



Wrangell, Alaska  
October 11, 2023

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Assembly has a lot of decisions to make on next year's sale of subdivision lots

BY LARRY PERSILY  
*Sentinel writer*

While ground work is underway at the Alder Top Village (Keishangita.'aan) subdivision upland from Shoemaker Bay, borough officials are at work researching options for how the residential lots — as many as 42 — will be sold.

The sale is expected by next summer or fall.

"People are excited about it," said Kate Thomas, the borough's economic development director. The community has never seen so many building lots come up for sale at one time, she said in an interview Friday, Oct. 6. "This is a new opportunity for us."

Borough officials want to get the land into private ownership so that people can build homes, Thomas said. A shortage of housing — either existing homes or lots for development — is often cited as a problem for attracting and retaining new residents, businesses and workers in town.

The subdivision is divided into two phases, totaling 42 lots. The 22 lots in Phase 1 range from 0.39 to 0.54 acres. The 20 lots in the Phase 2 have not been measured but appear on the map to be slightly larger in size.

Thomas said next year's sale could include just the Phase 1 lots, or maybe all the parcels from both phases

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PHOTO BY CYNII CRARY

## Gone until next summer

The last cruise ship of the season, the 650-foot Seabourn Odyssey, as seen from the Nolan Center, tied up at the City Dock on Sunday, Oct. 8. Wrangell was on the itinerary for more than 130 cruise visits this summer, ranging from 40-passenger Alaska tour boats to several ships with capacity to carry hundreds of guests each, such as the Odyssey with room for 450 passengers. If all of the ships had been full, the traffic would have totaled more than 28,000 visitors, about one-third more than the pre-COVID summer of 2019.

## Boys cross-country runners win state title again; Loucks takes first

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
*Sentinel reporter*

The Wrangell Wolves cross-country team braved near-freezing temperatures and stiff competition to take home their second state championship title in a row in Palmer on Saturday, Oct. 7. The boys team won the Division III title, and though the girls did not have enough runners to score for Wrangell, the two girls team members

finished the season strong.

Sophomore Boomchain Loucks took first place out of the 80 runners in the boys race, with a time of 17:28.0. He maintained a substantial lead throughout. "At 1K, he was over 100 meters ahead of the chase pack," observed coach Mason Villaroma.

"I knew I had to bring it all home," Loucks said after the win. "I had to grind for it. It felt amazing to cross the fin-

ish line, being first."

His goals for his high school running career are to "win it the next year and win it the next year too. Three in a row." As a junior, he's hoping to run the 5K in less than 16:30 and as a senior, break 16:00. That time would place him above Alaska's current Division I top finisher, senior Fischer Adams from Palmer, who logged the fastest time at

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## Killer whales freed after 6 weeks trapped in lake near Coffman Cove

BY ANNA LAFFREY  
*Ketchikan Daily News*

A team in Coffman Cove helped set free two killer whales that had been trapped in Barnes Lake on northeast Prince of Wales Island since mid-August for six weeks, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The orcas presumably stranded themselves by chasing prey into the lake during a high-tide cycle. Transient, or Bigg's, killer whales are a genetically and culturally distinct population of orcas that live in the Pacific Northwest and feed primarily on marine mammals, according to NOAA.

Barnes Lake has two entrances from salt water that a whale could pass through during a very high tide; the north and south entrances

become whitewater rapids, shallows or dry land at low tide. Experts and community members during a high-tide cycle last week used multiple techniques to encourage the orcas to exit through a narrow channel at the south end of the lake when the tide allowed a brief opportunity on Sept. 29.

The 42-year-old male and 16-year-old male orcas — well known to researchers — were not the first whales to be trapped in the lake. In 1994, a pod of nine offshore killer whales, a different ecotype of orcas, spent about six or seven weeks in the lake before whale biologist David Bain led efforts to push them back into the ocean. Two of those nine orcas died before the others were freed from the lake.

Bain, who is the chief scientist for the Orca

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## Borough confronts choices to replace aging barge ramp

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
*Sentinel reporter*

As the downtown barge ramp nears the end of its useful life, the borough is weighing its options for replacing and possibly relocating this piece of critical infrastructure.

Assembly members and borough staff discussed replacing the ramp in its present location or moving it to 6-Mile or the Marine Service Center. Alternative locations for the ramp could free up the downtown area for tourism development but might also inconvenience the shipping companies that prefer to deliver their freight directly to downtown businesses.

The ramp's life expectancy is "not long," Borough Manager Jeff Good told the assembly at its Sept. 26 meeting. The most recent condition assessment was conducted around 2009 and estimated that the structure had about 10 to 15 years of useful life left.

"We're there now," said Capital Facilities Director Amber Al-Haddad.

The borough has performed maintenance on the structure since it was assessed, like spending around \$250,000 to repair its floatation tanks in May 2022. But it has not yet formulated a plan to take care of the remaining structural issues.

"The problem with it is it's under-designed for the amount of

load we're putting on there," said Good. The metal ramp is old, and after years of withstanding heavier loads than it was intended to bear, its structure has been compromised.

Two years ago, an engineering firm estimated that building a new ramp at 6-Mile would cost about \$18 million, according to Harbor-master Steve Miller. However, costs have gone up "exponentially since two years ago," he added.

As the only municipal government in Southeast that owns its own barge ramp, the borough would need to pursue grant funding to replace and possibly relocate the ramp on its own. However, Miller hopes that the borough will be able to work with Alaska Marine Lines or Sampson Tug and Barge to build a privately owned ramp.

Alaska Marine Lines "owns its own place in Petersburg, Ketchikan, Juneau, everywhere," Miller said. For the borough, the ramp is "a huge expense," since it doesn't charge companies high enough rates to keep up with maintenance.

"If we were to crank up rates to do proper maintenance, how much could the community really bear," he asked. Products that arrive via barge are already expensive as is.

But before the borough can make any decisions about the

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

- Wednesday, Oct. 11:** Marty Kaer, Kanen Miller, Kurt Young; Anniversary: Craig and Kim Strain.
- Thursday, Oct. 12:** Kathie Angerman, Perry Brink; Anniversary: Tony and Sue Ann Guggenbickler.
- Friday, Oct. 13:** Tori Smith Roberts.
- Saturday, Oct. 14:** Dutsin Johnson.
- Sunday, Oct. 15:** Brianna Schilling.
- Monday, Oct. 16:** Craig Villarma.
- Tuesday, Oct. 17:** Rachel Angerman, Ann Kramer Benson; Anniversary: Fred and Sumi Angerman.

## Senior Center Menu

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

### Thursday, Oct. 12

Chicken pot pie, Harvard beets, fruit slaw

### Friday, Oct. 13

Beef stew with vegetables,  
spicy fruit cup, roll

### Monday, Oct. 16

Closed. Shelf-stable meal and fruit cup delivered on Friday, Oct. 13

### Tuesday, Oct. 17

Fiesta pork, green beans, Waldorf salad, rice

### Wednesday, Oct. 18

Closed for Alaska Day

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

- Friday, Oct. 13**  
Columbia, 8:30 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 20**  
Columbia, 3:15 p.m.
- Friday, Oct. 27**  
Columbia, 8:15 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 3**  
Columbia, 3:45 p.m.

### Southbound

- Monday, Oct. 16**  
Columbia, 7:45 a.m.
- Monday, Oct. 23**  
Columbia, 1:45 a.m.
- Monday, Oct. 30**  
Columbia, 8 a.m.
- Monday, Nov. 6**  
Columbia, 8 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

Call the terminal at 907-874-2021 for information or call 907-874-3711 or 800-642-0066 for recorded information.

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
Oct. 11	...	...	12:03	15.2	05:45	1.1	06:06	2.4
Oct. 12	00:09	15.2	12:34	16.0	06:16	0.7	06:37	1.2
Oct. 13	00:46	15.7	01:02	16.6	06:45	0.6	07:06	0.2
Oct. 14	01:21	15.9	01:29	16.9	07:12	0.7	07:35	-0.6
Oct. 15	01:54	15.8	01:54	17.0	07:38	1.1	08:04	-1.0
Oct. 16	02:27	15.4	02:20	17.0	08:05	1.7	08:34	-1.2
Oct. 17	03:00	14.9	02:46	16.8	08:33	2.4	09:08	-1.1



## ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

**SIGN-UP FOR CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY**, children 12 and younger 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.

**ST. ROSE PARISH** will serve an Asian meal, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 14. at the parish hall. The \$20 meal includes chicken adobo, pansit, chow mein, steamed rice, spring rolls and a brownie. For takeout orders call Marlene at 907-305-0654. Baked goods, quilts, handcrafted art and other special treasures will be for sale at the hall.

**BRAVE** is hosting its sixth annual Family Resilience Fair, 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Nolan Center. Learn how your community can help your family. Prizes, games and resources. For more information call 907-204-0530.

**WRANGELL COMMUNITY CHORALE** will begin rehearsals for their annual Christmas concert at 5:15 p.m. Monday, Oct. 16, in the high school music room. All singers are welcome. No auditions. Contact Bonnie at 907-796-9632 for more information.

**SCHOOL BOARD** work session to discuss student activities funding is set for 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 16, in Evergreen Elementary School Room 101. Although a quorum of the board may be present, no formal action will be taken.

**ALASKA DAY HALF MARATHON** starts at 8 a.m. Oct. 21 at Muskeg Meadows, hosted by Parks and Recreation. \$35 registration fee. All ages welcome. \$10 suggested donation. 1-mile dash, 5K run/walk, 10K, half-marathon at various start times. Check the link for routes, times and to register for the half-marathon at wrangellrec.com.

**KIDS CARNIVAL GAMES** start at 10:30 a.m. Oct. 21, at Muskeg Meadows, hosted by Class of 2025. Proceeds will go to prom and graduation for the class.

**BOOK FAIR** open to the public from 1:30 to 3 p.m and 4 to 7 p.m. Oct. 25, and 2 to 6 p.m. Oct. 26 at the Evergreen Elementary School gym. Call 907-874-2321 for more information.

**CHRISTMAS TREE LANE** is coming to town, and decorated trees will be accepted Nov. 25 and 27 at the Nolan Center. Each entry goes up for a silent auction to support Hospice of Wrangell. Be creative and beautify the Nolan Center lobby. For more information, call Alice Rooney 907-305-0007.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** - No movie this weekend. Movies will resume Oct. 27.

**WRANGELL PARKS and RECREATION** is offering multiple activities to get your body moving. For more information on any of the activities and more visit [www.wrangellrec.com](http://www.wrangellrec.com) or call 907-874-2444.

- **JIU JITSU** on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7 p.m. and Saturdays 10 to 11:30 a.m. at the community center gym for 16 years and up. \$5 drop-in fee.
- **ADULT SIGN LANGUAGE** Oct. 10 and Oct. 12-15 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the multi-purpose room at the community gym for ages 14 and older. Only 15 spots available. \$25 fee. Must register online.
- **JUMP ROPE CLUB** on Mondays, 5 to 6 p.m. at the community center gym with Kristen Debord. The 6 week course begins Oct. 16 for grades 3 and older. Jump ropes will be provided. \$25 fee.

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

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

### Oct. 11, 1923

Wrangell's John Hanson has received letters of patent on two inventions that will greatly facilitate the business of trolling. One of Mr. Hanson's inventions is a gaff hook, and the other a trolling swivel. The swivel relates to an apparatus used by fishermen on a line for catching fish of any kind. The invention includes the provision of a spring within the body of the swivel, thereby permitting a certain degree of resilience when a fish strikes so that the line may give and so that danger of losing the fish will be greatly reduced. The gaff hook has for its chief object a construction design whereby the hook is normally maintained in a fixed position relative to the handle but allows a rotary motion with a view of keeping the fish on the hook, so that the hook can turn and twist with the movements of the fish as it tries to separate itself from the hook.

### Oct. 8, 1948

Two Davis-type rafts of logs and poles, totaling nearly two and one-half million board feet, left McDonald's Harbor on Sokolof Island, seven miles from

Wrangell, on Wednesday for Puget Sound ports. One raft, bound for the Nettleton Lumber Co. at Bellingham, had over a million board feet of spruce, hemlock and cedar logs. The second raft contained about 1,500 board feet of spruce which enclosed the poles to prevent chaffing by the rafting chains. This raft will go to the Cascade Pole Co. of Tacoma, and is an experimental shipment of poles to determine the feasibility of Davis-rafting poles instead of shipping them aboard freighters, which is a more costly method. If the new method of rafting proves satisfactory, pole cutting operations will probably be forthcoming for Wrangell again this winter.

### Oct. 12, 1973

Alaska Airlines will continue service as usual from Wrangell airport this winter, an airline spokesman told the Sentinel. Warren C. Metzger, vice president of operations and chief pilot for the airline, said the 2,000-foot-long strip the state will leave open at the airport during a massive construction project

will be adequate for de Havilland Otter aircraft. "With an Otter, it will be no problem," said Metzger from Seattle. He said a plan to use amphibious aircraft or air taxi floatplanes to shuttle Wrangell passengers to and from main-line airliners at Petersburg has been scrapped.

### Oct. 8, 1998

Fire destroyed a portion of Frank and Doug Age's sawmill at 13-Mile Zimovia Highway during the night Monday. According to Wrangell Police Chief Jim Hasenohrl, the police department was called by an employee reporting to work at the site Tuesday morning who reported that the main saw building had burned to the ground. Officers responded to the call, and because the mill is located outside the city's jurisdiction the investigation was referred to Alaska State Troopers. Other buildings on the site were undamaged. Hasenohrl said the cause of the fire is unknown at present time, but it appears that it started in a center section of the site, in the luncheon area. There is no evidence of foul play at this time.

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FREIGHT FOR LESS

# Kolarich promoted from district ranger to deputy forest supervisor

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Clint Kolarich, who served as Wrangell's district ranger since June 2019, has moved to Ketchikan to work as one of the Tongass National Forest's two deputy forest supervisors. He officially stepped into the new job on Sept. 13.

District employee Austin O'Brien will step in as his interim replacement for the next 120 days.

In the Wrangell district, Kolarich was responsible for the management of the area's natural resources. "It's all the folks in the district that do the work," he said. "The district ranger is just there to support those folks."

During his four-and-a-half years as district ranger, his proudest accomplishments include helping clear the Roosevelt Harbor parking lot of derelict vehicles and collaborating with the Wrangell Cooperative Association to bring over \$600,000 of grant funding to the community.

The accumulated cars at Roosevelt Harbor were among the first problems Kolarich heard about during his first weeks on the job in 2019. Identifying which cars were aban-

doned and which had owners was a multi-year effort that required robust community collaboration.

Of the 76 vehicles that the Forest Service cleared out, "not one person in Wrangell complained that their vehicle was removed," Kolarich said.

"I'm really proud of that," he continued. "The community came together with the Forest Service" to complete a project that the organization had been putting off for 30 years.

In his new position as deputy forest supervisor, he'll be playing a similar role but on a larger scale, overseeing resource management all 17 million acres of the Tongass National Forest. "I like the challenge," he said. "The Tongass is a very unique forest. It has a lot of challenges, but it also has tons of opportunities."

In his first few weeks in the role, he intends to spend most of his time listening to rangers from the forest's nine districts and learning about the issues each area is facing. He'll develop long-term goals later on, once he has a more complete understanding of each district's needs.

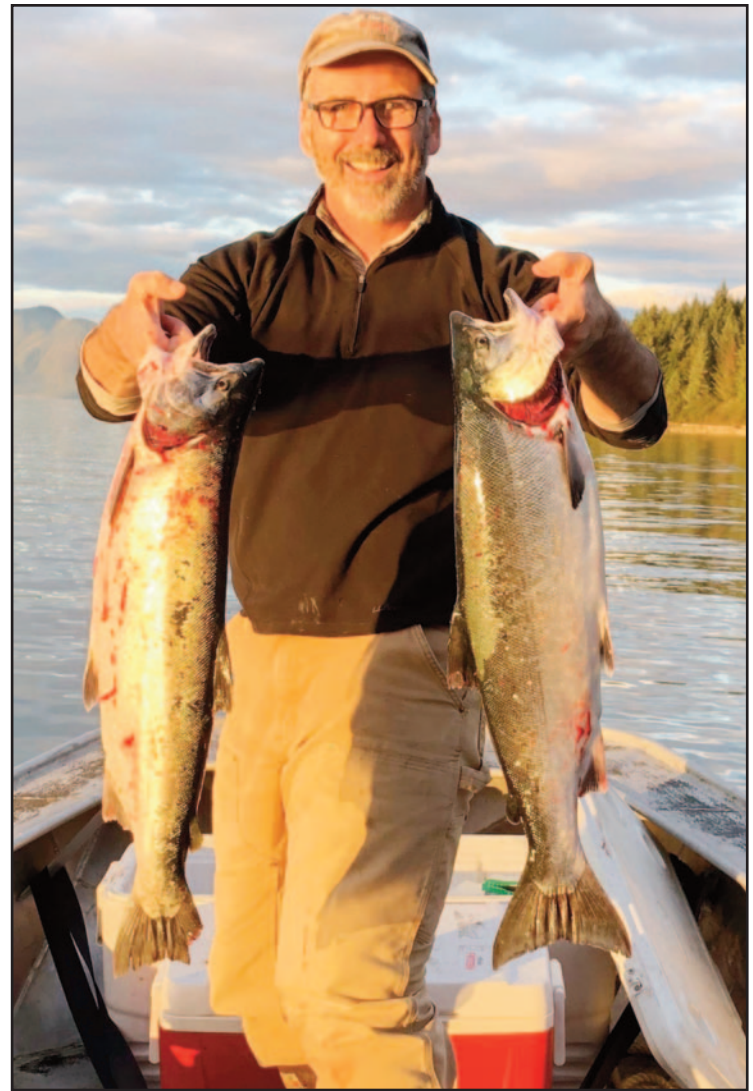
So far, the transition has

been like "going from the dance floor to the balcony," he said. He'll get to build on his previous successes, share his knowledge with other districts and help them accomplish their projects. "It's just extrapolating out from that district ranger position to a wider area."

Kolarich's love for the outdoors began in his childhood, when he would hunt and fish with his dad. After his junior year of high school, he joined the Forest Service's Youth Conservation Corps and after graduation became a seasonal firefighter.

Fighting fires was the ultimate physical and mental challenge, he recalled, but after 10 years of intense exertion, his focus shifted toward building relationships with communities and implementing good land management practices.

The chance to spend time outside "got me into it," he said of his career, "but it's the people that keep me in it."



Clint Kolarich displays his catch on a coho fishing trip near Wrangell in 2020.

# James Leslie brews up plans for special Wrangell beer flavor

BY CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Wrangell may soon be home to its own unique variety of beer.

James Leslie of Alaska Waters has plans to open the town's first brewery in a century, and though he still has plenty of permitting hurdles left to clear, the borough assembly had no objection to his state brewery license at its Sept. 26 meeting. He hopes to start brewing in winter of next year at the very earliest.

Opening a brewery "has always been bouncing around in my head," said Leslie. "I've messed around with brewing a little bit. It would be cool if there was a brewery here in Wrangell."

The long-term plan includes patio seating outside of 56° North, where the driftwood moose sculpture is currently located, a brewery in the storage space at the back of the building and, eventually, a canning facility. The business could hold a beer garden during the Fourth of July and distribute its product to local restaurants and bars.

"I think it would be a good thing for Wrangell to have its own flavor," Leslie said.

He's a longtime casual fan of the art of beer-making — his mother dabbled in brewing when he was younger and whenever he travels to a new town, he likes to check out its

local beverage offerings.

After working through the substantial amounts of paperwork required to serve alcohol on Alaska Waters jet boat tours, he decided he might as well "go for the stars and see how far we can get this" by applying for a brewery license as well.

Making beer in-house would allow him to provide wintertime work for his seasonal tour employees and serve his own brews to tourists on jet boats.

The name of the establishment is still to be determined, but Leslie is tentatively considering "The Sand Bar," which evokes the Stikine River Delta.

The lengthy permitting process isn't the only thing delaying the business's potential start date. Perfecting the product will also take time. "I'm capable of making beer," Leslie said, "but I need to learn how to make good beer."

Given enough practice and enough taste testers willing to provide candid criticism, he's confident that he'll be able to produce a beverage that will do the community proud. "Wrangell is a great place to start a brewery because people will give me honest feedback," he said. In a small town that values a good brew, it will be impossible not to find out if his work is below par.

After his state permits clear, Leslie's will start modifying the room at the back of 56° North to hold the facility and start moving in brewing equipment. The renovations that will be required are "all totally doable, it's just not going to happen overnight," he said. "As soon as I get the OK from the state — and I just got the okay from the city — then I'll start putting some money into the actual infrastructure."

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## Wrangell Voyage Schedule Change

A reminder for all AML customers: our barge service to Wrangell will begin departing Seattle on Friday (rather than Wednesday) beginning with voyage **S3412 on Friday, October 6**. Cargo availability in Wrangell will be the following Tuesday.

Please visit [www.shipaml.com](http://www.shipaml.com) for our current sailing schedules. If you have any questions, please email [amlcsc@lynden.com](mailto:amlcsc@lynden.com) or call **907-874-3314**.

Thank you for your continued support!



FROM THE PUBLISHER

Congressional Republicans too selfish to govern

By LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

One of the many reasons — perhaps the biggest reason — that much of the public has lost confidence and even interest in Congress is that a shrinking number of the 535 House and Senate members bother to do their job anymore.

They are too busy posturing for political gain, posting on social media for financial gain and positioning themselves to gain an edge on election rivals.

Pretty soon, I expect some of them might steal a publicity page from Taylor Swift's football playbook and be seen with star athletes to gain even more attention. The difference being, however, that Swift comes to work when she takes the stage, while many members of Congress simply take the stage.

It has been painful to watch the U.S. House, where a mini-minority of eight members, representing about 2% of the chamber and 2% of American voters, essentially fired the speaker of the House, creating turmoil, uncertainty, animosity and confusion in governing the country.

If a space traveler landed on the Capitol steps and asked a visitor guide at the U.S. House, "Take me to your leader," the guide might answer, "When you find one, let me know."

A leaderless, disorganized, divided House is not what the country needs.

Not when inflation is still too high; affordable housing too tight; homelessness too prevalent; a college education too expensive; health care too costly, even with insurance; workers in far too short of supply; guns and drugs and deaths from both much too common; attacks on personal freedom too numerous; and real leaders too few and very far between.

Those are the jobs that members of Congress are paid to work. Instead, too many would rather play at work.

Making a mess of the U.S. House is not in the best interests of Americans who are right to worry whether the government will shut down Nov. 17, which is the next deadline for Congress to approve some form of a spending bill to ensure that public services continue, members of the military get paid and federal offices don't close.

The staunchly publicity-hungry conservative mini-minority effectively controls the Republican House majority, who cannot do anything without the votes of their cranky colleagues. The anti-most-everything-about-government group is willing — even eager — to take hostages to win their arguments. Maybe their long Pinocchio noses are getting in the way from telling too many lies, but they seem to have lost sight that the hostages are not other members of Congress but rather 340 million Americans.

They also have lost sight that while they were elected to represent their district, their job is to serve the nation.

Risking a shutdown of federal services, jeopardizing people's jobs and families and national and global security to score political points and social media clicks is selfish. It's irresponsible, and it's too early for Halloween tricks.

It would be a treat if the House mini-minority and their supporters could accept that they don't rule Congress or the nation.

America is a country where the majority rules, though admittedly not always well or fairly, and the minority can object, attempt to amend, talk all day and night and lobby and buttonhole and cajole and whatever else they can legally do to make their point. But at some point, a 2% mini-minority needs to let the other 98% run government, provide public services and do their job.

If not, the 2% should get another job. One where they are paid for being selfish, not productive.

EDITORIAL

Look local first before looking online

Wrangell's sales tax revenues from online commerce continue to climb as more residents shop for more things online, and as more sellers follow the law and collect sales tax and send the money to the borough.

As much as that's good news for the municipal treasury, it's not particularly good news for local business owners and their employees, and it's not a good indicator for the long-term economic future of the community.

No doubt there are a lot of things that people want and need to buy which are not available in town. And no doubt much of what they buy online is less expensive than what they can find on Front Street or around the corners, though rising shipping costs charged by many e-commerce sites may be changing the math for some shoppers.

But online merchants don't help out the community with donations for school sports teams, the Fourth of July celebration and other fundraisers. Their employees don't volunteer around town, don't participate in the community theater, holiday chorale or annual cleanup.

Simply put, the cheapest price online comes at a price to the community.

Wrangell's retail shops don't stock every toner cartridge someone may need, or every brand of the latest organic vitamins and food supplements trending on social media, or that special kitchen utensil needed for an unusual recipe. But the stores do carry a lot — it's just a matter of giving them a look before clicking a mouse or a "Buy Now" button on a phone.

Take a short walk around town — the retail shops are only a few blocks apart. Look to see what they have in stock and what they could order. Consider how quickly you need it and whether buying in town works for you.

And while you are deciding, remember the benefits that local merchants provide the town. The owners and employees provide more than a retail service — they are in the business of community service too. Give them a look next time you think about filling your online cart.

— Wrangell Sentinel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Wrangell needs to exercise more local control before large ships take over town

The Sept. 20 article in the Wrangell Sentinel made it clear that the community of Wrangell has been infected with cancer. "Dam" cancer to be exact. That being the Nieuw Amsterdam and the Westerdam, along with accompanying disease names the Queen Elizabeth, the Ruby Princess and Grand Princess.

Not too long ago the people of Wrangell rejected the idea of turning the former sawmill site into some type of tourist-related mecca. Who gave this upcoming plague permission to infect Wrangell?

Were our community leaders contacted? The mayor? The assembly? The economic development director? Was there any input from community members? Or did they just decide to show up because they thought they could? Maybe Homer and Haines rejected them. Why didn't Wrangell? It's certainly not up to me to decide, but somehow, someday the community

should have a say since our leaders did not.

They sent their first invader here last month. They have tried or succeeded in booking rooms for employees here for the summer. Probably van or bus drivers so they can conduct their own tours. This thing will metastasize. Wait until their vans or buses show up on the barge. If you are a local tour operator, you better get on top of the upcoming situation. They will once again be looking for buildings to buy.

So often it appears that the Alaska summer is for tourists and not for the residents who anxiously wait for it. I have lived and worked in many areas of Alaska, and it is always the same story. More, more, more. Yes, Wrangell needs some tourism, but these companies are big boys and bullies, relentless, overbearing and only interested in their bottom line. Besides, can this community really handle these numbers?

Maybe we can copy what I witnessed in Sitka this summer

and barricade the streets so the town can be inundated. I happened to be there on the day 9,000 tourists came to town. What a mess. A beautiful place turned ugly. I understand there might be a measure on their ballot to cut back the numbers. Good luck.

Having 2,000 people enter Wrangell is roughly equivalent to 9,000 in Sitka due to the difference in size between the two towns. Of course, they all would not come at once, but how many is too many?

Are the following places capable of handling a huge influx of people? Rainbow Falls, Petroglyph Beach, Nolan Center Museum, Front Street, Anan and the river leading to the glacier.

I also learned in Sitka that their SEARHC hospital is often strained and/or overcrowded due to tourist injuries and diseases, and that shoplifting is common with these large, reduced-price cruise ships.

As of now, there is no local control.

John Bania

Barge landing

Continued from page 1

scope of the project and partnerships with shipping companies, it needs to decide whether to relocate the ramp or keep it in the same spot — ideally within the next three or four months.

"We need to make a decision so that we can start applying for grant money for wherever that project is going to be," Good said. "Otherwise, we can't afford it."

Alaska Marine Lines and Sampson Tug and Barge both use the barge ramp to move freight, so both companies' needs will factor into the borough's decisions about where to locate the facility. "It would be an increase in cost to move out (to 6-Mile) for both of them on the operational side," said Good, after factoring in the labor and operating costs for trucking freight into town.

However, moving the ramp from its current location "would allow us to do a lot downtown as far as the development of this property and would really be more attractive from a tourist standpoint," he added.

Moving the ramp is an integral part of the borough's waterfront master plan, which it developed in 2015 with Juneau-based Corvus Design. At that time, borough officials estimated

that the plan would bring roughly \$1.2 million to \$2 million in additional economic activity to the community annually.

However, at the Sept. 26 meeting, Assembly Member David Powell questioned whether the potential boost to the economy from a more tourist-friendly downtown would offset the potential increase in freight costs that consumers could incur if the barge ramp was six miles away.

"We want this out of here," he said of the downtown ramp. "But I'm not going to sit on the assembly and say, 'hey, guess what? We're going to move the barge out there and your freight in this town is going to go up another 30 cents a pound, or whatever it's going to.'"

The borough purchased the former sawmill property at 6-Mile for \$2.5 million last year, intending to use the site as a catalyst for economic development.

The future of the barge ramp will be among the most significant issues that the assembly will consider in the coming year, said Mayor Patty Gilbert. "When we see our new assembly in October, be prepared because we've got some major decisions to make," she said.

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# Subdivision sales update

Continued from page 1

of the development, even though the road and utilities work will be completed by next fall only for the first phase.

When to sell the lots and how to sell them are among the decisions the borough assembly will need to make over the next several months.

The borough could sell all the lots under the same process, or split the parcels into differing offerings with different terms. "At this point, we are looking at all possibilities," Thomas said.

Staff have been talking about the goals of any sale, emphasizing that the process should be fair and equitable and the lots affordable, she said.

The borough assembly could adopt stipulations for the parcels, such a development deadline to prevent people from buying and holding the lots for speculation.

The five-member Economic Development Board will make recommendations to the assembly, which has final say on the sales process, Thomas said.

The board is tentatively scheduled to hold a work session on Nov. 16 to discuss land sales options and to hear from

the public.

Borough code says the lots must be sold at fair market value, which will be determined by the municipality's contract appraiser. But the code allows the assembly to sell property for less than market value in the interest of promoting economic development.

The criteria in code for a below-market-price sale include creating jobs, putting the property in private ownership and on the tax rolls, and benefiting the economy.

Borough staff has been researching and discussing different ways the lots could be sold, including an open auction, sealed bid, lottery or simply over the counter at a fixed price, Thomas said. That decision will be up to the assembly, as well as a request from the Wrangell Cooperative Association for two of the lots in the first phase.

Ketchikan Ready-Mix and Quarry has been working this summer and fall under a \$928,900 borough contract to clear brush and overburden, along with clearing land for roadways.

"The contractor has been working six to seven days a week to complete this work," said Amber Al-Haddad,

Wrangell's capital facilities director. "They are projecting they will be complete by the established substantial completion date of Oct 30."

After the prep work, the borough will contract for roadbuilding and utilities installation. The project will include about two-thirds of a mile of paved road providing access throughout the subdivision just off Zimovia Highway.

"We are in the final stages of the design phase for the road and utilities project," Al-Haddad said last week. The water and sewer design plans have been submitted to the state for review and approval.

Currently, the borough plans to bury the electrical distribution lines underground at the subdivision, she said.

After receiving state approval, the borough will finish its construction contract documents and go to bid for the work. "We anticipate that bidding phase to be conducted over the winter, allowing for an early spring 2024 construction start," Al-Haddad said.

The borough does not yet have a cost estimate for the utilities and road work. The utilities will be stubbed at the lot

line, and property owners will need to extend the sewer, water and electrical service to their home.

In addition to selling the parcels, the borough is aware of the large undertaking if multiple new property owners all go after permits, contractors and suppliers at the same time, Thomas said. One idea would be to create a resource center "to help people get on their way."

Though prospective buyers will want to walk the parcels and judge the size and buildable area, property markers will not be driven into the ground until the utility and road work is completed.

The borough took ownership of the former Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding school property in 1996. The school closed in 1975, after more than four decades of operation. The school buildings, dorms and offices were demolished in the 1990s and early 2000s.

The borough investigated the property in advance to ensure there are no historic artifacts or remains on the former school land and will continue to monitor the site during subsequent work.

# Killer whales rescue

Continued from page 1

Conservancy, returned to Barnes Lake last month to lend his experience to the latest effort.

Mandy Keogh, Alaska marine mammal stranding coordinator for NOAA, said Coffman Cove community members reported sightings of the two killer whales in the lake as early as Aug. 17.

"These whales were out of

habitat and they needed intervention to get back to their natural environment," Keogh said. "So, in that case, it becomes a stranding."

One high-tide cycle in August would have allowed the killer whales to swim through the channel on their own, but they didn't find their way out during those high tides, Keogh said. Experts began hatching a plan for the next high-tide cycle

from Sept. 28 to Oct. 2.

"That gave us time to bring in a team," Keogh said.

Keogh said she worked primarily with Jared Tower, who is a killer whale research technician with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Chloe Kotik, a Ph.D. student with the University of Alaska Fairbanks whose research focuses on transient killer whales, and David Bain.

Tower brought technology that allowed the team to play calls recorded of other whales, according to Keogh.

The team also used a hukilau, a weighted fishing net that's used in Hawaii, and oikomi pipes, which are a traditional sonic deterrent used in Japan and made by banging hammers against hollow pipes set into the ocean off the side of boats, Keogh explained.

Using skiffs, the team employed all three tactics to corral the killer whales in the north channel of Barnes Lake.

Residents of Coffman Cove did some heavy lifting throughout the rescue, Keogh said. "I think they had about 15 boats and over 30 community members who came out during the two-day response and spent their time and boats on the water and kind of shared their knowledge with us."

The team on Sept. 28 focused on the north channel. In 1994, boats with oikomi pipes successfully pushed offshore killer whales through the north channel, though the tide was higher, the whales were smaller and the kelp bed had deteriorated more into the winter, according to Bain.

"We knew that the kelp bed in the north channel was potentially a psychological barrier," Keogh said. "We thought if we had the tides timed right, the kelp would drop down enough for the whales to get over and out."

However, the orcas didn't make it through the north chan-

nel on Sept. 28.

"It looked like the kelp was actually kind of physically blocking them," Keogh said. "So even though we had a really high tide, the whales were just too large to get past the kelp bed without getting like kelp wrapped around themselves. So, they backed out and got back into the lake."

Bain, the killer whale scientist that headed the 1994 rescue, said the older male is about 25 feet long, while the subadult male is about 21 feet long.

On the second day, the team "took a different approach" involving two teams, Keogh said.

"We had one team of folks that were on the north entrance working to clear the kelp out," in case the whales had to pass that way, "and then the second team focused on trying to encourage the whales out of the lake from the south entrance," she said.

It was an even higher tide on Sept. 29, 18 feet, which "was really the best chance we had on that south entrance," she said.

Using playback audio of whale calls, Towers drew the two orcas toward the south channel. Bain said that "playback kind of gave (the whales) the impression that another whale could go through that channel, so they tried to go out that direction and ended up following the boat out."

The whales swam from the channel into the ocean.

"After they left the lake, we followed them for about two and a half hours, and they made it over 10 miles away by the time that we stopped following them," Bain said. "We left them in a place called Lincoln Rock."

The freed orcas visited with a group of humpback whales out at sea, Bain said.

"They basically went east ... they went way over to the far shore and they stopped to visit a group of humpback whales," he said. "They didn't fight with each other; they just ended up in the same neighborhood."

## Birth Announcement

Harley Sue Ritchie was born on Sept. 8, 2023 at Bartlett Regional Hospital in Juneau. She weighed 6 pounds, 6 ounces and was 20 1/4" long at birth. Parents are Amanda Johnson and Laven Ritchie. Harley joins big brother Connor. Maternal grandparents are Harley and Lana Johnson. Paternal Grandparents are Chad Ritchie and Lucy Moline-Robinson. Paternal great grandparents are Sue Ritchie and Tyler and Deb Robinson.



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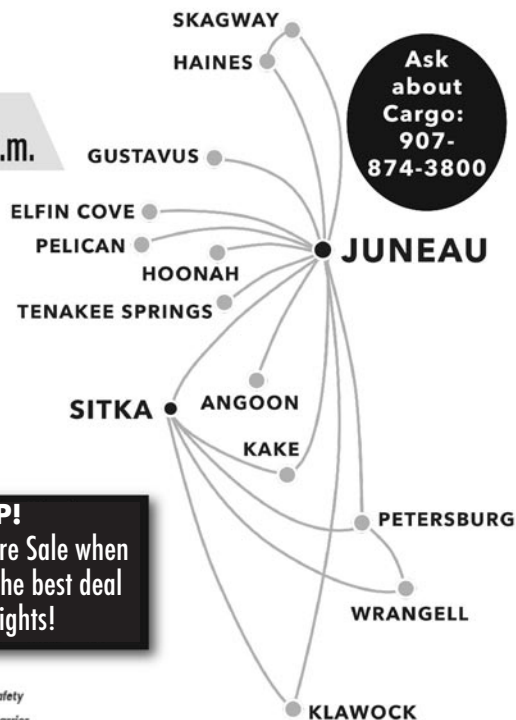


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# SENTINEL SPORTS

## Cross country champions

Continued from page 1  
state this year — 16:00.7.

Senior Keegan Hanson finished second in the Division III race at 18:12.6. "While I know he wanted to win just as bad as Boom, he had a great season," said Villarma. He was the only team member to finish the race in under 17 minutes this season and beat Loucks at meets in Wrangell and Ketchikan.

Junior Daniel Harrison took fifth at 18:24.0, putting three Wrangell runners in the top five. Harrison was "a leader I could count on this season," said Villarma. "I'm always impressed by his maturity and ability to overcome adversity."

Sophomore Ian Nelson was the team's next finisher, taking 12th place with a time of 19:11.4. Freshman Jackson Carney placed 19th at 19:49.0 and sophomore Jackson Powers placed 22nd at 20:00.9. Freshman Everett Meissner placed 51st at 21:24.8.

Of the underclassmen runners, Villarma was particularly impressed by Carney's performance. "He scored multiple times this year for us as a freshman," he said. "He's got that dog in him. He's going to find a way to make things happen."

Overall, the Wrangell boys won by the widest margin of all six races at the state championships for the three divisions, with a 44-point gap between them and the Cordova



PHOTO BY EMILY MESNER / ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

Wrangell's Boomchain Loucks holds up his jersey and celebrates as he nears the finish line in first place at the Division III boys cross-country state championships Oct. 7 in Palmer.

team, who finished second in Division III. Petersburg was close behind in third place.

Because of the boys' com-

petitive showing, coach Mason Villarma is considering moving Wrangell cross-country to Division II next year, which would put the team in competition with Grace Christian High School in Anchorage and Sitka High School. Both teams have runners who can complete the 5K in under 17 minutes.

The girls team "was small this year, but showed a lot of progress," Villarma continued.

Freshman Alana Harrison

was Wrangell's top finisher, taking eighth place out of the 86 runners in her division with a time of 23:18.5. Next year, she plans to push her limits as a runner and "leave it all out there" when she becomes a sophomore, though she doesn't yet have any specific time goals in mind.

Harrison's performance has been "pretty incredible" for a freshman season, Villarma said in a previous interview. Only

one other freshman finished ahead of her at state.

Sophomore Kalee Herman placed 32nd overall with a time of 25:52.4. Herman's performance was "consistent for us all year," Villarma said. "Another year of growth, and she'll be a top eight performer at state."

Dillingham, Kake and Craig finished in first, second and third in the Division III girls competition.



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Freshman Alana Harrison was Wrangell's top girls runner at the state meet Oct. 7 in Palmer, taking eighth place in the division.

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# SENTINEL SPORTS

## Swimmers drop times in Ketchikan, prepare for Petersburg this weekend

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

The swim team continued to drop times and log personal bests at the Kayhi Meet in Ketchikan on Sept. 29. Wrangell's seven swimmers participated in 28 individual and four relay events. Together, they received 18 personal-best times, with each athlete logging at least one personal best.

Jack Roberts dropped two seconds off his 100-yard breaststroke for a personal best of 1:02.14, which earned him second place. "He has been hovering around a mid to high 1:04 for the last couple of seasons, so this was a nice drop for him," said coach Jamie Roberts.

He placed first in the 100-yard butterfly with a personal best of 54.07, and also competed in the 100-yard freestyle and 200-yard medley with times of 49.06 and 2:05.72, respectively.

Alisha Armstrong competed in four events — the 100-yard freestyle, the 100-yard backstroke, the 100-yard butterfly and the 200-yard individual medley. The butterfly, at 1:24.65, and medley, at 2:55.33, were both personal-best times.

Armstrong "has been focusing on her butterfly technique and decided that it was time to put it to the test," said Roberts. "Her focus in practice has shown up in her races and her ability to maintain good technique throughout the duration of the race."

Anika Herman had "a nice time drop" of more than 2 seconds in her 100-yard backstroke, Roberts added, for a time of 1:20.50. She also logged personal bests in her other two events — the 50-yard freestyle and the 500-yard freestyle.

Four of the swimmers — Nate Rooney, Maddy Davies, Johanna Sanford and Anika Herman — competed in the 500-yard freestyle, which is the longest race in high school swimming. "As the season



PHOTO COURTESY JAMIE ROBERTS

The Wrangell swim team smiles under a handmade banner at the Kayhi Meet in Ketchikan on Sept. 29. From left: Nate Rooney, Andrei Bardin-Siekawitch, Anika Herman, Alisha Armstrong, Johanna Sanford, Jack Roberts and Maddy Davies.

progresses and the swimmers are getting stronger and more confident, it's nice to see them going after the longer-distance events," said Roberts.

Andrei Bardin-Siekawitch

also represented Wrangell at the meet, with personal-best times in his 100-yard backstroke and 100-yard breaststroke.

Overall, the team placed

fifth out of the participating seven schools; Juneau's Thunder Mountain High School took first place with five gold, six silver and three bronze medals.

Wrangell will travel to the Petersburg Invitational Friday and Saturday, Oct. 13-14, the last meet of the regular season before regionals and state.



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## Rockslide knocks town's burn pit out of commission until it's rebuilt

BY SENTINEL STAFF

The community's burn pit at the solid waste transfer station on the north end of the island is closed until further notice after a rockslide Friday morning, Oct. 6, destroyed the steel racks, I-beams and concrete blocks at the facility.

"Due to concerns with stability of the cliffside, and the need to rebuild the burn pit, wood waste, brush and large burnables will not be accepted until further notice," said a borough notice issued on Friday. "The area around the burn pit has been barricaded off and is off-limits to the public."

Though the waste transfer station is closed to larger burn-

able items, it will continue to accept paper and cardboard, the notice said.

The slide started small, but grew.

"Some smaller rocks started coming down, so it was pretty apparent that something was going on there," Public Works Director Tom Weter told KSTK. Larger rocks came down about 9:30 a.m.

"A pretty good amount of rock did come down and took out our entire burn racks, the concrete blocks and the steel racks and I-beams and everything that we have there. All of that was completely destroyed," Weter told the radio station.

"Right now, things are

pretty unstable there. And I think we need to give it some space and let it do its thing," he added.

No one was injured.

"We're going to try to salvage what materials we can try to rebuild what we can," Weter said. "We'll probably rebuild the burn pit more toward the closed landfill ... where the cliffside isn't quite as high and the rock appears to be more stable."

The borough burns what it can safely and within environmental rules, but most of the community's trash gets baled up, stuffed into containers and shipped out of town by barge and then rail to a landfill in eastern Washington state.

## Community chorale begins rehearsals on Monday for annual holiday concert

BY MARK C. ROBINSON

*Sentinel editor*

New voices are sought in addition to returning singers as the community chorale begins rehearsals for the 2023 Christmas concert on Monday, Oct. 16, in the high school music room.

"I never know until we have our first rehearsal," chorale director Bonnie Demerjian said of how many people to expect at the first rehearsal. "We have a group of people that have been with the (chorale) well over 20 years, and then every year we get new people, so it's always a surprise."

While the chorale is always looking for new participants, Demerjian said she's not focused on specific octave ranges such as tenors or sopranos. "We like a balance, but we're not totally sure who's going to show up this year, so we don't have any particular needs right now."

However, Demerjian said there is one element the chorale does need. "We are looking for a piano player, an accompanist," she said.

Last year's holiday chorale performance was the first since 2019, losing two years to the pandemic hiatus.

Demerjian added how the loss of the chorale was deeply felt in the community. "And also for the members too," she said. "Really, the members, I think, enjoy getting together and rehearsing even more than performing. It's a good social outlet as well as having a common purpose."

The rehearsals are scheduled for 5:15 p.m. Mondays, beginning on Oct. 16.

Anyone who wants to join in — no auditions required — can email Demerjian at [bonniede@aptalaska.net](mailto:bonniede@aptalaska.net) or call her at 907-796-9632.

## American Legion preps for children's Christmas party

BY MARK C. ROBINSON

*Sentinel editor*

The American Legion's Christmas party for children, now in its 13th year, came from a suggestion by Marilyn Mork's daughter, Jenny, after they had attended a Christmas party for kids in town.

"They had a party which was like, hot dogs and hot cocoa or something like that," Mork said. "Santa was there, and they all got to see Santa, and got a candy cane, and an orange or apple or something. And that was it."

Afterward, Mork remembered her daughter's suggestion. "Jenny said, 'Wouldn't be awesome if we could ... give them a gift?'"

While the party started small, it has grown over the past decade, so much so that the festivities have split into two events, one in the morning and a second in the afternoon, scheduled this year for Saturday, Dec. 16. That allows people to select which party better fits their schedule and make plans.

As in previous years, Mork

will send out letters to various organizations to request donations. "Alaska Marine Lines and Samson (Tug and Barge) have both donated cargo for us in the past," Mork said.

She said Andrew Zeutzius would likely return as Santa Claus this year, although it hasn't been confirmed.

In addition to the children's party, the Legion also organizes Christmas events for seniors and veterans in the area. "Those are our three big Christmas-time projects that we do," Mork said.

In addition to donating some of her own money for these events, Mork also donates much of her time and welcomes other volunteers. "So, if anyone wants to help with any of these programs, any of them, we would love to have some extra help."

She said there are many ways that volunteers can provide services, but the most important is deliveries, which take up much of her time and effort.

The Legion's annual children's Christmas party will be

held at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 16 in the American Legion Hall. Children must attend to receive their gift. For more information and to provide children's names, ages, gender, parents' names and gift ideas, contact Mork at 907-470-0085.

## Alaska Seaplanes will end service to Wrangell and Petersburg Oct. 31

BY LARRY PERSILY

*Sentinel writer*

Alaska Seaplanes has decided to shut down its Wrangell and Petersburg operations, citing poor economics. Its last flights to the communities are scheduled for Oct. 31.

"Unfortunately, it wasn't financially sustainable with the ridership," Carl Ramseth, general manager, said Thursday, Oct. 5. "It hurts to pull out of those two communities."

Alaska Seaplanes started scheduled service into Petersburg in spring 2021, with daily flights from Juneau, and added a Sitka-Petersburg-Wrangell-Sitka flight in May 2022.

The air service, which was founded in 1997 and is based in Juneau, operates a fleet of more than a dozen single-engine aircraft able to carry as many as nine passengers plus freight.

Though canceling its flights to Wrangell and Petersburg, the company will continue its year-round scheduled service from Juneau to Skagway, Haines, Gustavus, Hoonah, Kake, Klawock, Sitka, Angoon, Tenakee Springs and Pelican.

Passenger loads into Wrangell and Petersburg were lighter than needed for the economics to work out, Ramseth said, but the lack of revenue from freight and U.S. mail really added to the problem.

"The challenges we faced by not having UPS and U.S. mail to produce the revenues to maintain the scheduled service" were a major factor in the decision to stop flying into the two communities, he said.

Unlike Haines, for example, where Alaska Seaplanes hauls a lot of revenue-generating mail and cargo, UPS contracts with Anchorage-based ACE Air Cargo to deliver to Wrangell and Petersburg, and Alaska Airlines brings an all-cargo Boeing 737 into the two towns on a weekly basis.

The last day for passenger service will be Oct. 31. Alaska Seaplanes will stop accepting freight to or from the two communities after Oct. 28, to ensure they can move any cargo before the shutdown if weather interferes with the flight schedule, Ramseth said.

The company is the latest of several that have tried, unsuccessfully, to bring scheduled, small-plane service to Wrangell and Petersburg over the past 40 years.

Seaplanes has two part-time employees in Wrangell and one full-time and two part-time workers in Petersburg. The company had run two Juneau-Petersburg nonstop, round-trip flights before scaling back recently to a single daily flight.

Ramseth said the airline would look at bringing back scheduled service to the communities in the future if the economics change. Meanwhile, the company will continue to offer charter services.

Providing scheduled service between Wrangell and SEARHC medical facilities in Sitka was a big reason the airline started flying the route in 2022.

"One of our anchor (clients) is SEARHC," Andy Kline, marketing manager for Alaska Seaplanes, said last spring. "They've been wanting to have more connectivity between Wrangell and Sitka, especially with the new (medical) facility (in Wrangell)."

With the loss of the Alaska Seaplanes direct flight, travelers between the two SEARHC facilities will need to use Alaska Airlines and connect in either Ketchikan or Juneau.

The only other time Seaplanes stopped scheduled service to a community was three years ago, Ramseth said, when COVID-19 travel restrictions in Canada forced it to end its service between Juneau and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. The company has not restarted service to the Canadian community.

### ATTENTION SALMON FISHERS

The Board of Directors of the Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association, Inc. seeks nominations for the following three (3) year seats:

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- Hand Troll - 1 Seat



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# Federal agency conducts new analysis of king salmon harvest

By MEREDITH JORDAN  
Juneau Empire

Commercial trolling for king salmon in Southeast is back on the desk of the National Marine Fisheries Service, following on judicial rulings this past summer that saw the fishery shut down — and then reinstated — as a case brought by environmentalists wound its way through the courts.

NMFS issued notice on Oct. 4 that it is beginning work on an environmental impact statement and review of alternatives to its incidental take permit which allows Southeast trollers to harvest kings, many of which are destined for the

Pacific Northwest feeding grounds of an endangered population of killer whales.

NMFS is accepting public comments through Nov. 20, said Gretchen Harrington, assistant regional administrator for the agency's Sustainable Fisheries Division.

The EIS will look at three scenarios: The commercial harvest of kings in Southeast is allowed to continue at the current level; a new harvest limit is set; and there is no permit for commercial trollers to take kings other than those raised in Alaska hatcheries.

The third option "isn't going to happen," said Harrington, but is needed as a

baseline for the analysis.

The litigation started in March 2020 in U.S. District Court when the Washington state-based Wild Fish Conservancy argued that federal fishery managers were ignoring their own research by allowing commercial troll catches of king salmon, endangering the southern resident killer whale population which feeds on them.

The U.S. District Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in May of this year, which would have closed the Southeast summer fishery. But a three-judge panel on the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals halted the ruling in late June,

finding that the lower court had outweighed "speculative environmental threats." The court ruling allowed the summer fishery to proceed.

NMFS is working to address issues raised by the lower court regarding the incidental take permit. "The court pointed out problems with the biological opinion, and the document that covers the Endangered Species Act," said Harrington.

The lower court considered various factors in its ruling, including the decline of the southern resident killer whale population, which dropped from 98 whales in 1995 to 73 whales as of December 2021.

Alaska trollers argue that their fishing plays a very small role in the mortality of the killer whales, which are more affected by habitat loss, stormwater pollution, stream temperature and natural predators, among other factors, said Amy Daugherty, executive director of Alaska Trollers Association.

## DeRuyter wins school board seat

*Voter turnout down 64% from last year's total*

By SENTINEL STAFF

First-time candidate John DeRuyter won a three-year term on the school board in the only contested race in the Oct. 3 municipal election, which drew the fewest number of voters to the polls in years.

The turnout was down 64% from last year's election, when the mayor's office and two bond issues were on the ballot.

The borough assembly certified the election results on Oct. 5, with 192 votes cast on election day and 26 absentee and early votes added to the count. The total of 218 ballots is down from 602 votes cast in the 2022 election; 486 votes in 2021; 485 in 2020; and 406 in 2019.

DeRuyter defeated incumbent school board member Esther Aaltséen Reese, 129-87. Reese was elected to a one-year term last October.

DeRuyter is a member of the school district's Secondary Advisory Committee and also serves on the borough's Economic Development Board.

He joins the school board as it confronts a new challenge: The district overspent its account for sending student athletes to state competition last year and now needs to draw money from somewhere else to plug the gap, while also deciding on a funding plan for this year and future years.

The school board is scheduled to consider state travel budget options and hear from the public at a work session at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 16, in Evergreen Elementary School.

In the three uncontested races on the Oct. 3 election ballot, incumbent Anne Morrison (183 votes) was reelected to the borough assembly, winning a three-year term. First-time candidate Michael J. Ottesen (182 votes) also won an uncontested three-year term on the assembly.

Incumbent Port Commissioner Gary Morrison was uncontested in his bid for another three-year term, receiving 205 votes.

## Mitchell "Mickey" Julius Prescott May 24, 1940 - September 28, 2023

Mickey Prescott has gone fishing. Mitchell "Mickey" Julius Prescott was born on May 24, 1940, and died in Wrangell at his fish camp, Mickey's Fish Camp, on Sept. 28, 2023. He was 83 years old. Mickey was born in Everett, Washington, to Wrangellites Ralph and Edith Prescott (Johnson).

Mickey is survived by his favorite sister, Mercedes Angerman, and his seven adult children: Joy Prescott (Ed Bruns), Vivian Prescott (Howie Martindale), Tracey Martin Prescott (Dennis Martin), Vincent Prescott (Pamela Prescott), Kiply Clair (Robert Clair), Kim Prescott and Kelli Prescott. He leaves behind 15 beloved grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and 1.5 great-great grandchildren. He also leaves an island of nephews, a favorite niece and lots of cousins, plus his dearly loved dogs, his skiff, the Puddle Jumper, and his side-by-side, the Huckleberry.

Throughout his lifetime, Mickey was affectionately known as "Baby Brother," Daddy, Dad, Mitchell, Mick, Mickey, Uncle Mick, Grandpa Mickey, Grandpa Bear, Oompa and Grandpa Dog.

Mickey grew up in Wrangell, mostly on his dad's fishing boat the F/V Mercedes, and he attended public school through high school. He was a terrific basketball player in high school and an avid outdoorsman. He often pointed to the ocean and declared: "My church is out there."

Mickey remained friends with many of his classmates throughout life.

He married young and had four children, then married the love of his life, Kay Larson, and combined their families, and later had a child of their own. Together they raised seven children. His wife, Kay Prescott, preceded him in death in 2009.

Mickey spent most of his working career in the lumber and pulp mill industry that began with working the green chain and eventually he was the head of quality control, affording him the opportunity to travel to Japan and throughout the U.S. promoting the local mill.

He was also a commercial fisherman like his father, fishing the waters of Southeast Alaska on the F/V Irish. Later, he had an adventurous career in the U.S. Forest Service as a trail supervisor. Many of the outhouses, picnic tables and trails enjoyed on Wrangell Island and the surrounding Stikine-LeConte Wilderness were built by Mickey and his crew. If you walk those trails, you're walking in his footsteps. Mickey's friends from the crew remember him as "A great guy!" and "The best instructor!" and "He taught



Mickey Prescott

me all I know!" He dearly loved the crews who worked with him.

Mickey was an "early bird," whether at a Forest Service camp or on a hunting or fishing trip with friends. Mickey wanted to be the first one up in the morning to be out on the water or hunting in the woods. Often, he was up early, cooking a ranger breakfast for friends or crew.

When Mickey retired from the U.S. Forest Service, he went fishing. His family teased him about being a "King Salmon Snob" or the "King of Kings (but not Jesus)." He also loved driving the logging roads searching for scat and tracks and driving through town to check out life for the Wrangell Traffic Report for social media.

And every summer he and his family picked berries and spruce tips to donate to local Elders. Mickey was a big Seattle Mariners fan and enjoyed watching their baseball games on his big-screen TV. A highlight of his life was attending a Mariners game in Seattle with a daughter and son-in-law.

Mickey loved Wrangell and volunteered for several years, without fanfare, to plow snow with the Huckleberry on the bike path and parking areas along Zimovia Highway for local walkers, joggers and beachgoers. He always said, "Loving the outdoors doesn't stop when it's winter." Sometimes he plowed the sidewalks all the way to the Public Safety Building.

In his later years Mickey created art, though he claimed he wasn't artistic. He crafted walking sticks and burl art, designed seaglass art, made custom fishing plugs and deer calls, plus made jewelry from fishing gear. He was the subject of many articles for

Planet Alaska, a column authored by a daughter and granddaughter that appeared in the Juneau Empire and culminated in a book, "My Father's Smokehouse." Many people across Alaska and beyond got to know him and his stories.

As per Mickey's wishes, his and his wife Kay's ashes will be spread together in a private ceremony. No memorial is planned for the public, but the family asks you to take time to go fishing in Mickey's honor. If you live on the ocean, go fishing in your best spot. If you live by a lake, toss a line in. If you live by a river, go fishing. If you live by a pond or a stream, cast in a line. And don't forget to eat some chocolate cake or a fried egg sandwich in Mickey's honor, too. "Put an egg on it," was his favorite saying.

Also, in lieu of flowers, please donate in his name to the Wrangell Mariners' Memorial.

Throughout his life, Mickey gifted us with fishing stories, mill stories, Forest Service stories, and stories about life in Wrangell and Southeast Alaska growing up in the 1940s and 1950s. His stories held the wisdom that makes life in Wrangell a richer place to be. The following poem was written by Mickey Prescott in his late 70s after getting hearing aids for the first time. It contains some wisdom he'd want to pass on to everyone:

### Stop the Shouting and Listen to the Sunset

I guess I've been missing this most,  
if not all my life, to hear sounds  
I've never heard before.

It's a new world  
to hear the rain  
to hear the wind  
to hear the waves  
to hear the birds

to hear people talking,  
to hear them walking,  
to hear the fish flopping,  
to hear the hooters hooting.  
To hear the dogs barking,  
it scares me each time.

But to think how much I missed  
with my children  
and grandchildren  
and great grandchildren.

Maybe this is why  
I'm still here!

So stop the shouting  
and listen to the sunset.

# CLASSIFIED

## HELP WANTED

Wrangell Public Schools is accepting applications for the following positions for the 2023-2024 school year:

• Paraprofessional: This is a part-time, 9-month classified position, working 5.75 hours per day. Salary placement is in 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 Special Education. A High School Diploma or equivalent and an associate degree or the ability to pass the ParaPro Assessment is required. Start date: ASAP.

Also accepting applications for the following extracurricular

positions for the 2023-2024 school year:

- Baseball Head Coach and Assistant Coach
  - Basketball, Boys High School Assistant Coach
  - Basketball, Boys Middle School Assistant Coach
  - Class Advisers: Freshmen Class Co-adviser Senior Class Co-adviser Softball Assistant Coach
- For more information and detailed job description, please contact the District Office at 907-874-2347. These 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

KSTK has two positions open. A full-time news director and full-time development director. Information online at [kstk.org](http://kstk.org), and click on the employment tab. (907) 874-2345 or [cindy@kstk.org](mailto:cindy@kstk.org).

## FOR SALE

Bronze boat propeller, 2-inch hole. Stamped on the propeller: 4143 / U / R / P / D i a m e t e r 26 / P e r i m e t e r 22. Like new for \$1,200. Call 907-305-1414.

## LAND FOR SALE

Two Stikine River properties on the west side of Farm Island in King Slough: 200-foot frontage, 6-plus acres, \$80,000; 8-acre backlot, lots of good access, \$60,000. Can access the main river at any stage of tide. Willing to finance. Call 907-518-0101.

## FREE ADS

Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads

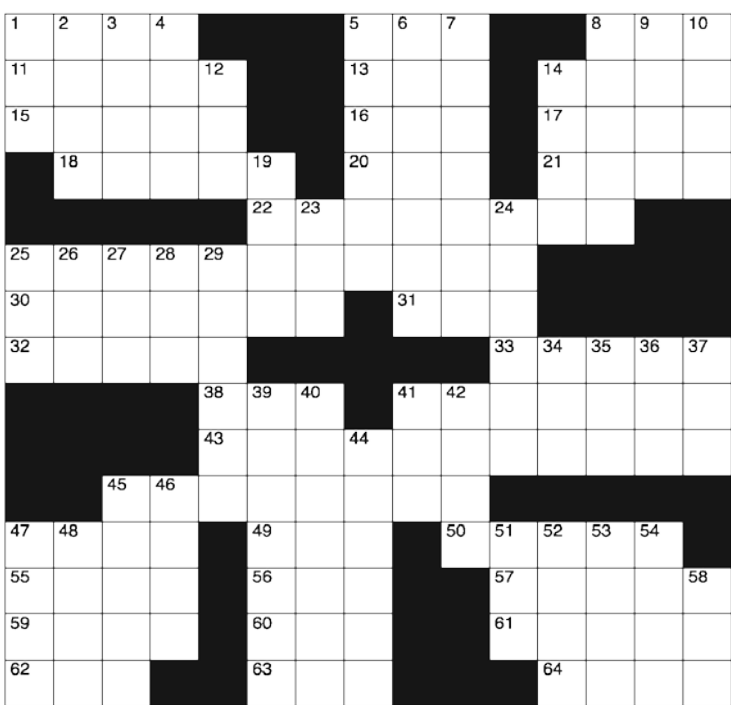
for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com).

## STAY UP TO DATE

Get a Wrangell Sentinel subscription today and enjoy the convenience of having the paper delivered to your mailbox each week. Subscribers also can enjoy free online access. Call Amber at 907-874-2301 or subscribe online at [wrangellsentinel.com](http://wrangellsentinel.com).

# Crossword

Answers on page 12



## CLUES ACROSS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Information                             | 33. Central Florida city                      |
| 5. Seaport (abbr.)                         | 38. Numbers cruncher                          |
| 8. Agricultural disease (abbr.)            | 41. Mexican beers                             |
| 11. Riding horses                          | 43. Lawyers say you can indict one            |
| 13. Boxing's GOAT                          | 45. Capital of South Australia                |
| 14. Hurt or discomfort                     | 47. Wings                                     |
| 15. A small sharp knife to trim vegetables | 49. Drug used to treat HIV/AIDS               |
| 16. A beaver builds one                    | 50. Fencing sword                             |
| 17. Horizontal passage into a mine         | 55. Capital of Qatar                          |
| 18. Self-immolation by fire rituals        | 56. Portable bed                              |
| 20. Chain bar with lots of games (abbr.)   | 57. Afflicted                                 |
| 21. Goo Goo Dolls' hit                     | 59. Lying down                                |
| 22. Agreeable                              | 60. Midway between north-east and east        |
| 25. In an early way                        | 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation |
| 30. In a way, struck                       | 62. Inflamed                                  |
| 31. It's there in the morning              | 63. Soviet Socialist Republic                 |
| 32. County in the S. Pacific               | 64. Impudence                                 |

## CLUES DOWN

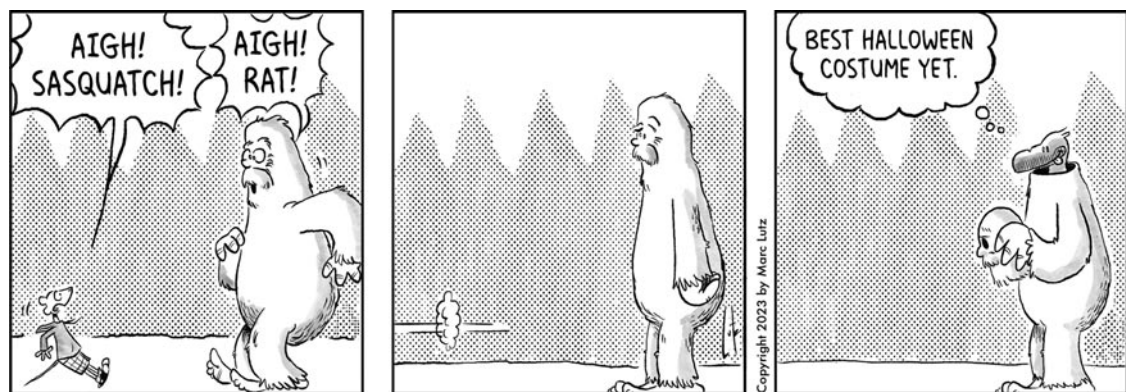
- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. A way to fish                          | people                                     |
| 2. Greek mythological figure              | 34. It says "moo"                          |
| 3. Scarlett's home                        | 35. Folk singer Di Franco                  |
| 4. Assist                                 | 36. Resinlike substance of certain insects |
| 5. More doleful                           | 37. Residue                                |
| 6. Premeditated                           | 39. Grand homes                            |
| 7. Dish featuring minced food             | 40. Popinjays                              |
| 8. San Diego ballplayer                   | 41. Man who behaves dishonorably           |
| 9. Eight                                  | 42. Figures                                |
| 10. Unwelcome picnic guests               | 44. One who watches over children          |
| 12. Human gene                            | 45. Expressed pleasure                     |
| 14. Bucket                                | 46. No longer living                       |
| 19. Make full                             | 47. Hebrew calendar month                  |
| 23. Dirt                                  | 48. Part of the ear                        |
| 24. Person cited as ideal example         | 51. Swiss river                            |
| 25. A part of (abbr.)                     | 52. Prejudice                              |
| 26. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet | 53. Italian Island                         |
| 27. Very long period of time              | 54. Resist authority (slang)               |
| 28. Gas usage measurement                 | 58. Criticize                              |
| 29. North American native                 |  |

# Police report

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Monday, Oct. 2</b><br/>Traffic stop: Citation issued for speeding.<br/>Traffic complaint.</p> <p><b>Tuesday, Oct. 3</b><br/>Motor vehicle accident.<br/>Motor vehicle accident.</p> <p><b>Wednesday, Oct. 4</b><br/>Traffic stop: Warning for no tail lights.<br/>Citizen assist: Abandoned vehicle.<br/>Traffic stop: Warning for faulty equipment.</p> <p><b>Thursday, Oct. 5</b><br/>Welfare check.</p> | <p>Traffic complaint.<br/>Domestic disturbance.</p> <p><b>Friday, Oct. 6</b><br/>Agency assist: Fire Department.<br/>Agency assist: Fraud.<br/>Motor vehicle accident: Deer.<br/>Suspicious circumstance.<br/>Traffic stop: Warning for headlight out.<br/>Noise complaint.<br/>Traffic stop: Citations issued for driving while license suspended and failure to provide proof of insurance.<br/>Warning for expired registration and speeding.</p> | <p><b>Saturday, Oct. 7</b><br/>Disorderly conduct.<br/>Motor vehicle accident: Deer.</p> <p><b>Sunday, Oct. 8</b><br/>Agency assist: Hospital.<br/>Disturbance.<br/>Agency assist: Hospital.<br/>Agency assist: Ambulance.<br/>Theft: Unfounded.<br/>Traffic stop: Citation issued for speeding.</p> <p>During this reporting period there were eight agency assists for the Hoonah Police Department and three ambulance requests.</p> |
|--|--|---|

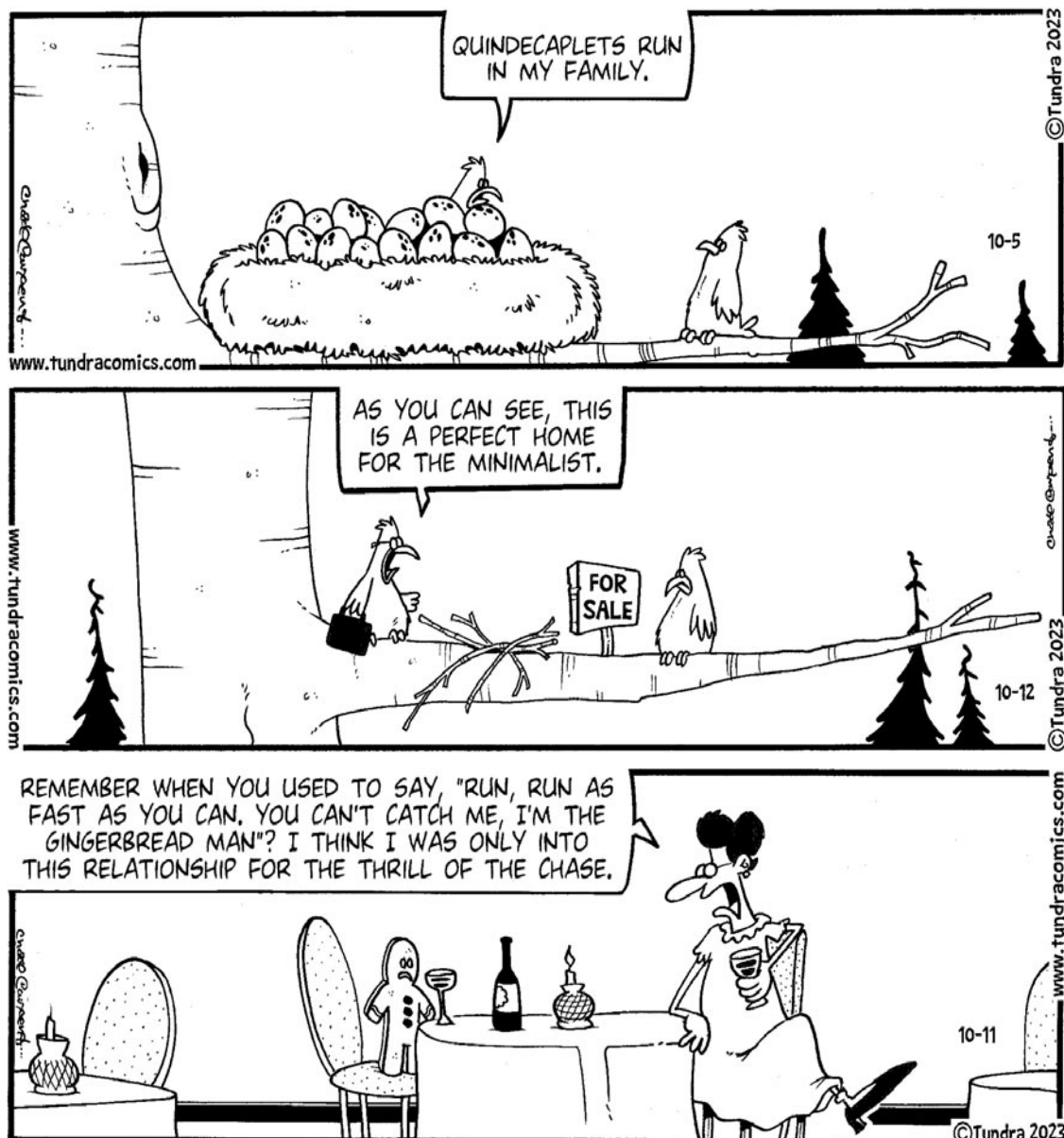
# Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



# Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



# Crary will leave job at Nolan Center on Jan. 1

BY SENTINEL STAFF

Nolan Center Director Cyni Crary submitted her resignation last week, effective Jan. 1, 2024. She plans to move to Arizona next year and is currently weighing two potential job opportunities in that area.

The Nolan Center's staff could be restructured after her departure. Crary has recommended splitting the director's duties into two positions.

"I have written my recommendations to the borough manager and, hopefully, the hiring committee will take those under consideration," she wrote in an email.

As director, Crary helped develop the community theater program, brought new exhibits to the museum, wrote grants and hosted countless cultural and community events.

She moved to Wrangell from Portland after making her first trip to the community in 2005. After arriving on this "beautiful little island," she started work at the Wrangell school district, then became executive director of the chamber of commerce, where she served for eight years. In the summer of 2018, she became the director of the Nolan Center.

Her educational background is in business administration.

"Wrangell has been a wonderful place to live for the last 15 years," she continued. "I have served on several boards and coached sports when my older kiddos were younger. Two of my kids are graduates of Wrangell High School. We are so fortunate to have been part of such an amazing community."



PHOTO BY CAROLEINE JAMES/WRANGELL SENTINEL

## Tuna boat comes to town

Benny Johnson displays a frozen 29-pound tuna, one of many that he sold off the fishing vessel Castaway while at the Reliance Float on Oct. 3. He and his fishing partner, Joshua Moore, have been bringing their catch to Southeast Alaska since 2014. They try to make it up to Wrangell to sell their catch every year, but the number of communities they stop in depends on how long supplies last, Johnson said. This year's sales trip brought them to Ketchikan and Coffman Cove before Wrangell, with stops in Petersburg and Juneau as the Castaway continued north. Moore, who owns the boat, had it outfitted in 2012 for albacore tuna fishing off the Pacific Northwest coast. "They've been selling pretty fast," Johnson said of the Wrangell stop. "Everybody loves them." The cost was \$3.50 a pound for whole fish.

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing

The Wrangell Planning and Zoning Commission's regular meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 12, at 5:30 p.m. in the Borough Assembly Chambers located in City Hall.

The following public hearing will be held at the meeting:

1. Variance application request for a variance to the front yard setback for a carport on a portion of POR Lot 14, Block 12, Wrangell Townsite (Plat No. 86-5), zoned Single Family Residential, owned and requested by Robert Marshall.
2. Review and approval of the Accessory Dwelling Unit code to be included in Title 20 Zoning of the Wrangell Municipal Code.

Meeting information will be published for public access prior to the meeting.

The meeting packet may be obtained through the calendar on the Borough website at <https://www.wrangell.com/calendar>.

The public is encouraged to attend. If you would like to submit a comment to the Department Director or to the Commission, please email your comments to [kthomas@wrangell.com](mailto:kthomas@wrangell.com).

Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director  
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Oct. 11, 2023

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Custodian-Light Maintenance

The Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department will accept applications for the position of Custodian-Light Maintenance through 5 p.m. Oct. 20, 2023. This is a full time, permanent position with all City and Borough benefits and is part of the IBEW collective bargaining agreement.

The Custodial-Light Maintenance position assists with maintenance and is responsible for the upkeep of Wrangell's Parks and Recreation Facilities. The job involves attention to detail, safety and the ability to work both independently and in a team setting.

This position requires strength to lift and maneuver materials and equipment weighing up to 50 pounds with proper PPE. Stooping, bending and squatting is required on a regular basis.

A High School Diploma or GED is required. Must have a valid Alaska driver's license and basic First Aid/CPR certification or the ability to obtain all within six months.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email to [rmarshall@wrangell.com](mailto:rmarshall@wrangell.com).

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

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

Publish Oct. 11 and 18, 2023

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## Youth ballet classes start Saturday, will run 6 weeks

BY SENTINEL STAFF

Tory Houser studied ballet as a young girl growing up in New Jersey and wants to share what she knows with Wrangell youth in a new fall class. The first session is Saturday morning, Oct. 14, at the community center gym.

"They really worked the fundamentals," Houser said of her studies years ago, and she intends to do the same with her Wrangell students. "It's just for

fun."

The weekly class will cover floor and bar work, she said.

The new Parks and Recreation program will run Saturday mornings for six weeks. The sessions will be divided into three age groups: 3- and 4-year-olds, from 9 to 9:30 a.m.; 5- to 7-year-olds, 9:40 to 10:25 a.m.; and 8 and older, 10:35 to 11:30 a.m.

No student recitals are planned, but parents can come

watch their children at the class, said Houser, who works as recreation staff officer for the U.S. Forest Service. She first offered a ballet class in Wrangell in 2017, also through the borough's Parks and Recreation Department.

The classes will run through Nov. 18.

Advance registration is required, and the fee is \$25. Registration is available online at [wrangellrec.com](http://wrangellrec.com).

### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC HEARING MEETING NOTICE Public Hearing Meeting for Community Development Block Grant FY23

During the regular Borough Assembly meeting at 6 p.m. on Oct. 24, 2023, there will be a **PUBLIC HEARING MEETING** on the following item:

For the purpose of seeking citizen views and community comments and accepting alternative project proposals for funding consideration under the FY23 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

#### ELIGIBLE TYPES OF PROJECTS

CDBG competitive grants are single-purpose project grants; maximum of \$850,000 per community, used to fund community development activities carried out to enhance the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents. There are three basic funding categories: Community Development, Planning, and Special Economic Development. The following are examples of eligible activities:

- Community Development
  - Public Facilities: Daycare Centers; Water & Sewer Systems; Solid Waste Disposal Facilities; Docks & Harbors; Electrical Distribution Lines; Acquisition or Construction
  - Transportation Improvements: Local Service Roads; Barge Facilities
  - Access to Public Facilities: Improve access for persons with disabilities
  - Real Property: Acquisition; Building Removal/Demolition; Improvements
  - Fire Protection Facilities/Equipment: Design; Construction; Rehabilitation; Purchase
- Planning
  - Data Collection; Analysis; Marketing Studies; Feasibility Studies; Economic Development Plans; Land-Use Plans; Plan Updates
- Special Economic Development
  - Commercial or Industrial Improvements
  - Acquisition or Construction
  - Assistance (through eligible applicant) to an identified private, for-profit entity, or entities for projects that create and maintain jobs for low- to moderate-income persons, or that assist business that provide goods or services needed by and affordable to low- and moderate-income residents

Project funding ideas may be submitted prior to the public hearing or during the public hearing. Please drop off ideas in writing at City Hall or by email to [aal-haddad@wrangell.com](mailto:aal-haddad@wrangell.com). For more information, please contact Amber Al-Haddad at 907-874-3902.

The public is encouraged to attend.

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

Publish Oct. 11 and 18, 2023

# State pauses cancellation of Medicaid due to missing paperwork

BY ANNIE BERMAN  
Anchorage Daily News

The Alaska Division of Public Assistance has temporarily stopped dropping people from Medicaid for paperwork-related reasons after thousands of low-income Alaskans — including families with children — lost health coverage that they may still be eligible to receive.

Nearly 14,000 households have lost their Medicaid coverage in the past two months. Almost 265,000 households were enrolled in the program as recently as April, before the state embarked on the federally required review of participants' eligibility.

The state Division of Public Assistance has so far reviewed about 10% of its Medicaid caseload to determine if they still meet income and other eligibility requirements.

As yet, Wrangell has not seen much of a drop in coverage due to reviews or

paperwork problems.

As of August, 471 households were covered by Medicaid, Alex Huseman, a public information officer with the Department of Health, reported Oct. 5. Almost 500 Wrangell households were on Medicaid last year.

Earlier this summer, the state resumed annual eligibility reviews which had been paused during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, only a third of Alaskans on Medicaid whose eligibility has been checked have been found eligible and were renewed in the program, according to state data.

Over the past two months, nearly 14,000 people were dropped from the program for procedural reasons, which often means that a family didn't receive or respond to mail from the Division of Public Assistance requiring them to verify their eligibility.

That can often happen because the state doesn't have an updated address

on file for a family, or a letter from the division gets mistaken for junk mail. But the state doesn't know exactly why so many people were getting dropped for this reason, said Deb Etheridge, the division director.

"We were seeing a lot of kids being disenrolled," said Etheridge. "So we paused procedural disenrollments for (October) benefits so that we can do a review of all individuals who haven't sent their information back to see if we can make an eligibility determination, and if we can get to the bottom of why this is happening."

As part of that review, she said, applications are being reopened in an effort to increase the number of people who can keep their health coverage. The state is also working on setting up a system to send text messages to people who are missing information.

Before eligibility reviews resumed, approximately one in three Alaskans

were enrolled in the state's Medicaid programs, which are sometimes referred to as DenaliCare and Denali Kid-Care, and thousands more could lose their coverage in the coming months.

Under a provision in the federal public health emergency that began in March 2020, Alaskans who might otherwise have lost Medicaid coverage due to a new job or other change in status were able to keep their coverage for the past two years without needing to submit annual paperwork — even if their income rose enough that they were no longer eligible for the program.

Medicaid recipients include eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, older adults and people with disabilities. States administer the program, which is funded jointly by states and the federal government.

*The Wrangell Sentinel contributed reporting for this story.*

# State report says two-thirds of Alaska adults are overweight or obese

BY YERETH ROSEN  
Alaska Beacon

Alaskans have high rates of chronic health conditions that can lead to death, and they are failing to follow lifestyles that would keep those chronic conditions at bay, according to a newly released state report.

Two-thirds of Alaska adults are overweight or obese, nearly a third have high blood pressure and 27% have high cholesterol, according to the state Department of Health's annual Alaska Chronic Disease Facts report.

COVID-19 became the third-leading cause of death for Alaskans in 2021, after cancer and heart disease, and the various chronic conditions that undermine health threaten to make the disease worse, the report said.

Three out of four Alaska adults have underlying health conditions that increase the chances of severe or even deadly effects from COVID-19, the report said. Those conditions include obesity, diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease and depression.

Lifestyle habits are tied to some of the conditions, the report said.

Among adults, 21% reported no physical activity and 17% smoke cigarettes, said the report, citing 2021 statistics. Among high school students, 30% were overweight or obese, fewer than half were in physical education classes, about half drank at least one sugary beverage a day and, while only

8% smoked cigarettes, 26% used e-cigarette "vaping" products, according to the annual summary.

The Alaska Chronic Disease Facts' summary of health conditions for high school students is based on statistics from 2019, the latest available.

Alaska's adult obesity rates are similar to the national rates recorded from 2017 to 2020, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The teen overweight and obesity rates are similar to the national averages for youth, according to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

While Alaskans are falling short of diet and exercise standards, large numbers are also failing to get the recommended health screenings that detect or prevent chronic diseases that can be deadly, the report said.

More than half of adults who had not been previously diagnosed with diabetes failed to get blood-sugar screenings

over a three-year period, the report said. Among adults aged 50 to 75, 30% had failed to get recommended screenings for colorectal cancer, the report said.

Among women 40 and older, 39% had failed to get a mammogram in the prior two years, the report said. Among all adults up to age 64, 11% lacked any health coverage.

The mammogram statistics paralleled those in a separate report that found Alaska women ranked second-to-last among states, after Wyoming, in staying up to date on those breast-cancer screenings. That report examined mammogram rates for women 50 and over, using 2020 statistics from the CDC.

To help people make positive lifestyle changes, the Department of Health launched a "Fresh Start" program last year. The free program can match participants with coaches, offers instruction and distributed health products like blood-pressure cuffs.

However, some health

problems are connected to poverty or substandard living conditions that are not easily addressed by changes in individual behavior, the new Alaska Chronic Disease Facts report noted. Those include lack of running water and sanitation services in some rural

communities, overcrowded housing and repeated mistreatment of children, the report said.

*The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.*

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Alaska



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