

COVID cases accelerate statewide

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's half-dozen new COVID-19 cases July 15-27 are a small piece of a wave of infections spreading across Alaska, with more than 2,200 cases reported statewide during that same period.

Most of the new cases are people who have not been vaccinated, state officials said.

The hardest-hit communities have been Sitka, the Kenai Peninsula, Cordova, Anchorage, Fairbanks, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Juneau, though almost all of Alaska is at high alert this week based on rising case counts.

There were 95 COVID patients in Alaska hospitals as of Tuesday, the highest count since December, as the highly infectious Delta variant is

spreading.

Sitka's active case count was 220 as of Tuesday evening, though the rate of new cases trended lower over the past weekend. The active case count represents more than one-quarter of the community's total number of cases for the pandemic stretching back to last spring.

Juneau officials reported 44 new cases Saturday through Monday, adding to a growing case count in the community.

"Over the past 14 days, 150 people tested positive for COVID-19 in our community, a significant majority of whom were residents," Mila Cosgrove, deputy city manager, said in a prepared statement on Monday. "We have not had a 14-day case count this high during the entire pandemic."

There were 112 active cases

of COVID-19 in Juneau as of Monday evening. The city last week ordered a mask mandate for municipal buildings and for unvaccinated residents indoors in public spaces.

State health officials report the vast majority of new cases in Alaska are people who have not been vaccinated against the virus.

Cordova has been hit hard, with dozens of seafood workers and community members infected, resulting in the closure of a seafood processing plant and prompting a mask mandate for city workers.

The city of just over 2,800 residents reported a peak last week of almost 60 active cases, including workers at the Camtu's Alaska Wild Seafoods plant, temporarily shutting down the plant for a salmon

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Borough plans careful look at InSTITUTE grounds

Search intended to ensure no burial or cultural sites

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The borough's plans to subdivide the former Wrangell Institute Native boarding school property will wait until a thorough inspection of the site is conducted for cultural artifacts and remains.

"We are working with both the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and working with the tribe (Wrangell Cooperative Association)," to ensure the property is searched "before any activity takes place," Mayor Steve Prysunka said last week.

"It is incredibly sensitive that we do it really well," Prysunka said. "What I care the most about is that our Native

community and our entire community" are part of the effort, understand the purpose and the work, and believe the results, he said.

The plan, Prysunka said, is to look over the entire site, "so that we have great peace of mind."

The BIA operated the Native boarding from 1932 to 1975. The borough received the property in 1996. The Army Corps is involved because the borough has applied for a wetlands fill permit to develop the site, just south of Shoemaker Bay, as a residential subdivision.

The borough has met with the Army Corps and the State Historic Preservation Office, and suggested the use of ca-

daver dogs, Borough Manager Lisa Von Bargaen said Tuesday. "They think that's a great idea."

The tentative plan, she said, is to search the grounds with trained dogs, then follow up with ground-penetrating radar as needed.

The borough has contacted the Wrangell Cooperative Association, and "we're taking their counsel," Von Bargaen said.

Search dogs could be brought in later this year. The borough will be looking to the BIA to cover the costs of searching the property, she said.

As part of the effort, the borough would talk with resi-

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PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jonah Hurst, 8, runs Lobtail Lemonade, and already is looking ahead. "I was thinking, sooner or later, I'm going to start instead of just a little stand, when I'm older I'm going to make a big store to sell lots of lemonade stuff."

Junior entrepreneur at work with Lobtail Lemonade stand

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

"Mostly what I do, when I'm not busy, is I mostly sit inside and ... just think about what I'm going to do," Jonah Hurst said.

Jonah, 8 years old, is the young entrepreneur behind Jonah's Lobtail Lemonade, a lemonade stand he set up along the driveway at Panhandle Trailer Court. Jonah said the name came from the whales that swim around Wrangell Island, sometimes beating the top of the water with their tails.

With his lemonade stand, he is making money and learning more about running a business.

He first ran the stand about three years ago, he said, for Lemonade Day. His dad built him the stand so he could participate in the event. Lemonade Day is an annual nationwide event held in August, to help teach kids about entrepreneurship.

This year is the first he's really taken off with the busi-

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Borough approves new Shoemaker cell tower

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The borough assembly Tuesday evening approved a lease amendment for a new cell tower at the Shoemaker Harbor, which the developer said will bring improved cell service to the island.

Action on a second agreement to lease borough land for a new tower next to the landfill at the north end of the island was postponed to the assembly's Aug. 10 meeting, waiting for a property appraisal.

The Shoemaker tower will replace a shorter pole installed

in 2007 near the parking lot. The new 125-foot-tall tower will be capable of providing improved cell service, said the developer, Florida-based Vertical Bridge, which will lease space on the tower to cell providers.

The amendment to the borough land lease expands the area from about 160 square feet to 1,898 square feet and would allow for additional storage facilities and the potential to add new services to the tower. The site will be surrounded with a 6-foot-tall chain link fence, topped with

barbed wire, according to the developer.

The proposed monthly lease rate was set at \$835.

"The existing wooden pole does not have the structural capacity to support installation of new equipment," Gary Brekke, with Alaska Aerial Survey, wrote to the borough on behalf of Vertical Bridge's application.

"The proposal will benefit the local residents that are now, or will be, GCI subscribers. They will notice a vast improvement in their

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The "Raven Story" stamp, designed by Juneau-based Rico Lanáat' Worl, a Tlingit and Athabascan artist, will have its official release Friday at the Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau. See story on Page 5.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, July 29: Jeffrey Brown, Devlyn Campbell, Katie Hagan, Tony Rice, Alice Hunt Rooney; Anniversary: David and LeAnn Bryner.

Friday, July 30: Bruce Jamieson, Scott McConachie; Anniversaries: William and Laurie Barker, Glen and Kelley Decker.

Saturday, July 31: Dino Brock, Tyler Crayne, Jeffrey Davidson, John Morse.

Sunday, Aug. 1: Jean Brown, Allen Edgley, Kadin Messmer, Douglas Wickman, Brynlee Young; Anniversaries: Haig and Bonnie Demerjian, Doug and Pam McCloskey, Adam and Tasha Morse.

Monday, Aug. 2: Debra Werner.

Tuesday, Aug. 3: Torrin Fowler, Deed Gillen, Edna Nore, Jillian Privett, Ben Schwerin; Anniversary: David and Alicia Gillen.

Wednesday, Aug. 4: Blaine Wilson.

Thursday, Aug. 5: Kody Davidson, Brandon Ellsworth; Anniversary: Troy and Leslie Kagee.

Senior Center Menu

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

Friday, July 30

Clam chowder, chef salad, crackers

Monday, Aug. 2

Egg salad sandwich, potato soup, sunshine salad

Tuesday, Aug. 3

Fish, broccoli salad

Wednesday, Aug. 4

Beef stroganoff, mixed vegetables, cabbage slaw

Thursday, Aug. 5

Pineapple lemon chicken, green beans, salad, rice

Please call the senior center at 874-2066 by 2 p.m. the day prior 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, July 30

Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 6

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 13

Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 20

Matanuska, 5:45 p.m.

Friday, Aug. 27

Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Aug. 2

Matanuska, 3:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 9

Matanuska, 7:15 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 16

Matanuska, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 23

Matanuska, 7:30 a.m.

Monday, Aug. 30

Matanuska, 6:15 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 874-2021 for information or call 874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.



TIDES July 29 - August 4

	High Tides		Low Tides		AM	PM	Ft	Ft
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft				
July 29	05:02	14.3	05:44	14.8	11:08	1.1	11:42	3.4
July 30	05:51	12.9	06:29	14.3	11:47	2.5
July 31	06:51	11.7	07:20	13.9	00:36	3.6	12:32	3.7
Aug. 1	08:06	10.9	08:19	13.7	01:38	3.7	01:25	4.8
Aug. 2	09:24	10.8	09:20	13.9	02:48	3.4	02:29	5.6
Aug. 3	10:33	11.3	10:17	14.3	04:00	2.9	03:40	5.8
Aug. 4	11:31	12.0	11:09	14.9	05:02	1.8	04:48	5.6

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

BEARFEST 2021 runs through Sunday. Symposiums, art and photo workshops, cultural events, golf and live music. Check out the full schedule at www.alaskabearfest.org

WRANGELL SCHOOL DISTRICT PowerSchool registration will open online starting Aug. 9. Districtwide registration help available 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 17 in the high school commons. Aug. 30 is the first day of school for students.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Black Widow," rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Aug 6-8. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the action, adventure and sci-fi which runs two hours and 14 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

WRANGELL PARKS & RECREATION is offering jiu jitsu classes on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for ages 18 years and up. Registration begins Monday; classes start Aug. 24. Contact Parks and Recreation for more information, 874-2444.

TLINGIT & HAIDA HEAD START is enrolling for the 2021-2022 school year. Head Start is a free federal program for preschool children from low-income families. Apply online at www.ccthitansn.gov/services/family/headstart. For more information, contact Head Start at 907-463-7127, or email headstartenrollment@ccthitansn.gov.

COMMUNITY POTLUCK 6 p.m. Fridays through Aug. 31, at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

Want more attendance at your meeting or event? Send information for Roundup to wrgsent@gmail.com or call 874-2301. Or go to the Sentinel website, click on the Calendar tab, and submit your entry online.

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, 5:30 - 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 available by appointment and at reduced capacity:

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. Philips Episcopal Church.

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

July 28, 1921

An offer of several hundred books for Wrangell was received from the Juneau library this week. The books are from the Gastineau mine, which closed. The Juneau library is too crowded for them and many are duplicates of books already on hand. They will be sorted at Juneau and those which are in bad condition will be discarded. The offer of the books was made to Wrangell because of the response here to the American Library Association's call last year for help in the "Better Books" movement. Several of the local organizations and a number of individuals subscribed varying sums and the money was sent to Mrs. F.A. Metcalf in Juneau, to be forwarded to the library association. It is thought that the money to pay for transporting the books from Juneau can be raised easily. A Wrangell library should not be impossible if there

are enough people interested in its establishment and maintenance.

Aug. 2, 1946

If Wrangellites are wondering about the whys and wherefores of the snappy new telephone booth installed between the windows of the Army Signal Corps in the Federal Building, the Sentinel can, as always, give the latest dope. In the near future, perhaps two weeks, Wrangell residents will be able to call up their Petersburg neighbors by phone, and vice versa, and hold telephone conversations. Preliminary tests have already been made, Staff Sgt. Sam Pickering said, and results are satisfactory. All the final service is waiting for is a line to be strung about two miles from the cable landing on Mitkof Island to Petersburg proper. The phone booth has metropolitan-style sliding doors, which automatically turn on a light in the booth.

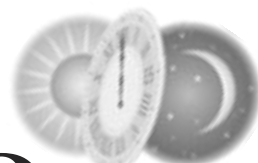
July 30, 1971

Fire danger in Wrangell area forests this week is the highest in recent years. The U.S. Forest Service put the six logging operations in the 1.5 million acre Wrangell District of the Tongass National Forest on so-called Hoot Owl working shifts. The ruling keeps crews out of the woods at prime fire danger hours of noon to 6 p.m. Forest Service personnel were flying a fire watch and firefighting crews stayed on alert. District Ranger Gary McCoy said fire indexes rose to the extreme rating of 10 on a scale running from 2 to 10. The 10 was recorded at

Bradfield Canal, where daytime temperatures have been in the mid-80s. The Hoot Owl directives were given to loggers Monday at Sykes Logging (Bradfield Canal), Elmer Day Logging (Snow Pass), Hamilton Log (Anita Bay), Tyler Log (St. John's Harbor), Nelson Log (Sokolof Island) and Galla Log (Elephant's Nose).

Aug. 1, 1996

There seem to be a lot of bears in town this summer. Roaming through residential streets, staking out the city dump to the point that officials have urged residents not to go there, and chasing people's pets around. In the past month, 30 bears have been seen at one time at the landfill. Five bears, including two that were described as large and aggressive, have been carted off to the southern end of the island. The U.S. Forest Service has some advice for people on how to survive or, better yet, avoid bear encounters. According to wildlife biologist Scott Posner, who manages the Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory, most of the bears seen locally have been black bears. The few brown bears spotted have been outside the city. Most encounters have involved people walking their dogs. "Be sure if you plan to walk your dog in these areas where bears have been seen, to have good voice control over your pet, or walk with it on a leash. Letting them romp around in the woods may end up with him coming back with a bear right behind," warns Posner.



Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
July 29	4:46a	9:04p	16:17h
July 30	4:48a	9:02p	16:14h
July 31	4:50a	9:00p	16:10h
Aug. 1	4:52a	8:58p	16:06h
Aug. 2	4:53a	8:56p	16:02h
Aug. 3	4:55a	8:54p	15:58h
Aug. 4	4:57a	8:51p	15:53h

Regional, economic divides hinder compromise on state's fiscal future

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Some of the key players in legislative efforts to reach a compromise on a long-term fiscal plan for the state — in addition to settling on an amount for this fall's Permanent Fund dividend — say growing regional, political and economic differences, plus a large number of first-term legislators, make the effort harder.

"To find a common ground means people have to give up something," said Anchorage Sen. Natasha von Imhof.

That compromise of spending versus revenues versus dividends has to add up to a solution that balances the checkbook and "does not cripple our state" for future economic

growth, the Senate Finance Committee member said in an interview last Friday.

"The biggest issue is that we are a representative government, and the Legislature represents the different viewpoints all around Alaska," the senator said. "People's perspectives are different," increasingly influenced by which state services they use, their household size, how much they may depend on the PFD, how much they might pay in taxes — if the state were to adopt any new taxes.

"People vote their pocket-book," and Alaska, like much of the nation, has a wide diversity of household incomes affecting what people want out of government, what they want to pay and how much they can afford to pay, she said.

One of von Imhof's Senate colleagues, Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman, sees the geographic and economic differences between Alaskans widening, and adding to the strain to find a compromise.

Looking over his 19 years in the Legislature, Stedman said, "The most concerning issue is the resurfacing of the urban versus rural divide." Those differing perspectives helps determine what residents think is important, what should be in-

cluded in the state budget, and what can be cut.

"There is an apparent philosophical difference between families who have been here multiple generations and people who have been here a very short amount of time," he said in an interview near the end of the regular legislative session in May.

Stedman, co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, sees some of the most noticeable differences in attitudes over the Permanent Fund dividend, financial aid to residential electricity customers in rural communities, and village water and sewer improvements.

"The Power Cost Equalization is at risk of elimination by a handful of legislators," Stedman said of the rural aid program, which is in jeopardy if lawmakers cannot muster a three-quarters majority vote when they reconvene in special session in August.

The division also shows up in legislative debates over funding public services in small communities, such as driver's license and vehicle registration services, and school expenses in villages without a sufficient tax base for a local contribution.

Reapportionment of legislative seats for the 2022 election based on the 2020 U.S. Census could further erode the count of rural lawmakers, as population gains in Southcentral Alaska will continue the ongoing shift of seats and political influence to that region.

Lawmakers are scheduled to convene in special session Aug. 2 to decide on this year's dividend and work toward a long-term fiscal plan, with an eight-member joint House-Senate working group meeting to look for com-

promises and take public testimony this week.

Many of those same diverse constituencies that have divided policy makers may now be coming together to push toward a solution to the state's long-term finances, said co-chair of the working group, Sitka Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins.

"There are constituencies within the political system that I've never heard from ... who are saying this is a problem that must be solved," the representative said.

There is a growing recognition among Alaskans "from across the political spectrum," Kreiss-Tomkins said last Friday, that new revenues — taxes — will be needed.

The state has operated at a revenue deficit most years since 1990, as declining oil production has fallen short of state spending, pushing lawmakers and governors to draw down billions of dollars from savings.

The high-profile divisions over state spending also extend to battles over raising new revenues to pay for public services, Stedman said, exacerbated by unachievable campaign promises.

As legislative candidates tell voters they will oppose any new taxes, it's hard to tell those same voters that the state cannot afford all the services and large PFDs they may want and have come to expect.

One solution supported by the governor and some legisla-

tors is to withdraw more money from the Permanent Fund this year to cover larger dividends and other spending, promising not to do it every year. Stedman is one of the loudest voices in the Legislature against drawing down the fund for short-term benefits, which would jeopardize its long-term earnings potential.

Part of the problem in reaching compromise is that almost half of the state House came into office in the past two elections, said Juneau Rep. Sara Hannan, one those new members. A dozen members of the 40-member House are new this year.

The lack of understanding of the issues is a challenge, she said, particularly for public services unique to some areas of the state.

Such as Hannan's advocacy for state funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System, which has endured deep budget and service cuts in recent years, presenting significant challenges for coastal communities dependent on the transportation service.

During a town hall meeting in Haines earlier this month, she explained her efforts to educate Southcentral and Interior legislators who may not know that many travelers to their districts arrive in the state by ferry.

Before the pandemic closed the border with Canada, a large chunk of ferry travelers would end up in Anchorage or Fairbanks, particularly military families moving to Alaska, Hannan said.

Correction

The Sentinel on July 22 incorrectly reported that Baked for Breakfast plans to add something similar to "Diamond C hash browns" to its menu. The news story should have reported the dish would be similar to "Diamond C hash." The Sentinel apologizes for not hashing out the difference before publication.

Happy Birthday to my girl Leslie Smith



Love, Phil



Summer Activities Include Protecting Against COVID-19

While enjoying summer, protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19 by registering for a vaccine, getting tested when needed and following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) on when to wear a facemask. SEARHC thanks you for being part of the solution to keep our communities, patients and healthcare workers safe and healthy.



Vaccinations are available to all people ages 12 and up. To learn more and sign up for a vaccine or testing, please visit covid19.searhc.org.

SEARHC | healthy is here.

Salmon runs have been weak

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

Salmon harvests are coming in slowly in the Wrangell-Petersburg area, according to Sea Level Seafoods and the state fisheries biologist out of Petersburg.

Though it's too early for a lot of specific numbers, both report catches have been lower than in previous seasons.

"It's going pretty slow," said Nik Morozov, manager at Wrangell's Sea Level plant. "We're close to half of what we normally do."

Morozov said he has three tenders out right now, and had been assuming they would fill up and bring back loads of fish quickly, but that is not happening. Catches are low, he said, though the price for salmon is high. That's at least some good news for the fleet.

"Southeast is just not there," he said. "I don't know the cause of that, but we're not seeing the pounds through this plant that we were expecting."

Paul Salomone, state fisheries biologist in the Petersburg office, which manages the area, said so far he is seeing much the same story.

"It's kind of a similar story of Petersburg proper, it's slow developing at this point," he said. "It's still early yet. Some areas can be better than others. ... I'll know more in August."

In an update last Friday, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported "on-the-grounds surveys indicated sockeye salmon abundance well below average for the time of year" in

District 6, which extends west from Etolin and Woronkofski islands into Clarence and Sumner straits.

"49 boats participated this week (July 18-19), which is below the 10-year average of 59 boats. Preliminary statistical harvest estimates include 100 chinook, 2,700 sockeye, 8,000 pink, and 18,700 chum salmon. Harvest of all five species was below the 10-year average."

District 8, in front of the Stikine River and Wrangell, remains closed

"The 2021 preseason forecast for Stikine River sockeye salmon is 56,000 fish, which is well below the average of 108,000 fish," the department reported last Friday. "This forecast includes: 28,000 Tahltan Lake and 28,000 mainstem sockeye salmon and results in a small U.S. allowable catch of 2,120 Tahltan Lake sockeye," but whether that happens will depend on run counts.

Chum returns aren't looking much better in Southeast.

"Hatchery-produced chum salmon runs throughout Southeast have been variable to date, but harvests have generally been below average, as forecasted," the department said.

"The 2021 Southeast Alaska pink salmon harvest forecast is predicted to be average, with a point estimate of 28 million fish. ... Pink salmon percent males have generally been above average this season, indicating a later than normal run. Pink salmon average weights have been low, averaging 3 pounds or less."

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Bad time to rewrite the state constitution

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

The list of escalating Alaska political divides is growing faster than skunk cabbage in a rainforest. And it smells just as bad.

The line-up for the political fight scorecard seems endless: Democrats versus Republicans, liberals versus conservatives, rural versus urban, sportfishing versus commercial versus charter fishing, full-dividend advocates versus fiscal restraint, tax advocates versus budget cutters.

There are those who believe religion belongs in government and others who believe God belongs in church, not the state Capitol.

And those who believe less government is better government, unless government provides something they really want.

People don't talk out their differences, they proudly tweet them in all capital letters, with exclamation points. Emojis, too, though we seem to be missing an emoji for compromise.

Why meet face to face to resolve differences for the good of our communities when so many turn to Facebook to shout down their opponents.

Looking at all the animosity, stubbornness and partisanship, this is not a good time to rewrite the state constitution. This isn't even a good time for a community dinner between opposing sides, but at least a potential food fight is less damaging than carving up the constitution.

Alaskans will be asked on the November 2022 statewide ballot whether they want to call a constitutional convention to consider changing, even rewriting large pieces of the document that has guided lawmaking and laws in Alaska for more than half a century. The state constitution requires the question to go before voters every 10 years, just in case people think it's time to reopen, revamp and reseal constitutional rights and responsibilities.

ties.

Wisely, a clear majority of Alaskans have said no in past decades. The vote was 65% to 35% in 1972 against a constitutional convention; 63% to 37% in 1982 and again in 1992; 72% to 28% in 2002; and 67% to 33% in 2012.

Let's hope Alaskans are just as smart in 2022 as in the past five votes.

But if the politics of anger, anti-government rhetoric and frustration overwhelm too many Alaskans, and voters decide a constitutional convention could fix all the wrongs they see, the constitution requires an election to choose delegates to the convention. No doubt all of the escalating, divisive issues of today will become the campaign slogans of candidates for the delegate seats.

Is that what Alaska needs? Another election focused on campaign slogans like "no new taxes," or "protect the PFD," or "our fair share of _____" (fill in the blank on that one). Or maybe "no zoning" or "no (or yes) to mining." Or maybe, "don't appoint judges, elect them, so that they need to solicit campaign contributions and make political promises just like other candidates."

Simplistic, emotional slogans don't make a constitution. They make great fundraising soundbites for partisan battles and help to energize the angry, but that is not going to solve Alaska's problems.

As it is, and as it should be, Alaskans will have the chance to vote on Alaska's fiscal future and help decide the direction of the state in November when they select a governor and the state Legislature. What is the purpose of redoing it all over again the next year with a constitutional convention, other giving the losing sides a second shot at rewriting the rules. Or the winning side a chance at changing the rules for generations to come.

Either way, now is not the time to rewrite the constitution.

EDITORIAL

Follow the math and get vaccinated

Just look at the numbers.

More than 2,200 new cases of COVID-19 in Alaska over July 15-25.

More than 200 active cases in Sitka alone last week, winning the top spot for the worst outbreak in the state.

Almost 60 active cases in Cordova, a town of 2,800, resulting in the closure of a seafood processing plant.

Juneau reported 44 new cases over the weekend, and more than 150 in the past two weeks. The city brought back restrictions to contain the spread of the more infectious Delta variant of the coronavirus.

Case counts in Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan all were higher than last month's numbers.

COVID-19 patients occupied 95 hospital beds around the state as of Tuesday, a large enough jump from two weeks ago that Alaska placed No. 2 nationwide for increased hospitalization rates.

Meanwhile, Alaska has slipped to 31st place among the states for vaccination rates as of Tuesday

That is not a winning record.

Yes, some of the new cases are among people who have been vaccinated. No vaccine is 100% effective, but the lack of a guarantee is not a good reason to avoid a shot in the arm. Wearing ice grippers is not 100% effective at preventing broken arms and other injuries from falling in the winter, but people use them to reduce the odds and stay out of the hospital.

Sadly, the vast majority of hospitalized COVID-19 patients in Alaska are unvaccinated, and the clear majority of new cases are unvaccinated. They also are younger than the patients seen earlier in the pandemic, as a higher percentage of young adults have declined to roll up their sleeves for a shot.

Sadly, Alaska has plateaued at 57% of eligible residents with at least one dose of a vaccine, and 52% fully vaccinated. The rate has barely moved up 1% this month.

Sadly, the math tells us that as long as more than 40% of the population is unvaccinated, the coronavirus has a lot of room to grow, infect and spread.

If you don't want to listen to the president's call to get vaccinated, then listen to his biggest political opponent.

"These shots need to get in everybody's arm as rapidly as possible, or we're going to be back in a situation in the fall that we don't yearn for, that we went through last year," U.S. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said during a weekly news conference. "I want to encourage everybody to do that and to ignore all of these other voices that are giving demonstrably bad advice."

As McConnell said, there is a lot of bad advice out there. Talk with your health care professional — rather a Facebook doctor — and make a smart decision.

— Wrangell Sentinel

OPINION COLUMN

Legislators need to do the right thing for Alaska's future

By FRANK MURKOWSKI

The Alaska Legislature already has been in session for almost six months this year and is scheduled for another special session on Aug. 2. Instead of arguing political ideology, let's concentrate on what is right and what is wrong, and focus on what is right for Alaska.

The special session debates are focused on three issues: First, a long-term solution to our budget shortfall; second, an affordable level for the Permanent Fund dividend; and third, the governor's effort to pass a constitutional amendment that would put the dividend and the Power Cost Equalization fund into the constitution.

A special legislative working group has been tasked with reporting back to the full Legislature prior to the August special session with specific recommendations to resolve the impasse.

The reality is that the state does not have enough money to simultaneously fund the serv-

ices Alaskans want and need, pay a dividend based on the 1982 formula, and avoid an increase in taxes.

An increase in state funds can only come from one of four choices: Reduce services; pay an affordable (non-1982 formula) dividend; impose new taxes; or grow the economy through natural resource development

Services have been reduced over the past eight years as our population increased. It is doubtful how much additional reductions are realistically possible. Moreover, while budget reductions sound good as a general proposition, Alaskans don't want to reduce individual services such as education, health care or public safety. It is not a viable alternative.

That Alaskans do not want a tax imposed on them is seen in polling and in Alaskans' overwhelming vote rejecting an increase in oil taxes in 2020.

The enshrinement of the Permanent Fund dividend and

Power Cost Equalization in the constitution would put that funding ahead of all other state needs such as education, health care, public safety, and other necessities of life. I do not believe this proposal is in the best interest of all Alaskans.

Growing the economy through natural resource development takes time and is not a solution for this year. Nevertheless, for future revenues, I would urge this administration to be more aggressive in developing natural resources on state and Alaska Mental Health Trust land, especially in mining.

Just one regional example: A 1991 U.S. Geological Survey study estimated the value of discovered minerals on the Tongass National Forest at \$37.1 billion (expressed as 1988 dollars), and the value of undiscovered minerals at \$28.3 billion (expressed as 1988 dollars). Obviously, the exploration that has taken place since 1991 and the escalation in metals prices has

changed these numbers upward.

The bottom line is that it is highly unlikely the eight-member legislative committee will produce a resolution satisfactory to everyone. Instead, the Legislature must come together in a non-partisan manner and develop compromises based on what we can afford, using funds we know we have without spending future funds that only add debt or adversely impact the corpus of the Permanent Fund.

Further, we should not be manipulated by commitments to pass out free money at a level we cannot afford.

Resolution of these issues re-

quires statesmanship and principled decision-making, not partisan ranker which solves nothing. Each legislator's satisfaction should be in doing what's right for Alaska and leaving behind a better foundation for the next generation. That is their challenge.

Ask your legislator to reflect on his or her oath of office to uphold the interest and needs of all Alaskans, both urban and rural.

We cannot risk a house divided.

Frank Murkowski served as governor of Alaska 2002-2006, and as U.S. senator for Alaska 1981-2002.

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Sculptor turns driftwood into life-size animals

By CINDY MARTIN

Sigrid Vanek, driftwood sculptor, "raises wildlife" on her Wrangell beachfront property.

This summer, a curious bear made an appearance for Bearfest, the annual event now underway in town.

For years, the life-size, captivating animals have delighted family members and neighbors, startled tour ship passengers, and amused visitors from around the world who ask permission to photograph the wooden zoo.

Born and raised in Palmer, Vanek was introduced to Wrangell by Ken Lewis. Their annual Wrangell visits over 28 years stretched from a couple weeks to months. With the exception of 2020, visits got longer each year.

"I was looking for something to do while I was here in the summers. I quickly went through the pile of books I brought. My grandkid's totem pole with raven and eagle was the first thing I made," Vanek said of her woodwork.

"In 2015, I saw an online image of a driftwood horse. It prompted me to make a life-size moose. I create a central wire or wood body frame. Zip ties hold the internal pieces in position. I use screws — lots and lots of them — to attach most pieces," she explained.

"Tiny Bradley nails hold together smaller features like owl feathers. I need to wear gloves because the drill can jump off the screw. I go through a lot of drill batteries."

Though not a fan of flat puzzles, shaping animals is like making a big 3D puzzle, she said, adding enough wood until it all fits together. Dry, light driftwood is her go-to medium. She uses shells for seahorses' eyes and glass beads for bears' eyes.

Broken plates and driftwood pieces brought to her by others add to her critter construction. "Sometimes, I have to walk away for a bit, like when trying an octopus."

The wildlife is so realistic, it occasionally startles even the artist when she wakes up and glances outside the house. Other times, the Shustak Point wooden wildlife attracts the attention of boaters passing by the property.

Vanek has sold one eagle, but selling is just an afterthought, a side benefit. "I need to keep my mind and hands busy. I do it for me. No research. It's not a job, just



PHOTO BY CINDY MARTIN

Sigrid Vanek takes driftwood and sculpts the pieces — with the help of zip ties, screws and nails — into wooden wildlife at her Wrangell waterfront property.

something I like to do."

Seasons, wind, birds and more can alter her creations. So, she takes apart and rebuilds, sometimes more than once. Hoping the sculptures will last longer, this summer she experimented with a finish made of part paint thinner and linseed oil. When sprayed on, it only changes the color slightly.

Art is a family affair for Vanek, 56. Her mother and grandmother were painters. Her dad was creative with found objects. She and her sister host craft parties.

She also paints oil landscapes. Her favorite creation is based on her experience piling in a truck and picking blueberries all day with her family. Her "Blueberry Hills" painting has been shared among her family, each taking a turn at displaying the piece.

Vanek has been a farmer, a waitress and a university student. However, decorating cakes at Carrs, now Safeway, gave her 12 years of 3D experience.

She doesn't have a particular dream project in mind. "No, I do the art when I want. I tell my nieces there aren't any rules. You just act on it."

Her favorite and most inspirational place is the mountains around Palmer. Soon, Vanek will be at work at her Soldotna driftwood ranch, managing a couple moose, bear, eagles and an owl — one of which will be niece's wedding gift.

A tourist to Wrangell recently asked if he could take a sculpture home. "Of course, it won't fit onto a jet," Vanek answered, "but I have been known to take driftwood animal parts in my suitcases."

Lemonade stand

Continued from page 1

ness venture, his mother, Nikka Mork, said. Jonah said he has been out running his stand

whenever the weather is good this summer. His business has developed along the way, too. Recently, he introduced

reusable drink pouches, so customers could enjoy their drinks more easily while on the go.

"He needed to-go cups for his customers, and I was looking at the cups, clear cups with lids," Mork said. "I came across these and I thought, 'Oh, these are reusable!'"

"And I thought it would be pretty cool," Jonah added.

Small drinks are \$1, and the larger drink pouches sell for \$4. He also offers homemade cookies at Lobtail Lemonade, two for \$1. Anybody who wants to bring their drink pouches back

for a refill will get a dollar off their price, Mork said.

Jonah has learned a lot about running a business. For example, he has learned about self-sufficiency. When he was first getting started, his parents would give him money for supplies, but they would expect him to pay him back. Now, however, Jonah generates enough income that he can set aside some of profits to keep the stand supplied on his own. He's also learned about managing payroll as his cousin, Daniel Mccolloch, sometimes helps

him run the stand.

He's also learned how to plan big things for the future.

"I was thinking, sooner or later, I'm going to start instead of just a little stand, when I'm older I'm going to make a big store to sell lots of lemonade stuff," he said. "Like I'm going to give out instructions how to sell it, I'm going to sell the ingredients."

Jonah's Lobtail Lemonade is open whenever the weather is nice. Mork said they post on the Wrangell Community Group whenever they are open.



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Postal Service releases Raven stamp this week

By SENTINEL STAFF

The U.S. Postal Service will officially release the "Raven Story" stamp at 11 a.m. Friday at the Sealaska Heritage Institute in Juneau.

The stamp, designed by Juneau-based Rico Lanáat' Worl, a Tlingit and Athabascan artist, depicts Raven freeing the sun, stars and moon.

The ceremony will be streamed live through the heritage institute's YouTube channel.

The Postal Service said Antonio Alcalá, who served as art director on the project, reached out to Worl about creating the stamp after seeing his work for sale at the National Museum of the American Indian gift store in Washington, D.C.

The stamp, the first ever illus-

trated by a Tlingit artist, depicts Raven just as he escapes from his human family and begins to transform back into his bird form, the Postal Service explained.

"Art is kind of integral to indigenous culture. It has always been around me, it's always been integral to my life. ... I've always been involved in being creative," Worl said in an interview last year with the Sitka Sentinel newspaper.

The artwork includes Raven flanked by the stars as he makes his escape from a clan house.

"It's more focused on this exciting moment of trying to pull off this heist. And I wanted to show some of that drama and excitement from the story," Worl said.

"Raven is trying to grab as

many stars as he can, some stuck in his feathers and in his hands or in his beak. Some falling around him. It's a frazzled moment of adrenaline," he said.

"Partially still in human form, as depicted as his hand still being human, as he carries the stars away. I think it depicts a moment we all have experienced, the cusp of failure and accomplishment," Worl wrote on his blog.

"Because it was a national platform, I wanted to be able to give a good access point for a non-Tlingit audience to be able to learn about the culture. And that story is a foundational story for a lot of Tlingit ideology and ways of being," Worl said.

The stamp will be available at post offices and online at usps.com.

New leader has plans for more chamber events in the community

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

There's some new leadership at the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, but the organization's mission is still the same: To promote and support local businesses. To do so, said the new executive director Britani Robbins, there are big but currently secret plans for the future.



"I have lots of new ideas, but they're secret."

Britani Robbins,
the new director of
the chamber of commerce.

"I have lots of new ideas, but they're secret," she said. "I plan on having a fair amount more events following COVID. Everything's opening back up. When I was a kid Wrangell was all about events and community gatherings, and I kind of want to get back into that flow. I just want to keep people on their toes."

Robbins came in as executive director June 6, taking over for Stephanie Cook.

Luana Wellons also has joined the chamber staff as Robbins' assistant.

Robbins has spent most of her life in Wrangell, she said. Her family has strong roots in the community, having owned and operated Bob's IGA up until 2018, when they sold the grocery store. She wants to use her position with the chamber to help the community she loves grow.

"I've been living in Wrangell since 1989," she said. "I grew up here, went to school here K-12. I only ever left for college, and a very brief stint where I met my husband and brought him back. ... I wanted to come to the chamber because I wanted to do something that matters for Wrangell, because Wrangell is important to me."

One thing that Robbins has on her to-do list is to bring back the community's annual dinner, sponsored by the chamber. The event was cancelled last year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will return this year, she said.

Robbins also said she is planning a big meeting in August to go over some of her other ideas and start putting plans together.

"I'm just really excited to be ... a bigger part of the community," she said. "It's been a long time. COVID really shut the town down for a long time, and I can't wait to get the community back into gathering."

COVID-infected traveler skips isolation, flies home

By SHANNON HAUGLAND
Sitka Sentinel Staff Writer

Alaska Airlines said it was not aware that a passenger who boarded Flight 73 in Sitka the morning of July 20 had tested positive for COVID-19 a day earlier.

"We would never allow someone to travel that is COVID-positive, knowing they were COVID-positive," Alaska Airlines spokesman Tim Thompson said July 21. "Our priorities are for the safety of staff and employees."

State public health Denise Ewing said a visitor from outside Alaska who was in Sitka on vacation tested positive for COVID-19 on July 19 and was provided test results, including isolation instructions. In a July 20 announcement, Ewing said the visitor and three traveling companions boarded Alaska Airlines Flight 73 at 6 a.m. the day after the positive test. The infected passenger was headed for "their home state" by way of Juneau and a transfer to Flight 60 to Seattle with a stop in Ketchikan.

Ewing said state public health officials and the federal Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention tried to stop the travelers from boarding the flight in Sitka.

Alaska Airlines did not know the traveler was COVID-positive when the visitor boarded the plane in Sitka or Juneau. "They couldn't have known that until they heard from the CDC and (state) epidemiology. It's quite an involved process," Ewing said. "The airline did their part. They took action as soon as they could."

Thompson said Alaska Airlines was notified by the CDC of the passenger when Flight 60 was in the air between Juneau and Seattle. Thompson said the airline stopped the traveler in Seattle, denying boarding on a connecting flight. "They won't fly on us because they are COVID-positive," he said.

Thompson said CDC also notified the passengers sitting near the coronavirus-positive person.

"We take this very, very seriously."

Ewing said people who had families or friends on the flights should "let them know of the potential exposure."

Among the passengers on the flight from Juneau to Seattle was Libby

Watanabe. "It was a typical flight, it was very full. There were no empty seats," Watanabe told the public radio station in Juneau.

She said she later saw the Sitka health nurse's notice on Facebook.

"I think that's really irresponsible of them [the COVID passengers]. ... It's worrisome when you find out things like this, how other people have unnecessarily put not just myself and my family in harm's way but others as well," she told the radio station.

Dr. Louisa Castrodale, an epidemiologist with the Alaska Division of Public Health, told reporters there is a process for preventing infected passengers from flying — it is not voluntary. It's called the "Do Not Board" list and is run by the CDC, she explained in the public radio interview.

The no-fly list is coordinated at the federal, state and local levels and is not always as fast as someone booking a ticket.

"And sometimes because of timing, it's difficult to either get somebody on or off that list very quickly," Castrodale said.

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Fundraiser underway for family that lost boat to fire

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The Della G, a Wrangell fishing vessel owned and operated by the Churchill family, was lost to a fire in Juneau on July 13. Nobody was on board the 32-foot boat at the time of the fire, according to news reports in Juneau.

The Wrangell community has started to come together to help the Churchills.

According to news reports, the Della G was in Gastineau Channel near the Juneau airport. Reports of the fire came in before midnight, but the response was delayed.

"Initially unable to get through the wetlands to the fire from the airport side, Juneau Police Department officers were eventually able to get close by hiking in from North Douglas Highway," the

Juneau Empire reported.

"Due to dark conditions and not having the ability to pinpoint the location, the fire investigation was postponed until there was daylight and more information available to safely move forward," the fire department reported in a Facebook posting the morning after the fire.

The Della G was destroyed. The boat was insured, accord-

ing to the Juneau fire department.

"At this time the fire marshal is working with the District 17 U.S. Coast Guard personnel and the boat owner and a salvage company to safely remove the boat and to allow a fire origin and cause investigation as well as any pollution mitigation," the fire department posted on Facebook.

Randy Churchill Jr., owner of the Della G, declined to comment for this story.

Lucy Moline-Robinson has started a GoFundMe page for the Churchills. As of Monday morning, it had raised \$2,215. Donations can also be made to an account set up at First Bank.

Though the gillnetter was insured, the coverage will not pay for fishing gear, electronics, personal belongings or the loss of fishing income to the family, Moline-Robinson said on the GoFundMe posting.

According to the GoFundMe page, Randy Churchill has fished the Della G since 2007 as a family operation.

SEARHC encourages Alaskans to check out new options for low-cost health plans

By SENTINEL STAFF

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium has joined the list of health care providers encouraging Alaskans to participate in the potentially money-saving special enrollment period for insurance offered under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

The latest round of federal aid for people hurt by the pandemic's hit to the economy, the American Rescue Plan Act, includes "additional insurance subsidies and (ACA) plan options for individuals and families," SEARHC explained in a prepared statement July 22.

"During this one-time special enrollment period, individuals and families can enroll in a new insurance plan or make changes to their current plan," the statement said. Anyone missing the Aug. 15 deadline would need to wait until the next regular opening at the federally operated health insurance online marketplace Nov. 1.

"Significant cost cuts have been made and all Alaska residents are encouraged to compare their current health insurance plan with the options available at health-care.gov," or by talking with a certified application counselor at SEARHC "to help guide Southeast residents through the enrollment process."

For more information, email the SEARHC patient health benefits team at outreach@searhc.org, or call 907-966-8684.

The U.S. Department of Health and Social Services estimates the savings could reduce premiums on average by \$85 per policy per month, or many people could upgrade to a better plan with more coverage for the same or lower premiums than they currently pay.



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Disc golfers can take a toss for 18 baskets at Muskeg Meadows

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Although the directional signs for each hole have not yet arrived, eager disc golf players are tossing their way through the 18-basket course at Muskeg Meadows.

“People are playing, it’s just not well marked yet,” said Kristi Woodbury, board president for Muskeg Meadows Golf Course.

After a couple of years of work, the baskets went in last fall, she said. The baskets were delayed by COVID-19. The manufacturing plant closed down at the start of the pandemic last March, pushing off delivery until the end of last season.

Scorecards, par designations and tee markers came into play this summer, and even without the directional signs the first disc golf tournament was held over the Fourth of July weekend, Woodbury said.

To help promote the new attraction in town, Muskeg Meadows is offering a low, introductory disc golf price of \$5 per round for members and \$10 for non-members, she said. Players can pay at the clubhouse, and discs are available for rent. The course even has custom-designed discs.

“If you can toss a disc, you can play,” she said of beginners. Adding disc golf is another attraction for the course. “It’s a special place for Wrangell,” Woodbury said.

A golf disc is similar to a Frisbee, in that it’s round and made of plastic. But it’s smaller, thinner, made of denser plastic, and designed for throwing and distance, not for catching.

Each “hole” on the disc course has three tees of varying distance to the basket for beginners, intermediate and advanced players, explained Andrew Hoyt, who took first place in the July 4 tournament.

The course is wet much of the time – no surprise in a rainforest – and some disc golfers play in Xtratuf boots and ice grippers, which work the same as cleats and most everyone has a set of ice grippers at home, Hoyt said.

The plan is to have the course signs up by fall, and to let players toss their discs into the baskets – much like golfers aim their shots for the pin on the green – during the winter, paying for their rounds online, Woodbury said.

The community nonprofit that runs the golf course is looking for sponsors for the signs, asking \$1,000 for each sign. For more information about sponsorships, email muskegmeadows@gmail.com.

The 18 baskets of disc golf are set up among the nine holes of the regular golf course, with many of the same etiquette rules as the older game. Let faster golfers play through; watch out for others on the course; be quiet when



PHOTO COURTESY LUCY MOLINE-ROBINSON

“If you can toss a disc, you can play,” Kristi Woodbury, board president for Muskeg Meadows Golf Course, said of the 18-basket disc golf course set among the nine holes of traditional golf. The directional signs are the only missing piece to complete the disc golf course, which held its first tournament over the Fourth of July.



PHOTO COURTESY ANDREW HOYT

The No. 1 basket at Muskeg Meadows gets an umbrella to shield it from the rain. Disc golfers adapt for play in a rainforest.

others are taking their shot.

By being courteous, golfers who toss a disk and those who

hit a ball can play at the same time, Woodbury said.

The July 4th tournament

winners were Hoyt, at one under par; Shawn Curley, even par, in second place; and

Alex Lattimore, in third at four over par.

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

High school swim team starts practice Aug. 4

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

Practice starts next week for the Wrangell High School swim team, which had its season cut short last year by pandemic restrictions. After a month of five-day-a-week practice, the team's first swim meet is tentatively planned for the first weekend of September, in Ketchikan.

And although the team has put 13 or 14 swimmers into the pool in past years, "this year I might have only eight swimmers," said coach Jamie Roberts.

Fewer students this coming school year is part of the reason, Roberts said. In addition, some swimmers also compete in cross country, which will run at the same time as the swim season, pushing students to choose one or the other sport.

Roberts would like to put at least four boys and four girls into the pool, so that the Wrangell team could compete in four-person relays. But if there are not enough swimmers, team members can still compete in individual events, the coach said.

Roberts has coached the school swim club for about a decade and has been the high school team coach since 2018, but this is the first year she will be paid by the district for her coaching work. The three-year contract between the Wrangell School District and the teachers union, which took effect July 1, now includes a swim team coach on the list of paid extracurricular staff.

All of this year's swim meets will be held out of town — Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka and Juneau.

Wrangell cannot put on a swim meet because it lacks officials, starting blocks for the races, electronic touch pads and the rest of the automated scoring system needed for races, Roberts said.

The community pool has one starting block, but it would need enough for five lanes, and they cost about \$4,000 each, she said.

Wrangell also does not have a competition diving board. Swim and diving meets are held jointly, limiting the sites to schools that can handle both.

Under a tentative schedule, regionals would be held in Ketchikan the last weekend of October, with the state swim meet in Juneau the first weekend of November.

Most of Wrangell's swim competition last year was virtual, due to COVID-19 travel and social distancing restrictions, with the team racing in its home pool and sending in times to measure against other participating schools.

The season ended early last fall when the borough ordered the pool closed, in response to rising COVID-19 case counts in the community. Wrangell was unable to compete in regionals, and the state tournament was canceled.

While the swim team is limited to high school students, Roberts said the district's swim club is open to youth ages 5 to 18. The swim club runs longer, extending past the end-of-season state tournament for the team, giving youth more time in the pool.

The swim club usually attracts about 40 participants, she said.



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

A waterfront tradition

Bella Ritchie, 12, and Ryder Ritchie, 10, operate a booth near City Dock, catering to visitors who want to take back a piece of Wrangell history. The Ritchie family creates custom jewelry using garnets dug up from the ledge on the mainland near the mouth of the Stikine River. The ledge has been mined since the 1800s to create jewelry and such, though it's been set aside for children to use the past 60 years. Tricia and Ray Corkran visited Wrangell on Monday aboard the Admiralty Dream, and stopped to check out some of the merchandise.

Ketchikan airport worker finds lost diamond

By SPENCER GLEASON
Ketchikan Daily News

It's funny how life works out sometimes — how people often are in the right spot, at the right moment.

Danielle Wakefield, the assistant coach for the Nunaka Valley Little League softball team from Anchorage, was in Ketchikan for the Junior Division state softball tournament last week. And it was shortly after her plane landed on July 15 at the Ketchikan airport that she realized the diamond from her ring was missing.

The diamond has special meaning, as it's the only thing Wakefield has from her late father. "I had nothing else from him," she said.

"I got off the plane and went to the ferry, and by the time I had gotten off the ferry, I felt my ring — and my diamond was gone," she said. "I couldn't go back, so I basically left and came (to the softball field)."

She said to a friend, "I lost my diamond. How am I going to tell my mom?"

Her mom was watching the game's livestream feed Face-

book Live, and soon called Wakefield. "My mom called me and said, 'You lost your diamond,' right away. It was weird."

Moms have a knack for being all-knowing, and giving advice.

"She said post on Facebook, so I posted on Facebook," Wakefield said.

The post spread rapidly.

"Ketchikan shared it everywhere in their community pages," Wakefield said. "I was getting messages from people in the city, (saying) call the borough; here are phone numbers. People were really on top of this."

The next day, Wakefield received a message from someone who thought she had found the diamond.

It was Destiny Madewell, a lead security officer at the airport.

Madewell had picked up the shiny rock before it was vacuumed up in the baggage claim area.

"I had seen a post that a friend had shared with me on Facebook regarding (Wakefield) losing her diamond out of her ring," Madewell said. "It was after she had arrived (on Alaska Airlines flight) 64, the night before. I just decided — I don't normally do this — but I shared the (post) on Facebook with some of my airport friends, hoping, you know, like a needle in a haystack, (maybe) they would find it."

That haystack happened to be in an airport that sees an average of 700 people a day during the summer months,

according to Transportation Security Manager Jeremiah Tucker.

Even after all of that foot traffic — and more than 24 hours later — Wakefield's diamond lay there on the floor.

"I was sent downstairs at the end of the day to doublecheck, and make sure things were closed in our baggage area," Madewell said. "As I was leaving and walking through the airport baggage claim area, something shiny on the floor caught my eye. I was going to keep walking, but decided to look at it closer, and I picked it up and it turned out to be the diamond."

Madewell had found that "needle in a haystack."

She took it to her supervisor, Jodi Muzzana, to doublecheck whether it matched Wakefield's original Facebook post, and then sent Wakefield a message.

"I looked at my phone in the middle of a game, which I'm not supposed to do," Wakefield said, "and (Madewell) said, 'Is this yours?'"

"I said, 'It looks like mine, but I don't know until I try to put it back in my ring,'" Wakefield continued. "She said, 'Well, I'm going to be off the ferry at 8:30 p.m. — this is like 8:10 p.m. (on July 16) — so I was like, 'I'm leaving.'"

Of course, the diamond fit. "She was beyond joy," Madewell said of Wakefield's reaction. "Very excited and happy. I don't think she had much hope that it was going to be found."

Police report

Monday, July 19
Suspicious circumstance.
Speeding complaint.
Citizen assist.
Fireworks complaint.
Fireworks complaint.

Summons service.
Agency assist: Ex-parte hold.
Arrest: Violation conditions of release.
Burglary: Unfounded.

Tuesday, July 20
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Motor vehicle accident.
Dog complaint.

Friday, July 23
Fireworks: Disorderly conduct.
Agency assist: Ex-parte. Traffic stop.

Wednesday, July 21
Criminal mischief.
Domestic disturbance.

Saturday, July 24
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Thursday, July 22
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Traffic stop: Citation issued for failure to stop at stop sign.

Sunday, July 25
Trespass.
Agency assist: Hoonah.

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WRANGELL SENTINEL

Alaska Fish Factor

By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

Alaska company teams up with textile maker to use crab shells

Most people are unaware that the yarns and fabrics that make up our carpets, clothing, car seats, mattresses, even mop heads, are coated with chemicals and metals such as copper, silver and aluminum that act as fire retardants, odor preventors, antifungals and anti-microbials.

Now, crab shells from Alaska are providing the same safeguards in a bio-friendly way.

The metals and chemicals are being replaced by all-natural Tidal-Tex liquid treatments derived from chitosan molecules found in the exoskeletons of crab shells.

The bio-shift stems from a partnership between Leigh Fibers, of South Carolina, and Tidal Vision, the proprietary maker of the crab-based product that it began producing in a 20-foot Conex van in Juneau six years ago. The company, which now operates near Seattle and has 22 full-time employees in three production facilities, expects to put up to 60 people to work within two years.

In July, Tidal Vision opened its newest facility within Leigh Fibers' headquarters, bringing its Earth-friendly technology into the heart of the U.S. textile industry. Leigh Fibers is one of North America's largest textile waste and by-product reprocessing businesses that dates back to 1866 and now serves 25 countries.

Most of the raw product comes from snow crab and red king crab delivered to St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea, where they are processed into frozen leg clusters. The shells are transported to the mainland, where they are put through Tidal Vision's zero-waste, proprietary extraction process that produces chitosan in a flake form and is then made into the ready-to-use liquid Tidal-Tex product.

Tidal Vision CEO Craig Kasberg said it provides the same fabric protections as the manmade agents at far less cost.

"Our costs are minimal. They're basically just tied to the logistics and some of the freezer storage costs but it's nearly a free input material,"

he said.

All crustaceans have chitosan, a polysaccharide that is the second most abundant organic compound in the world next to cellulose.

"All these heavy metals need to be mined and refined, and then modified into these metal-based chemicals. Whereas we're taking an abundant and even problematic by-product from the seafood industry and with a really low-cost extraction method, producing a biochemistry solution that can provide the same properties in these industries. Our inputs are tied to a byproduct," Kasberg said.

Tidal Vision has tested a lot of crustacean "inputs," Kasberg said, but Alaska crab shells pack the best chitosan punch.

Tidal Vision hopes to build more partnerships and expand to other countries within the next few years.

The company also features a line of other chitosan-based products including water clarifiers and a game animal spray that prevents spoilage and keeps insects away.

Seafood scholarships

Scholarships are being offered to small and medium-sized seafood businesses to participate in helping to shape and launch a new National Seafood Council. Its mission is straightforward: to provide a unified voice for the industry to encourage Americans to eat more seafood.

A task force was formed in April, led by the Seafood Nutrition Partnership to get things underway.

"Some of the tasks include designing the governance of the National Seafood Council and the makeup and responsibilities of the board members. We want to make sure that the task force is representative of size of companies, gender, geography around the U.S. and points all along the supply chain," said Linda Cornish, president of the partnership.

Nominations are sought from six to eight seafood-related companies whose annual revenue is less than \$20 million each. The participation scholarships, backed by the Walton

Family Foundation, will be a minimum of \$2,500.

A National Seafood Council was created in 1987 as part of a Fish and Seafood Promotion Act but fizzled after five years. A group of more 60 U.S. fishing companies, groups and medical professionals have asked Congress to provide seed money to revive the group to develop a national seafood marketing and education program. The seafood council would eventually become industry funded, similar to other food industries.

"Seafood is probably one of the healthiest foods that people can eat, and there's just not enough funding to get that message out," Cornish said. "The milk industry has about \$300 million a year to market their product, pork about \$70 million a year, avocados about \$50 million. Seafood doesn't have that. So, for us to tell our story to the consumers in a more cohesive and unified way, we need some help to get this council started, and provide that resource to have a marketing campaign to do the same as other food groups have."

The deadline to apply for a task force scholarship is Aug. 13. Find links at seafoodnutrition.org.

Bristol Bay breaks it

The reds are still rolling in at Bristol Bay, where a return topping 64 million has officially broken the record for all-time sockeye returns since 1893. The previous record was set in 2018, at 62.9 million fish.

"Large numbers can be hard to comprehend, so consider this," wrote Andy Wink, executive director of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, which is funded and operated by drift-net fishermen. "If lined up nose-to-tail, this year's Bristol Bay sockeye run would stretch on for roughly 20,000 miles, enough to encircle all the Lower 48 states ... twice!"

It's natural abundance on a truly epic scale, Wink said. "It's important to highlight just how special the Bristol Bay

salmon resource is. These records aren't being set while overfishing. All escapement goals were met to propagate strong future runs. Despite all the bad news about environmental degradation and destruction, Bristol Bay is a shining example that healthy eco-systems can and still do still exist. It's really an ecological treasure. We ask that state and federal government pro-

tect Bristol Bay salmon and the natural habitats that allow it to thrive."

Processors have increased the base price at Bristol Bay to \$1.25 per pound. At an average fish weight of 4.5 pounds and a catch so far at nearly 39.5 million fish, back-of-the-envelope calculations put the value of the sockeye haul to fishermen so far at more than \$222 million.

Agency to take another look at Southeast wolves

JUNEAU (AP) - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced plans Monday to review whether the Southeast Alaska wolf population merits Endangered Species Act protections.

In 2016, the Fish and Wildlife Service determined the wolf did not warrant such protections.

The agency said Monday that a petition from conservation groups to protect the Alexander Archipelago wolf included information indicating protections may be warranted due to potential threats associated with logging, illegal and legal trapping and hunting, climate change impacts and loss of genetic diversity.

The agency said it is initiating a status review to determine if protections are warranted.

The wolves are found in the coastal rainforests of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. A petition filed last year by the Center for Biological Diversity, Alaska Rainforest Defenders and Defenders of Wildlife raised particular concerns about the wolves in Alaska and on Prince of Wales Island.

Conservationists contend that recent federal proposals to end large-scale, old-growth timber sales in the Tongass National Forest and to reverse a Trump administration decision to lift restrictions on logging and road-building in the forest don't erase the concerns for the wolf's habitat and population. They also cite wolf numbers, impacts from logging in the forest and on state lands and other factors as concerns.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Matter of the Estate of Clayton Smalley. You are notified that the court has appointed a personal representative of the estate of Clayton Smalley, born November 20, 1957, died June 26, 2021. All persons having claims against the deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

Case No. 1PW-21-00024PR

Sherrie Carlson

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Forks, WA 98331

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Publish July 15, 22 and 29, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Declaration of candidacy for Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board, and signature petitions required, will be available in the Borough Clerk's Office from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, August 2, 2021, through August 31, 2021.

Qualified persons may have their name placed on the ballot for the October 5, 2021, City and Borough of Wrangell Regular Municipal Election by filing declarations of candidacy for Borough Assembly, Port Commission and School Board.

Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 2-year terms

Borough Assembly: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022

School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms

School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022

Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms

Port Commission: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022

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

Publish July 29, Aug. 5, Aug. 19, Aug. 26, 2021

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Changing weather patterns threaten Northwest vineyards

By ANDREW SELSKY
The Associated Press

TURNER, Ore. (AP) - The heat wave that recently hit the Pacific Northwest subjected the region's vineyards to record-breaking temperatures nine months after the fields that produce world-class wine were blanketed by wildfire smoke.

But when temperatures began climbing close to 120 degrees Fahrenheit in late June, the grapes in Oregon and Washington state were still young, as small as BB's, many still shaded by leaf canopies that had not been trimmed back yet.

The good news for grape growers, wineries and wine lovers is the historic heat wave came during a narrow window when the fruit suffered little, if any, damage. Earlier or later in the growing season, it could have been disastrous.

The bad news is that extreme weather events and wildfires are apt to become more frequent because of climate change. A less intense heat wave again hit parts of the U.S. West just about a week after extreme temperatures gripped the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia on June 25 and lingered for several days, causing what could be hundreds of heat-related deaths.

This cool, rainy part of the country normally experiences plenty of sunny summer days but winemakers are worried about what's still ahead amid a historic drought tied to climate change: Extremely high temperatures could hit yet again, and wildfires are expected to be ferocious.

That includes Christine Clair, winery director of Willamette Valley Vineyards

in the city of Turner, just outside Oregon's capital. She watched rare winds last September smother the Willamette Valley, famed for its delicate pinot noir, in smoke from nearby flames.

"Last year was our first experience in the Willamette Valley with wildfires and smoke impact from them. Though it was considered a once-in-a-100-year east wind event, we believe we are at risk annually now," Clair said.

In recent years, wineries worldwide began hedging their bets against global warming and its fallout by moving to cooler zones, planting varieties that do better in heat and drought, and shading their grapes with more leaf canopy.

Similarly, in the wake of the Northwest heat wave, wineries plan to protect their crops from more blistering sunshine.

At Dusted Valley Vintners, in Walla Walla, Washington, less of the leaf canopy will be trimmed to keep the grapes shaded and prevent sunburn, co-owner Chad Johnson said.

Workers, who are restricted to morning work on very hot days, also will leave more grapes on the vine so the fruit ripens slower, Johnson said.

He has never seen conditions so early in the summer like those during the heat wave, with the thermometer climbing above 100 F for several days in the eastern Washington town near the Oregon border.

"It is definitely unusual and unprecedented in my career since I've been making wine for 20 years here," Johnson said.

June 29 was the hottest day in Walla Walla's recorded history, reaching 116 F and breaking the previous record by



AP PHOTO/ANDREW SELSKY

Christine Clair, winery director of Willamette Valley Vineyards, inspects pinot noir grapes on July 9 in Turner, Oregon. After a recent record heat wave and more hot weather expected, vineyard workers will trim less of the leaf canopy to keep the grapes shaded and prevent sunburn. Winemakers in the normally cool, rainy Pacific Northwest are worried about what's ahead this summer amid a historic drought.

two degrees.

Climate change, Johnson noted, has become a major concern for him and other wine producers worldwide.

"If it's not this early horrible spring frost they're having over in Europe this year, it's wildfires in the West, with the drought. It's always something," Johnson said. "And it's getting just more severe every year."

The industry, meanwhile, has been totaling the damage from last year's wildfires that covered California, Oregon and Washington state in thick smoke.

So many California growers worried about unpleasant "smoke taint" in the wine produced from their grapes that

they tried to get the fruit tested to see if the crops were worth harvesting.

The few testing labs were so overwhelmed they couldn't meet demand. Some wineries opted not to risk turning some of their own grapes into bad wine and hurting their brand and stopped accepting untested grapes from growers.

Wineries can do little to prevent wildfires outside their property, but if they become inundated with smoke, they can try to minimize damage. For example, they may turn some of the grapes with heavier smoke exposure into rose instead of red wine. That limits contact with the skin of the grape during wine production and can lower the concentration of smoke aroma compounds.

Updated maps add 200 Juneau homes to landslide, avalanche zones

JUNEAU (AP) - Updated maps add 200 homes and other buildings to hazard zones for landslides and avalanches in Alaska's capital city, bringing to about 550 the total number of structures that would be con-

sidered at moderate to severe risk of being damaged or destroyed if disaster struck.

The new maps, finished this year, used technology to chart the risks and are meant to update hazard maps made in the

1970s. The area reviewed includes downtown Juneau.

The Juneau Planning Commission is expected to review the maps next month before they advance to the city assembly for consideration and possi-

ble adoption.

"It's a big change," said Alexandra Pierce, Juneau's planning manager. "The new maps are much, much easier for us to use and also much, much more accurate. It does mean some changes for people in the community and their properties."

Insurance costs and resale values for homes can change in known hazard areas. In such areas, local laws also restrict construction and subdivision. That can lead to push back from the public.

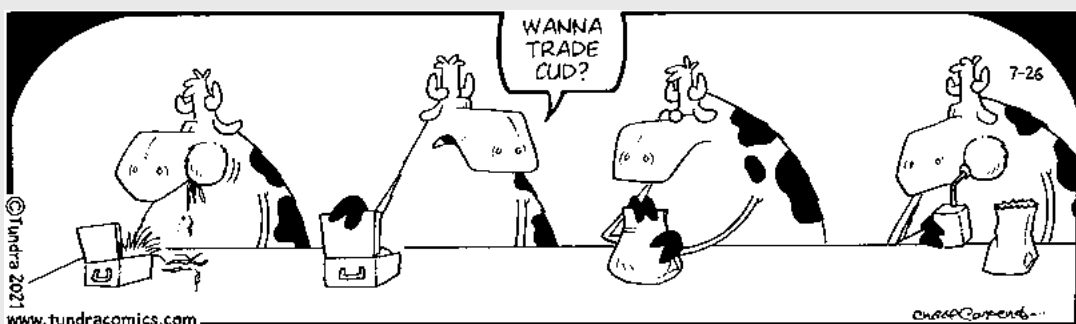
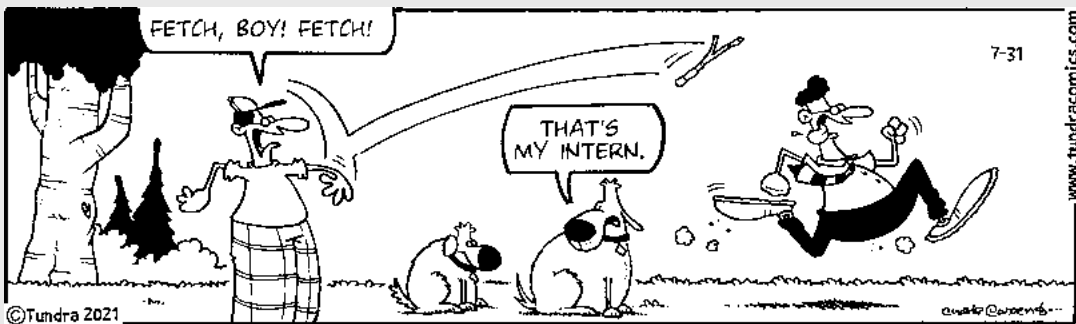
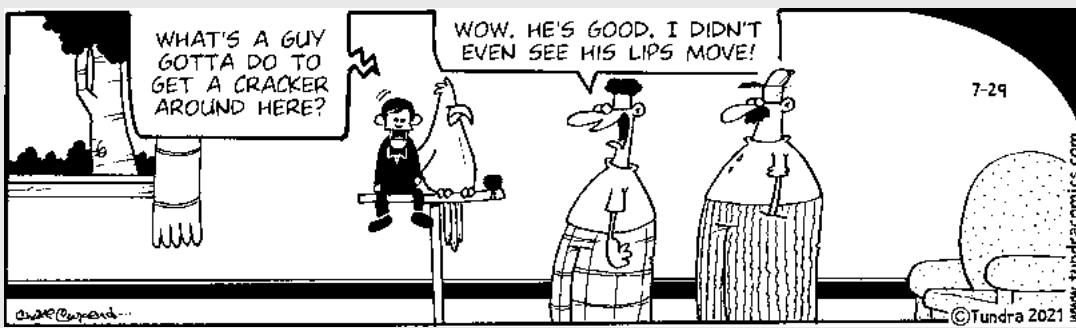
Pierce said the city did not have information on how insurance rates or values may change if the new maps are adopted.

Buying a home is the biggest investment many people make, and "dealing with issues outside of your control that affects

your property can be scary and can be difficult to digest," Pierce said. "And our goal in this project was to give the public the most accurate and up-to-date information on the landslide and avalanche hazard areas in downtown Juneau."

This isn't the first attempt to update the maps: The city's planning department tried to upgrade them in the 1990s, but the maps were not accepted by the assembly.

Mudslides, snowslides and rock falls are not uncommon in Southeast Alaska, with its steep terrain and heavy rainfall. A landslide in Haines killed two people last December. A landslide in a residential area of Sitka killed three people in 2015. A February 2020 rock fall in Ketchikan put a grocery store out of business.



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COVID

Continued from page 1

fishing opener.

Cordova's active case count was down to 40 as of Tuesday afternoon.

Starting next Monday, all Cordova city employees will be required to be vaccinated or undergo weekly testing for the virus, the city manager announced. Staffing at the city's dispatch center was stretched thin last week, with some employees out with the virus.

Petersburg reported its second COVID death of the pandemic last week.

At least three more cruise ships in Alaska waters reported COVID-19 among passengers this week. The 74-passenger Wilderness Explorer left Ketchikan and headed straight for Juneau on Monday evening, canceling its full itinerary, after seven fully vaccinated people aboard the ship tested positive for COVID.

Ketchikan officials said some of the infected travelers planned to isolate in hotels after the ship docked in Juneau.

Juneau officials on Monday reported one case each on a large ship, the Celebrity Millennium, and on a small ship, the American Constellation,

which already had an outbreak of 16 COVID cases earlier this month.

Celebrity Cruises said the passenger flew home aboard "private air transportation."

"I think that we were never expecting the cruise season to be entirely COVID free," Robert Barr, Juneau's deputy city manager, told Juneau public radio station KTOO.

State health officials continue to preach that vaccines are the best defense against the spread of the coronavirus. Dr. Joe McLaughlin, the state epidemiologist, told reporters the vaccine effectiveness is "exceptionally high," but it is "not perfect."

The vaccination rate among eligible Alaskans — ages 12 and older — has held mostly steady in the past week at 57% with at least one dose of a vaccine and 52% fully vaccinated, below the national rates of almost 67% and 58% — with 30 states doing better than Alaska, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Wrangell was at 62% at least partially vaccinated as of Tuesday, according to state statistics.

"This is becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated. We

are seeing outbreaks of cases in parts of the country that have low vaccination coverage because unvaccinated people are at risk," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said in a July 16 interview on National Public Radio.

The state is continuing to contract with the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium for free COVID testing at the Wrangell airport. The contract had been scheduled to expire June 30, but the state decided to continue paying for the tests, which are available to travelers and anyone else in the community.

SEARHC also provides vaccinations in Wrangell, at no cost to the individual.

Alaska's 88-year-old member of the U.S. House, Don Young, tweeted on Monday to encourage people to get vaccinated. Young, who had COVID-19 last year, tweeted, "It is NOT an experience I want again. That is why I chose to get vaccinated."

He added, "I understand there is quite a bit of misinformation out there, so let me be clear: These vaccines are safe and can help keep you out of the hospital."

Institute property

Continued from page 1

dents who worked or lived on the property, to learn as much as possible about the operations and what existed before the land was cleared, the mayor said.

The classrooms, dorms and other school buildings were demolished in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The school had about 260 students at its largest enrollment in 1959-1960, according to a 2005 report from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

The U.S. Department of the Interior, which oversees the BIA, has committed to investigating its past operation and oversight of Native American boarding schools. At its peak, the government operated more than 200 boarding schools nationwide and funded over 100 more, mostly run by religious denominations.

The department will work to "uncover the truth about the loss of human life and the lasting consequences" of policies that over the decades forced children from their families and communities, Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced last month.

The recent discovery of children's remains buried at the site of what was once Canada's largest Indigenous residential school has magnified interest in the troubling legacy both in Canada and the United States.

In Canada, more than 150,000 First Nations children were required to attend state-funded Christian schools as part of a program to assimilate them into society and convert them to Christianity.

The Wrangell Institute was

much different than the boarding schools in Canada, Prysunka said. Unlike in Canada, the school "was not run as a closed system," where children could be hidden away from their home communities, he said.

The U.S. government's unprecedented work will include compiling and reviewing records to identify past boarding schools, locate known and possible burial sites at or near those schools, and uncover the names and tribal affiliations of students, Haaland said.

"To address the intergenerational impact of Indian boarding schools and to promote spiritual and emotional healing in our communities, we must shed light on the unspoken traumas of the past no matter how hard it will be," the secretary said.

Neither the Department of the Interior nor the BIA have yet publicly announced their plans for investigating former boarding school sites. Several religious orders operated boarding schools in Alaska separate from the BIA, as did the state.

A member of New Mexico's Laguna Pueblo, Haaland is the first Native American to serve as a Cabinet secretary.

The Army Corps is not taking action on the borough's wetlands fill permit application, pending completion of requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act, Carol Rushmore, Wrangell's planning administrator, reported to the borough assembly for its Tuesday night meeting.

The borough is working toward redeveloping the 134-

acre property in two phases, eventually offering 40 lots ranging in size from 17,000 to 41,000 square feet.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Cell tower

Continued from page 1

service as a result of long awaited cellular technological improvements not possible with the existing wooden pole," Brekke wrote.

There was some discussion about whether or not the equipment atop the tower would provide the latest 5G service. However, Joel Aro, with Lynx Consulting, told the assembly the equipment on the Shoemaker tower would provide just regular LTE service at this time.

Assemblymember Patty Gilbert, acting mayor for this meeting, suggested an amendment to the lease that would require the assembly to receive reports on the radio frequency radiation from the tower.

"When you sublease and have all these antennas, obviously you're subject to federal and state regulations, and the FCC (Federal Communications Commission)," Gilbert said. "But what about the combined effect of all your subleases? Is there a way to gauge the radiation output from that? ... We need to have some language in there that takes into consideration the totality."

After some brief discussion, the assembly approved the amendment.

Vertical Bridge is also the applicant for the new tower next to the landfill, with Verizon listed as the user.

"Granting the permit to proceed with this project will greatly enhance wireless coverage in the area" at the north end of Wrangell Island including residences, the airport, and the islands at the mouth of the Stikine River, according to the application.

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