

Online shopping accounts for 12% of total sales tax collections by the borough

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

A 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision on sales taxes and a 2020 statewide initiative started by the Alaska Municipal League are benefitting Wrangell's public treasury.

The borough in the past fiscal year collected about \$440,000 in sales taxes from purchases made online, by phone or mail and delivered to Wrangell households and businesses.

That is up about 10% from the prior year and up substantially from \$180,000 in revenues in 2021, the first year of the program.

Before the court ruling, states and municipalities were blocked from collecting sales taxes from so-called "remote sellers" that did not have a physical presence in the tax jurisdiction. Wrangell residents could order tax-free through Amazon, Walmart, Eddie Bauer and other online sites.

In response to the court decision removing the legal barrier to applying local sales taxes to online purchases, the Alaska Municipal League set up the Alaska Remote Seller Sales Tax Commission, which serves as a central administrator to collect and distribute tax revenues to almost 50 cities and boroughs around the state.

The statewide organization in fiscal year 2024, which ended June 30, distributed almost \$24 million in sales tax receipts, after administrative expenses, to those municipalities — almost triple the \$8.5 million in the first full year of the program in fiscal 2021.

A municipality must have a general sales tax in order to collect tax from online sales, and the tax rates must be the same for online and local businesses.

Wrangell's 7% sales tax on goods and services generated \$3.765 million in revenue for the fiscal year that ended June 30. Revenue from online sales was almost 12% of that total.

"It's bittersweet," Mayor Patty Gilbert said. It's good that the borough is able to collect revenue on sales by out-of-town businesses, but it's unfortunate that the dollars are being spent outside the community, she said.

Sales tax revenues from online purchases are increasing as people shop more online and as more remote merchants around the country follow the law and collect state and local taxes. Before the Supreme Court ruling in 2018, most online merchants declined to collect sales taxes on goods shipped into states and cities with a local tax.

Last year's total sales tax revenues

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PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jamie Roberts stands by the water on Nov. 29. She first came to Wrangell in 1998 and has been a big part of the community ever since. Roberts, a staple of Wrangell swimming, will leave town later this month — the family is moving to Oregon.

Jamie Roberts, a Wrangell staple, is packing her bags

By SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

Jamie Roberts is leaving Wrangell better than she found it.

After 26 years on the island, Jamie is saying goodbye to a town that not only formed her, but that she helped form for the better. The Roberts family moved out of their 11.25-Mile home after the Nov. 20, 2023, landslide. Since then, they have been unable to find a tenable housing solution. Later

this month, Jamie will join her husband, Greg, at their new home in Veneta, Oregon.

The Wrangell chapter in the book of Jamie Roberts begins in 1998. A student at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, she needed just one more credit for her degree in forest management. With eight months until the required credit was offered in the spring semester, she took a flier (or as

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WCA to host community potluck on anniversary of landslide

By SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

The Wrangell Cooperative Association, alongside the borough, invite community members to come together at the Nolan Center for a one-year remembrance of last November's deadly landslide.

The event is set for 6 p.m. on the slide's anniversary, Nov. 20. Tribal Administrator Esther Aaltséen Reese said both the tribe and the borough want the structure of the event to be flexible in order to best meet people's needs.

There will be speeches to open the remembrance, but Reese said they are going to try and keep that portion of the evening short so that community members can come together and spend the time supporting one another instead.

"Every person in this community was just there and helping and involved," Reese said of Wrangell's response to the 2023 slide. "It will be a time for us to come together, commemorate the ones we lost, and acknowledge the resilience of our community."

She also mentioned that WCA is trying to bring some main dishes to the potluck to further ease the burden of mourners at the event.

The landslide at 11.2-Mile Zimovia Highway occurred on the night of Nov. 20. It started at around the 1,500-foot elevation before roaring down the mountainside and across the highway. The slide destroyed two homes and claimed the lives of Otto Florschutz and the entire Heller family: parents Tim and Beth and children Kara, Mara and Derek.

WCA is planning several events and offerings around the one-year mark of the slide. Reese also wants to bring back emotional support dogs in the classrooms during the same week.

There will also be a social-emotional learning day at Evergreen Elementary School on Nov. 20. As a part of that programming, a team of therapists will be made available to all Wrangell students during the week of Nov. 20-22, as well as throughout the following week.

Reese also made sure to tie in Team Hollywood's second visit

to Wrangell with the anniversary of the landslide. Team Hollywood describes itself as a national organization "dedicated to bringing basketball, resources, and entertainment to rural Alaska communities."

Team Hollywood, alongside retired NBA champion Chucky Brown, will be in town on Nov. 11 to offer programming, entertainment, and even host a three-on-three tournament for students. Reese hopes their visit can help boost students' spirits as the landslide anniversary approaches.

Forest Service partially clears Middle Ridge blockages

By SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

Almost a year after a landslide on the night of Nov. 20, 2023, blocked and destroyed parts of Middle Ridge Road, the U.S. Forest Service was able to clear two of the four locations where the slide crossed over the switchback-style road.

The clearings allowed for the rescue of Stan Guggenbickler's abandoned truck, which became trapped in the slide debris last November and remained there until the blockages were cleared last month.

Despite the partial clearing, Wrangell District Ranger Tory Houser expects the road, as well as the Middle Ridge Cabin,

to remain closed through next summer.

The public-use cabin can only be accessed via the old logging road, and Middle Ridge cabin is one of the U.S. Forest Service's "most popular cabins," Houser's predecessor said last winter.

Houser said "it will be a lot of work" to clear and repair the remaining damaged areas of the road.

Not only will crews need to remove debris, but she said the slide "pulled" the road down the mountain — meaning the road base will need to be repaired or rebuilt in addition to the clearing of debris. Houser said the repair process will be a long one, citing budgetary restraints as the reason the

Forest Service was only able to clear the lower part of the road.

The Forest Service is working with a team of geotechnical engineers to survey the areas and better determine exactly what and how much is strewn across the road. Houser said the agency will continue working with the engineers throughout the entire process.

While she does not have a concrete timeline for any reopenings, the ranger suspects the road and cabin will remain closed through next summer.

The Forest Service recently received funding through the Great American Outdoors Act for upgrades to the Middle Ridge Cabin, but due to its current

inaccessibility Houser said the agency is exploring other avenues to best use that money.

Though the road was damaged on the same night as a separate landslide that claimed the lives of six people, the Middle Ridge slide had a different starting point. It originated a couple miles inland from the Pats Creek Road turnoff at around 1,200 feet elevation. The scar stops roughly 300 feet from the Middle Ridge turnoff at Pats Creek.

The Forest Service reported 35 slides across Southeast that night, spurred on by high winds and heavy rain, with several slides blocking roads on Prince of Wales Island.

Senior Center Menu

Open for in-person dining.

Thursday, Nov. 7

Sweet and sour spareribs, green beans, romaine and radish salad, confetti rice

Friday, Nov. 8

Pineapple lemon chicken, mixed vegetables, fruit slaw

Monday, Nov. 11

No meal service on Mondays

Tuesday, Nov. 12

Pot roast with carrots and potatoes, peas, fresh fruit with creamy sauce, herb biscuits

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Pork chop suey, broccoli and cauliflower, tossed salad, steamed rice

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

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Sunday, Nov. 10

Kennicott, 3:45 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 17

Kennicott, 10 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 24

Kennicott, 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 15

Columbia, 10:45 p.m.

Southbound

Wednesday, Nov. 13

Kennicott, 3:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 20

Kennicott, 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 27

Kennicott, 3:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 18

Columbia, 8:30 a.m.

Listings are scheduled departure times. Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or 907-874-3711 for recorded information.

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Nov. 6	03:31	12.4	02:51	14.8	08:45	5.4	09:40	0.6
Nov. 7	04:24	11.9	03:40	14.0	09:37	6.0	10:37	1.2
Nov. 8	05:34	11.7	04:51	13.1	10:47	6.4	11:44	1.6
Nov. 9	06:54	12.3	06:28	12.7	12:15	6.1
Nov. 10	08:00	13.5	07:58	13.2	00:56	1.8	01:42	4.8
Nov. 11	08:53	15.1	09:09	14.2	02:05	1.5	02:54	2.8
Nov. 12	09:39	16.7	10:08	15.2	03:05	1.2	03:53	0.4



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

SIGN-UP FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY, children 12 and younger are welcome to the annual American Legion Auxiliary community children's Christmas party. Name, age, gender, parents' names and gift ideas can be texted to Marilyn Mork at 907-470-0085. Sign-up deadline is Wednesday, Nov. 13. The Christmas party (split into two sessions) will be Saturday, Dec. 14.

FALL STORYTIME for children 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Stories, crafts and snacks.

SALVATION ARMY Thanksgiving sign-up is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesdays until Nov. 12. Sign up at The Salvation Army. For more information or to schedule sign-ups for another day or time call 907-874-3753.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9 at the Nolan Center. Door prizes will be drawn every hour. Support local artists. Hosted by Harbor Light Assembly of God.

CHILI COOK-OFF 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Nolan Center during the Christmas bazaar. Cash prizes for the top three chilis. Sign up online at: <https://bit.ly/3A8Elkl>. \$10 admission fee to try all the chilis. This is a fundraiser for The Salvation Army food pantry.

ADVENTURERS CLUB 2 to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, Nov. 23 and Dec. 14. at the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Come learn about the Bible, pick up valuable skills and earn badges. Register and learn more at <https://bit.ly/3TBw0fl>. \$10 fee covers the school year.

THE AMERICAN LEGION will hold a Veterans Day dinner Monday, Nov. 11, at the American Legion Hall. Free for veterans and one guest each. Potluck style. Ham will be provided. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. and dinner starts at 5:30 p.m. Seating is limited; call Barb at 907-305-9037 to get on the list.

"THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN" at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 19, at the Nolan Center. The 1960 western action adventure drama movie is free; presented by Island of Faith Lutheran Church as part of its retro-movie program. The concession stand will be open.

LANDSLIDE REMEMBRANCE 6 p.m. Wednesday Nov. 20, at the Nolan Center. Community potluck. Hosted by WCA to remember the deadly landslide that hit Wrangell a year ago.

COMMUNITY CHORALE REHEARSALS 5:15 to 6:45 p.m. Mondays at the high school music room for the Christmas concert. Use the back entrance. All singers are welcome. Contact Bonnie at 907-796-9632 or bonniede@aptalaska.net for more information.

CHILDREN'S CLASS 2:30 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays at the elementary school music room for kindergarten to fifth grade. The focus of the program is for spiritual growth to learn to apply virtues through stories, devotions, music, games and art. All are welcome. No charge. For more information call Kay Larson, 907-209-9117.

WRANGELL KIDS CLUB 2:30 to 5 p.m. Mondays at the community center for open gym, board games and coloring; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays at the Irene Ingle Public Library for STEM activities and crafts; 2:30 to 5 p.m. Fridays at the Nolan Center for a movie. For ages 7 to 13 years old. Runs through Dec. 16. Free.

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

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

- **WATER AEROBICS** noon to 1 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the swimming pool with volunteers Alice Rooney and Melody Hazel. Day rates apply.
- **PICKLEBALL** 6 to 8 p.m. Mondays and Saturdays, noon to 2 p.m. Wednesdays at the community center gym.
- **FUNCTIONAL FITNESS and TECHNIQUE** 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the court in the pool building with Devyn Johnson. A guided workout. Learn how to use the gym equipment. For ages 18 years old and up. Daily entry fee, pass or punch card.

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

Nov. 6, 1924

G. E. Diemart of the Wrangell Dairy received a fine milk cow from the states on the Yukon when it called at port Monday night. The cow is a strong-willed animal. She did not like the looks of the deckhands who had her in tow, so after dragging two or three of them around over the dock she broke away and came uptown. After looking around for a time she decided to spend the night at the Lemieux ranch. She was not obstreperous, however, when taken to the dairy on the following day.

Nov. 4, 1949

A thorough study of the feeding habits of wildfowl

around the Stikine River was made by U.S. Fish and Wildlife crew last weekend. The party headed by Winson A. Etkins, Fish and Wildlife management supervisor, included U. C. Nelson, research biologist; W. A. Chipperfield, Forest Service agent; Lee Ellis of Wrangell and Dan Bates and Monte Clemmons of the local Fish and Wildlife Service office. They made a study of aquatic plant life on Farm Island and Nore's Island at the mouth of the river and also took specimens all the way to the border. They collected the stomachs of about 70 birds, which included those of Canadian geese, snow geese, pintail, teal and mallards. The

contents will be taken to laboratories and studied and a report will be published on the findings.

Nov. 6, 1974

A declining market in Japan has forced Wrangell Lumber Co. to slash its workforce by nearly a third, dropping the work schedule to one shift. Mill Manager Lance Ingle said 40 workers have been notified of layoff, effective with the close of the work day this Friday. Alaska Wood Products, Wrangell Lumber's partner mill, will continue production with its full two shifts for the foreseeable future, Ingle said. A declining market in Japan caused minor slowdowns at

the local mills through the summer, but surpluses finally reached the point this month where the workforce had to be reduced, Ingle said. "Spruce cant inventory in Japan has reached the 50-million-board-foot level, the largest excess of lumber inventory from Wrangell mills ever stored in Japanese lumber yards," said Ingle.

Nov. 4, 1999

Elk hunters wrapped up the 1999 season on Sunday, Oct. 31, bringing in 15 animals. The season was held on Etolin Island, which produced 13 elk, and Zarembo, where two were taken. Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Ed Crane said

the majority, 10, were large bulls, while the rest were smaller bulls. Elk are not native to Alaska but were introduced on Afognak Island in 1929. Two subspecies, Roosevelt elk and Rocky Mountain elk, were transported to Southeast Alaska from Oregon in 1987. Fifty elk were transplanted that year, of which two-thirds died in the first 18 months from various causes. After that time, the population stabilized and is now permanently established, with estimated numbers of 250 to 300. Elk are most commonly seen on south Etolin Island, with a growing population on Zarembo Island.

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The stage was set



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Cast members in "You Can't Take It With You" pose in character at a full dress rehearsal on Oct. 29. The community theater production boasted back-to-back sold-out shows on Nov. 1-2. The play, which was held at the Nolan Center, drew loud applause from an appreciative audience.

Summer ferry schedule unchanged from recent years; one ship a week

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The proposed summer 2025 Alaska Marine Highway System schedule shows the same level of service to Wrangell as in the past several years: one ship serving the mainline route, with one stop northbound and one southbound each week.

The Columbia will stop in Wrangell northbound on Sun-

days, on its run from Bellingham, Washington, through Southeast, then turn around in Skagway and stop on its southbound route on Wednesdays.

It's the same schedule as the Kennicott is running this year.

The state ferry system is scheduled to pull the Kennicott out of service at the end of November, sending the 26-year-old ship to a Puget Sound shipyard

for replacement of its generators to meet federal emissions standards.

While in the yard for a year, the Kennicott also will undergo steel repairs, main engine rebuilding work and a tail shaft survey, according to a staff presentation last month at the Marine Highway System's public advisory board meeting.

The Columbia, which has been out of service for a year, will go back to sea in mid-December to take over the route. Its shop work the past year has included major steel repairs, cabin deck renovations and repairs, and new windows, according to the same fleet maintenance presentation at the advisory board meeting.

The Southeast mainline will be without any service for almost three weeks between the loss of the Kennicott in late November and the return of the Columbia

mid-December.

The proposed summer ferry schedule, which covers May through September, includes one week without any mainline service in early May. "It is a one-week placeholder when the 50-year-old Columbia will dock in Bellingham," Sam Dapevich, Alaska Department of Transportation spokesman, said last week.

"The goal would be to take care of any maintenance items or Coast Guard requirements that pop up this winter. By keeping the Columbia in Bellingham, we can have any necessary vendors lined up to service the boat as needed," Dapevich said. "By taking care of the issues, hopefully the ship will run through the summer schedule without disruptions."

With the Kennicott scheduled to be out of service until the end of 2025, the Alaska Marine High-

way System will be wholly dependent on the Columbia to serve its most heavily traveled route from Bellingham through Southeast.

The ferry system is accepting public comments on the draft summer schedule through Tuesday, Nov. 12.

The public can email comments to dot.amhs.comments@alaska.gov.

The schedule will be open for reservations and fares will be posted after the ferry system adopts the summer timetable.

The Alaska Marine Highway has endured a rough decade of deteriorating ships, losing several to age, and declining ridership. Passenger traffic last year was about half of a decade ago.

The Matanuska, second in size to the Columbia, has been out of service since 2022 while the Department of Transportation considers the cost of replacing wasted steel against the value and life expectancy of the 61-year-old ferry.

While out of service, the state is using the Matanuska as a hotel for crews in Ketchikan.

The ferry system's long-range vessel replacement plan shows it could cost \$2 billion to build six new vessels over the next 20 years, with a replacement for the Columbia penciled into the schedule to arrive in 2031. The Department of Transportation has full funding for only the first of the six new vessels it says it needs.

The ferry system's other ongoing problem is a chronic shortage of crew. As of Oct. 11, the system was down 70 workers — about 13% of full staffing — according to a management report presented to the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board at its Oct. 23 meeting.

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The Wrangell Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest thanks the following organizations and individuals for your help making the Capitol Christmas Tree Harvest and Celebration Event a wonderful success! Go Wrangell!

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Nolan Center & Parks and Recreation
City Market
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Changes would improve presidential campaigns

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

I'm on the five-year plan for colonoscopies. The doc keeps finding small polyps that he cuts out and so he tells me to keep coming back to avoid a worse fate. As uncomfortable as it is, at least the prep work for that is brief and painless compared to the excruciatingly long and upsetting presidential elections which come every four years.

Something is wrong with politics when I dread elections more than colonoscopies.

Yes, the voting is over, though it will take several more days or weeks or court decisions to know the final outcomes of the presidential race and the campaigns for U.S. House and Senate. But while waiting for the results, we need to get started now on making elections less stressful, less dishonest and better for our health. Think of it as prep work for a medical exam.

It's probably illegal to ban social media advertising by political campaigns, prohibit junk mail and outlaw misleading speeches and false promises. And it's probably impossible to police every false claim, fake video and dishonest statement posted, shared and circulated.

And even if Elon Musk took off for Mars next week, he would still find a way to beam back messages more dangerous than a self-driving Tesla in heavy traffic.

Yet maybe there are some answers. We have to try; the country cannot go through this again in four years.

Part of the problem is that there are so many ultra-wealthy Americans eager to write seven- and eight-figure checks to promote their favorite candidates and causes. All that money pollutes the public discussion, drowning out everyone else. If we can't get our elected leaders to pass laws limiting dona-

tions, let's at least get something good out of those deep pockets. For every dollar a megadonor gives to a candidate or cause, they should have to donate an equal amount to their local food bank, neighborhood health clinic or child care center.

It's not a tax, it's a mandatory matching pledge drive.

And for every junk mailer a campaign or political action committee sends, their volunteers would have to donate an hour of work cleaning up litter around their community.

For every abrasive, dishonest and manipulating social media post put up by a campaign, they would have to volunteer as an English tutor at their local schools, helping to teach grammar, spelling and punctuation.

For every big political rally that demands attention from first responders who already are busy enough, a campaign would need to buy a new fire truck or ambulance for the local department. For even bigger rallies, the campaign would be required to build a new fire hall.

Let's make it personal, too.

Every time a candidate hurls out a childish insult or resorts to name calling, they would have to spend a day back in kindergarten — clearly, they failed the class on appropriate behavior the first time.

Every time a candidate threatens a political opponent, they would need to attend a church, synagogue, mosque or other religious or secular institution of their choice to learn to love thy neighbor.

And every time a candidate says, "I promise," they should be required to put it in writing, sign their name and pay for an insurance policy that pays off to the American public when they fail to honor their promise.

Putting a price on dishonesty may be the only way to stop it.

EDITORIAL

Online sales tax numbers are an opportunity

Online, mail order and phone shopping by Wrangell households and businesses last year totaled around \$7.5 million, which averages out close to \$4,000 for every person living in town.

That is a stunningly large amount of money. And a large opportunity.

Not that residents could find every item, or even most items, on that \$7.5 million shopping list in town. But if they could shift just 10% of online shopping to in-town shopping, that would equate to about \$2,000 a day in additional spending at local businesses.

That is a lot of money in a small town.

Here's the math: The borough in the past fiscal year received about \$440,000 in sales taxes collected by out-of-town merchants, called "remote sellers" in the tax world. The vast majority of that came from online sales delivered to Wrangell addresses, with mail order and phone orders in the mix, too.

At Wrangell's 7% sales tax rate, the \$440,000 represents at least \$7.5 million in goods shipped into town, after deducting the commission the borough pays to an offshoot of the Alaska Municipal League which assists about 50 cities and boroughs across the state collect from out-of-town businesses.

Tax revenues on purchases from out-of-town merchants represent about 12% of Wrangell's total sales tax collections — and the number is growing. Tax collections have been allowed since a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 2018 said states, cities, boroughs and counties could collect sales taxes from remote sellers the same as in-town businesses.

Wrangell — or any small town — will never be able to recover all of the retail business it has lost to Amazon, Walmart and other online shopping sites. No community can compete with the prices, selection, availability and convenience of click-and-deliver commerce. That's also true for bigger cities, too. Consumers are finding it increasingly easy to click first and visit downtown only when the free shipping is late.

But unlike bigger cities, where a small recovery might not mean much, pulling back \$2,000 a day in sales to Wrangell would make a big difference.

Something to think about next time everyone starts to swipe through an online shopping trip.

- Wrangell Sentinel

Jamie Roberts

Continued from page 1

she calls it, a "happy detour") on a U.S. Forest Service job in Wrangell.

Not only did the job keep her busy from the summer into the fall, but Jamie also happened to fall in love — and not just with Wrangell itself. That summer she met Greg Roberts, another Forest Service employee. In 1999 she returned to Wrangell after graduation. The next year, she and Greg bought the A-frame at 11.25-Mile together. By 2003 they were married.

Since settling down here over two decades ago, Jamie Roberts has worn several hats, often filling a need with each new role.

The first time this happened, it was 2000 and she was doing Forest Service field work with her crew on the mainland. A radio call informed them of a medical emergency at the Anan Wildlife Observatory. After seeing first-hand how long it took the emergency response crew to

arrive on scene, Jamie realized it would be worthwhile to get her wilderness first responder certification. What resulted was a 21-year career with the Wrangell Fire Department, working not just as a firefighter, but also as an EMT and a search and rescue officer.

A similar thing happened in 2016. The Wrangell Swim Club was four years old, and for the first time in its history the club was planning to attend a competitive meet: Petersburg's November Rain. For the previous four years, Roberts supported the team behind the scenes. She fundraised, provided snacks and helped head coach Bruce McQueen on the pool deck.

But a competitive meet meant Roberts needed to acquire her official USA Swimming pool deck certification. So, she did just that. And when McQueen could no longer make the time commitment to the team, it was Jamie who took over the reins. Since then, she

founded the high school swim program and legally purchased the Wrangell Swim Club (She jokingly boasted that the club made \$100 in profit last year). Odds are, if you learned how to swim in Wrangell in the past decade, Jamie taught you.

When the landslide hit last year, Jamie stepped up for her community once again, dipping into the grant-writing skills she gleaned while forming the high school swim team. She is currently under contract with the borough to help with the reimbursement process for a federal disaster grant it received earlier this year.

When she's not working on disaster grant funding or coaching on the pool deck, she's subbing for the school district. Why? Because they needed help.

The landslide is what spurred her departure from the community for which she has done so much. The slide occurred at 11.2-Mile Zimovia

Highway. The Roberts lived at 11.25.

It claimed the lives of six people including the three Heller children: Derek, Kara and Mara. Jamie coached Derek and Kara in the swim club. She said Mara was their loudest supporter.

But as soon as the slide hit and Jamie ran out of her house that night, she knew there was no going back.

"It was a very sensory experience," she said. "Greg and I agreed we would never sleep again in that home. (That house) was not a refuge anymore."

She said she still has trouble sleeping during nights with heavy rain. Even the noise of the Alaska Airlines jet triggers memories of the slide. So do certain smells.

Jamie wanted to spend eight more years in Wrangell, but when she and Greg could not find any tenable housing solution, they decided to skip

straight to their retirement plan.

"We might as well just fast forward," she said.

Greg, who is already retired, moved into their new home in Oregon earlier this year. But Jamie wanted to stay behind for one more swim season.

"I wanted to see through Anika Herman's senior year. I want to be here for the kids, because I really love them. I just love the kids that swim for me," she said.

Her last meet, the Southeast championships, was this past weekend. But that won't be her final time atop the pool deck. The Wrangell Swim Club will compete on Nov. 15 in Petersburg. The competition? November Rain, the very same meet that got it all started for Jamie nearly 10 years ago.

On Nov. 20, the Wrangell Cooperative Association is hosting a landslide memorial potluck at the Nolan Center. The next day, Jamie will board Alaska Airlines southbound Flight 64.

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska

WRANGELL SENTINEL

ESTABLISHED NOVEMBER 20, 1902
Published weekly by: Good Journalism LLC
PO Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929
Phone: 907-874-2301

POSTMASTER: send address changes to Wrangell Sentinel, P.O. Box 798, Wrangell, AK 99929

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Production Ola Richards

Subscription Rates

Wrangell \$50
Out of town \$75
First Class..... \$110
Online-only subscription.....\$40

Wrangell Sentinel (USPS 626-480) is published weekly except the third week of July and the week after Christmas by Wrangell Sentinel, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929. Periodicals postage paid at Wrangell, AK. Phone: 907-874-2301; Email: wrgsent@gmail.com; Website www.wrangellsentinel.com. ©Copyright 2024.

Wi-Fi coming to state ferries; will start with Columbia next month

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

While planning and hoping for as much as \$2 billion to replace its shrinking fleet of older ships over the next 20 years, the Alaska Marine Highway System also is looking at smaller things it can do to improve service in the near term.

That will include Wi-Fi service on the ships; possibly more offerings or expanded bars; maybe even putting gift shops on the vessels.

Federal money will pay for installing Wi-Fi. Increased bar service and possible gift shops

will depend on whether the state ferry system can cover the costs, said Sam Dapceovich, spokesman for the Alaska Department of Transportation.

The state expects the Wi-Fi service will be up and running aboard the Columbia when the ferry comes back to work in mid-December after a yearlong layup. The ferry system will use Starlink's satellite-based service, which already is available for crew and the ship's operating systems and which will be extended throughout the vessel for passengers to use, Dapceovich said.

The Marine Highway System this year received \$177 million in federal aid for multiple projects, including adding to the pool of money for replacing the 60-year-old Tustumena, which serves Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands ports. Of that federal money, \$5 million will go toward installing Wi-Fi on the ships. Dapceovich said the department estimates that will be enough to add the service to the entire fleet.

"It requires adding access points throughout the vessel — you can't just drop one router on top and everybody has service," Dapceovich said.

"So, that'll take some time to wire everything in, and it would need to be firewalled from operations," he added.

"During the beta stage

(aboard the Columbia) it will be free to users. Eventually, the service will likely be similar to the paid Wi-Fi service on Alaska Airlines," he said. The fee has not been determined.

Any expansion of bar services or bringing back gift shops will take longer. The Department of Transportation is seeking proposals for a gift shop merchandising and marketing consultant, with bids due Nov. 13.

Dapceovich said ferry system management also is "talking to the Alaska Railroad about how they handle merchandising." The state-owned railroad, with gift sales on board the trains and online, carried more than half-a-million passengers last year along its route from Seward to Anchorage and north to Fairbanks, about three times


as many as the state ferry system.

The Marine Highway System is considering merchandise sales aboard ships, in terminals and online, he said.

"Past accounting figures showed the bars and gift shops operating at a loss, but we're exploring new possibilities to generate revenue," he said. "We do see the potential for revenue from merchandising, as long as it doesn't require a larger increase in labor costs."

Currently, the Columbia, Kennicott, Hubbard, Tazlina and Tustumena sell beer, wine and mixed drinks in cans.

Any change or expansion in the alcoholic beverage offerings is a ways off. "Just like the gift shops, we're in the exploration stage regarding how this will look," Dapceovich said.



Harbor Lights Assembly of Good
41ST ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR
Saturday, Nov. 9, 10 am to 2 pm at the Nolan Center
A door prize will be drawn every hour.
Come get that unique and special Christmas gift for a loved one and support our local artisans!

WCA bringing NBA, soccer stars to town to work with kids Nov. 11

By SAM PAUSMAN
Sentinel senior reporter

NBA champion Chucky Brown should probably be back in Raleigh, North Carolina, preparing his St. Augustine's University Falcons for their basketball season opener. He is their head coach, after all. But following a Zoom call with Wrangell Cooperative Association Tribal Administrator Esther Aaltséen Reese earlier this fall, he realized that a trip to Wrangell was not something he could turn down.

Brown will join a coalition of Team Hollywood athletes and officials in Wrangell on Monday, Nov. 11, to lead all-day programming for students. Team Hollywood, a national company, describes itself as "dedicated to bringing basketball, resources and entertainment to rural Alaska communities."

This is the second time the organization will be in town. In February 2023, the group visited with students for an anti-bullying campaign sponsored by WCA.

The purpose of this year's visit is different. Reese scheduled Team Hollywood's arrival to coincide with the days leading up to the one-year anniversary of Wrangell's Nov. 20, 2023 deadly landslide that claimed the lives of six people. She hopes the visit can boost morale ahead of the anniversary and noted that one-


year anniversaries of tragedies can often be difficult for young children.

Nov. 11 will be marked by a myriad of Team Hollywood activities. Programming will tip off with events throughout the school day at Evergreen Elementary School.

Then at 2:30 p.m. there will be an assembly for the middle and high schoolers followed by an NBA-style draft at 4 p.m. Any 13- to 18-year-old is eligible and the draft will determine teams for the subsequent three-on-three tournament that will begin at 5:30 p.m. The after-school portion of the programming is open to the public, and there is no fee for participants.

Even better, the winners of the tournament will receive NBA-style championship rings. Brown will organize and oversee the entire draft process, making the whole experience even more authentic for the Wrangell student-athletes.

Another addition to this year's programming is soccer. According to Reese, the town's elementary schoolers are "really into soccer" and elementary teachers have mentioned it's the most popular sport at recess. So along with basketball players, Team Hollywood is bringing a couple of soccer professionals to provide the elementary school kids with training opportunities.



THANK YOU, DISTRICT 1!

Agnes MORAN

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Sales tax revenues

Continued from page 1

were the second highest on record in Wrangell, down from \$4.04 million in 2023. That record year was skewed higher by a \$90,000 collection on an old sales tax lien, according to Borough Manager Mason Villarma.

Tax receipts have risen every year since 2017, particularly in the past few years as inflation has driven up prices and as residents spent several million dollars in federal pandemic relief payments.

But a tightening economy, and fewer cruise ship tourists this summer than last year, have led to lower expectations for tax revenues, Villarma said.

Painfully low salmon prices last summer meant less money for fishermen and fewer hours for seafood processor workers, likely further cutting into sales tax receipts, he said. This

year's salmon prices were better, but runs were down.

The assembly adopted a budget for the fiscal year that started July 1 with sales tax revenues estimated at \$3.625 million, down about \$140,000 from last year's actual receipts.

"We're seeing a decline a little bit in collections," Gilbert said.

Borough code dictates that 20% of sales tax revenues go to the schools. The rest is deposited into the general fund, which covers the Parks and Recreation Department, police and fire departments, the Nolan Center and other municipal services.

Sales tax is far and away the single largest revenue source for the borough, easily surpassing property taxes, which are projected at \$2.1 million for this year.

Retail sales, including gro-

ceries, and gasoline, diesel and other fuels top the list of taxable purchases in town, Villarma said.

Sales tax on purchases made online are collected by the merchant and remitted to the borough, the same as taxes collected by businesses in Wrangell.

To help promote local shopping, the borough for years has set aside two days a year as tax-free days, one in May and one in October. An ordinance that would allow the assembly to designate just one day a year was pulled from consideration at the Oct. 8 meeting but likely will return to the agenda for the Nov. 18 meeting, Villarma said.

Each tax-free day costs the borough about \$20,000 to \$30,000 in lost revenue, he said.

Are you concerned with your child's development?

REACH Infant Learning Program provides services for families with infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, with developmental delays and/or disabilities. Wrangell Public Schools offers special education services to eligible children, ages 3 through 21 years of age.

Screening is available to children in the areas of:

- health
- vision
- hearing
- general development (including speech/language)
- basic skills
- primary language
- daily skills in home and community, obtained through parental input

When screening results determine further assessment is necessary, REACH Infant Learning & Wrangell Public Schools work closely with parents to assess a child's need(s).

All information regarding your child is kept confidential.

Would you like to arrange a screening for your child? If so, please contact:

For children birth to age 3: REACH's Infant Learning Developmental Specialist, Jennifer Jenkins, at jjenkins@reachak.org

For children age 3 through 21, contact any of the following:

- Ryan Howe, Special Education Coordinator at Evergreen Elementary (874-2321)
- Mikki Angerman, Special Education Teacher at Stikine Middle (874-3393) or Wrangell High (874-3395)
- Bill Burr, Superintendent or Wrangell Public Schools District Office (874-2347)

Child Find 2024

Police report

- Monday, Oct. 28**
Summons service.
Citation issued for objectionable animal.
- Tuesday, Oct. 29**
Courtesy transport.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Criminal mischief.
Found property.
Agency assist: Public Works.
- Wednesday, Oct. 30**
Traffic stop.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Traffic stop.
Gunshots: Unfounded.
- Thursday, Oct. 31**
Dog complaint.
- Friday, Nov. 1**
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for headlights out.
- Saturday, Nov. 2**
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Found property.
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for no turn signal.
Traffic stop.
Bar check.
- Sunday, Nov. 3**
Bar check.
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Traffic stop.

Sitka deer hunter killed in bear mauling

By SHANNON HAUGLAND
Sitka Sentinel

A search for a missing hunter ended Oct. 30 when search teams found his body on the hillside in Nakwasina Sound, 14 miles north of Sitka. Alaska State Troopers said Tad Fujioka, 50, an experienced hunter and longtime Sitka resident, appeared to be the victim of a bear mauling.

Fujioka left Sitka on a deer hunting trip to Nakwasina on Monday, Oct. 28, and a search was started around 5:30 p.m. the next day after he was reported overdue. U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Sitka dispatched a helicopter crew who searched for three hours before nightfall. They found his vessel but not Fujioka.

The Coast Guard helicopter resumed the search the next day and also delivered a Sitka Fire Department team for a ground search. Teams from the fire department and Alaska Wildlife Troopers arrived by boat to join the search.

Searchers on the ground covered the hillside trail that Fujioka was known to use for hunting, and after three hours found his body at about the 800-foot level, between Lisa Creek and the back of the bay, on Baranof Island, Sitka Fire Chief Craig Warren said.

Fujioka had killed a deer and that there was evidence that bears had been feeding on the carcass, according to state troopers spokesperson Tim DeSpain. A Coast Guard helicopter spotted three bears at the site and notified the teams searching on the ground, he said.

Troopers and members of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game searched for the bears until it became too dark but did not find them, DeSpain said. "The bears consumed the deer and left the immediate area, which is remote and difficult to access," he said in an email.

Fujioka, a commercial longliner and troller, was known as an avid outdoorsman and hunter, trapper and fisherman.

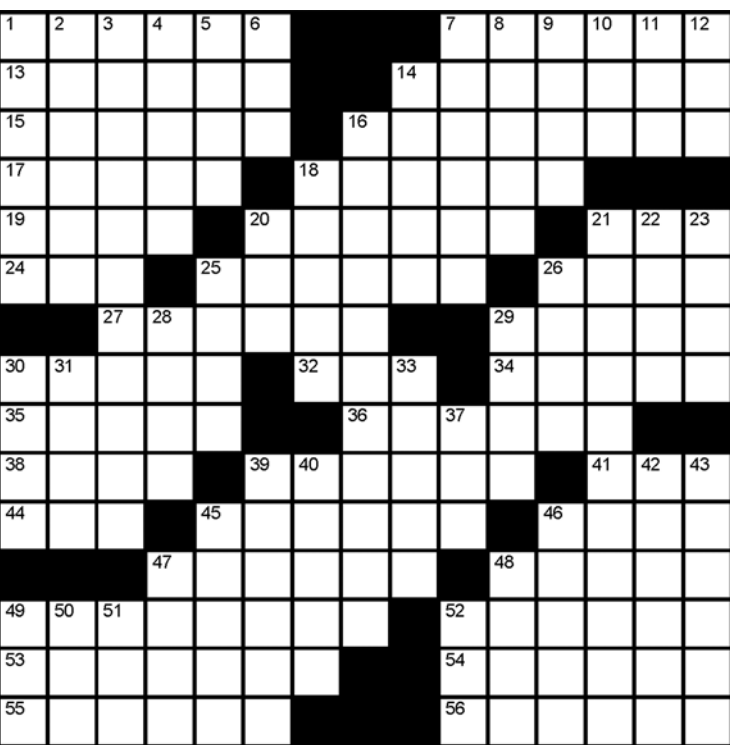
Over the years he was active advocating on behalf of Southeast Alaska fisheries, presenting evidence on behalf of the troll fishery in a recent Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit to shut down Southeast trollers.

He was chairman of the Seafood Producers Cooperative board for the past three years and held the processor seat on the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee.

The Anchorage Daily News contributed to this report.

Crossword

Answers on page 8



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Habitual practice
- 7 National park in Tennessee
- 13 Punctual
- 14 Self-destruction
- 15 In this place
- 16 University of California campus site
- 17 In broad daylight
- 18 Does puzzles like this one
- 19 Consults
- 20 Shaped
- 21 Dram
- 24 "The Last Ship" channel
- 25 Reimburse
- 26 King Cole's fiddlers, for example
- 27 Kind of couch
- 29 Fine-grained rock
- 30 Steam
- 32 Admiration
- 34 Buffalo Bill and Iron Eyes
- 35 President who wrote "Liberty, once lost, is lost forever"
- 36 Seasoned
- 38 Father
- 39 For the nonce
- 41 Vase
- 44 Social group
- 45 Experimental kind of pig, maybe
- 46 Your largest joint
- 47 "Hogan's Heroes" actor --- Klemperer
- 48 Sudden attacks
- 49 Notorious White House intern
- 52 Ventilate
- 53 Pistil parts
- 54 What Hepburn called Tracy
- 55 Agree
- 56 Became taut

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Share the emceeing
- 2 Bumpy
- 3 Wise to urban ways
- 4 Bleachers' features
- 5 Leave out
- 6 Chess pieces, informally
- 7 Questionnaire
- 8 Raised drastically
- 9 Finishes off a cake
- 10 Small, in Dogpatch
- 11 "--- to a Nightingale" (Keats)
- 12 "I object!"
- 14 1965 civil rights march site
- 16 Get an advance
- 18 Bulgarian capital
- 20 Gangster's foe
- 21 ET radios nun about groups of workers
- 22 Smooth-talking
- 23 Lear's Pobble lost them
- 25 They don't go off
- 26 Norse thunder god
- 28 Domesticated
- 29 Surface gunk
- 30 Deepest part
- 31 "Nurse Jackie" lead --- Falco
- 33 Consumer, in a diner
- 37 "--- With Mussolini" (Zeffirelli movie)
- 39 Puckers
- 40 Where many participants get cold feet?
- 42 Lower
- 43 Wrote code within code
- 45 Aladdin's factotum
- 46 Member of a Myanmar ethnic group
- 47 Lean and muscular
- 48 Ready for harvest
- 49 Official go-betweens
- 50 "Little" '60s singer
- 51 "One --- or Another" (hit Blondie song)
- 52 Bermuda time, initially

Sentinel part of statewide nonprofit to help newspapers

By SENTINEL STAFF

Wrangell Sentinel publisher Larry Persily is part of a new nonprofit, the Alaska News Coalition, which formed this summer to help newspapers around the state find ways to adapt and survive in the changing world of online media, digital delivery and tightening finances.

"As the landscape for news and information continues to change and evolve, it's imperative for the well-being of our communities that local newspapers in Alaska stay alive. The Alaska News Coalition is committed to bringing to-

gether news outlets from around the state to figure out how to do that," the group's board said.

The new nonprofit has received a two-year, \$100,000 grant from Press Forward, a nationwide movement to strengthen communities by supporting local news. The Alaska News Coalition was one of 205 recipients in Press Forward's first nationwide round of grants.

The Alaska group intends to work with publishers, editors and other supporters toward improving the financial viability of local news operations.

The Sentinel plans to hold a public forum sometime this winter to discuss local news, the growth in online news delivery versus print, newspaper finances, and to hear from the community.

The Press Forward grant will fund the start of a long-term effort to build and share resources and solutions between newsrooms across Alaska. The news coalition intends to seek additional grants for its work.

The nonprofit currently is operating as a special project fund at the Juneau Community Foundation.

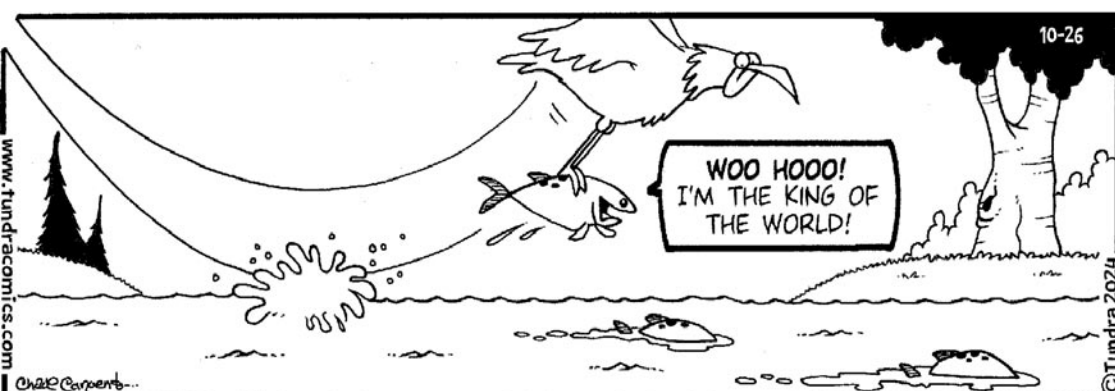
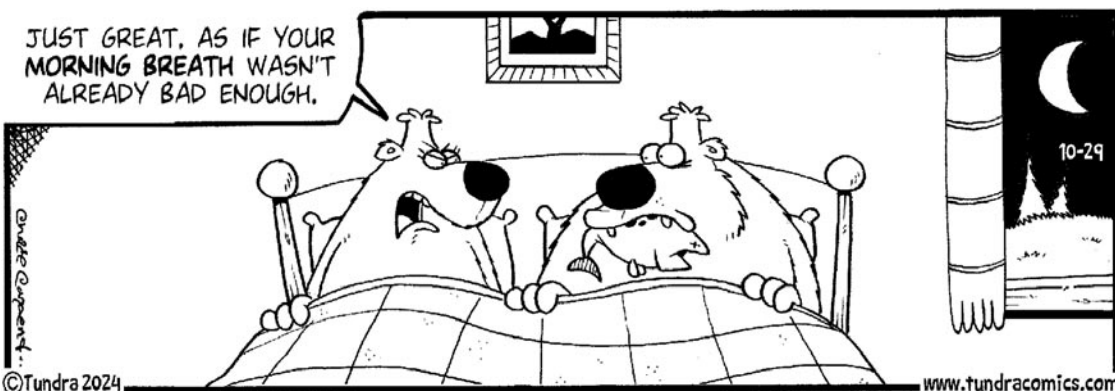
Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



Villarma reflects on first year as borough manager

By SAM PAUSMAN

Sentinel senior reporter

There's not much on the walls of Mason Villarma's borough manger office.

There is a minimalist whiteboard (purchased with his own money, he noted), a couple vintage maps of downtown, and some photos of fishing boats Villarma trolled on growing up. But one decoration stands out: a blown-up black and white image of an older man with a smile so infectious that even if Villarma's office's walls were decorated like Paris' Louvre, the image of the elder gentleman would stand out.

"Who's that," I asked, pointing to the photo.

"That's my grandfather," he said.

In the photo, the older man wears a gray wool suit complete with a pinned-on flower and a bandana-patterned tie. His name was Felix Villarma. A second-generation citizen of Wrangell, he grew up in a shack down by the Inner Harbor.

Mason grew up visiting Felix every summer as a kid. He fished on his grandfather's boat and started tendering and crabbing when he turned 10. This relationship with his grandfather is in part what drew him to Wrangell when he accepted the borough finance manager job in 2021.

But now, two generations removed from those humble upbringings on the beach, Felix's grandson is entering his second year as borough manager. On Oct. 30, Mason Felix Villarma sat down with the Sentinel to reflect on a year christened by tragedy, fueled by optimism and marked by a promising start for Wrangell's young borough manager.

When manager Jeff Good

handed in his resignation last October, Villarma was next up. He assumed the interim position soon after and was quickly thrust into the onboarding process.

Villarma's feet were hardly wet when the Nov. 20, 2023, landslide killed six members of the community. Over the course of a harrowing night, his new job meant he was now heading Wrangell's emergency disaster relief team.

"It was very distressing," he said. "I was panicking, but I couldn't display that. I had to evoke a sense of calm."

And that's what he did — that's what he had to do — for those first few months: tackling problems as they arrived. Villarma is still feeling the effects of those rapid-fire first few months. He hasn't even fully moved into his new office yet. (His vinyl records collection — comprised mainly of Creedence Clearwater Revival and The Eagles — remains in storage.) Finally, as winter turned to spring, he was able to start being proactive after spending months in a reactive role.

In the past nine months, Villarma made seven hires in borough leadership positions. Mike Howell joined the capital facilities team as senior project manager. Jordan Bunes and Gene Meek took over the fire and police departments. At just 25 years old, Jackson Pool took over the borough's finances and Robbie Marshall (another 20-something) was hired as controller. Jeanie Arnold became the Nolan Center's director of operations and Dwight Yancey stepped in to serve as the borough's interim electrical superintendent.

"That team," Villarma said, "is my proudest accomplishment."



PHOTO BY SAM PAUSMAN / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Mason Villarma sits at his desk on Nov. 1. He sat down with the Sentinel to reflect on his first year as borough manager. The 28-year-old attributed his successful first 12 months to the team around him at City Hall.

Managing a team of 13 department directors in addition to coaching high school cross country and continuing to work as finance director for several months (on top of the borough manager job) ensures there's always a lot on Villarma's desk. A year into the job, he seems to have found a solution.

Once a week, Villarma meets with his department heads one-on-one. He has a notebook with each of their names scrawled across the cover (color-coded, of course). After the meeting he writes down their expectations for him that week, as well as the expectations he set for each director. He then lists his daily tasks ranked by priority, plugs them into an artificial intelligence software that creates a calendar based on the day's most important tasks. And then he gets to work, some days leaving the office at midnight.

And yes, it seems grueling, but Villarma loves it. In the past nine months, the borough secured over \$50 million in federal and state funding, a good deal in part due to Villarma's — and Wrangell's — relationship with Alaska U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, who attended middle school in Wrangell.

He could take the credit for the record numbers. He could point to this year's success and compare it to the year prior — or the 10 years before that. But he doesn't. For Villarma, all praise should go to the team at City Hall and the support of Wrangell's advocates at the state and federal level.

"You don't get the money without the team," he said. "I think the ship can weather a lot of storms when you have a really tight team."

But the bureaucratic side of City Hall is only half the battle to enacting change. The other half is the assembly. And while Villarma can hire any department director he sees fit, there is nothing he can do about who sits on the borough assembly. In fact, it's the other way around. Villarma answers to them.

"My relationship with the assembly? It's perfect," he said. "They've been so supportive and they're willing to put in even more work to understand issues and brainstorm different solutions."

This positive relationship between the borough manager and the assembly has been a critical factor in Wrangell's recent success. Villarma believes such a relationship is rare, citing a more toxic dynamic in

the past.

"Sometimes the public puts pressure on the assembly, the assembly puts too much pressure on the manager, and then the manager either quits or gets fired. And then, members of the assembly start to burn out," he said.

For Villarma, preventing that "vicious cycle" is productive for everyone.

"I've learned to create realistic expectations," he said. "We're not looking for home runs. We just need to hit some singles."

Conveniently for Villarma, next up to the plate are a series of high-batting average projects. The borough's on-deck list includes (but is not limited to) sidewalk replacements, a trap and skeet range project, moving the barge ramp and freight yard to the former mill property at 6-Mile, and even a five-year strategic plan.

On the personal side of things, he wants the next year to be marked by what was initially appealing about Wrangell, the same things that his grandfather taught him to enjoy.

"I want to find a bit more balance," he said. "Get back to the roots here and enjoy the fishing and hunting and going upriver. That's why I live here."

WRANGELL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION REQUEST for PROPOSALS

Wrangell Cooperative Association (WCA), a federally recognized tribe, is soliciting proposals and rate information from qualified firms and individuals to provide bookkeeping services for WCA.

For more information and to request a copy of the RFP, please contact Esther Ashton at 1002 Zimovia Highway, (907) 874-4304 or email wcatrbe@gmail.com and receptionist.wca@gmail.com.

Deadline for proposals: Monday, Nov. 11, 2024.

Publish Oct. 30 and Nov. 6, 2024

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the City and Borough of Wrangell Code, Sec.3.04.080, notice is hereby given that the regular assembly meetings of the assembly shall be held on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month and shall begin at 6 p.m.

If any such Tuesday shall fall on a legal holiday as defined by the laws of the State of Alaska, the meetings scheduled for that day shall be held at the same hour on the next succeeding day which is not a holiday. Separate notice for the regular assembly meetings shall not be required. There will be no regular meetings the second Tuesday in July and August and fourth Tuesday in December.

If a work session is scheduled preceding the regular assembly meeting, publication shall be made on the website and posted at City Hall and the post office that the regular assembly meeting shall begin at 7 p.m.

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

Publish Nov. 6, 2024

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for:

IEA Tutor/Paraprofessional:

This is a part-time, 9-month classified position, working 5.75 hours per day. Salary placement is on Column A of the Classified Salary Schedule. Job duties include but are not limited to working with students individually and in small group settings in the Indian Education Program. A High School Diploma or equivalent and an associate degree or the ability to pass the ParaPro Assessment is required. Start date: as soon as possible.

For more information and a job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. Positions are open until filled. It is Wrangell Public School District policy to not discriminate based on age, race, color, national origin, sex or disability.

HELP WANTED

Johnson's Building Supply is accepting applications for the following position:

Customer Service. Duties include counter sales, freight handling, customer deliveries, stocking and inventory. Full-time position; will require working Saturdays. Valid Alaska driver's license, must be able to lift 50 lbs., forklift experience a plus, starting pay is DOE. Stop by Johnson's for an application.

RETURN

The loan closet, operated by Hospice of Wrangell, has durable medical equipment available for those in need. If you have items you borrowed and are no longer using, contact DonMcConachie at 907 305-0063 to arrange their return.

FREE

Free 4 drawer metal filing

cabinet in fair condition. 28" deep, 15" wide and 52" tall. Stop by the Sentinel to pick up.

FREE

Recycled newspapers. Stop by the Sentinel to pick 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.

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Wrestlers continue to punch above their weight in Anchorage

By SAM PAUSMAN

Sentinel senior reporter

Wrangell High School wrestlers attended the Mountain City Christian Academy Invitation tournament in Anchorage this past weekend. Over the meet's two days (Nov. 1-2), every single Wrangell wrestler won at least one match. The team also returned home with the first-place award for small teams.

This is the third time in four years that the Wolves were the recipients of the award.

Ben Houser was the team's

sole champion of the tournament. The junior finished atop the podium in the 125-pound weight class after finishing in second place in Juneau during the previous tournament.

There were 26 wrestlers in the 125-pound bracket. In the end, Houser cleared them all. He pinned all five opponents, including Seward's Emery Kirchner, his championship match rival.

"He just looked really good," head coach Jack Carney said. "For him to go from not placing last year to taking first, it's kind of surreal."

Jackson Carney and Cody Barnes each finished third in their respective weight classes, rounding out Wrangell's podium finishers in Anchorage.

Senior captain Della Churchill finished fifth in the girls 120-pound bracket. The Wrangell standout won her first three matches before falling in the semi-final round to Palmer's Lillie Vansiegmán. Ian Nelson and Everett Meissner finished fifth in their brackets.

Hailey Cook was the lone

wolf to finish fourth place at the tournament. The sophomore won three matches en route to the fourth-place finish before falling just short of a podium place.

In total, Wrangell boasted a record of 41 wins and 18 losses. The team tallied 29 pins across the 59 matches over the two days. The girls two-person team, still without freshman phenom Kourtney Barnes who remains sidelined due to injury, finished 19th out of the 30 schools in attendance.

The boys team's point total of 134.5 vaulted them to a sixth-place finish, just four points behind Kenai. For the boys, this was especially impressive considering they only brought seven wrestlers with them to the tournament.

Wrestling is unique in that there are not divisions based on school size like there are in other sports. Meaning that when Wrangell wrestles, they wrestle against Alaska's biggest and best, making a six-place finish more notable.

"We're competing against teams with 500 kids in the school," Carney said. He

pointed out the nine Wrangell wrestlers who attended the tournament make up roughly one sixth of the entire high school.

Up next, the team will compete in Ketchikan on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 8-9.

"Southeast is really tough this year, so we're going to have great competition," he said. "We're just trying to bring as many kids down and just get a little bit better every weekend."

Sandy Churchill elected ANS grand camp president



ANS Grand Camp President Sandy Churchill

By SENTINEL STAFF

Wrangell resident Sandy Churchill was elected Alaska Native Sisterhood grand president for 2024-2025

Outgoing ANS Grand President Daphyne Alby and President Emeritus Millie Schoonover visited Wrangell to bestow the honors in ceremonies Oct. 24.

Virginia Oliver was elected second grand vice president.

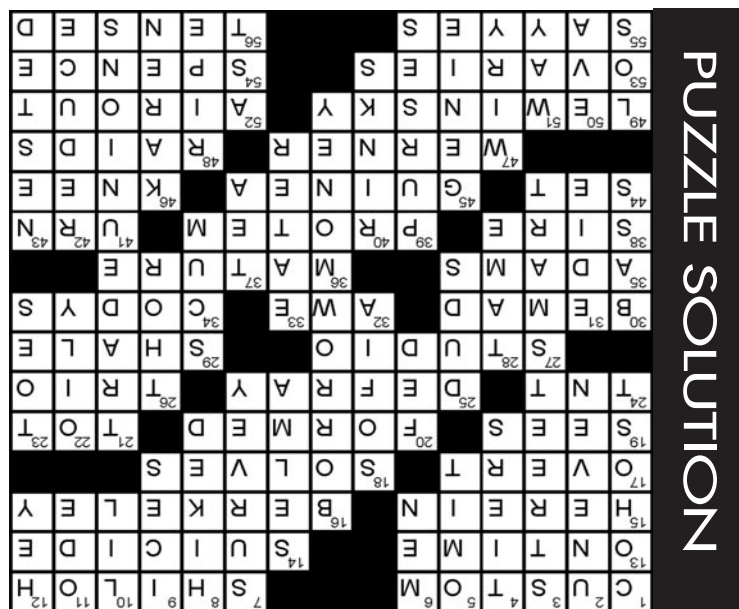
Both are from Wrangell ANS Camp No. 1, where Churchill is president and Oliver is secretary.

The Wrangell camps of ANS and the Alaska Native Brotherhood are scheduled to host the organization's next grand camp convention in October 2025. "Lots of fundraising and donations are appreciated and new members are welcome," Churchill said.

Churchill retired this past spring after 26 years at Head Start. She was born and raised in Wrangell to Eddie Pat and Ethel Churchill.

In addition to Churchill and Oliver, other ANS Grand Camp officers for 2024-2025 are First Vice President Heather Powell-Mills, Secretary Jessica Llanos-Cintron, Treasurer Elias Chase and Sergeant-at-Arms Joey Ketah.

ANB officers for 2024-2025 are Grand President Sasha Soboleff, First Vice President Paul Johnson, Second Vice President Woodrow Watson, Secretary Tamzyn Alzyout, Treasurer James Llanos Jr. and Sergeant-at-Arms Chad Titell.



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"If you are considering making changes to your business, and have discussed them with your attorney or CPA, consult with your insurance agent to make sure your coverage will be maintained. It is especially important to contact your agent when you change the name of your business."

Susan Erickson,
Agency Owner &
Commercial Lines Agent

Email: susane@p-wins.com
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all ads in the November 20
Sentinel that promote
HARVEST SHOPPING
on Nov. 21, 22 & 23

Deadline for ads is Nov. 15

Contact Amber at 907-874-2301
or wrgsent@gmail.com to schedule your ad today!

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