



New staff among biggest changes at schools as classes begin Aug. 25

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

With the first classes just over two weeks away, students are getting ready to return to their education-filled days.

Before that can happen, administrative and teaching staff are prepping classrooms, curriculum and registrations to welcome back students from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Schools Superintendent Bill Burr said based on the number of kindergartners and graduated seniors from last year, the district is anticipating about 263 children in the student body this year, similar to last year's number.

Registration is tentatively scheduled to open online at wpsd.us next Monday and in person next Wednesday from 10 a.m.-noon and 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the high school commons. A fee will be due at registration.

Other than new kindergartners taking their seats, new teachers and other staff are among the changes

returning students can expect when classes start Aug. 25. A new second grade teacher, Alyssa Howell, will join Evergreen Elementary along with new principal Ann Hilburn, who was previously the special education teacher at the high school and middle school.

"We are a little smaller, staff-wise," Burr said. "There is some adjustment to that. We don't anticipate that it's going to affect parents and students, aside from two K-1 teachers instead of three."

Bob Burkhart and Ann Hilburn serving as new principals this year
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One of those first grade teachers, Mikki Angerman, is filling the special education role left vacant by Hilburn. Other hires include Krysta Gillen as a paraprofessional, Peter Parks as a custodian and Holly Padilla as a long-term elementary substitute. The schools have needed paraprofessionals

(aides) and substitutes for some time.

Both Hilburn and Bob Burkhart are stepping into leadership positions that opened up with the retirement of Jenn Miller-Yancey at the elementary school and Bob Davis at the middle school and

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State ferry traffic into town this year down 90% from decade ago

BY LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

More than 6,700 passengers a year boarded a state ferry in Wrangell 2010 through 2015, and more than 6,900 a year walked or drove off the ships during that six-year period.

In calendar 2021, those numbers were down to 690 passengers boarding a ferry and 771 getting off a ship, a drop of about 90%.

Those 2021 passenger counts are up from the pandemic-worst travel year of calendar 2020, when just 264 boarded in Wrangell and 274 arrived, but the decline in ridership has been constant since 2014, according to statistics provided by the Alaska Marine Highway System.

From 6,835 boardings in fiscal 2014 (July 2013 to June 2014), Wrangell boardings fell to about 4,000 in 2017, 2,600 in fiscal year 2019, and then crashed with the pandemic.

The passenger count inched back up to around 700 in fiscal year 2022, which ended June 30, more than double the pandemic-worst year but still off 90% from a decade ago.

Vehicle traffic into Wrangell

held steady at around 1,900 to 2,100 cars, trucks and vans from fiscal year 2010 through 2014, before sliding down to 1,200 in 2019 before the pandemic cut the numbers about in half for 2021.

Even before the pandemic, ferry service to Wrangell was in decline, falling 40% from 385 port calls in 2011 to 230 in 2019, making it hard on school sports teams, families, vacationers and other travelers to schedule trips.

Wrangell is not alone in losing ferry traffic, but its numbers are among the worst for Southeast ports of call, according to the state's traffic count.

In 1992, 372,000 passengers rode aboard the state ferries in Southeast. Numbers have declined since then, dropping to 152,000 in pre-pandemic 2019 and crashing in pandemic 2020 to 43,723.

The steep drop in travelers when the pandemic hit, plus deep budget cuts in the first year of Gov. Mike Dunleavy's administration, resulted in vessels being held out of service to save money.

Even before the pandemic,

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Stepping through history



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Peter Karras, of Sitka, works on clearing away salmonberry bushes and other vegetation from stone stairs that were built just up the hill from downtown Wrangell sometime in the early 1900s. He found out about the steps from Wrangell resident Frank Young, who used to run up and down the stairs in his youth.

Good deed uncovers stone stairs built in early 1900s

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

Uncovering historical items can have its ups and downs. In some cases, that's the literal truth.

Somewhere around 1915, a set of stairs was built that saw a lot of use over the next 80 years. But they began to fade like an old photograph until suddenly they disappeared.

It wasn't until a couple of weeks ago that the stairs were found, leading to a conversation about their place in Wrangell's history.

Peter Karras, of Sitka, was in town on a visit in mid-July. Not one to be idle, he was cutting down some trees for Frank Young, who lives on Third Street.

"He said there's some steps over here and they let them

overgrow with salmonberry bushes," Karras said. Partly out of curiosity but mainly because he wanted to help unearth Young's childhood memories, Karras set to cutting back the bushes and revealing the stone steps.

The stairs are part of pathway that runs from the intersection of Reid Street and Greif Street up to Third, and is an easement overseen by the Parks and Recreation Department, according to Borough Manager Jeff Good.

"When I was a kid, we used to run up and down them," Young, 82, said. Though he lived out at Heritage Harbor, Young said he and his friends would go to the area around Third Street now and again. "Over the years, nobody really used them. They started devel-

oping houses up here more. None of these houses were here when I was a kid."

Young has lived in his house on the south side of the easement since 1983, and the steps were still uncovered and in use at that time. "When tourists would go to Mt. Dewey, I'd see them walking up and down that path."

Before houses were built up in the area of Third Street, it was all farms, Young said. Al Bankly, who owned and farmed the land, had used a motorized tram next to the stairs to bring supplies up to the property, according to Young.

"There was a tramway made of wood and Bankly had the farm up here, that's how he got his supplies up the hill,"

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Permanent Fund lost money for the first time in 10 years

BY JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

For the first time in a decade, the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp., source of more than half of Alaska's general-purpose state revenue, posted negative investment returns for an entire fiscal year.

As of June 30, the last day of the just-ended fiscal year 2022, the fund reported having earned minus-1.32% over the preceding 12 months.

The decline will not have an immediate effect on state finances, but continued losses over multiple years would reduce the amount of money available each year for state services and the Permanent Fund dividend.

Between June 30, 2021, and June 30, 2022, the fund's market value declined from \$81.8 billion to \$77.3 billion. That decline includes withdrawals and deposits, as well as the investment loss.

Those figures are from the fund's monthly performance report for June, released last week. Final figures are expected later this month.

Each year, the fund attempts to earn at least 5% plus the cost of inflation, the minimum necessary to keep the fund's inflation-adjusted value constant. Over the past year, the

fund would have had to earn 14.06% to keep pace with inflation and withdrawals. Instead, it lost money on its investments for the first time since fiscal year 2012.

Chief Investment Officer Marcus Frampton said the biggest reason for the loss is "the stock market."

Between June 30, 2021, and June 30, 2022, the Dow Jones Industrial Average, a key indicator of public markets in the United States, fell by almost 11%. More than a third of the Permanent Fund is invested in public equities, mostly stocks in the United States.

That has caused many public investment funds to post significant losses. CalPERS, the California public pension fund, posted a loss of 6.1% during the just-ended fiscal year.

Frampton noted that despite losing money overall, the Permanent Fund did better than its contemporaries, beating benchmarks in a down market and generally losing less money than they did.

"I'm encouraged by that," Frampton said, "because anyone can make money in an up market by taking more risk. But then to have beaten the benchmark in an up year like

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Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Wednesday, Aug. 10: Katie Brock, Debbie Mathews.

Thursday, Aug. 11: Teslin Nichole Smith, James Stough Sr.

Friday, Aug. 12: Rebekah Gile, Wayne Harding, Lauran Woolery; Anniversary: Eric and Darian Gerald.

Saturday, Aug. 13: Chris Byford, Rachel Harris, Kyle Hommel, Sean Kaer, Erik Keene Kohrt, Heidi Villarma.

Sunday, Aug. 14: Alice Bakke.

Monday, Aug. 15: Chris Guggenbickler, Mikel Smith.

Tuesday, Aug. 16: Diane O'Brien, Cooper Seimears, Margaret Villarma; Anniversaries: Keith and Kathy Appleman; Bryant and Joan Benjamin.

Wednesday, Aug. 17: Emily McCloskey; Anniversary: Derek and Adrienne Angerman.

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, Aug. 11

Dutch style beef and cabbage, carrots and raisin salad, cornbread

Friday, Aug. 12

Fiesta pork chops, cauliflower, waldorf salad, biscuit

Monday, Aug. 15

Burgers, oven french fries, honey-mustard slaw

Tuesday, Aug. 16

Chicken alfredo, green beans, peach salad

Wednesday, Aug. 17

Pork chops baked with apples, boiled potatoes, cauliflower broccoli toss, stuffing

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, Aug. 12
Matanuska, 8:45 p.m.
Tuesday, Aug. 16
Matanuska, 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, Aug. 20
Matanuska, 2 a.m.
Friday, Aug. 26
Matanuska, 8:45 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Aug. 15
Matanuska, 9:45 a.m.
Thursday, Aug. 18
Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.
Monday, Aug. 22
Matanuska, 3:15 a.m.
Monday, Aug. 29
Matanuska, 9 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.
Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information
or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM	PM	AM	PM
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Aug. 11	00:26	18.5	01:31	16.0
Aug. 12	01:18	19.1	02:15	16.8
Aug. 13	02:08	19.0	02:57	17.2
Aug. 14	02:54	18.5	03:36	17.3
Aug. 15	03:40	17.4	04:15	17.0
Aug. 16	04:25	15.9	04:54	16.4
Aug. 17	05:13	14.3	05:36	15.6

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 10	5:09a	8:39p	15:29h
Aug. 11	5:11a	8:36p	15:25h
Aug. 12	5:13a	8:34p	15:21h
Aug. 13	5:15a	8:31p	15:16h
Aug. 14	5:17a	8:29p	15:12h
Aug. 15	5:19a	8:27p	15:07h
Aug. 16	5:21a	8:24p	15:03h

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

WRANGELL SCHOOL BOARD will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, via Zoom. Go to: <https://bit.ly/3JnxZhe>. The meeting ID is 856 0826 6706 and the passcode is 376429. Community members can email comments to kpowell@wpsd.us, or can sign up under guests to be heard at the meeting by emailing the same address before 3:30 p.m. the day of the meeting.

PARKS and RECREATION basketball open gym for middle and high school-age kids will be Aug. 15-19 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. at the community center. Warm-ups, drills and scrimmage games. Gym shoes are required. Fee of \$25. Register online at wrangellrec.com or call 907-874-2444.

WCA and BRAVE are seeking assistant and substitute coaches to coach third through fifth graders for the I Toowú Klatseen (Strengthen Your Spirit) program. Sessions will be Sept. 6 through Nov. 18 on Tuesday and Thursday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Participants don't have to commit every week and don't need to be a runner -- just have a sense of spirit and fun. The program is open to Native and non-Native children. Contact Kim Wickman at kwickman1299@gmail.com or 907-305-0425.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Where the Crawdads Sing" rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the drama mystery thriller film that runs two hours and five minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

MUSKEG MEADOWS will hold the George Woodbury Memorial Tournament, nine-hole best-ball tournament starting at 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 13-14. Must register by 9:30 a.m.

WRANGELL HEAD START is accepting applications for children ages 3 to 5 years old. Class begins Aug. 23. Head Start is a nationwide, federally funded program whose purpose is to promote school readiness by enhancing the social, physical, and cognitive development of children. Head Start is provided at no cost to eligible families. Apply online at <http://cchita-nsn.gov/>.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK 6 p.m. Fridays through August at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

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

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

Arthritis class, 8:30 - 9:30 a.m., Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Lap swim, 6 - 7:30 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Lap/tot swim, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., weekdays, 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, and 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday

Open swim, 6 - 7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday; 6:30 - 8 p.m. Friday; 1 - 2 p.m. Saturday

Water aerobics class, 10 - 11 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

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

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

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

Aug. 10, 1922

It has been decided to use the Guild Room back of St. Philip's gymnasium for kindergarten, which the Wrangell school will add this year. There is no room in the school building for such a department, and a survey of the available buildings failed to locate anything else that was entirely suitable, most of the rooms being on Front Street where no playground could be secured for the tots. While the Guild Room seems at first thought to be rather far from the center of town, the location is really a central one when the fact is considered a number of children from the bay residential area will attend. The room is large and well lit. A number of improvements will be added that will make it very comfortable for the little ones. All children between the ages of four

and six who are eligible for entrance to the public school will be admitted. The kindergarten will be maintained by funds handled by the school board and there will be no charge for tuition.

Aug. 8, 1947

Using ingenuity and a war-surplus flying boat, three Seattle men this week will start a new air service from Seattle to the "airportless" maritime region of Southeast Alaska. If the idea pans out, it will bring heavy air freight and passenger service to Alaska coastal villages that have never seen anything larger than small pontoon planes, F.A. Davis, one of the backers of the venture, said, "The present air freight lines are bypassing this area because there are practically no airports where we come in. We don't need an airport, we taxi right up to the beach." The new line will serve Sitka, Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Juneau and smaller towns.

Aug. 11, 1972

Plans for a radio station which would serve Wrangell and Petersburg with local and network programming were disclosed this week. Bill Williams, president of Great Land Broadcasters, of Juneau, said the station may be operational by early next spring, if Federal Communications Commission sanction is secured promptly. Williams said the station would be located near Petersburg on Mitkof Island and

use a transmission tower at Blind Slough to send the signal across Summer Strait to Wrangell. Radio stations would be located in both Wrangell and Petersburg. Williams said the station's format will include music, network coverage and local news. Williams said a marketing study in the two communities has indicated there is sufficient potential advertising revenue to support the business. "There is not enough population to support a station in either town, however, so we have to serve both communities."

Aug. 7, 1997

With the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation complaining about noncompliance at the Wrangell landfill, and the Federal Aviation Administration concerned about the dump's proximity to the airport and attracting birds, the city is facing some unpleasant tasks. "The problem is that, no matter what you do, it's going to cost more money," said City Manager Scott Seabury. He said he'll likely suggest that the council pick a figure - \$20 a month or maybe \$5 more than at present - and let him put together a management system for one year, then revisit the issue. Whatever expenses the user fees don't cover (and they don't cover costs even now, Seabury said), will have to be made up from other city revenues. Wrangell's had a 20-year struggle with its garbage.

New principals preparing for start of school year

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

As students start school on Aug. 25, two new administrators will be joining them.

Ann Hilburn is the new principal for Evergreen Elementary and Bob Burkhart is new the principal for Wrangell High and Stikine Middle school.

Hilburn was previously the special education teacher at the high school and middle school, while Burkhart was working as a principal in Missoula, Montana, after having been retired.

Leadership positions at the schools opened after Bob Davis retired from the high school and middle school and Jenn Miller-Yancey took a position with the Alaska Department of Education after 30 years at the elementary school. Both were assistant principals.

"There's always a certain amount of nervousness whenever new admin starts working with a group of teachers that are already used to each other and the ways of the previous admin," Hilburn said. "We will need to learn to work together as a team and be flexible to learning new ways of doing things."

Hilburn, who's been an educator for 37 years, said she's not the only new one at Evergreen who will need to integrate into the current staff, as others have been hired for various roles at the elementary level. "I don't expect big challenges, just routine challenges," she said.

"Almost all of the staff have been repositioned to different grades and support staff are almost all new," Hilburn said. "Learning the new routines and learning to work together will be the biggest challenges for teachers and support staff."

Having already worked within Wrangell schools, Hilburn understands the culture. Burkhart admits it's new territory for him, even though he's worked in Alaska schools before.

"There's no way from my perspective that I could come into school" (and not rely on current staff, Burkhart said. "I need people to tell me where we are.

I need to communicate with everybody and listen carefully."

Burkhart said he wants to "accentuate the positive" aspects of the school and work on weaknesses, like a doctor evaluating a patient. "I do not plan to do anything until I understand the situation."

Before starting his position, Burkhart sat in on some of the school board meetings and has met with staff to get a better understanding of the schools and community.

"I'm very impressed," he said. "There's no lack of effort being withheld. There's a very high commitment."

Both principals believe that teachers, students and parents have to work together to provide children with the best education possible. Burkhart likened it to a three-legged stool.

"We have to work together, all three of us, to come up with a stable plan that works for all of us," he said. "It's not going to come from any one person. We need to help (students) as much as we can to be productive, happy and successful."

Hilburn echoed those statements. "I would like for parents to become really involved with their child's education and find ways to support their child, as well as the school," she said. "I want parents, staff, students and community to find our office door always open to assist them in the best ways possible."

As for any changes this year, those mostly center around operating in an ever-changing COVID landscape. Some changes pertain to fixing gaps left in education in the wake of the pandemic, which both principals said need to be a priority. Other changes are simpler.

"We will once again be eating lunches in the multipurpose room instead of the classrooms," Hilburn said.

Despite any unknowns, both are ready to begin the year.

"I'm excited and can't wait for the staff to be in place and the students to come streaming through our doors," Hilburn said. "I feel sure the staff feel the same and will be anxiously waiting for their new classes to begin Aug. 25."



PHOTOS BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Ann Hilburn, above, began work on Monday as the principal of Evergreen Elementary. She was the special education teacher at the high school and middle school before taking on the new position. Bob Burkhart, below, stands in the halls of Wrangell High School last Friday. He moved from Ennis, Montana, to be the principal of the high school and middle school, taking over after Bob Davis retired as assistant principal.



School board approves four new hires, revised budget

By MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

The school board Aug. 1 held a special meeting to take care of a few last-minute items before the start of classes on Aug. 25.

Board members approved the hiring of four staff members for vacant positions. The district hired Krysta Gillen as a paraprofessional, Peter Parks as a custodian, Alyssa Howell as a second grade teacher and Holly Padilla as a long-term substitute at the elementary

school level.

Only two vacancies in the district remained at the time of the board meeting, but both have since been filled. The board will need to officially approve the personnel choices for high school secretary and Alaska Native education director and tutor.

The board on Aug. 1 also approved minor revisions to the 2021-2022 school year budget.

The school's fiscal year ended on June 30, but the numbers were not final. Business Manager Tammy Strom-

berg said she was still making adjustments to the general ledger.

"This is really just a housekeeping matter," Stromberg said of the budget revisions.

Total expenditures for the 2021-2022 school year were \$5.91 million, against revenues of \$5.23 million. The district paid its bills by drawing down on its reserves, which started the new fiscal year on July 1 at about \$400,000.

This year's spending plan is just over \$5 million.

Low enrollment numbers the past few years have cut into the amount of state

funding for the district.

Stromberg also discussed with the board an IRS audit. Accounting mix-ups in 2020 and 2021 resulted in miscommunications between the district and the tax agency.

Stromberg said any amount that might still be owed to the IRS will fall under a "prior period adjustment" or will be covered in this year's budget, depending on the size. "I've left a little wiggle room for what I think will be in this year's budget. It will be noted one way or another in the June 30 audit."

State reports at-sea COVID count falls back to average

Sentinel writer

After a mid-July surge to 1,021 COVID-19 infections among tourists at sea in a single week, the state Health Department reports the case count the past two weeks fell to an average of 550 per week.

The record number of infections among non-residents, which the state refers to as "at-sea, purpose tourism," was reported July 20.

The July 27 count was down to 517, then 583 on Aug. 3. The state reports COVID statistics once a week, every Wednesday.

At-sea cases averaged less than 450 a week from the start of the cruise ship season to mid-July.

In communities statewide, a total of 3,284 new cases were reported Aug. 3 over the pre-

vious seven days, an increase from 2,946 cases reported the prior week, with 17,317 cases in the past month. The numbers do not include at-home tests, which have become increasingly popular but don't get reported.

Alaska's seven-day infection rate per 100,000 people has declined the past few weeks and now ranks 13th among U.S. states, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tracking website.

Wrangell's seven-day case count as of Aug. 3 was down to just a dozen new infections, after 96 infections were reported in the past month.

The community has recorded 755 cases over the past two and a half years, according to state Health Department statistics.

DEAR TAXPAYER

Each year, the City and Borough of Wrangell receives Community Assistance Program (CAP) funds from the State of Alaska's Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development. The purpose of CAP funds is to aid municipalities in delivering vital public services to their respective communities. As part of the compliance requirements associated with this funding, the Borough is required to notify taxpayers of the amount of CAP funding received and how it was used. This letter serves as said notice. Please see below for a summary of budgeted vs actual CAP expenditures for FY 2021 and FY 2022:

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this notice, please feel free to contact the Borough's Finance Department at (907) 874-2381.

Mason F. Villarma, Finance Director
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Community Assistance Program - Expenditure Summary				
Public Service	FY 2021		FY 2022	
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual
Water/Sewer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 96,555	\$ 96,555
Public Safety	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 193,111	\$ 193,111
Road Maintenance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 96,555	\$ 95,568
Health	\$ 375,807	\$ 375,807	\$ -	\$ -
Savings/Not Spent	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total	\$ 375,807	\$ 375,807	\$ 386,221	\$ 385,234

FROM THE PUBLISHER

We're here to help tell everyone's stories

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Of course the Sentinel wants to tell stories about what's going on in town, what's happened, what's coming up, what government and businesses are doing that interests or may affect people. The staff depends on the community to share information and opinions so that we can tell all those stories.

It's the same when a member of the community dies. And it's even more important at those times to tell the person's story so that friends and family, acquaintances and even strangers can read and remember the person's contributions to the community and to lives of others.

It's a responsibility we take seriously, particularly in a small town.

Which is why the Sentinel generally will not charge to publish an obituary as long as it stays within our limit of about 400 words. No charge for the photo, either. If a family wants a particularly long obituary, or designed with a border and artwork or larger type, we do charge but we offer a discount and try to work with the family to ensure the expense is not an undue burden.

We know that many people feel uncomfortable writing an obituary — and we want to help.

Family members can write an obituary and submit it for publication, which we will look over and call if we have any questions. Or people can download the obituary form from the Sentinel website to use as a guide. Even easier, call Amber

at 907-874-2301 for a fill-in-the blank Word document and provide as much information as everyone is comfortable with — and we will write up the obituary for the family.

The Sentinel doesn't want any member of the community to pass away without an obituary to tell the story of their life and accomplishments. However, all too often we hear of a death in the community but never receive an obituary or the information form from the family. We know death is a difficult time for

families and we do not want to intrude, which means we wait until the family is ready to deal with submitting their own notice or filling out the form and answering questions.

If you have a death in the family, take time to comfort each other and then, when you are ready, you can help comfort everyone else who knew your mother or father, sibling, aunt or uncle or close friend and share their stories with an

obituary in the Sentinel.

People can take screenshots of Facebook notices or file them away on their smartphones, but nothing matches the permanence of a printed newspaper page that can be shared for generations.

Alice Rooney and Cindy Martin, of Hospice of Wrangell, said it well: "During these recent years of social distancing, some people have just vanished from sight. We'd like to honor their lives."

The Sentinel has been honoring lives and recording Wrangell's passings for 120 years. Help us continue that service by sharing news when someone dies.

"The Sentinel doesn't want any member of the community to pass away without an obituary to tell the story of their life and accomplishments."

Back to school

Continued from page 1

high school. Burkhart is the new middle and high school principal.

Addy Esco, the counselor at the middle school and high school, resigned last year to move to Anchorage for health-related reasons. Laurie Hagelman, the fifth grade teacher, and her family also moved to Anchorage. Julie Williams was hired to replace Esco.

As of last Friday, the district was still looking for a full-time paraprofessional to work with students at Evergreen Elementary School. Otherwise, all the open positions that had been advertised by the district had been filled as of last week, including Marsha McCay as the high school secretary and Tom Jenkins as the Alaska Native education director and tutor.

Jenkins is an in-house transfer and McCay's position is still

pending school board approval.

Not much will change in the operation of the schools, Burr said. "Where we left off is where we're going to begin," he said. Burr met with the incoming principals this week to iron out details.

Tasha Morse, who teaches high school art and music from kindergarten through 12th grade, will return to her classroom early to make sure she is ready to teach. Technically, the first day back for teachers is Aug. 22, an in-service day.

"It seems that they (custodial staff) tackle classrooms first," Morse said in a phone interview last week during the final days of her vacation in the Lower 48. "They try to get the classrooms clean, the floors polished and the counters wiped down. A lot of teachers opt to keep their keys so that we can go in before

the school year starts so that we can get things prepped."

Morse not only has to prepare to teach returning students, she has to prepare her daughters to return. Silje, who is in seventh grade this year, is excited to return, she said. However, Lilly, a first-grader, said she wished summer vacation could be longer.

"This is the beginning of year 15 for me teaching, I've already got a list of things that I need to get checked off," she said. "And Silje being in the seventh grade, that gives me eight years of both being teacher and mom to a student. At this point, it's kind of old hat. We fall into a routine easily. It's not stressful to think about getting my kid ready in the morning or get myself ready."

Burr said last year was a challenge with budgetary issues and staffing. He lauded both educa-

EDITORIAL

Candidates needed for municipal offices

August is a time for fishing, the last of any gardening work and the enjoyment of harvesting the fruits (and vegetables) of that effort. It's a time for home repairs, while there is still a plausible chance of dry weather to patch the roof, refinish the deck or scrape and repaint the siding.

It's also a time to consider serving in public office. Probably you're thinking you'd rather pick garden slugs or clean the gutters than serve on the borough assembly, school board or port commission. At least no one criticizes you for those other pursuits, and you don't have to answer questions and explain yourself to a neighbor when all you wanted to do was run into the store for a half-gallon of milk.

But just as weeding and maintenance are important for gardens and homes, so too are tending to public finances and ensuring the public process is well maintained to grow a healthy community. And for that, Wrangell needs people willing to run for election and serve.

The jobs don't pay, they take a lot of time and work, and often require decisions between several unpleasant choices.

For example, Wrangell schools have steadily lost enrollment, which has cut deeply into state funding. The school district has been using federal pandemic relief funding and reserves to fill budget gaps, but those patches will not last. The schools have had a hard time recruiting for support staff positions and often struggle to find substitute teachers. The administration is working on the problems and board members can expect those issues and more on their meeting agendas.

The borough assembly is working to catch up on repairs to buildings long neglected, and is hoping someone will buy the former hospital and former 6 Mile sawmill property and turn the sites into something useful. The borough also needs to find ways to entice, encourage or assist new housing development in town. All the while keeping taxes as low as possible.

The port commission sets the rules for the Marine Service Center, City Dock and harbors, looking to serve recreational and commercial boat owners while promoting the offerings to bring more business to town.

The work lists are not intended to scare people away from running for public office. Rather, it should alert the community to how important the jobs are for Wrangell's future and why it's necessary that people volunteer to serve.

The candidate filing deadline for municipal offices is Aug. 31. Whether a current officeholder who wants to serve another term, or a new volunteer willing to help the community, Wrangell needs people to run for office. It's more than a learning experience. It produces results, just like that garden or home repair.

— Wrangell Sentinel

tional and administrative staff for stepping up and stepping in where needed when illness, travel and personal obligations left shortfalls at all the schools. Though all positions are filled going into the new year, he said there are still challenges ahead.

"We always have the funding challenges that come from the state," he said.

Funding from the state is based on student enrollment and the number of campuses operated by school districts. Pandemic aid money has helped Wrangell close its budget gaps, but with those funds running

out by 2024, staff has had to look at possible cost-saving solutions. One option could be reducing school buildings from three to two. That's not likely to happen this year, Burr said, unless something drastic happened to warrant such a change.

"There are benefits and negatives to (combining school campuses) which would need to be discussed further," he said.

Budgetary issues aside, Burr said staff is ready to welcome back students "with a smile on their face, but they might be in different spots, as well as some new faces, of course."

Ferry traffic

Continued from page 1

Southeast port calls dropped from 5,290 in 2011 to 3,718 in 2019.

Crew shortages have hampered the ferry system, too.

The "fiscal turmoil" and schedule cuts of recent years have made the hiring problem worse, said Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee. Prospective hires look for dependable work and shy away from jobs that could be at risk with the next cutback, he said.

That adds to the loss of passengers, Stedman said. "When you don't run a

predictable schedule, you lose market share." The senator was in Wrangell last week on his reelection campaign. Stedman said he worries it will be difficult for the ferry system to recover lost travelers — whether locals or visitors — even if its schedule improves.

Passenger and vehicle fares have covered less than half of the ferry system operating budget for the past 15 years, with state general fund dollars and federal money filling the gap.

And although this year's budget for the Marine Highway System provides enough funding to restore more service,

crew shortages and hiring problems have prevented the state from meeting its proposed summer schedule.

"Staff are burning out due to national staffing shortages in the maritime industry, this is our foremost critical problem," according to a state Department of Transportation report for the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board, which met last Friday.

"The shortage of qualified crew members threatens the ability" to operate the ships, the report said. "Being short-staffed, vessels are frequently at risk of going into layup," or running "with a

crew operating by extensive holdovers and significant overtime status, leading to low morale."

Since 2019, the ferry system has lost 357 employees due to resignations, retirement and firings, while adding just 211 new hires, according to the report for the new advisory board comprised of members appointed by the governor and legislative leaders.

Transportation Department management repeatedly testified to legislative committees this past spring about crew shortages of as many as 300 workers for full staffing.

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Alaska voters will select new member of Congress next Tuesday

Primary election held the same day for November races

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Alaska voters will go to the polls next Tuesday to mark their ballots in a couple of firsts: The first election under the state's new ranked-choice voting system, and the election of Alaska's first new member of the U.S. House in 49 years.

The three finalists for Congress selected in the July special primary election are Republicans Nick Begich, a Chugiak businessman, and former Gov. Sarah Palin, and former Bethel state legislator Democrat Mary Peltola.

At a recent candidate forum in Juneau, Begich noted that Alaska is the second most federally dependent state in the U.S., and the rising threat of federal deficit spending is his top concern.

Palin, who is backed by former President Donald Trump, said at the same forum, "All we have to do is turn on the spigot in Alaska" to resolve any economic woes by "developing our God-given resources."

Peltola agreed with the other candidates that inflation is a top concern for the nation, while voicing her support for legislation in Congress that would allow Medicare to negotiate lower

drug prices, penalize pharmaceutical companies for increasing prices faster than inflation, and impose a 15% minimum tax on certain corporations.

The state is conducting a special election Tuesday to fill the unexpired term of the late U.S. Rep. Don Young, who died in March in his 49th year in Congress. The winner will serve until January, when the winner of the regular election in November will take over for a full two-year term.

Early voting is open. Voters may cast their ballots between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. weekdays through Aug. 15 at City Hall assembly chambers. Voters can vote early for any reason, including convenience or personal preference.

On election day Tuesday, Aug. 16, polling places will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Nolan Center.

The special election will be on one side of the paper ballot, giving voters the option of — but not requiring — ranking the three candidates in order of preference. If no candidate wins a majority of votes when the first-choice options are counted, the third-place finisher will be eliminated and those ballots will be recounted for the voter's second choice. Of the remaining two candidates, the one with the most votes wins.

Alaskans in 2020 approved a citizen's initiative for the ranked-choice system, which also did away with political par-

ty primaries. All candidates run against each other in a single primary, with the top finishers — up to four — advancing to the general election.

The other side of next week's statewide ballot will be the regular primary election for governor and lieutenant governor, Legislature, U.S. Senate and House. Voters can choose only one candidate in each primary race.

In the state House race for the district that includes Wrangell, incumbent Rep. Dan Ortiz, of Ketchikan, is running against Jeremy Bynum, of Ketchikan. Bynum is a registered Republican; Ortiz an independent. Both will advance to the Nov. 8 general election.

Wrangell non-partisan candidate Shevaun Meggitt had filed but later decided not to run, citing personal reasons. Her name, however, will be on the primary ballot. Meggitt said she is backing Bynum, agreeing with his position of a smaller state government.

Bynum has served two years on the Ketchikan Gateway Borough assembly and works as an acting division director at Ketchikan Public Utilities. He wants to see the state do more to help ease the housing shortage in the district, including grants to extend roads and utilities to developable land. "We definitely have a housing problem."

He also wants to look at easing some state regulations for child care providers, hoping it

will lead to more openings.

Ortiz, who has served in the House since 2015, wants to return to the Legislature "to help guide our Southeast economy to a complete recovery from the COVID years." He said he would look for what the state could do to boost the tourism and fishing industries and bring back some timber jobs.

Ortiz also said the state ferry system needs more attention after years of decline and service cutbacks. "We've got to get that Columbia up and running," he said of the flagship vessel that has not operated since 2019.

Same as the state House district, there are just two candidates for the Senate district that represents Wrangell, and both will advance from Tuesday's primary to the November general election.

Incumbent Republican Bert Stedman, of Sitka, has been in the Legislature since 2003 and currently serves as co-chair of the budget-writing Senate Finance Committee. The state's biggest issue is its revenue stream and balancing that with paying a healthy Permanent Fund dividend each year. Stedman has been a strong advocate of not overspending for an unaffordable, oversized dividend.

Repairing past damage to the ferry system is his top priority for the district. That includes hiring new crew, keeping the ships in service and bringing back schedules to

levels sufficient to meet community needs.

His challenger, Republican Mike Sheldon, of Petersburg, supports paying a full dividend based on the 1982 formula which lawmakers have dropped in recent years as the state ran short of money. He also wants to reduce state regulations that hurt businesses, though he offered no examples in an interview last week. "I've got to look in the books."

The primary ballot will include the governor's race, with incumbent Gov. Mike Dunleavy facing former Gov. Bill Walker, who lost to Dunleavy in 2018. The other candidates include former Anchorage Democratic legislator Les Gara, and seven other Republican, Libertarian, Alaskan Independence Party and undeclared candidates. The top four will advance to November.

Incumbent U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski faces a reelection challenge from Republican and former Dunleavy administration official Kelley Tshibaka and 17 other candidates in the Senate primary. Tshibaka, who is backed by former President Donald Trump, is running her campaign focused on claims that Murkowski is not conservative enough.

Mark Sabbatini of the Juneau Empire contributed to this report.

Stone stairs

Continued from page 1

Young said. "He had a little gas engine on it, and he'd pull that trolley up that ramp."

Both Bankly and Einar Ottesen were in their 90s when they would tell Young about Wrangell's early history, and the stairs were included in those conversations. "They built it during the First World War," Young said. "They had city co-op camps, but they had formed a different group here in Wrangell. I can't remember the name of it, but they built the stairs."

Kathie Angerman, who lives a block up from Third on First Avenue, remembered using the stairs as a girl to go up and visit the farms, since Bankly was her stepfather.

"They were beautiful stone steps," she said. Eventually, Bankly sold all the land for homes, with one of the lots bought by Angerman and her husband

more than 60 years ago just a stone's throw from the steps.

Young's wife, Cherie, said when she was a girl, she used to have a friend who lived up the hill and they would walk together up the steps to get to her friend's house.

Karras cleared around 70 feet of the stairway before returning to Sitka on July 22. It's his hope that the work can continue by people willing to volunteer their time.

Kate Thomas, director of Parks and Recreation, said she was unaware of the steps until last week. She's unsure of how much control, if any, her department has over the easement, but said she would follow up with the borough to get a better understanding.

Young would like to see the steps restored in some capacity.

"I'd love to see them uncovered," he said. "It's part of Wrangell's history. ... It's kind of neat."



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Peter Karras was able to clear about 70 feet of the stone stairway before he had to return to Sitka on July 22. According to Frank Young and other longtime residents, the stairs extend all the way from Third Street down to Reid Street.

Permanent Fund

Continued from page 1

last year and then beat it in a down year, this year, I'm really encouraged by how our portfolio managers navigated the two very different markets."

One notable failure was in the Permanent Fund's special-opportunity investments, which include investments where the Permanent Fund offers a company money for an ownership share that can later be converted into cash when the company starts selling public stocks.

If the Permanent Fund had hit its benchmarks on those investments, it would have earned a 22% return on \$4.6 billion. Instead, it earned only 1.85%.

Frampton said that's attributable to the fact that the Permanent Fund has invested heavily in biotechnology and medical companies that were particularly hard-hit during the recent stock market declines.

The Permanent Fund invested about \$130 million into a company called Denali Therapeutics in 2013, then saw the value of its investment grow by 700% or 800%, Frampton said.

At the start of the fiscal year, the fund still held about \$400 million in Denali Therapeutics' stock, only to see its value fall by about half.

"That one position was a couple hundred million of loss," Frampton said.

"With hindsight, we wish we had sold more aggressively, like a year ago," he said.

Frampton said that with hindsight, he would have invested more into real estate, which the Permanent Fund keeps as a hedge against inflation.

In the short term, the one-year downturn will have limited effect on the Permanent Fund and on state finances.

In 2018, state lawmakers created an annual transfer from the Permanent Fund to the

state treasury in order to pay for the Permanent Fund dividend and state services amid falling oil prices.

Last year, that withdrawal to the treasury was about \$3.1 billion. In addition to investment income, the fund receives a share of state oil and gas royalties.

Investment returns, rather than oil deposits, are the biggest factor in whether the fund gains money or loses money.

Creating an automatic transfer was intended to discourage lawmakers from taking larger amounts of money from the fund. The transfer is limited to 5% of the fund's average value over five years. If the current downturn lasts only one year, that smoothing effect means the average transfer won't change significantly.

Over the past three years, the fund has averaged 9.33% returns, below the target of

9.98%. Over the past five years, the fund has averaged 9.03%, slightly above the target.

Over the next 10 to 15 years, he said the Permanent Fund is set up to succeed, "but I think

the setup for investors right now, on like a one-to-two-year outlook, is pretty tough. So it would not surprise me if there are more difficult periods in the next year or two."

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Candidacy filing for municipal elections closes at end of month

Sentinel staff

There are three weeks remaining for candidates to file for election to the borough assembly, school board and port commission, and as of Monday no one had submitted their paperwork to run for office, with most incumbents reporting they were still undecided.

The deadline to file is 4 p.m. Aug. 31 at City Hall for a spot on the Oct. 4 municipal election ballot.

Mayor Steve Prysunka has announced he is not seeking a third term.

In addition to the mayor's job, two borough assembly seats, three school board seats and two port commission slots will be on the ballot.

As of Monday, port commission member John Yeager was the only incumbent to announce his intent to seek reelection. Yeager is finishing his second term on the port commission. He was first elected in 2016.

Assembly members Patty Gilbert and David Powell, school board members Julia Ostrander and Jessica Whitaker, and port commission mem-

ber Frank Roppel all have told the Sentinel they were undecided.

Ostrander was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the school board last winter. Whitaker was elected to the board last fall.

Roppel was appointed to fill an empty seat on the port commission in 2020, then elected for a one-year term in 2021.

The Sentinel has not been able to reach two-term school board member Dave Wilson to ask whether he plans to seek a third term.

Of the three school board seats up for election in October, two are three-year terms and the other is a one-year term. Candidates choose which term they want when they file for office.

The port commission seats are three-year terms, as are the two borough assembly seats.

Persons interested in filing for office need to submit their candidacy declaration form and a petition signed by 10 qualified voters. The forms are available from the borough clerk's office at City Hall, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

Palin skips candidate event for out-of-state fundraiser

By IRIS SAMUELS

Anchorage Daily News

One of the three U.S. House candidates was missing at a candidates forum in Kenai on Aug. 3: Former Gov. Sarah Palin instead held a fundraiser in Minneapolis, according to photos she posted on her Instagram account.

The next day, she was in Dallas for a 20-minute onstage interview titled "She's Back!"

Her Texas appearance was at the Conservative Political Action Conference, which draws notable Republican and conservative politicians, including former President Donald Trump and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Her opponents to fill the seat of the late U.S. Rep. Don Young — Republican Nick Begich and Democrat Mary Peltola — discussed their views on the economy, gun rights and abortion, among other issues, at the Aug. 3 forum hosted by the Soldotna and Kenai chambers of commerce.

For Alaskans hoping to hear from her, she has been notably difficult to track down. Palin's congressional campaign marks her first run for elected office since quitting as governor in 2009, and while she has marched in occasional parades and roused a crowd of more than 5,000 in an Anchorage Trump rally, she has turned down some candidate

forums, including one hosted by the Anchorage Republican Women earlier this year. There, hosts left an empty chair for her at the table with the word "no" attached to her name.

Palin's campaign manager, Kris Perry, said Palin, 58, was not available for an interview for this story despite multiple requests this week.

Begich, 44, is a millionaire businessman and the grandson of Nick Begich Sr., who served as Alaska's U.S. representative until he disappeared in a plane crash in 1972. He is also the nephew of former U.S. Sen. Mark Begich, and current state Sen. Tom Begich. The younger Begich says his biggest challenge in the campaign has been convincing voters that unlike his grandfather and two uncles, he's not a Democrat.

Peltola, 48, served in the state Legislature for a decade, representing the Bethel area. As a Yup'ik woman, her victory would propel the first Alaska Native to Congress. In the Legislature, she headed the Bush Caucus representing communities off the road system. First elected at age 25, she said she went to the Legislature thinking she would "fight enemies." But she quickly learned that she would be more effective if she turned the other 59 lawmakers into her best friends. Her friendliness has become a hallmark of

her current campaign.

Still, Peltola and Begich recognize that Palin is a formidable opponent. The former governor garnered 27% of the vote in the 48-way special primary in June, and in some more conservative regions of the state, including Kenai and Soldotna, she commanded more than 40% of the vote.

"I can't help but still see her as the clear front-runner. She's an international celebrity. How can you not be the front-runner if you're an international celebrity and a former sitting governor?" Peltola said in an interview after the Kenai forum. "I think Nick must feel like that too, since the negative comments that he makes are really just at Sarah."

After the Kenai forum, local residents lamented Palin's absence — and some said it would change how they planned to vote.

"She has been a no-show for so much. I was really hoping that she would be here just to express her opinion. Because right now, I'm one of the believers that she is literally running on her celebrity only and has no real clue what the issues are," said Larry Opperman, a Soldotna resident who plans to support Begich.

Don and Alice Heckert, who live in Kenai, said they planned to rank Begich first, but that forum would likely change who they rank second on their ballot.

"I think it was very good to see Mary Peltola. I didn't know anything about her," Alice said. "The third candidate, her not showing up just speaks for itself, because all of a sudden Kenai's not important."

April Hall, a pastor at the Kenai United Methodist Church, said she would vote for Peltola first and Begich second.

"To me, (Palin) doesn't seem as grounded. We need someone who's grounded and these two seem to be very grounded," Hall said. "For her, it's more of a show."

House, Senate incumbents hold lead in early fundraising

By ERIC STONE

KRBD radio, Ketchikan

The candidates to represent Wrangell in the state Legislature have filed their first campaign finance reports for the Aug. 16 primary election. Not surprisingly, House and Senate incumbents have the lead in fundraising.

Rep. Dan Ortiz is looking to keep his seat in the newly redrawn District 1, which includes his hometown of Ketchikan, along with Wrangell, Metlakatla, Hyder, Saxman and the Prince of Wales Island communities of Coffman Cove and Whale Pass.

Ortiz reported to Alaska's campaign finance monitor, the Alaska Public Offices Commission, that he raised \$16,424 in contributions between Feb. 2 and July 15. Almost \$5,900 of that was his own money.

"I'm not having too much of a problem at all fundraising," Ortiz said. "I'm not recognizing any upswell of anti-Ortiz sentiment out there, either on social media or anywhere else, so I think it's going pretty well."

About 40% of his early fundraising came from donors who listed home addresses outside the district.

Almost all of that out-of-district money was from organizations, including labor groups NEA-Alaska and the Teamsters, which pitched in a total of \$1,500 for his campaign. And two dental organizations — the Alaska Dental Society and Dentists of Alaska Political Action Committee — chipped in \$1,000 each.

Ortiz had just shy of \$16,000 on hand as of July 15. He said he raised a total of about \$70,000 during his past campaign and is looking to take in a similar amount this year. He was first elected to the House in 2014.

Republican challenger and Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly Member Jeremy Bynum reported \$12,878 in contributions. The vast majority — all but \$364 — came from Bynum himself, including a \$10,000 check to kick-start his campaign for the House and a variety of purchases he made with his own money. Bynum said he's still working on getting his fundraising effort up and running.

"Overall, I think it's going well," Bynum said. "It just takes some time to try to get those mechanisms in place."

Contributions have averaged about \$60 each. All of Bynum's reported donors were individuals with addresses in the Ketchikan

"The campaign will start to slowly pick up the pace and accelerate through November."

Sen. Bert Stedman

area. Bynum said he is glad to have some small-dollar support but is open to larger contributions.

He had about \$10,000 on hand as of July 15.

Air cargo pilot Shevaun Meggitt, of Wrangell, who had filed to run as a nonpartisan for the House seat, said in an emailed statement that she is ending her campaign and endorsing Bynum because of unexpected personal issues.

In the race for state Senate District A, which includes Wrangell, Sen. Bert Stedman raised \$21,500 between Feb. 2 and July 15. The Sitka Republican, who has served in the Legislature since November 2003, said he's just getting started with his reelection campaign.

"It's early yet, particularly along the coast — we've got tourism season going full speed with our visitors, we've got fishing season in full swing. People are busy working," Stedman said. "The campaign will start to slowly pick up the pace and accelerate through November."

All but \$500 raised so far came from donors outside the district.

Stedman's 23 listed donors averaged more than \$900 each, including \$14,500 from seafood industry executives and managers. He said much of that came from a recent fundraiser in Washington state.

"The fish processing industry is mainly outside of Alaska, mainly based in Seattle. And that's just due to the economics of the industry itself," Stedman said.

His district includes coastal communities stretching from Yakutat to Ketchikan.

Stedman had \$23,441 in his campaign bank account as of July 15, according to the report.

His lone challenger, Petersburg handyman and Republican Mike Sheldon, raised \$2,410 between Feb. 2 and July 15. All of that came from individuals, averaging about \$100 each.

About half came from outside the district. Sheldon also kicked in \$500 of his own money. He was sitting on \$871 as of mid-July.

With fewer than four candidates in each race, all will advance from the pick-one Aug. 16 primary to the ranked-choice general election on Nov. 8.

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SENTINEL SPORTS

Coaches working toward successful cross country season

BY MARC LUTZ
Sentinel editor

And they're off!
The Wrangell High School cross country practice began July 27, with many returning runners and a few new faces to race toward a successful season that started with a different training approach.

Head coach Kayla Rooney is returning for her third year to guide the team with the help of new assistant coach Mason Villarma. Both coaches have had success as runners in the past, with Rooney placing at the state level each year of her high school career and Villarma running from elementary school through college at Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, placing ninth nationwide in the men's 1,500-meter run his freshman year.

On the team so far this year are four seniors, one junior, four sophomores and two freshmen. Rooney said it's the smallest team in the time she's been coaching.

The approach to training will be different for the returning runners.

"We're starting differently this season than we have in past seasons," Rooney said at practice last Wednesday evening. "The structure is different. The workouts are different. Our practices are much longer and we're doing more core strength, not just all about running."

Villarma is leaning on his collegiate training to help the runners succeed, which means using weightlifting, yoga and morning runs as well.

"It will be a lot of strength work early, then a slow build in the mileage at a sustainable rate," he said. "The top-tier guys (will be running) at 60 miles a week, two and a half weeks from state. Then sharpening up speed-wise. Then doing a lot of



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

The Wrangell High School cross country team runs down the sidewalk along Church Street on a practice run around the Airport Loop last Thursday, while head coach Kayla Rooney paces the group on the street. From left: Ethan Blatchley, Ian Nelson, Lucas Schneider, Boomchain Loucks, Kyan Stead, Daniel Harrison and Mia Wiederspohn.

shorter intervals with less recovery at the end. It's just giving them a nice platform to really capitalize."

Rooney said the goal for the year is to be more structured and to do more strength training, "really focusing on using everything and getting built up."

Last year, senior Liana Carney won third place in the small-schools division at state, while Daniel Harrison, a freshman at the time, placed 11th out of 84 boys. Harrison has returned for this

year's team. Villarma believes the boys team has a good shot at making it to state.

"I'd say the men can win regionals if we get the guys we need to turn out," Villarma said. "They can probably be top three at state, if not win it if they are really disciplined. For the women, it's a matter of getting more numbers and building up that side."

There are only three runners for the girls team at this point: Senior Rylee Chelette, junior Mia Wiederspohn and

sophomore Clara Waddington.

Though runners will cross train in other sports, the coaches want them to put all their focus into cross country while on the team. They aren't dissuading their athletes from having fun, but they do want to keep them from risks of injury.

"Kind of just have fun, go shoot some hoops, but don't play a full-on game," Rooney said. "That's where we run into conflict with other seasons starting. Each coach expects 100% from each student."

Villarma said it's a rule of thumb in most sports programs that "if you're in-season for one sport, you're not going full-bore in another."

The only other sports program right now is swimming.

At last Wednesday's recovery practice, runners were excitedly greeting one another, preparing to do stretches and other warm-up exercises. The day before, runners ran a three-times-a-mile exercise, with some turning in times of 5:50 per mile, Villarma said.

"Where are we going," one student asked before the recovery run.

"Wherever I tell you to," Rooney responded.

The cross country team is scheduled to compete in Craig on Sept. 3.

Team roster:

Rylee Chelette, senior
Devlyn Campbell, senior
Ethan Blatchley, senior
Randy Churchill, senior
Mia Wiederspohn, junior
Daniel Harrison, sophomore
Kyan Stead, sophomore
Clara Waddington, sophomore
Boomchain Loucks, freshman
Ian Nelson, freshman

Petersburg swimmer pulled out short of reaching the mainland

BY CHRIS BASINGER
Petersburg Pilot

At 8 a.m. on July 30, Andrew Simmonds, 60, entered the chilling waters of Sandy Beach in Petersburg, setting out to prove that age has not slowed him down.

His goal was to swim across Frederick Sound to the mainland, more than six miles away.

His journey started months earlier.

Soon after arriving in Petersburg in November, Simmonds, who is a physical therapist at Petersburg Medical Center, visited Sandy Beach to gaze out over Frederick Sound. He admired the whales leaping above the water and crashing back down, but beyond that the mainland caught his eye.

"It was just so magical, so magical to see that and I just said, wow ... God only knows what's over there and what it's like over there," Simmonds said.

As he pondered about what lay at the base of the mountains that loom over the sound, he wondered if he could make it over there and see for himself. He began thinking he could try kayaking across, but with time his idea evolved.

"I said ... maybe I still have enough physicality left in me that I could make it across in a swim."

Over the next several months he worked to build up his stamina in the water and got involved with Scott Burt and the masters swimming program at the pool while he pushed to increase his range.

He also tested himself by competing in the Tongass Tough-Man Triathlon in Wrangell on July 2, and while that swim was only a sixth of what his crossing would be, he proved to himself that he had the mental fortitude to attempt it.

On the day of his crossing, calm seas and good weather helped with a solid start. After about 90 minutes, he was halfway across the sound. "I thought maybe this is going to turn into a cake walk," he wrote.

It didn't work out that way. After crossing the halfway point, he battled for more than six hours toward the unreachable shore.

The rising tide and current pushing back against him made it impossible to swim in a straight line, increasing the distance he had to travel.

A safety boat captained by Josef Quitslund kept a steadfast watch. When Simmonds would pause alongside the boat, he could feel his core temperature dropping fast and found it difficult to speak, but he chose to venture on and began to focus on staying warm by propelling his limbs through the waves harder than he had before.

North of McDonald Island and with about half a mile to go, icebergs flowed around him as the outflowing current pushed him away from the shore.

He wrote that he drew from his experience swimming the big waves of Kauai as he tried moving toward either side to find a hole in the current, but despite his zigzag efforts he gained no ground.

Unable to break through he called out to Quitslund, who confirmed that it had been some time since he had made forward progress. With his core temperature continuing to decline and his body failing, he made the difficult decision to end his swim and with his last strength he climbed the ladder into the boat.

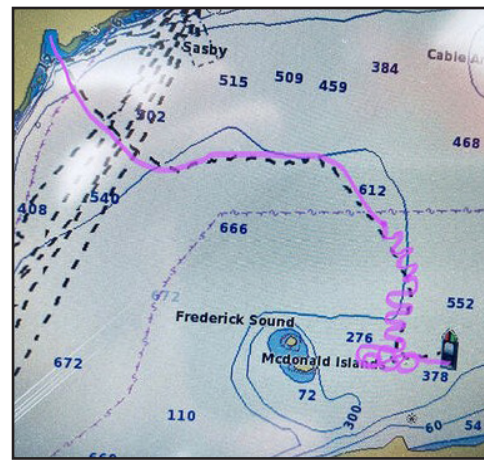
He wrote that it was hard to give up on those final yards. But with a few days to reflect on it,

Simmonds said he knew it had been the right time to end it.

"I'm feeling really good because I pushed myself as hard as I could physically without jeopardizing myself or jeopardizing the crew that I had," he said.

He said he is already talking to people familiar with the waters of Frederick Sound and getting ideas on how to improve his chances of completing the crossing if he tries again next summer.

"Why make another run at it? Why not maybe is a better question," he wrote.



The rising tide and current made it impossible for Andrew Simmonds to swim in a straight line on his quest to go from Petersburg to the mainland on July 30. He pulled out short of his goal.

MAP COURTESY OF JOSEF QUITSLUND



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Colorado organization rescues six suspected Haines wolfdogs

By MAX GRAHAM
Chilkat Valley News

While thousands danced and dined at the Southeast Alaska State Fair in Haines last weekend, Drew Robertson of Sedia, Colorado, was rescuing a half dozen puppies that might be part wolf.

The state suspects at least 10 dogs born at 35 Mile Haines Highway in February could be wolf hybrids, which are illegal to breed or possess in Alaska.

The owner of the litter — “Seandog” Brownell — said he suspects the mother, Inja, a lab, could have mated with a wild wolf last December on or near his property.

Robertson, who runs an organization with wolfdog sanctuaries in the Lower 48, picked up six of the Haines puppies and took them back to Colorado. The other four possible wolfdogs haven't been surrendered by their owners.

Robertson said Aug. 1 some of the puppies would be placed in sanctuaries — large, enclosed properties — but “a couple of them were so social, we already plan on them being support animals.”

In addition to running sanctuaries, Robertson's organization, Mattersville Veterans, pairs rescued wolfdogs with U.S. military veterans experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder or other health issues.

Mattersville works to promote “pack healing” — creating bonds between canines separated from their packs and veterans missing their military units. “They end up having really, really strong bonds,” said Robertson, who started the organization about a decade ago after his friend, a veteran, committed suicide.

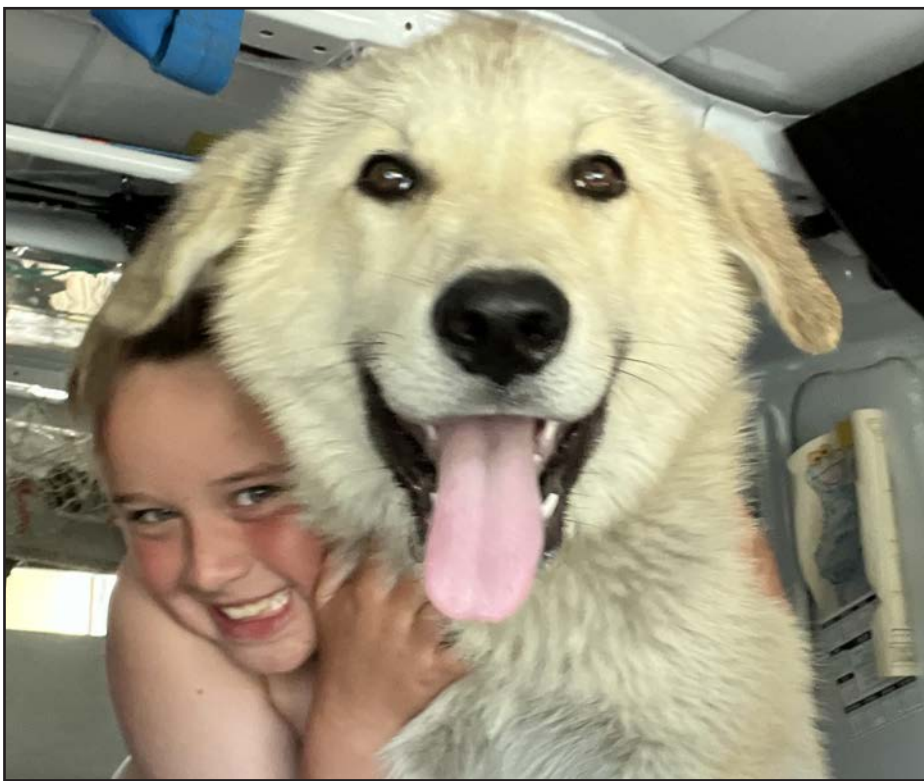


PHOTO COURTESY OF JENNIFER MARSCHKE

Archie Dunbar, 7, smiles with puppy Biscuit, one of at least 10 dogs born in Haines this spring that the state suspects could be part wolf. The owner of the litter's mother said her dog might have inadvertently mated with a gray wolf in a rural part of the borough. Wolfdogs are illegal to breed or possess in Alaska.

The organization has five sanctuaries — in Colorado, Texas, Florida, Wisconsin and Kansas — as well as a group of support animals. Wolfdogs that act more like dogs than wolves usually become support animals, while the wilder res-

cues live with animal care teams at Mattersville's sanctuaries, Robertson said.

“I'm just really happy that he's going to have a family,” said Jennifer Marschke, referring to her puppy Biscuit, one of the dogs Robertson took with him

from Haines. He thought Biscuit might be a good fit for a friend of his in Washington state, where wolfdogs are legal.

The wolfdog saga started earlier this summer when one of the dogs in the litter registered as 50% wolf on a dog DNA test. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is awaiting results from more accurate laboratory testing to prove whether or not the dogs are part wolf.

Wildlife managers sent samples from six of the dogs and are seeking contact information for the owners of the other dogs in the litter. Until the results come back, the state will consider the animals legal.

Wild gray wolves rarely mate with domestic dogs, but the two kinds of animals can have viable offspring. Some biologists contend they are two different species; others say dogs are a wolf subspecies.

It's possible that some, but not all of the Haines litter could be part wolf. There could be multiple fathers because female dogs have “numerous eggs that the sperm can mix with,” state biologist Carl Koch said in an email. “Wild wolves will only have one father because of pack dynamics. The father wolf helps raise the young. But with domestic dogs they don't help the female raise the pups,” he said.

Brownell for several weeks had been working to line up a sanctuary for the dog before the genetic test results came back, while the pups are still legal.

He started a GoFundMe page in July to raise money for vaccinations, rabies shots, dog food and transportation to new homes for the dogs. That page as of Aug. 2 had raised \$3,061 through 41 donations.

Another bad year for Alaska wildfires, and the worst could be ahead

By MARK THIESSEN
Associated Press

ANCHORAGE (AP) — Alaska is burning this year in ways rarely or ever seen, from the largest wildfire in a typically mainly fireproof southwest region to a pair of blazes that ripped through forests and produced smoke that blew hundreds of miles to the Bering Sea community of Nome, where the normally crystal clear air was pushed into the extremely unhealthy category.

As of late July, more than 530 wildfires had burned an area the size of Connecticut — and the usual worst of the fire season is ahead. While little property has burned, some residents have been forced to evacuate and one person was killed. A helicopter pilot died last month when he crashed while attempting to carry a load of equipment for firefighters.

Recent rains have helped but

longer-term forecasts are showing a pattern similar to 2004, when July rains gave way to high-pressure systems in August, hot days, low humidity and lightning strikes that fueled Alaska's worst fire year.

In 2004, the acreage burned by mid-July was about the same as now, but by the time that fire season ended, 10,156 square miles were charred.

“The frequency of these big seasons has doubled from what it was in the second half of the 20th century,” said Rick Thoman, a climate specialist with the Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy at the University of Alaska's International Arctic Research Center. “And there's no reason to think that's not going to continue.”

Heat waves and droughts, which are exacerbated by a warming climate, are making wildfires more frequent, destructive, and harder to fight

in many places. Last month, wildfires tore through Portugal, Spain, France, England and Germany, which have seen record-high temperatures.

California has recorded its largest, most destructive and deadliest wildfires in the past five years, and with the state deep in drought authorities are girding for what may be a late summer and fall filled with smoke and flames.

Alaska also has been dry. Parts saw an early snow melt and then a largely rain-free June that dried out the duff layer — the band of decaying moss and grasses that blankets the floors of boreal forests and the tundra. This organic matter can be up to 2 feet thick but in various stages of decay.

On May 31, a lightning strike on the duff layer in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta started the East Fork fire, an area in Southwest Alaska that rarely burns. Two communities with a combined population of about 700 were threatened but no mandatory evacuations were ordered in what became the

largest wildfire ever in the delta at 259 square miles. Firefighters were able to protect the communities.

A fire like that one was directly attributable to climate change, Thoman said. There's more vegetation growing on the tundra, willow and alder trees are thicker in the transition area between the tundra and forests, and spruce along river valleys are growing thicker and moving farther uphill from those valleys.

“There's been a significant increase in the amount of fuel available, and that's from decades of warmer springs and summers in the region, a direct result of a warming climate,” he said. “And, of course, fires with more fuels available burn hotter. They burn longer. They're more resistant to changes in weather.”

In Alaska, a little more than half of all wildfires are started by lightning and the rest are caused by humans accidentally, intentionally or through negligence. Of the almost 5,000 square miles burned as of late July, only 2 square miles have

been from human-caused fires.

It isn't feasible or necessary to try to fight all Alaska wildfires. Fire plays a key role in the state's ecology by cleaning out low-lying debris, thinning trees and renewing habitats for plants and animals, so Alaska typically lets most burn themselves out or wait until rain and snow does the job. Firefighting resources are used to battle fires in populated areas.

While there's been little loss of property, smoke from the fires has caused dangerous breathing conditions. In one case, two fires burning near Lake Iliamna joined and in one day burned about 75 square miles of boreal forest, creating smoke and ash that strong winds transported hundreds of miles northwest to Nome, pushing the air quality index into the extremely unhealthy category.

“I would never have thought that you could get that poor of air quality back 400 miles from the active fires, and that is a testament to how hot those fires were,” Thoman said.

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Anchorage, Fairbanks schools deal with shortage of bus drivers

Anchorage Daily News

Students return to school soon, and Alaska's larger districts are facing a shortage of school bus drivers.

The Anchorage School District was short 75 bus drivers less than two weeks before classes begin on Aug. 18. The shortage could lead to some bus routes being suspended, the superintendent said.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District contractor was short bus drivers last month to cover 115 routes, and as of last week was advertising: "We need bus drivers and attendants!" The district last week announced reduced service when classes start Aug. 17.

The Fairbanks bus contractor was advertising a starting wage of \$26.79 per hour for drivers, and offering to pay for commercial license training and pay new drivers while they are in training.

In Anchorage, it was not immediately clear which routes could be affected or how the district would decide where to suspend services, if needed. Bus services for special education students are not expected to be interrupted, Superintendent Jharrett Bryantt said in a message to families Aug. 3.

"We are preparing ourselves for the reality that we may need to streamline operations to minimize disruption. In other words, there's a real possibility we won't be fully staffed in these positions on the first day of school," Bryantt told the school board at its Aug. 2 meeting.

The Anchorage district generally operates with about 240 to 250 drivers

"We are preparing ourselves for the reality that we may need to streamline operations to minimize disruption."

*Jharrett Bryantt,
Schools Superintendent
Anchorage*

but has struggled during the past few years to hire bus drivers amid a broader shortage of workers, an official said last year when the district enacted route suspensions because employees became ill with COVID-19 or were showing symptoms.

The Fairbanks district also suspended some routes last year due to a shortage of drivers.

The Anchorage district hopes to entice people to apply for the job by offering additional bonuses for new and existing employees — bus drivers will receive an extra \$2,500 and bus attendants could receive up to \$500 more for the first semester of the year, the district said in its message to families on Aug. 3.

Rob Holland, operations director at the Anchorage district, said the administration is discussing their options. One possibility could be to prioritize bus services for the youngest students, and the district could reduce the number of stops along bus routes, which would allow drivers to pick up more students on each trip.

Obituary

Former resident Leatha Vada Aitken dies at 90

Former Wrangell resident Leatha Vada Aitken "went home to her Lord" on July 19, in Juneau surrounded by family.

Vada, as she was known, was born Nov. 12, 1931, to James Virgil and Maude Briscoe in Healdton, Oklahoma, and grew up in nearby Fox. The farm life was not easy, but Vada had happy times, her family wrote, especially with cousins Judy and JoAnn. Vada had two daughters with first husband, George Vaughan: Vicki, born in California, and Sandi, born in Juneau. After divorcing, Vada met and married Alan Aitken who added three stepdaughters, Sherry, Sandra and Melody.

Vada worked for banks in Haines and Wrangell before settling at the U.S. Forest Service in Juneau, retiring in 1990. Life after retiring included gardening, reading, indoor orchids, trips to Oklahoma and New York family, talking to her daughters every day and spending time with her beloved dogs Pepper, Molly, Hannah and Maggie. All cockapoos, "which she thought were the best dogs in the world," her family wrote.

She is survived by her loving husband of 45 years, Alan "Al" Aitken. "Vada was a kind, smart-as-a-whip person with a southern woman's wit and subtle independence," her family wrote. "She was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who never met a cake she couldn't bake to perfection or a roast that didn't melt in your mouth."

Vada is lovingly remembered by her daughters Vicki Vaughan and Sandi (Robert) Shaw, of Juneau; step-daugh-



LEATH VADA AITKEN

ters Sherry (Greg Knight) Aitken, of Sitka, Sandra (Chris LaValle) Empson, of Juneau, and Melody Anhalt, of Littleton, Colorado; seven grandchildren, Kyle Shaw of San Francisco, Amanda (Guillermo Palma) Empson of Juneau, Alexandra (Michael Kraehling) Aitken of Prince Frederick, Maryland, Adam (Virginia Veltri) Empson of Philadelphia, Julia Anhalt of Greenwood, South Carolina, Lindsey Anhalt of Littleton, Colorado, and Gabriel Knight of Oak Creek, Colorado; two great-grandchildren Sage and Makai of Juneau; and Oklahoma nieces and nephew. She was predeceased by her parents, brother Robert "Golden" Briscoe, and nephew Brett.

Other special people in Vada's life were Sarah McDaniel, Vicki's BFF from college who became another daughter to Vada and lifetime best friend Bea Rounsley of Juneau.

Vada requested to be cremated and her ashes will be spread in a favorite Juneau place as well as Oklahoma and New York. A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Juneau. Call 925-326-7746 for Zoom link.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Juneau Animal Rescue or Southeast Alaska Food Bank.

Murkowski part of bipartisan group in support of abortion access

BY RILEY ROGERSON

AND IRIS SAMUELS

Anchorage Daily News

WASHINGTON — Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski on Aug. 1 joined a bipartisan coalition to introduce a bill that would protect abortion and contraception access.

The measure faces an uncertain future in a Senate that failed to pass a broader measure enshrining abortion rights in May. It also comes as Murkowski faces reelection this fall, with abortion emerging as a key issue in that campaign.

Despite the bill's bipartisan co-sponsors — Democrats Tim Kaine, of Virginia, and Kyrsten Sinema, of Arizona, and Republicans Susan Collins, of Maine, and Murkowski — it is unlikely to clear the 60 votes necessary to overcome a GOP filibuster.

In a statement, the four senators said it would "undo the damage" of the Supreme Court's June decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. In that decision, Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas signaled that the court may also reconsider its stances on contraception and same-sex marriage.

The bill leans on language from Roe v. Wade and other Supreme Court rulings that protected abortion before the court's Dobbs v. Jackson decision on June 24.

It would block state regulations that impose an "undue burden" on women trying to get a pre-viability abortion, according to the written statement from the senators. The act would allow states to make "reasonable restrictions" on post-viability abortion and ensure abortions to protect the life or health of the mother.

In Alaska, abortion access is protected under the state constitution. Changing that would require changing the constitution — a possibility that Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy has suggested exploring in the state's next legislative session.

The federal legislation would also preserve the right to contraception access that is currently constitutionally protected by another Supreme Court ruling.

Additionally, it would keep in place conscience protections for health care providers that refuse to provide abortions because of religious beliefs.

"For five decades, reproductive health care decisions were centered with the individual — we cannot go back in time in limiting personal freedoms for women," Murkowski said in a written statement.

"Every American should have autonomy over their own health care decisions," Murkowski said. "The Supreme Court's de-

cision in Dobbs has made it imperative for Congress to restore women's reproductive rights."

Murkowski is the only one of the bill's sponsors who is running for reelection this year, and she faced a wave of criticism for her votes to confirm two of the justices who later backed the decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

Murkowski faces challenges from both the right and left. Her leading opponents are conservative Republican candidate Kelly Tshibaka and Democrat Pat Chesbro, who both have raised concerns over Murkowski's position on abortion access.

"Put this on the list of reasons why Lisa Murkowski can't be trusted. Just a few weeks ago

she voted against codifying Roe v. Wade, but now she wants pro-choice voters to think she's for it," Tshibaka said in a written statement Aug. 1.

Murkowski voted in May against the House's abortion bill, the Women's Health Protection Act, because she said it went too far beyond codifying Roe. She has not taken a position on the House's Right to Contraception Act which passed 228-195 last month.

Murkowski has tried to codify Roe v. Wade before. Alongside Collins, she introduced a bill to protect Roe v. Wade in February. However, the bill has not advanced in the Senate.

Tshibaka has previously said

she thinks it should be up to states to determine laws governing abortion access.

Chesbro, who is running for the Senate seat with the backing of the Alaska Democratic Party, said Aug. 1 she would not support the new legislation because it does not protect abortion access after fetal viability — generally considered to be around 24 weeks of gestation.

"I don't think it really addresses the issues that were present before Roe v. Wade was overturned," Chesbro said about the new legislation. "I'm not going to call it a political stunt, but I am going to say that I doubt it would pass even in its current form."

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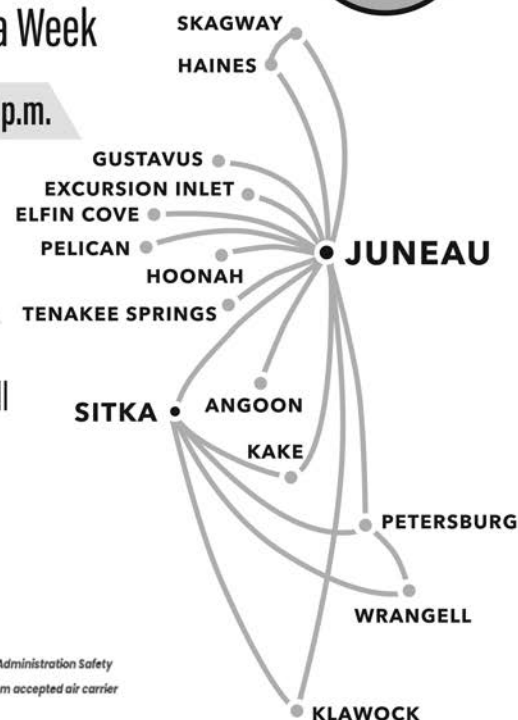


Alaska Seaplanes began service to Wrangell in May. Photo credit: Deni Hoy

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Petersburg assembly sets up task force to look at housing shortage

Petersburg Pilot and Wrangell Sentinel

The Petersburg Borough Assembly voted 4-1 on Aug. 1 to establish a new task force to address the community's housing crisis.

Assemblymember Jeff Meucci said the task force would work with the assembly's backing to look at housing needs in the community. "Like child care, I think this is one of the most important issues facing Petersburg," Meucci said.

"Every person that we've hired within the borough over the past several months — police officers, up at the fire department, Mountain View Manor (senior citizen housing) —

they were all looking for houses and without a place to stay it's impossible for somebody to work here."

The housing shortage is not unique to Petersburg. This year's Southeast Alaska Business Climate Survey reported, "Housing is the region's No. 1 economic problem. Business leaders identified housing as the top need to advance economic growth in the region."

Of the 26 Wrangell businesses that responded to the spring survey, conducted on behalf of the regional non-profit Southeast Conference, 86% said there are not enough homes available for purchase to attract and retain employees.

Three-quarters of Wrangell busi-

nesses said there are not enough long-term rentals available in town.

Petersburg Assemblymember Dave Kensingler said he saw creation of the task force as a necessity and suggested that using the borough's unoccupied land and changing the planning and zoning codes could increase the availability of housing.

"I think we have to realize that this problem is going to get worse instead of better unless we start taking action now," Kensingler said.

Assemblymember Bob Lynn supported the idea but said the assembly should hold a work session before establishing the task force in order to set specific objectives and discuss their ideas for what the group should

look like.

"I think the idea is excellent, I just don't think it's well enough thought out yet," Lynn said.

Lynn was the only member to vote against creating the group.

Borough Manager Steve Giesbrecht said he would meet with the consultant who wrote the borough's 2016 comprehensive plan to talk about the potential of compiling a housing needs assessment.

The assembly will meet in a work session Aug. 29 to discuss housing needs in Petersburg and the goals of the task force.

The borough is seeking letters of interest for volunteers to serve on the 12- to 15-person group.

Sitka 9-year-old out with his grandparents reels in 45-pound king

By Garland Kennedy Sitka Sentinel

For many Southeast residents, fishing is a way to fill the freezer or earn a living. But for Sitka's 9-year-old Miles Lawrie, fishing is a chance to spend time with his grandparents on the water.

It was a bonus for Miles when, while fishing with his grandparents on July 8, he caught his first ever king salmon — a 45-pounder.

"The pole went like 10 feet out, just dragging, it kept going hard way out," Miles said.

It's unlikely he would have caught the big king if

sea conditions out in Sitka Sound hadn't made grandparents Pete and Shelley Palmer decide to fish close to town. They had been planning to go out to Vitkari Rocks, a popular fishing ground south of Kruzof Island.

"We were headed for Vitkari. My wife and grandson were with me and we thought that the water was too rough," Pete Palmer said. "So, we decided instead of going (to Vitkari) that we'd come in and stay close to town."

Shelley Palmer said they wound up fishing in flat conditions, so they can credit the rough sea conditions offshore for Miles' chance to catch the big king.

"If it hadn't been so rough, we would never have

caught it, because we went where no one was fishing," she said. "I mean, there wasn't a single boat anywhere near us, just super flat."

After about an hour of fishing, a line went tight and Miles rushed from the cabin to play the fish.

"I got pretty excited, I was just like, 'There's a fish! I've got to run out there,'" he said.

After about 10 minutes of carefully reeling in the large king with his grandparents' help, Miles had the 45-pounder on board. He'd never caught a king salmon before.

The Palmers lived in Sitka for over a decade, but now live in Michigan and come back to Sitka in the summer. Miles lives in Sitka with his parents, Ben and Cara Lowrie.

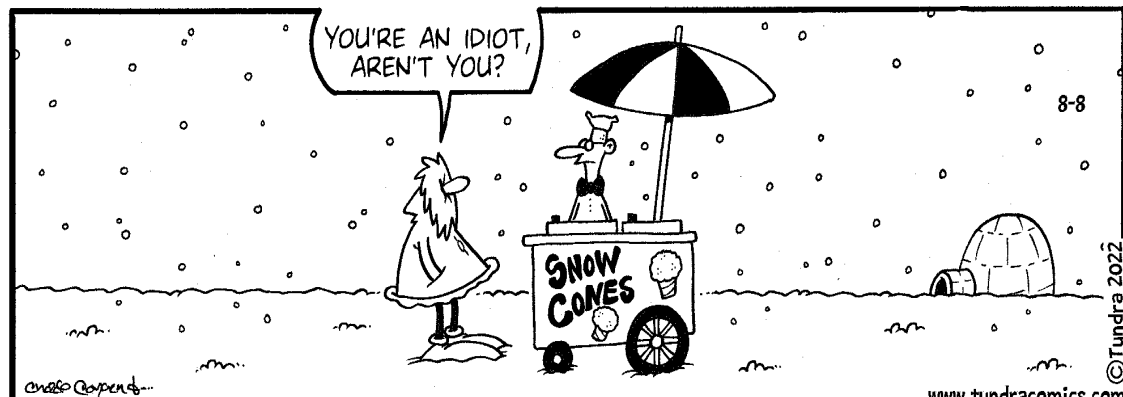
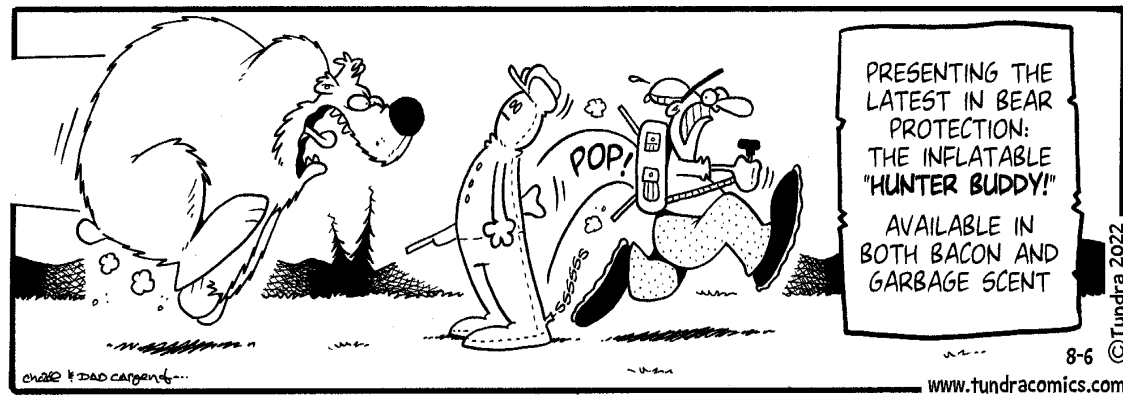
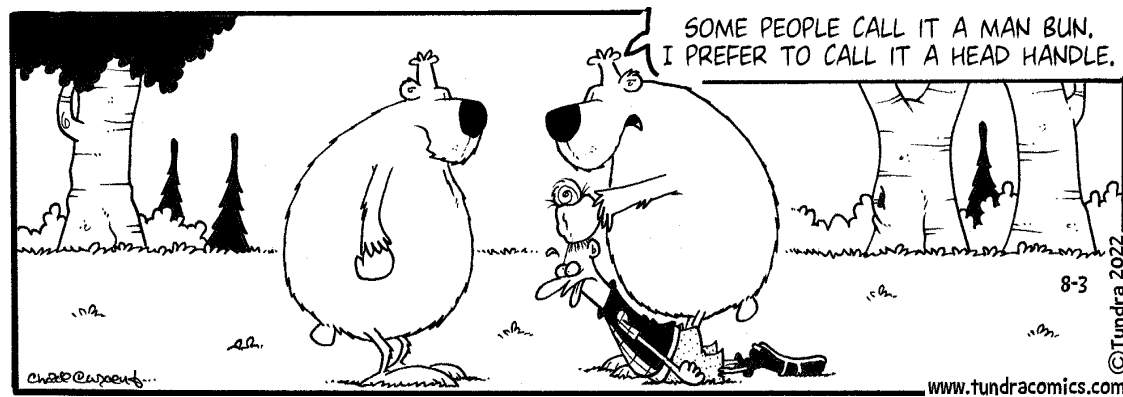
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



Sitka starts with site preparation for 12 cabins to house homeless

By Garland Kennedy Sitka Sentinel

After years of work and planning, site preparation is underway for the cabins to house Sitka's homeless people. The plan is to build a dozen small cabins at the end of Jarvis Street, about a mile east of the downtown waterfront.

The Sitka Homeless Coalition's fundraising has exceeded expectations, SEARHC health educator Doug Osborne said at the Rotary Club meeting Aug. 2. The project also got a boost Aug. 2 with Sen. Lisa Murkowski's announcement that she has added \$1 million for the project to the federal appropriations bill now under consideration in the Senate.

Previous efforts to shelter Sitka's homeless haven't gotten as far as this one, Osborne said. "In the past, four different community groups came together to establish a shelter and none were successful," he said.

The coalition has researched dozens of buildings for a potential winter shelter, but none worked out. "It became clear that a new approach would be needed," Osborne said.

The coalition settled on the idea of building 12 small cabins in a planned development on Alaska Mental Health Trust

land at the northern end of Jarvis Street, he said. The project kicked off last September when the Sitka Health Summit made ending homelessness in Sitka a community goal. Fundraising was launched in October. The initial goal was \$20,000.

"We reached that goal really quickly," Osborne said. All told, fundraising efforts have pulled in \$130,000, with the largest single amount coming from Sitka Tribe of Alaska. As suggested by the tribe, the housing project will be named Hit'xi Sáani, or the Little Houses.

Plans call for all the cabins to have running water for a sink and toilet.

Osborne said the Juneau Community Foundation has found that shelter for homeless people reduces hospitalizations. "This is important. Every community that has homelessness is going to pay in one way or another. We can build facilities like that, or we can pay in a much, much more dehumanizing way."

The goal is 12 units with a residential unit for a live-in manager, "somebody who's there and can help connect people to services and just make sure that things are running smoothly for everybody," Osborne said.

Police report

Monday, Aug. 1
Nothing to report.

Tuesday, Aug. 2
Found property.
Trespass.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Wednesday, Aug. 3
Citizen assist: Lost medication.
Agency assist: Harbor Department.
Parking complaint: Vehicle blocking driveway; vehicle moved.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Gunshots: Unable to locate.
Smell of fireworks in the area.

Thursday, Aug. 4
Found property: Bushnell range

finder.
Animal complaint: Car versus fawn.
Disorderly conduct.
Citizen assist: Vehicle unlock.
Abandoned property.
Gun shots.

Friday, Aug. 5
Dog complaint.
Agency assist: SEARHC pharmacy.

Saturday, Aug. 6
Agency assist: Harbormaster.

Sunday, Aug. 7
Civil issue.
Found property.
Found property.
Agency assist: Line crew.
Traffic stop.

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following position for the 2022-2023 school year:

- **Title I Paraprofessional:** This is a full-time position working with students in Grades K-5, 7.5 hours per day at Evergreen Elementary School. Salary placement is Column A on the Classified Salary Schedule. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. An associate degree, equivalent credits, or the ability to pass the parapro assessment is also required. This position does include a benefits package. The anticipated start date for this position is Aug. 22.

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

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James Leslie II is making application for a new common carrier license, AS 04.11.180 liquor license, doing business as motor vessels Dreadnaught and Chutine Warrior located at Reliance Harbor, to be dispensed on excursions by Alaska Waters.

Interested persons should submit written comments to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501, or email alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.

Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) will hold a Special Board Meeting on Friday, August 12, 2022, at 3:00 p.m. AKDT, via teleconference, in the offices of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency, 1900 First Avenue, Suite 318, Ketchikan, Alaska. The purpose of the meeting will be for consideration and approval of bond and retirement security plan resolutions. For additional information, please call 907.228.2281.

Published August 10, 2022



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South Wrangell Island (Thoms Place subdivision). 1.88 acres, waterfront. Lot 18, Block 2, Unit 3 of Alaska State Land Survey No. 81-234, Wrangell Recording District. Phone or text 907-321-3240.

ATV FOR SALE

ATV 200cc, manual transmission, 4-speed plus reverse, for sale. Looks and runs good. \$1,800. 907-660-7550.

FREE

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

FREE ADS

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

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE Heritage Harbor Boat Ramp Closure

Heritage Harbor boat launch will be closed Monday, Aug. 1, 2022, and will reopen on Aug. 20, 2022, to accommodate parking lot repairs at the top of the ramp. The Shoemaker Bay Harbor boat launch and the Inner Harbor boat launch across from the Power Plant on Case Avenue will remain open.

We appreciate your understanding and thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Harbor Department at 907-874-3736.

Amber Al-Haddad, Capital Facilities Director
City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish July 27, Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Declaration of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board, and signature petitions as required, will be available in the Borough Clerk's Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, Aug. 1, 2022, through Aug. 31, 2022.

Qualified persons may have their name placed on the ballot for the Oct. 4, 2022, City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Municipal Election by filing declarations of candidacy for Borough Mayor, Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board.

Borough Mayor: One seat, for 2-year term

Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms

School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms

School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2023

Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms

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

Publish Aug. 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL INVITATION TO BID

Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection

The City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska will receive Bids for the Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection project. The work for the Packaged Water Treatment Plant Equipment Preselection consists of designing and furnishing related manufacturer's labor, materials and services for prepackaged water treatment plant equipment for installation in the Project entitled Water Treatment Plant Improvements, in Wrangell, Alaska. The treatment system specified will be used to meet a 2.26 mgd design water treatment capacity.

Sealed bids will be received at the office of the Borough Clerk, City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929 until 2 p.m. prevailing time (Alaska Standard Time) on Aug. 24, 2022, after which time proposals will not be accepted. As such, proposal pricing shall be read aloud.

The Contract Documents may be downloaded free of charge on the City & Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFPs section. Downloading Contract Documents from the City and Borough of Wrangell's website requires registration with the Borough Clerk to be placed on the Plan Holders List and to ensure receipt of subsequent Addenda. Failure to register may adversely affect your proposal. It is the Offeror's responsibility to ensure that they have received all Addenda affecting this Solicitation. To be registered, contact the Borough Clerk at 907-874-2381; Borough Clerks Office, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, Alaska 99929; or at clerk@wrangell.com.

The owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, and to make award to the lowest responsive, responsible Bidder as it may best serve the interests of the owner.

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

Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE to Purchase Borough Owned Tidelands

As per WMC 16.12.040, notice is hereby given of a request to purchase Borough-owned Tidelands consisting of approximately 9,456 square feet of tidelands, described as Lot 6, Block 84B, Tidelands Subdivision ATS 83, Parcel No. 02-013-104 on Peninsula Street, for the purpose of improving the site that is currently being leased by the requestor.

The Wrangell Planning & Zoning Commission and Port Commission have reviewed this request and approved the request to move forward with the Tidelands Purchase with conditions.

Any person wishing to protest this application to purchase the proposed Borough-owned Property described as:

Approximately 9,456 square feet of tidelands described as Lot 6, Block 84B, Tidelands Subdivision ATS 83, Parcel No. 02-013-104 on Peninsula Street must file a written protest with the Borough Clerk, no later than August 30, 2022, at 4 p.m.

Written protests may be emailed to clerk@wrangell.com or delivered to 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, AK 99929. Any such protest shall state the reason(s) for the protest in detail.

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

Publish Aug. 3, 10 and 17, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Temporary Workers Harbor Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications from which to hire Temporary Laborers for the Harbor Department. Employees will be selected from applications in the pool at the time employees are needed throughout the year. There are multiple immediate openings. You must have a valid Alaska Driver's license, or a valid out-of-state Driver's License with the ability to obtain an Alaska license within six months. A CDL license is preferred but not required.

This position will require someone with experience in carpentry and the ability to work independently in a marine environment. Work may include but will not be limited to replacement of bull rails, fascia boards, decking, plumbing, pile hoops and concrete patching. Duties will also include painting, pressure washing, cutting brush and grass, and working in the boatyard and office. Boatyard duties will include carrying blocking, boat stands, and various types of cleanup. Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicant must be able to work in all weather conditions and weekends.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email to rmarshall@wrangell.com. Pay for this position starts at \$16.54 per hour DOE.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

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

Publish Aug. 3 and 10, 2022

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING Facilities Maintenance Specialist Wrangell Capital Facilities Department

The Wrangell Capital Facilities Department will accept applications for the position of Facilities Maintenance Specialist.

This position performs a wide range of technical maintenance and repairs of building systems, equipment and grounds throughout all Borough-owned facilities and assists other departments with special projects. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Facility Maintenance Specialist Lead. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of the collective bargaining agreement.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 19 with a starting wage at \$24.28 per hour. Applicants must meet the qualifications of the position, as listed in the job description. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained at City Hall. To be considered, interested applicants should submit their CBW employment application, a cover letter and current resume to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at payroll@wrangell.com. This position is open until filled and the first review of applications will take place beginning Aug. 18, 2022.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

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

Publish Aug. 10, 17 and 24, 2022

ALASKA VOTER ADVISORY

August 16 Statewide Election

The **REGULAR PICK ONE PRIMARY ELECTION** and **SPECIAL GENERAL ELECTION** are on the same ballot.



THE AUGUST 16TH ELECTION WILL BE AN IN-PERSON ELECTION
with polling places open on election day 7am-8pm

Absentee In-Person & Early Voting begins August 1. The list of locations is available at elections.alaska.gov/avo

RANKED CHOICE VOTING: HOW TO MARK YOUR BALLOT

Fill in only one oval per candidate, in each column.

You do not have to rank all the candidates. Your second choice is only counted if your first choice candidate is eliminated.

State Senator District B					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Larry Doe (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mac Allen (Registered Republican)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edna Mode (Undeclared)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiffany Strait (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

MISTAKES TO AVOID

State Senator District B					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Larry Doe (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mac Allen (Registered Republican)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edna Mode (Undeclared)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiffany Strait (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you skip a ranking your next ranking moves up. Here, if your first choice candidate is eliminated, your third choice counts as your second choice and your fourth choice would count as your third choice.

State Senator District B					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Larry Doe (Registered Democrat)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mac Allen (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edna Mode (Undeclared)	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiffany Strait (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you give more than one candidate the same ranking, those rankings and later rankings will not count. Here, only your first choice counts.

State Senator District B					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Larry Doe (Registered Democrat)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mac Allen (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edna Mode (Undeclared)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiffany Strait (Nonpartisan)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your vote only counts once, even if you rank a candidate more than once. When a candidate is eliminated in a round, they are eliminated from all future rounds.

State Senator District B					
	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice
Larry Doe (Registered Democrat)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mac Allen (Registered Republican)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Edna Mode (Undeclared)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tiffany Strait (Nonpartisan)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Write-In:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you skip two or more rankings in a row only the rankings before the skipped rankings will count. Here, your first choice counts and the fourth choice would not count.

For more detailed information, sample ballots, and explainer videos, visit www.elections.alaska.gov/rcv.php.

