



Assembly approves sale of hospital property to real estate developer

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly approved the sale of the former medical center and six adjacent lots to property developer Wayne Johnson on April 9.

Johnson is a Georgia-based real estate developer hoping to build a 48-unit condo-style housing development with covered parking on the property.

The borough sold the 2 acres of the former hospital property to Johnson for \$200,000, which required approval from the economic development board and the planning and zoning commission as it was below the property's appraised value of \$830,000.

Municipal code allows the sale of borough property at less than appraised value if officials determine it would benefit the town's economy.

The six lots behind the hospital property, totaling about 1.3 acres, sold for their appraised value of \$316,000.

At the public hearing April 9, a couple community members voiced concern over Johnson's plans.

Alice Rooney expressed her desire to downsize into condo-like housing yet was discouraged by the cost of the condos, which Johnson said in an

interview in early March could be as much as \$500,000 for the largest units.

The Sentinel was unable to contact Johnson last week for any additional information on his plans.

In March, Johnson estimated construction of the 48 units could total \$12.5 million to \$15 million, after almost \$1 million to demolish and remove the old hospital building.

Christina Florschutz expressed her concerns to the assembly over the engineering of the new construction. Florschutz's home was destroyed in the Nov. 20 landslide and she credits her life to the engineering of her home. She noted how soft the ground is on the island and the strength of the wind that blows off the Stikine River.

Borough Manager Mason Villarma noted that the sale of the property does not include any requirements to demolish or build anything on the land. Johnson will have to follow municipal building code and zoning regulations, he said. Since the property is currently zoned for open space, it will have to be rezoned if Johnson wants to build anything.

The sale is expected to close by May 30.

Latest state budget proposal falls short of paying for Wrangell school repairs

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The Alaska Senate has passed a capital budget to fund roads, school repairs and rebuilds, housing, water and sewer systems and other public works projects across the state — but the spending plan is short of funds to cover repairs to Wrangell's three aging school buildings.

The budget bill approved by the Senate on April 12 will move next to the House for its consideration and possible amendments before a legislative adjournment deadline of May 15, at which time the governor could exercise his authority to veto individual

items in the spending plan.

The Senate voted 15-3 to approve its version of the state's \$3.9 billion capital budget. About 80% of the money is federal, going to roads, airports, broadband internet service expansion and improvements to the electrical transmission lines serving the Railbelt from Fairbanks to the Kenai Peninsula.

Less than \$500 million is state general fund money, which covers discretionary spending on projects statewide. That number total is significantly higher than the average annual state spending on construction, repairs and maintenance over the past 10 years.

Continued on page 12

Forest Service adds staff; will mostly work on recreation projects

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

The U.S. Forest Service is adding a dozen new positions in Wrangell, plus changing two jobs from seasonal to permanent. Most of the new hires are on the job, with a couple still in the hiring process.

District Ranger Tory Houser

estimated it's a 15% to 20% gain in staff.

"Many of the positions are recreation positions," she said. "In our case, the influx is more a management decision to transition from having seasonal, temporary employees to having permanent employees that work a seasonal schedule."

Houser added the new staffers will be involved in multiple recreation projects in the area, including major trail renovation at Rainbow Falls, work at Anan Wildlife Observatory, as well as the Kunk Lake Trail and Nemo Saltwater Access Trail.

In addition to recreation projects, other new hires were

added to work in disciplines such as fish and wildlife, and timber and silviculture.

Houser said the agency was able to use authority in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which allowed them to consider people with ties to the area as prospective employees, "to be

able to look at their local knowledge as an asset in hiring them."

"Most of them are people that were hired under ANILCA, and if they weren't born in Alaska they have lived and worked here at some point in time," she said, adding that some had once been interns

Continued on page 12



PHOTO BY RJ SANGOSTI / THE DENVER POST

Visitors to the Denver Art Museum look at "Drum (Gaaw)," a cultural item from the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, on display in the Northwest Coast and Alaska Native Art Galleries on March 27. The tribes have been trying to reclaim their cultural items from the museum for more than 30 years.

Tlingit and Haida continues pressing Denver museum to repatriate cultural objects

At least five pieces came from collection of Chief Shakes items

By SAM TABACHNIK
The Denver Post

In 2017, a delegation from the Tlingit and Haida tribes flew to Colorado to meet with officials from the Denver Art Museum.

The dozen tribal members came to discuss the return of a 170-year-old wooden house partition, painted by a master Indigenous artist. The panels — 67 inches tall, 168 inches wide — illustrate the story of how a raven taught the Tlingit to fish.

The delegation told the museum that this screen never should have left Southeast Alaska and belonged home with its people under a 1990 federal law designed to repatriate objects of cultural significance to Native Americans.

But at the end of three days of meetings, the tribes left Denver without a promise of any repatriations.

"It felt like they were trying to hang onto those objects at all costs," said Father Simeon Johnson, vice chancellor

for the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and Alaska, who accompanied the delegation that day in Denver. "Their attitude was: 'These are ours. They're here and they're going to stay here.'"

Tribal representatives say they're still trying to reclaim their heritage from the Denver Art Museum, 34 years after the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act came into effect. Museum officials have been intransigent, condescending and insensitive in consultations, they allege.

To this day, a host of prized Tlingit cultural objects remain in the museum's much-celebrated Indigenous Arts collection, despite three formal repatriation claims and numerous delegation visits to Denver's premier art museum.

"They are probably the worst museum we have ever dealt with," said Harold Jacobs, the Tlingit and Haida cultural resource specialist, who attended the 2017 meetings in Denver.

Continued on page 3

Senior Center Menu

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

Thursday, April 18

Senior spring picnic at Shoemaker Park. Call to reserve a van ride if you need one.

The menu will be roast beef sandwich, corn chowder and creamy coleslaw

Friday, April 19

Chicken adobo, oriental vegetables, honey orange salad, rice

Monday, April 22

Shelf-stable meal delivered on Friday, April 19

Tuesday, April 23

Pork, steamed carrots, honey mustard slaw, baked potatoes, gravy

Wednesday, April 24

Beef paprika, butternut squash, sliced banana and orange, rice

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

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, April 19

Kennicott, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 26

Kennicott, 3:45 p.m.

Sunday, May 12

Kennicott, 4:45 p.m.

Sunday, May 19

Kennicott, 8:45 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, April 22

Kennicott, 6:15 a.m.

Monday, April 29

Kennicott, 7:15 a.m.

Wednesday, May 15

Kennicott, 6:15 a.m.

Wednesday, May 22

Kennicott, 6:15 a.m.

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

Tides

High Tides

Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
April 17	09:09	12.4	10:23	12.8	02:55	6.7	03:43	2.9
April 18	10:17	13.0	11:07	13.9	04:22	5.5	04:43	2.4
April 19	11:11	13.8	11:44	14.9	05:16	4.0	05:26	1.9
April 20	11:56	14.5	05:55	2.6	06:00	1.6
April 21	00:17	15.8	12:36	15.0	06:27	1.3	06:31	1.5
April 22	00:47	16.4	01:13	15.3	06:57	0.2	06:59	1.6
April 23	01:15	16.7	01:48	15.3	07:26	-0.5	07:27	2.0



ALASKA AIRLINES CLUB 49 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

NOLAN CENTER THEATER "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire," rated PG-13, at 6 p.m. Friday, April 19, 6 p.m. Saturday, April 20, and at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 21. The adventure comedy fantasy runs 1 hour and 55 minutes; tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

WRANGELL COMMUNITY CLEANUP 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 20, starting at the Evergreen Elementary gym. Trash bags will be provided. Cash prizes for trash volunteers. Lunch will be served at noon.

FOREST SERVICE WORKSHOP 3 to 6 p.m. Monday, April 22, at the Nolan Center. Come and share comments, ideas and ask questions about the Forest Service Tongass management plan. There will be a brief presentation, an open and informal workshop, and feedback stations that cover various topics.

KSTK SPRING ON-AIR FUNDRAISER April 22-26. Help KSTK raise \$21,000 for broadcast services. All donors are invited to KSTK Friday evening, April 26, for the spring grill-out, with burgers, hotdogs, side dishes and beverages.

JAM BAND 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, April 23, at the Sourdough Lodge. Bring your guitar, banjo, fiddle, harmonica, bass, spoons or whatever you play, or sing or just come listen. Will circle up and share music around the room. Any experience level is welcome.

COMMUNITY MARKET 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 27, at the Nolan Center. \$10 a table for vendors. Register with jarnold@wrangell.com or awade@wrangell.com, or call 907-874-3770.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER "Migration" rated PG, at 1 p.m. Sunday, April 28, at the Nolan Center. The animated adventure comedy runs 1 hour and 23 minutes. Free; part of the Stikine River Birding Festival. The concession stand will be open.

KINDERGARTEN enrollment is now open for the 2024-2025 school year to any child who will be 5 years old by Sept. 1. Kindergarten screening will take place May 2-3. Call Kendra at 907-874-2321 or stop by the Evergreen Elementary School office.

TECH SAVVY SENIORS 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 4, at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Wrangell High School Student Government volunteers will help senior citizens with tech issues on phones, computers, email, social media, etc.

STORY TIME AT THE LIBRARY, 10 to 11 a.m. Fridays through April 26. Come enjoy the stories, crafts and snacks at the Irene Ingle Public Library. Call 907-874-3535.

VIRTUES MATTER activities for children, 2:35 to 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the elementary school music room. An interfaith effort hosted by the Baha'is of Wrangell and open to all. For more information and to register, call Kay Larson, 907-209-9117, or email wrangell@akbnc.org.

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 or call 907-874-2444.

- **OPEN GYM VOLLEYBALL** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Mondays, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Fridays at the community center gym. Wear sporty clothes and gym shoes. For ages 14 and up. Drop-in rates apply.
- **OUTDOOR CHALLENGE** through April 28 is built to encourage consistent movement, with a goal of completing at least 30 minutes of exercise 5 to 7 days per week. This challenge is for people of all fitness levels. The participant who completes the most workouts will win a six-month pass to the Parks and Recreation facility; prizes donated by local businesses will be raffled off at the end of the challenge. For ages 14 and up. Registration required for this free activity.
- **TOT SWIM** 11:30 to 1 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. For guardians and children 5 years old and under. Toys and "pool noodles" available.

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

April 17, 1924

To meet the expense of sending contestants to the meet which will be held in Juneau next week instead of Ketchikan as first planned, the Wrangell PTA staged two benefits during the past week. The first was a food sale and tea held last Saturday afternoon in the Patenaude Building. All of the donated items found a ready sale and the event was well patronized. Cash donations were also received from many of the townspeople and the use of the building was given rent free so that the sum of \$7.60 was realized. The second benefit was the declamatory contest Tuesday night at the

Redmen Hall. While all the returns are not in, about \$35 will be cleared from this event. The community orchestra turned in to the PTA treasury something over \$20 as their donation from the proceeds of the musicale given Saturday night, thus swelling the amount on hand to more satisfactory proportions.

April 15, 1949

The U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administration today listed 32 locations in Alaska where it said airports should be constructed or improved on a basis of existing and anticipated demands for air service. The listings were contained in the 1949 National

Airport Program and the CAA annual report. The plan does not represent the allocation of funds. Included were the Kodiak airport and the Wrangell seaplane base.

April 17, 1974

Wrangell's 22nd annual king salmon derby begins April 19, with \$1,000 for first place and \$500 for second. Fishing for prize-winners extends through July 14, with weekly merchandise prizes given beginning April 29, according to co-chairman Art Nelson. Once again, the \$10 derby tickets will entitle entrants to participate in the regular derby and special

derby days during the Memorial Day holiday period. Special derby days will be May 18-19 and May 25-27. The official weighing station will be at the Totem Bar. Derby rules and boundary descriptions will be handed out with tickets, according to Nelson.

April 15, 1999

Tidelands and debris were the topics of much of the discussion during Tuesday night's city council meeting. One of the city's concerns for the past year has been disposing of the demolition debris from the former Wrangell Institute. After looking into available and possible sites, it

was recommended that the area just south of the fenced area where the old Institute landfill is located would be the most desirable site. Regulations concerning asbestos disposal indicate that more than one disposal site is needed to meet the volume limits to use a general permit for disposal of demolition debris (the general permit is limited to volumes of 1,000 cubic yards or less). According to City Project Manager Mark Storm, the old landfill location could accommodate multiple sites. After lengthy discussion, the council voted unanimously for the selection of the proposed site.

FREE TRAVEL BENEFITS JUST FOR YOU.



Alaska AIRLINES

Learn more at Club49Hub.com



2 FREE CHECKED BAGS



TRAVEL NOW DISCOUNTS



WEEKLY FARE SALES



FREIGHT FOR LESS

Denver Art Museum

Continued from page 1

John Lukavic, the museum's curator of Native arts who also attended those meetings, said in an interview that it was surprising and disappointing to hear the tribes' reaction to their Denver visit. He disputed their characterization of museum officials' behavior.

The Tlingit representatives never submitted a formal claim under the federal repatriation act for the raven screen, he said. The museum follows the same rulebook in all dealings to comply with the law, he added, and even offered to help the tribe complete the necessary paperwork to request repatriation.

"We're not in the business of just giving away our collections," Lukavic said. "Nobody is."

How Tlingit objects dispersed around the globe

At least five pieces in the Denver Art Museum's Tlingit collection come from the collection of Walter Waters, a former proprietor of Native American wares in Wrangell.

How Waters acquired those objects, however, is a matter of great pain for the Tlingit.

A number of objects in the collection came from Chief Shakes VI, a hereditary clan leader. Before he died in 1916, the chief was ordered by a Presbyterian minister to will his property to his widow and not his maternal nephew — contrary to Tlingit inheritance laws, Jacobs said.

All of his property ended up outside the clan. Waters got many of the objects, as did Axel Rasmussen, a local collector.

The Tlingit tribe adheres to different property customs than U.S. law. Ownership of property resides within the clan as a whole, rather than within individual members. But American expansion into Alaska during the 19th and 20th centuries imposed U.S. customs on tribes, including the Tlingit, in efforts designed to strip Indigenous people of their culture.

"An individual clan member has the authority to 'use' clan property, but he/she cannot independently transfer or alienate this right," the tribe wrote in a repatriation request to a Maine museum last year.

The Chief Shakes pieces collected by Rasmussen and Waters ended up at the University of Washington's Burke Museum, the Portland Art Museum and the Denver Art Museum, former Denver Museum of Nature and Science curator Chip Colwell wrote in his 2017 book "Plundered Skulls and Stolen Spirits."

A bear screen once seen in the clan house's interior was still on display in Denver at the time of the book's publishing, though it's not anymore. It remains in the museum's collec-

tion.

Inside the museum's Tlingit collection

The Tlingit pieces at the Denver Art Museum are part of 18,000 objects by artists from more than 250 Indigenous nations, the museum states on its website, an assemblage it boasts as "one of the strongest and most comprehensive collections of Indigenous arts from North America in the world."

The museum acknowledges that institutions like theirs have "benefited from the displacement of Indigenous people and the removal and historical misrepresentation of their arts, often resulting in deep harm to originating communities."

But the museum has rejected Tlingit tribal representatives' overtures multiple times over the course of 20 years.

When the law that became known as NAGPRA passed in 1990, museums were required to send inventories to tribes of their entire Native American collections that might be subject to the new legislation.

The law was designed to force federal institutions and those that receive federal dollars to return any human remains, funerary objects, sacred pieces and objects of cultural patrimony to tribes. The hope, advocates believed, was that this law could help unwind the centuries of subjugation and genocide of Indigenous people on the land that became the United States.

Soon after the new law took effect, the Denver museum told the Tlingit tribes in a letter that the institution held five objects of theirs subject to NAGPRA, said Jacobs, the Tlingit and Haida cultural resource officer. But the law states museums need to send tribes full inventories — not just a selection of items a particular tribe may want.

"That's our determination to make," Jacobs said his predecessor told the museum. "Not yours."

However, museum records show Denver officials included an inventory list of 325 works identified as Tlingit for the tribe's review, said Andy Sinclair, a museum spokesperson. The museum would handle

this situation differently today, she added, saying it accommodates all Indigenous community requests to see artworks in the museum's collection.

Tlingit leaders asked Johnson to accompany the delegation to the three-day sitdown in 2017, since several of the visitors were members of the church.

The priest recalled one moment particularly vividly: The Denver Museum officials, as they were discussing the raven screen, cited Hopi law for why they could keep the Tlingit object. The Hopi tribe lived in what's now northeastern Arizona.

"I was surprised by how rude and culturally insensitive the museum was toward the repatriation of some of these objects," Johnson said. "The general impression was, 'You're Indians; you're all the same.'"

Lukavic, the Native arts curator, said his predecessor, Nancy Blomberg, was using the Hopi as an example of what a tribe needs to do in order to fulfill certain NAGPRA requirements.

Those meetings were largely positive, Lukavic remembers. Museum officials learned from the Tlingit delegation about their culture and traditions. But as soon as the museum described everything the tribe needed to do to have the item considered for repatriation, the tone shifted.

"They saw the process as a hurdle to getting something back," Lukavic said. "We can hear verbally what people are saying, but it's not a claim."

At other points over the years, the Tlingit and Denver Art Museum engaged in extensive talks about a house partition with a Shakes family crest, a significant piece from 1840 made of wood, paint and human hair.

Denver officials offered to have a copy made of the partition — which would go to the tribe, Jacobs said. The Tlingit representative said the museum should be the one with the copy, while the original should be returned.

In September, the tribe used a replica of the piece during a traditional ceremony. The original remains in the Denver Art Museum's collection, though it's not on display. Visitors to the museum's gift shop can purchase postcards with the bear screen's image.

One of the Waters pieces held by the Denver Art Museum, a wooden drum with an image of a raven from 1880, remains on view in the Northwest Coast and Alaska Native Art Galleries.

Kevin Callahan is a descen-

dant of Chief Shakes and the current leader and house master of the Naanya.aayí clan. The house partition with the Shakes crest — known as "many faces" to tribal members — is supposed to stand in front of his clan's longhouse.

"To us, these are our uncles, our fathers," Callahan said. "These are living beings for us."

When they sit in storage of American museums, he said, "it's like taking them and locking them up. They're unable to speak, to communicate."

These objects are crucial to helping keep the tribal language going, relearning family trees and for use in Native ceremonies, Jacobs said.

Lukavic said the tribe never submitted a formal claim for the Shakes family crest. Jacobs countered that museum officials were adamant they weren't returning the bear screen even with a claim.

As the 2017 meeting concluded, Johnson left the building feeling the outcome was clear: "The museum was not going to return the screens."

The Tlingit and Haida tribes filed official NAGPRA claims for three objects in the Denver Art Museum's collection between 2002 and 2007, museum records show, including a beaver clan hat, a bear shirt and a tunic. None have been repatriated.

Museum officials denied two of the claims and said the third couldn't be properly assessed due to a lack of sufficient evidence.

For the beaver hat, the museum agreed that the claim met two of three guidelines under the law for repatriation. But the evidence for the "right of possession" condition was "not conclusive," Sinclair said. The item will not be displayed, she said, remaining in a secure location.

The museum denied the bear shirt claim due to a lack of information on how the shirt satisfies "ongoing central importance and constitutes communal rather than individual property."

Sometimes tribes can make a valid claim, Lukavic said, "and sometimes they can't."

'It's the federal law'

The Denver Art Museum's dealings with the Tlingit tribe stand in sharp contrast to other museums with holdings from the same collections.

In 2020, the Burke Museum in Washington state told the federal government that it intended to repatriate seven objects to the Southeast Alaska tribes. Several of these pieces, museum officials noted, are visible in historic photos of Chief Shakes V and his successor. Information from the tribes, meanwhile, indicated that the relics were communally owned by the clan — meaning no one person could decide to dispose or sell them.

Burke Museum officials determined that the seven cultural items have "ongoing historical, traditional or cultural importance central to the Native American group or cul-

Continued on page 4

WRANGELL
REAL ESTATE

Kathleen is locally committed, and here to help you **BUY or SELL!**

907-874-4445
movetowrangell.com

Celebration of Life

Please join us as we celebrate the life of **James Randolph Rinehart**

Tuesday, April 23, 2024
at 1:00 O'clock

Wrangell Carving Shed
Please bring a memory or photo to share if you have one.
Food donations appreciated.
~ The Rinehart Family ~

Homeport Electronics, Inc

Marine - Computer • Sales and Service
Computer Repair • Marine Electronics

TIMEZERO by NOBELTEC **FURUNO** **GARMIN**

WE HAVE MOVED to 114 Harbor Way, Petersburg, AK

907-772-3100 • www.homeportelectronics.com
• SALES@HOMEPORTELECTRONICS.COM

N K ELECTRIC
Here to serve all your electrical needs

COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL RESIDENTIAL

907-874-2770, #21633

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Time to let younger people take the lead

BY LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Neither President Joe Biden, 81, nor former President Donald Trump, 77, is necessarily too old to be president. Their biggest flaws are not their ages, it's that they are blocking and discouraging younger people from getting a chance to lead the country.

It's because the two nominees are so certain that they are best suited for the job of leading the country and that they, more than anyone else, are best able to manage a nation of 335 million people. They seem to think that younger leaders are not as capable as they are. Their ego tells them that they are a winner.

No disrespect to my elders, but it's time that they — myself, at age 72, included — make room for others on the podium. We may be wise and witty and experienced and still active in our Social Security years, but we don't have to be in charge forever. Nor should we be.

We had our time at the top, but now it's time to let others try. And until we step aside and give others a chance, they will feel disconnected, disinterested and disheartened at the political direction of the country. Who can blame them. It's their country for the next 20, 30 or 40 years, not ours.

Just because we are living longer with better medical care and healthier lifestyles doesn't give us the right to extend our leadership past its expiration date. And that date should not be based on whether we can still give a speech, make a decision or convene a meeting, but on whether younger people are ready to lead and

deserve the chance.

A nation led by older people is more focused on Medicare than child care; more interested in senior discounts than the price and availability of infant formula; more preoccupied with remembering the past than looking to the future.

Though it's not all our fault for hanging on to power with our arthritic hands. Younger generations need to put down their smartphones, take out the earbuds, click off the video streams or whatever else is on their screen and sign up to lead. It should be their time, but only if they pay attention.

The inattentiveness of 20-, 30- and 40-somethings creates a void, a lack of candidates for elected office, a shortage of volunteers to run community groups, an empty leadership chair that by default often is taken by older leaders who figure someone has to do the work.

The frustration of 50-somethings that they have to keep waiting while their elders refuse to step down leads many to give up and do something else with their life than run for office.

Just look at the Polident grip in Congress. The calendar says 20 members of Congress are in their 80s. The average age of the U.S. Senate is about 65. The average age in the U.S. House is close to 60.

Trump and Biden reflect more the age of Congress than of the country. I must have missed that provision in the constitution. I hope the Democrats and Republicans will decide it's OK for Father Time to sit out the next elections and let a younger crowd take over. It's their turn.

EDITORIAL

Alaska House made the right decision

The Permanent Fund dividend is important to a lot of Alaska households, but so is education, public safety, ports and harbors, roads and more.

The state House did the right thing last week in rejecting a proposed constitutional amendment that would have elevated the PFD to a higher status than any other need in the state.

Yes, Alaskans have to find a solution to the annual divisive, debilitating, political fight over the amount of the dividend. It has become worse than a distraction; it's become an obstruction that prevents elected officials and the public from confronting the state's pressing problems of inadequate housing, lack of child care services and a growing shortage of new residents and workers.

But guaranteeing a dividend in the constitution is not the answer or even an answer to the problems. Even worse, adding the exalted PFD to the constitution denigrates the importance of everything else that the founders — and the public — thought important when they adopted the document almost 70 years ago.

The constitution says the state shall maintain a public school system and a university, and shall promote and protect public health.

The right to privacy "shall not be infringed."

The state's natural resources shall be "available for maximum use consistent with the public interest."

Putting the dividend on equal footing with those defining provisions is not a solution to the annual political fight over the amount of the payment. Rather, it would create problems for generations to come as Alaskans find they cannot afford everything they want, but the constitution says the dividend takes precedence.

The House fell five votes short of the two-thirds majority required to put the amendment on the ballot for voters. Yet that doesn't mean the fight is over. Lawmakers still need to settle on an amount for this year's PFD and then every year until they can agree on a financially responsible formula.

There are several good proposals in the House and Senate, such as legislation that would allocate 25% of the annual draw on the Permanent Fund investment earnings to the dividend and 75% to public services, which is the formula used last year with a \$1,312 PFD. Another bill would set the dividend at a flat \$1,000 a year. Both are affordable for a state that should be spending money on so many other needs of its residents and communities.

Someday, legislators and the governor need to find a workable dividend calculation. Keeping it out of the constitution was a good start.

— Wrangell Sentinel

Denver Art Museum

Continued from page 3
ture itself."

"(The Tlingit) know what they are doing when it comes to taking care of their sacred cultural heritage," Sven Haakanson Jr., the museum's curator of North American anthropology, told The Denver Post. "Returning the Tlingit pieces and seeing them used in ceremonies again — what more can we ask for in doing the right thing for the community? They were reawakened in a beautiful way and now are back in their rightful place."

The Portland Art Museum in 2022 repatriated nine Tlingit objects, including some from Chief Shakes' collection. Museum officials called the repatriation ceremony a "landmark occasion, too long in the making."

"Receiving them back, one by one, brings back the spirit of the person who wore them," Luella Knapp, a member of the Naanya.aayí clan, said in a statement at the time.

Other museums have developed creative ways to return Tlingit cultural property to the tribes while maintaining educational opportunities.

The University of Maine's

Hudson Museum in May will formally repatriate seven objects after requests from the Alaska tribes. The museum, though, still wanted to showcase one particular item, a Tlingit frog clan helmet. So university engineers created a replica using a 3D printer.

"The end product allows the museum to continue educating learners of all ages about the cultural traditions of the Northwest coast, while allowing the original object to be reintegrated into traditions, ceremonies and cultural practices of the community from which it came," museum officials wrote on their website.

Why did the museum feel it was important to return the Tlingit pieces?

"It's the federal law," said Gretchen Faulkner, the Hudson Museum's director, in an interview.

Other Tlingit pieces from the Waters collection remain in prominent museums, including New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum in London. Cultural objects — like a painted Tlingit raven rattle — also have appeared on auction blocks for as high as \$50,000.

After decades of inaction on NAGPRA from some of the country's largest institutions, there has been a recent groundswell of movement.

Increased media attention has played a significant role, including a ProPublica investigation that allows anyone to search collections at their hometown museums and universities for ancestral remains and funerary objects.

The Biden administration this year also rolled out new federal regulations governing the 1990 law, which gave tribes more power when dealing with obstinate institutions.

These regulations forced museums around the country to reassess their exhibits and holdings. The Denver Art Museum in January removed a case of Native American ceramics from public view in response to the new rules, which require museums to obtain permission from tribes before exhibiting cultural objects.

Jacobs, the Tlingit and Haida cultural resource specialist, said the new NAGPRA regulations will, hopefully, "make it easier to go after this large collection that was forcibly willed outside of our customs."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Community support essential for raising safe, healthy children

April is National Prevention of Child Abuse Month. The Alaska Children's Trust partners with organizations around the state to create awareness and help nurture healthy families. BRAVE is one such group working in Wrangell to build a positive outlook for the future for our children and youth.

Our work is based on our core values of Building Respect and Valuing Everyone (BRAVE). Too often, our society thinks of raising strong children as a parent or caregiver's responsibility alone. This simply isn't true. Community support

and family-friendly activities can help lighten the burden on families and strengthen communities from the ground up.

Every family and child deserve the foundation necessary to live purposeful lives with a bright future. Prevention efforts aim to provide help and resources before a crisis occurs.

We hope that this month, our community will join us in learning about the importance of upstream prevention and linking arms to do the critical work that Alaska families require.

More information can be found at alaskachildrenstrust.org/child-abuse-prevention-month.

Kay Larson
BRAVE Secretary

Oldest continuously published paper in Alaska



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

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

Sentinel Staff:

Publisher Larry Persily
Office Manager... Amber Armstrong-Hillberry
Reporter Mark C. Robinson
Reporter Becca Clark
Production Ola Richards

Wrangell Sentinel (USPS 626-480) is published weekly except the third week of July and the week after Christmas by Wrangell Sentinel, 205 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929. Periodicals postage paid at Wrangell, AK.
Phone: 907-874-2301; Email: wrgsent@gmail.com; Website www.wrangellsentinel.com. ©Copyright 2022.

Subscription Rates

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

Volunteer student group expands focus, starts selling lunches

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

A high school organization founded by students several years ago aimed at inclusivity and students helping each other has expanded its focus, and its store in the school's commons area is selling an assortment of sandwiches, beverages and other snacks during lunchtime.

BASE, founded by a group of Wrangell High School students in 2019, has grown over the years from decorating the halls to providing needed food to students, arranging teacher appreciations, working with school staff to learn how to write grants to help fund the BASE food store, and even securing money to make microloans.

The name originally stood for Building a Supportive Environment. Mikki Angerman, special education teacher for the middle and high school, assumed responsibility for the group this school year and is re-vamping it, changing the name so that BASE now stands for Building Acceptance and Support for Everyone. "I just tweaked it a little bit to be more inclusive," she said.

When Angerman took over, it included just her own students but quickly expanded. "It blew up," she said. "Kids said, 'Hey, I want to be a part of it.'"

She said all the students are volunteers. "I have mostly middle schoolers and a handful of high schoolers, so it is a mixed group. It's very diverse. We've got athletes. We've got some of the more tech kids. We've got some with disabilities, some without."

Angerman arranged to have some of her students join other BASE members behind the counter at the snack bar to provide them with work experience and social interaction. Paraprofessionals Christina Good and Kathleen Easterly assist in guiding the students as they perform various duties in the store. "The goal is to show that everyone has value," she said. "Lunches have been that outlet to get us started."

Although the store began several years ago selling breakfast food, it hasn't been open for breakfast so far this school year but was going to give it a trial return this week.

Angerman added that inclusion can often be something her students struggle with. "We have a lot of our student population that are not educated on differences, and it can be a target for bullying or exclusion," she said.

"We do allow all students to join but special education does have a central part. We are promoting in-



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Behind the counter at the BASE food store in the high school commons area (from left) are special education teacher Mikki Angerman and paraprofessional Kathleen Easterly, with seventh graders Zander Bartlett, Arabella Nore and Jacoby Hunt.

clusion and support for all. We will be offering education and resources on various things such as neuro-diversity, specific disabilities, mental and physical health (and) bullying."

As April is Autism Awareness Month, Angerman has been taking the opportunity to address students about autism briefly every day in the commons area at lunchtime. On April 11, she talked about the meaning of the word "autism," having heard it used in a derogatory fashion at school.

"I've just been really disheartened to hear that word thrown around as maybe a jokey word to your friends or maybe to put somebody else down, and I hope that we can change that," she said to those present. "People in our school actually do struggle with autism, adults and children, and so when you're throwing that word around and they're hearing it or your friends are hearing it, that is hurtful."

In an interview after her talk with students, Angerman said incidents of bullying or name-calling have happened more often than she would like. "I do think that it's just lack of education, lack of knowledge about it, so I'm hoping through this (public discussion), that we can help with that."

She also wants to address other issues through BASE, such as depression or grief. "It can be just any challenges that these kids are going to experience outside of reading, writing, math. Challenges that they have in life."

Angerman wants to use the money raised from the store to further educate on inclusion and awareness, in addition to providing a small scholarship for someone each year. While the store currently only sells food, she hopes to expand the selection in the future. "I'm hoping that it can grow," she said. "I really do want it to be more student-led."

WRANGELL SENTINEL

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

To advertise here, just call
907-874-2301

ANCHOR PROPERTIES
e: marilyn@apalaska.com | 907-470-0085
w: www.apalaska.com | free market analysis
WRANGELL'S #1 REAL ESTATE COMPANY

JOHNSON'S BUILDING SUPPLY
FOR ALL YOUR BUILDING NEEDS
2.5 ZIMOVIA HIGHWAY
PHONE 907-874-2375 • FAX 907-874-3100

Buness Bros. Inc.
Appliances
Home Furnishings
Boat Motors & Pumps
Phone: 907-874-3811
Facebook: @bunessbros.

Stik Cafe • Stik Restaurant & Lounge • Stikine Inn Hotel •
907-874-3388

CITY MARKET INC.
Where Wrangell Shops!
Since 1935
Full Grocery, Meat, Liquor
Fresh Produce, Bakery & Deli
Copy & Fax
Online Ordering & Free Delivery
Facebook: @City Market, Inc. 907-874-3333

TYEE TRAVEL
Cruise and Tour Specialist
• Cruises • Packages • Vacations
Cruises and custom tours to Alaska for your family & friends
Wrangell
907-205-4003
Call Toll Free 1-800-977-9705

zelle
is a convenient way to send money directly between bank accounts in the U.S.
CALL 907.874.3363
FIRST BANK
The one who's here. FirstBankAK.com Member FDIC

Sentry Hardware & Marine
Got A Question... Need A Hand?
408 Front Street
907-874-3336
P.O. Box 1139 • Wrangell 99929

Wrangell IGA
Groceries
Meats • Bakery
Deli • Liquor
Wrangell's Complete Food Store
Phone 907-874-2341

Help Wrangell's economy GROW. SHOP LOCAL!

Borough approves pay raises for union, non-union employees

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly approved a three-year collective bargaining agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers on April 9, covering public works, light and power, port and harbor and maintenance jobs, totaling about 23 positions.

The agreement includes amendments to some job descriptions and the wage and grade table, effective July 1.

Borough Manager Mason Villarma said they wanted to make sure changes were made to reflect inflation. He also said the borough noticed that some wages weren't competitive with other municipalities, and that there were quite a few inequalities between similar roles within the borough.

The average wage increase across all positions is approximately 10% in the first year of the new contract. Villarma explained that rather than doing a blanket percentage increase for each job across the board, they evaluated each position's grade on the wage and grade scale for equity and regraded many positions.

A cost-of-living adjustment of 2% will be applied to the wage and grade scale each year of the new contract.

The employer-employee split of health insurance premiums also changed, with employees paying a larger share. With the new agreement, employees will pay 20% and the borough will pay 80%. Previously, employees paid 15% while the borough covered 85%.

Vacation and sick time will be converted to paid time off, with a cap of 680 hours per year, which is standard for government jobs, Villarma said. Currently, vacation time is capped at 520 hours and sick time at 480 hours. He noted that currently employees could potentially take off a total of 1,000 hours, and changes were made to reduce the overall liability for the borough.

With the approval of the union negotiations, the borough also adjusted some of the non-union job descriptions and pay grades to ensure parity between similar jobs across the borough.

All non-union hourly employees will receive a 6% pay increase on July 1, and some positions will have pay grade adjustments on top of the increase. Salaried employees will receive a 4% increase on top of grade increases. Cost-of-living adjustments will be made annually, each spring.

Villarma said that while he knows it won't please everyone, he is proud of the negotiating team's work and believes the new wage scales correct some unfairness in job classes.

Wrangell may receive state funds to start planning emergency route

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The state capital budget approved by the Alaska Senate last week includes \$200,000 for the borough to start planning an emergency access route for when Zimovia Highway is blocked by landslides or other disasters.

The route would connect the old logging road at Pats Creek on the west side of Wrangell Island to the Spur Road on the island's east side.

The borough estimates the total cost of design and construction at roughly \$5 million, and requested \$500,000 in state funding to start planning and design work.

The Senate approved the capital projects budget on April 12, sending it to the House for consideration. The Legislature faces a May 15 adjournment deadline. The governor would have the final say on spending items in the budget.

The East Channel Emergency Access Route, as the borough calls it, would use the existing Forest Service road that starts at Zimovia Highway near Pats Creek, crossing through the middle of the island and adding maybe half a mile of new road to link up with the Spur Road for access to the airport and town.

In its request for state funding, the borough referred to the new route as "a critical need" to provide access for emergency personnel and an escape route for residents in the event of another landslide like the one at 11.2-Mile on Nov. 20 that blocked Zimovia Highway.

Without a secondary route to the south end of Zimovia Highway, the only access for residents and emergency crews is by boat, which is how first responders and others managed until the highway reopened a week after the landslide.

The proposed escape route of about 12 miles would cross federal and state lands. The borough already is working with the state for an easement to allow use of an existing state forest road.

The project would require improving portions of the roadways along the route to make them accessible to most vehicles, in addition to building the short stretch of new connector road on the east side of the island.

"A portion of the state forest road on the south side of the unconnected area is decommissioned and water-barred," the borough said in its request for state money. "The existing road to the north has drainage issues, alder growth and two bridges requiring condition assessments but are currently drivable by all-terrain vehicles."

The estimated \$500,000 for planning and

design would help determine the route alignment, conduct environmental permitting and prepare a better estimate of the construction cost, the borough said.

That work also would include fish stream surveys and reviews of culvert and drainage issues.

In addition to providing a secondary access route to the southern end of Zimovia Highway, the new road connection would "create a loop for expanded tourism opportunities and recreation," the borough said in its funding request.

Borough officials discussed the proposed escape route with federal officials in December, during a trip to Washington, D.C. Borough Manager Mason Villarma suggested the U.S. Forest Service should consider abandoning the Middle Ridge Road that was heavily damaged in last November's landslide and spend money instead to help fund the escape route.

"It doesn't make sense to spend millions and millions" to rebuild the road to the Middle Ridge Forest Service cabin, Villarma said last December, when the money could go toward an escape route.

The \$200,000 in planning money is a small piece in the \$3.9 billion capital budget approved by the state Senate last week. About 80% of the spending is federal money dedicated for roads, airports, electrical transmission lines and improved internet service in rural communities.

Of the discretionary state money in the budget, Wrangell would receive \$5 million to strengthen the century-old earthen dams that hold back the community's water reservoirs. The state grant would pay to "reinforce both these dams with buttresses," likely concrete, Villarma said last December.

The Senate bill also includes \$26.5 million toward the University of Alaska's \$1.4 billion backlog of deferred maintenance work. The spending plan appropriates about \$30 million split between rebates for homebuyers for new energy-efficient homes; weatherization projects to help reduce power bills; and new housing in rural communities for teachers and public safety workers, among others.

In addition, the budget includes \$15 million to help fund a skilled-nursing facility at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, intended to alleviate pressure at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, and \$7.5 million for SeaShare, a nonprofit based in Washington state that provides fish to Alaska food banks and pantries.

Besides for adding items to the budget, the Senate deleted several of the governor's requests, including the entire \$4.5 million

budget for the state corporation that has spent more than a decade promoting an Alaska North Slope natural gas pipeline project.

Despite spending several hundred million dollars on the gas pipeline venture, the state has attracted no partners, investors or customers for the development, estimated at \$40 billion to \$50 billion.

Assembly approves four-year contract for borough manager

By BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The borough assembly on April 9 approved Mason Villarma's contract as borough manager.

The assembly vote was unanimous.

Villarma went to work as finance director in September 2021 and has been serving as both finance director and interim borough manager since November 2023 when Jeff Good stepped down as manager to accept a federal job.

Villarma's four-year contract for borough manager goes into effect May 5.

During his tenure as interim borough manager, Villarma helped see the borough through the deadly landslide Nov 20 and recovery efforts.

Villarma spoke with excitement in an interview about the more than \$8 million the borough has received in state and federal grants in the past year, and the \$45 million in project grants it has applied for next year. His focuses for the borough as manager are growth and prosperity, he said.

The borough is advertising for a new finance director and Villarma said hopefully one will be hired by May 5.

Villarma's negotiated salary is \$160,000 per year, with a cost-of-living adjustment of 4% annually. He negotiated the new contract with Mayor Patty Gilbert and Vice Mayor David Powell.

The assembly agreed last month to hire Villarma, with the terms of his contract to be negotiated.

Good started at \$126,000 a year when he was hired as manager in 2022.

The contract allows Villarma to serve on the Southeast Alaska Power Agency and to continue as cross country coach at Wrangell High School.

SAVE THE DATE



2024 WRANGELL WELLNESS FAIR

Saturday, October 19, 2024
7 a.m. - 12 p.m.
The Nolan Center

SEARHC is committed to providing annual wellness fairs throughout many of the communities we proudly call home.

This year, we look forward to seeing the Wrangell community on October 19. In addition to the health and community resources you've come to expect at these events, we will also be able to help you prepare for fall with expanded flu clinic offerings.

SEARHC is always here to address your healthcare needs throughout the year. Should you wish to visit your healthcare provider prior to October, please visit searhc.org



SEARHC
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

Forest Service asks public input on revisions to management plan

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

After more than a quarter-century, the nation's largest national forest is getting a new management plan. On April 22, Wrangell community members will get a chance to learn about the proposed revisions to the forest plan and share their thoughts.

A forest plan can be compared to zoning, Paul Robbins Jr., public affairs staff officer for the Tongass National Forest, explained. The plan helps guide management decisions, such as focusing on what areas are managed for recreation versus other activities, rather than looking at specific trails and cabins.

The Forest Service will host an in-person Wrangell workshop for the plan revisions where community members will be able to share comments, ideas and ask questions. The workshop will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Monday, April 22, at the Nolan Center. There will be a brief presentation, and then the workshop will be open and informal, with feedback stations that cover various topics.

The workshop in Wrangell is one of over 20 similar events held around Southeast this month. The goal of the workshops is to help educate the public on what a forest management plan is, get feedback on their vision for the Tongass and give them an opportunity to share their knowledge, Robbins said.

Bob Dalrymple, borough assembly member and former Forest Service employee, said the new plan will likely focus on wilderness, wild scenic rivers, mariculture and recreation.

The borough will become a cooperating agency in the plan revision, Borough Manager Mason Villarma said, which will provide the local government with a formal process for commenting on the plan revision.

Dalrymple noted that originally, the Tongass drove economic development of the timber industry. Throughout the years, as environmental groups have become more concerned with the Tongass, Dalrymple said some changes have been detrimental to the communities within the national forest.

He said part of the reason the borough wants to be a cooperating agent is so that it can comment on what the Forest Service could do for the economy.

Meaningful dialogue is vital to creating a successful management plan, Robbins said. The Forest Service is also partnering with Spruce Root and Juneau Economic Development Council to ensure that a variety of inputs, local and traditional ecological knowledge are involved.

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 required every national forest to develop a plan. The current management plan for the Tongass was created in 1997, with a subsequent revision. It's important to adapt to the social and ecological conditions that have changed over the past 25 years, Robbins said.

When the management plan was created in 1997, the region was looking at the end of the pulp mills and logging era. A 2016 amendment to that plan focused on the need to transition to young-growth forest. Today, the region has a much more diversified economy that includes tourism, fishing and recreation.

In addition to the in-person workshops, the Forest Service has been hosting webinars every Wednesday evening that are recorded and can be watched on their website: www.fs.usda.gov/main/tongass/landmanagement/planning

The revision will likely be drafted by 2025, with implementation in 2028, according to the Forest Service website.

Dalrymple said the complexities of the process and the legal components of revising the management plan are overwhelming. The event April 22 will help inform the public and explain these components, he said.



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Coast Guard crew talks with students

Petty Officers 2nd Class Anderson Ernst (left) and Andrew Kappler of the U.S. Coast Guard discuss safety procedures for emergencies at sea with third graders at the elementary school on April 10. While the Ketchikan-based, 154-foot fast-response cutter John McCormick was at the City Dock for tours, its crew also visited the high school to discuss possible career choices with students.

Annual birding festival flies into town April 24-28

BY BECCA CLARK
Sentinel reporter

The time of year is approaching when birds flock to the river flats, and Wrangell is once again hosting the Stikine River Birding Festival.

The festival will run from April 24 to 28 and will include a variety of bird-themed events and activities free of charge.

This year is a bit of a lighter year, Matt Henson, who is organizing festival planning, said. They are focusing on community-centered, family-friendly events.

Rather than a couple weekends of programming that the festival has offered in years past, this year's schedule will be more condensed into just a few days.

The events will kick off with "Birding 101" led by Bonnie Demerjian at St. Philip's Episcopal Church on Wednesday, April 24, at 6:30 p.m. Demerjian will provide tips and tricks for identifying birds.

On Friday, April 26, Gwen Baluss, a U.S. Forest Service wildlife technician, will band birds at the Volunteer Trail from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 27, will be full of activities, beginning with a bird walk led by Demerjian at Muskeg Meadows Golf Course, from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Participants are encouraged to bring binoculars and join her for coffee, pastries and casual birding conversations at the Nolan Center

afterward.

The Wrangell Community Market will take place at the Nolan Center from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 27. From 11 a.m. to noon there will be birdhouse building outside the center. Participants should bring their own hammer.

Also on Saturday, the Angerman's Inc. Golf Tournament will be held at Muskeg Meadows. Registration is open until 9:30 a.m. and costs \$25. The tournament starts at 10 a.m.

The festival will conclude Sunday, April 28, with a ballet recital at 10 a.m. at the Nolan Center. There will also be a workshop presentation on pollinators in Southeast Alaska at 11 a.m. at the Nolan Center.

Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. the movie "Migration" will be shown at the Nolan Center. The animated adventure comedy film tells the story of a family of mallards who try to migrate from New England to Jamaica.

All weekend, art by Evergreen Elementary School students will be on display at the Nolan Center.

The event is supported by a U.S. Forest Service grant, which provides enough funding for this year's event and two more years. Next year, organizers are hoping to have more of a regional draw for the festival, said Henson, who works as the borough's marketing and community development coordinator.

Court rejects state funding for homeschooled students

BY JAMES BROOKS AND
CLAIRE STREMPLE
Alaska Beacon

An Anchorage Superior Court judge has struck down an Alaska law that allows the state to allocate cash payments to parents of homeschooled students, ruling that it violates constitutional prohibitions against spending state money on religious or private education.

"This court finds that there is no workable way to construe the statutes to allow only constitutional spending," wrote Judge Adolf Zeman, concluding that the entire law must be struck down.

The April 12 decision has major and immediate implications for the more than 22,000 students enrolled in state-approved correspondence programs used by homeschooled students.

For the past decade, state law has allowed families to receive thousands of dollars per

year in reimbursements — paid for with public money — for education-related expenses of their choosing.

There are almost three dozen such programs in the state, many operated by local school districts. The Wrangell School District does not operate a correspondence program, but Wrangell homeschooled students may enroll in programs outside the district.

Scott Kendall, the attorney who represented plaintiffs suing the state, said he believes the changes will not disrupt correspondence programs, just the money.

"What is prevented here is this purchasing from outside vendors that have essentially contorted the correspondence school program into a shadow school voucher program," he said.

"That shadow school voucher program that was in violation of the constitution,

as of today, with the stroke of a pen, is dead," Kendall said.

"This is going to become a hot-button legislative item," said Soldotna Rep. Justin Ruffridge, co-chair of the House Education Committee. "I would imagine that would quickly become a No. 1 legislative priority."

Anchorage Sen. Bill Wielechowski also expressed concern, adding, "It couldn't have come in some ways at a worse time." The Legislature has four weeks left before adjournment, with the state budget still unresolved.

"My hope is there is a stay (in the court ruling) until the school year's out so that parents can get through the school year," he said, adding he expects an appeal of the ruling. "Then we'll see what the (Alaska) Supreme Court says and hopefully the Supreme Court takes it up quickly ... and gives us some

Continued on page 8

I can help you make sure your coverage is up-to-date. Contact me today.



"As your business evolves, so do your risks. Which likely means there are changes that need to be made to your insurance policy. It is a good idea to consult with your insurance agent twice a year to make sure you are still paying for what you need."

Leslie Binkley,
Commercial Lines Agent

Email: niccole@p-wins.com
Toll Free: (800) 478-3858, Fax: (907) 802-3225
www.p-wins.com
PO Box 529 Petersburg, AK, 99833



Correspondence students

Continued from page 7
guidance on this.”

The stakes for correspondence programs and public schools in general are high. Since a 2014 law, roughly 10% of Alaska school enrollment has shifted from school buildings to correspondence programs, with the pace of the shift accelerating over the past four years.

Alaska has operated correspondence programs for homeschooled students since before statehood, but only in the past decade have those programs started giving state cash allocations to families.

In 2013, then-Sen. Mike Dunleavy sponsored legislative language that allowed parents of correspondence program students to spend their

share of state education money, labeled an allotment, on “nonsectarian services and materials from a public, private, or religious organization.”

The Alaska Constitution, however, says: “No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution.”

As a state senator, Dunleavy attempted to amend that section of the constitution but failed, though his spending proposal became law the following year.

While the state began allowing parents to spend correspondence program money on nonreligious materials, those materials also could be purchased from public, private or religious organizations.

After Dunleavy became governor in 2018, the state expanded the ways those allotments could be used.

In 2022, several state-licensed homeschool programs began allowing participants to use their allotments to pay for classes at private and religious schools.

Jodi Taylor, the spouse of

Attorney General Treg Taylor, wrote publicly that year about her plans to use correspondence allotments for private school tuition and wrote instructions to help other parents follow suit.

Two months later, Deputy Attorney General Cori Mills issued a legal opinion concluding that the practice did not violate the Alaska Constitution to pay for one or two classes, while saying that the money could not pay for most of a student’s private school tuition.

A group of teachers and parents filed suit against the state in January 2023, alleging that the state’s system of correspondence program allotments “is being used to reimburse parents for thousands of dollars in private educational institution services using public funds, thereby indirectly funding private education in violation ... of the Alaska Constitution.”

Judge Zeman, examining the legislative history of the program, concluded that “the statutes were drafted with the express purpose of allowing purchases of private educational services with the public

correspondence student allotments.”

“Parents have the right to determine how their children are educated,” Zeman wrote. “However, the framers of our constitution and the subsequent case law clearly indicate that public funds are not to be spent on private educations.”

Kendall stressed that the ruling does not affect parents retroactively.

“Really what was going on here was the reimbursement of state funds to pay for tuition at private schools. That was really, in a nutshell, what this case was all about,” he said.

Kendall hopes the Legislature acts quickly to ensure that correspondence programs can continue to operate, while prohibiting families from using funds to go toward private or religious organizations.

The state has yet to say whether it will appeal the April 12 court decision.

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com. The Anchorage Daily News and Wrangell Sentinel contributed to this report.

Chamber hands out annual volunteer, business, educator and citizen of the year awards

By SENTINEL STAFF

The chamber of commerce at its annual awards dinner last weekend honored several members of the community for their service, including the fire department and emergency medical services crew, municipal electric line crew and borough employees for their response to the deadly Nov. 20 landslide that hit Wrangell.

“Nowhere was the ‘I can help’ spirit more evident than in November of last year when a tragic landslide befell our community. For weeks, volunteers and first responders showed just what an amazing place Wrangell is,” said Caroline Bangs, chamber secretary, as she asked the award winners to come forward and accept a plaque.

“It is with great pleasure and admiration that I introduce to you tonight’s guests of honor: Representatives from the Wrangell Volunteer Fire Department, the City and Borough of Wrangell, EMS and the linemen who worked so hard in our time of need.”

The chamber awards night was held Saturday, April 13, at the Stikine Inn.

The chamber also announced the theme for this year’s Fourth of July celebration: “Home Where We Belong.” Anyone with a flair for art who wants to design a logo for the celebration can drop off their donated submission at the chamber office in the Stikine Inn. The deadline is May 8.

The chamber at its dinner honored Joan Sargent as volunteer of the year.

“I just want you to know how easy it was to give this award to this individual because she is literally involved in everything, and how tough it was to make sure she didn’t know she was going to receive it,” Tommy Wells, the chamber’s executive director, said. “I have to thank her husband for scheming with me over the past few weeks to have her be here. It’s incredibly hard to keep a secret from someone who is involved in so many different things.”

Sargent serves on the Parks and Recreation advisory board, volunteers with the St. Francis Animal Shelter, BRAVE and Island of Faith Lutheran Church. She also has represented Wrangell on the board of directors of Ketchikan-based WISH (Women in Safe Homes), helping connect survivors of domestic violence with services.

The chamber’s educator of the year award went to Virginia Oliver.

“She is one of the most endearing and far-reaching teachers through her work as one of the only fluent Lingít speakers in Wrangell,” according to the nominating letter, which was read by Omid Rahmanian, chamber board member.

“She teaches language classes at the high school and elementary school, hosts a weekly drumming circle, leads the Wrangell Johnson O’Malley (JOM) group ... and instills pride in many of Wrangell’s youth and tribal citizens.”

In addition to her work with school students, she has taught adult Lingít language classes twice a week for the past two years. “In June 2023, she was recognized by the Sealaska Heritage Institute as one of seven distinguished educators throughout Southeast Alaska.”

The business of the year award went to BW Enterprises.

“There are some businesses that go far beyond their primary goal and become major contributors to the very fiber and fabric that holds a community together,” the nominating letter said.

Brent Woodbury’s BW Enterprises “dropped everything to assist with the landslide,” Amber Armstrong-Hillberry, chamber board member, said of the company’s response to help with search and rescue, cleanup and rebuilding of Zimovia Highway after the landslide.

“They regularly donate and give to the community and provide such a great service to Wrangell most people don’t realize or understand,” the nominating letter said.

This year’s citizen of the year award went to Christina Florschutz, who survived the Nov. 20 landslide that killed her husband, Otto Florschutz.

Wells read from the nomination letter the chamber received: “Having gone through what she has, and to be so positive is amazing. She is an inspiration with her desire to live. ... (She) deserves to be acknowledged for her awesome positive spirit.”

Wrangell team takes 2nd place in middle school volleyball tourney

By MARK C. ROBINSON
Sentinel reporter

One of Wrangell’s two teams placed second in the Stikine Middle School Invitational Volleyball Tournament, losing to Klawock in the final, while a Petersburg team took first place in the other bracket after defeating a different squad from Klawock.

The two-bracket competition of 13 teams from middle schools across Southeast was held at the Wrangell high school and community center gyms on Friday and Saturday, April 12-13.

The teams included two from Wrangell, one from Craig, one from Metlakatla, two from Klawock, two from Ketchikan and five from Petersburg. The teams competed in separate brackets, A and B, that played round robins on Friday to determine the bracket order for Saturday.

“It was fantastic,” said Shelley Powers, who coached Wrangell’s B team that won second place. “It’s one of the biggest tournaments we’ve had since before COVID, and I feel like it was a success.”

Brian Herman coached Wrangell’s A team in the single-elimination tournament on Saturday, where they lost their first game. “We were bummed that the A team didn’t make it further,” Powers said.

Both Powers and Herman said the standouts of the B team were seventh graders Evelyn Gadd and Kaiya Roher. Powers praised Evelyn’s leadership and consistent all-around play, while Kaiya helped support the sixth graders and had great passing and serving.

“We’re pretty excited with how the B team did,” Herman said. “They’re playing so well.”

Herman said most of the teams were evenly matched, but Petersburg’s A team excelled. “They played the best volleyball of any team at the tournament.”

Herman was thankful to the borough’s Parks and Recreation Department for providing the community center gym to make the tournament possible with so many teams. “We did not have the gym space available,” he said. “That’s the only way we



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Seventh grader Evelyn Gadd keeps the ball alive for Wrangell in a match against Petersburg on Saturday. Though the team defeated Petersburg in the semifinal, they lost the final against Klawock in the B bracket of the Stikine Invitational Middle School Volleyball Tournament held April 12-13.

were able to bring in this many teams.”

Herman set up the entire tournament, coordinating all the teams and setting up the brackets, while Powers handled communications for the teams and worked with parents and community members to meet their other needs, adding that they came together to make meals for the teams.

Powers said they will probably do this again next year. “If we do this again, we’ll need a little help,” she said. “Brian and I were running around like crazy.”

State House approves budget with one-time boost in school funding

BY WRANGELL SENTINEL AND ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

The Alaska House has sent to the Senate a state operating budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1 with an almost \$2,300 Permanent Fund dividend that would be the single largest expenditure in the spending plan.

The budget also includes \$175 million in additional one-time school funding, raising the total state contribution to school district operating expenses to just over half of what House members voted to spend on this fall's dividend.

The boost in state aid for the 2024-2025 school year, if approved by the Senate and signed into law by the governor, would generate about \$440,000 in additional funding for Wrangell

schools, covering about two-thirds of the district's budget deficit for next year.

The \$175 million statewide is the same amount lawmakers appropriated last year — which Gov. Mike Dunleavy vetoed in half.

Though school supporters have been pushing for a permanent change in the state funding formula, which has not budgeted in seven years, they have not succeeded in rounding up support from enough legislators and the governor and may be left with a one-year funding increase as the only politically feasible option this legislative session.

The budget also includes a new appropriation of almost \$9 million to help school districts provide more help for K-3 students to improve their reading

skills. Wrangell schools could receive an additional \$22,000 if the Senate and governor concur with the spending item.

House Republicans responsible for crafting the budget said April 11 that their plan would not require drawing from savings — even with a dividend almost twice as large as last year — but that math is somewhat misleading.

Leaders of the Senate majority, along with members of the Democrat-led House minority, said the budget would lead to a more than quarter-billion-dollar deficit because it does not account for several critical spending items not included in the House bill.

The House claim of a balanced spending plan also excludes the annual capital (public works) budget, which the Senate approved on April 12.

The House passed the operating budget along caucus lines on a 23-17 vote, with all members of the Republican-led majority caucus in favor of the spending plan.

The House and Senate have

four weeks to reconcile their different versions of budget bills and agree on a spending plan before a mid-May adjournment deadline.

The size of the Permanent Fund dividend again proved contentious in the House budget bill. Gov. Mike Dunleavy has promoted a dividend of almost \$3,500 per person, but which would leave a \$1 billion hole in the budget that he proposes to fill from savings.

However, there has been a broad unwillingness among legislators to use savings to balance the budget. House Finance Committee Co-Chair DeLena Johnson, a Palmer Republican, said April 8 "it was not possible" to approve such a large dividend.

"I know some at home may be disappointed with the lower dividend in the budget, but this is the biggest PFD that the state can realistically afford," she said of the House-approved \$2,300 payment.

Speaking during debate on the House floor on April 10, Rep. Zack Fields, an Anchorage De-

mocrat, called the \$2,300 dividend "a fantasy" and said it was "completely unaffordable" after all state expenses are included in the final budget.

The House dividend is unlikely to survive negotiations with the Senate. Sitka Republican Sen. Bert Stedman, who manages the operating budget in the Senate, said the chamber was likely to support a dividend, with an "energy relief" bump-up, closer to \$1,600 per person.

"Their (the House) spending plan has a significant deficit, which is concerning," Stedman.

In addition to routine spending on public services, road maintenance, courts and jails and state troopers, Medicaid and the university system, the House amended the budget to include an additional \$5 million for tourism marketing and an extra \$5 million for seafood marketing efforts. The Alaska salmon industry is facing a second year in a row of low prices, an oversupplied market and tough competition for consumer dollars.

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING FINANCE DEPARTMENT Finance Director

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications for the position of Finance Director through May 15, 2024, at 5 p.m. The position will be posted for no less than 14 days and will remain open until filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits.

The Finance Director is a senior management position responsible for overseeing accounting operations, preparing for the annual audit, maintaining and integrating accounting systems, preparation and maintenance of the annual budget and implementing and monitoring internal controls governing business transactions such as purchasing, contracts and insurance. Advancement to this position is through promotion and compliance with the qualifications of the position.

This positions' full job description and employment application can be found online at www.wrangell.com/jobs. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Rob Marshall at City Hall at 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929, or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish April 17, 24, May 1 and 8, 2024

State House rejects proposal to put the PFD in constitution

BY JAMES BROOKS
Alaska Beacon

The Alaska House of Representatives on April 11 rejected a constitutional amendment that would have guaranteed payment of the annual Permanent Fund dividend.

The final vote was 22-18, five votes short of the two-thirds majority required to advance the amendment to the Senate for further debate.

If it had won legislative approval, the amendment would have gone to the public in this fall's general election.

The amendment was part of a plan created in 2021 by a bipartisan working group after the state came within a week of a government shutdown due to disputes over the size of the dividend.

Nikiski Rep. Ben Carpenter was a member of the working group and the author of the proposed amendment. He said the failed vote in the House doesn't mean the end of the end of the plan envisioned by the working group.

"There's enough people who want to see something happen," he said. "We'll just regroup."

From 1982 through 2015, the size of the dividend was set by a formula in state law. In 2016, amid falling oil revenue, then-Gov. Bill Walker vetoed half the dividend to balance the state budget for public services.

After a subsequent lawsuit, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled that the dividend is subject to the annual budget process, the same as any expenditure of state funds

for public services.

"Absent another constitutional amendment, the Permanent Fund dividend program must compete for annual legislative funding just as other state programs," Supreme Court Justice Daniel Winfree wrote at the time.

Every year since that decision, the Legislature has set the amount of the dividend by political negotiation, and debates over the amount have repeatedly brought Alaska to the brink of a government shutdown.

House Joint Resolution 7 would require the state — starting in 2025 — to pay a Permanent Fund dividend "according to a formula set out in law."

The problem with that idea, said Anchorage Rep. Andy Josephson, one of its most vocal opponents, is that the current formula in state law would produce an unaffordable dividend and create a budget deficit of more than \$1.5 billion.

This year, for example, the traditional formula calls for a roughly \$3,500 dividend that would cost \$2.27 billion, almost three times the size and cost of last fall's payment to Alaskans.

Carpenter and other supporters of the amendment responded to Josephson's criticism by saying that nothing prevents the Legislature from simply changing the formula in state law.

Homer Rep. Sarah Vance, a supporter of the constitutional amendment, urged her fellow lawmakers to have "faith" that the Legislature will be able to change the dividend formula.

Fairbanks Rep. Will Stapp voted in favor of the amendment but warned about the costs of the current dividend formula in state law. "The only way that's sustainable is if you tax people — and oil companies too — or massively cut government spending," he said.

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

It all adds up!

25% off

all ads in the May 1 Sentinel that promote Wrangell's Tax-Free Day

May 4

Shoppers get a break that day and the Sentinel wants to give businesses a break too

Call, email or visit Amber at the Sentinel to order your ad
Deadline to order your ad is noon Friday, April 26

WRANGELL SENTINEL 907-874-2301 • wrgsent@gmail.com
205 Front Street

Police report

Monday, April 8
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Deer complaint.

Tuesday, April 9
Burglary alarm.
Harassment.
Found property.
Harassment.
Dog at large.
Disturbance.

Wednesday, April 10
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Dog at large.
Citizen assist.
Noise complaint: Verbal for loud music.

Thursday, April 11
Agency assist: Trouble alarm.
Parking complaint.
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.

Traffic stop: Verbal warning for under-vehicle lights.
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for no headlights.
Citizen assist.

Friday, April 12
Agency assist: Ambulance.
Parking violation.
Hit and run.
Traffic stop: Warning for out-of-state plates.

Saturday, April 13
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.
Dog complaint.
Traffic stop: Warning for stop sign violation and vehicle registration.
Traffic stop: Warning for diving on the shoulder.

Sunday, April 14
Dangerous play.

Wrangell loans ambulance to Ketchikan after station fire

By **BECCA CLARK**
Sentinel Reporter

The South Tongass Volunteer Fire Department station in Ketchikan caught fire early morning April 9, damaging multiple fire and EMS response vehicles.

When the Wrangell Fire Department heard about the damages, they responded quickly by lending an ambulance to Ketchikan, sending it out on a barge later that same day.

The fire started at 2 a.m. April 9, according to information from the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and was under control by 3:49 a.m. and extinguished by 4:30 a.m. No one was injured.

The Ketchikan department lost a 20-year-old fire engine, a 20-year-old ambulance and a support vehicle in the fire. A 7-year-old fire engine was smoke damaged, as was a 10-year-old ambulance, but both may be repairable.

The fire started at the north end of the building near a piece of equipment, and the state fire

marshal traveled to Ketchikan to investigate the cause of the blaze.

The South Tongass department responders now are stationed at the Ketchikan Fire Department's downtown station about 6 miles away, where they continue to provide fire and EMS response services.

Wrangell has three ambulances and could spare one to help Ketchikan, Borough Manager Mason Villarma said. He said there is still plenty of coverage in Wrangell, and that there are backup plans in place.

In addition to the Wrangell loan, the Alaska State Fire Marshal Office is loaning a fire engine to Ketchikan and the borough is proceeding with the purchase of a 2024 pumper fire engine that officials located in Washington state. The cost is almost \$800,000.

The Ketchikan Daily News contributed reporting for this story.

Land trust transfers property to Forest Service wilderness area

By **YERETH ROSEN**
Alaska Beacon

A designated wilderness area in the Tongass National Forest, the largest U.S. national forest, is now a little bit bigger, after a land purchase and transfer arranged by two conservation organizations.

Five acres of land that was formerly privately owned has been added to the forest's Kootznoowoo Wilderness area on Admiralty Island, one of the organizations, The Wilderness Land Trust, said in a news release issued on April 11.

The project, a partnership with the Juneau-based Southeast Alaska Land Trust, is the latest in a series of land purchases or conservation transactions aimed at preserving sections of the Southeast Alaska rainforest.

The 5-acre parcel, at a site called Wheeler Creek, on the

northwest side of Admiralty Island, was purchased in 2022, The Wilderness Land Trust said in its announcement. The organizations worked since then to transfer it to U.S. Forest Service ownership.

The Wheeler Creek site is valuable for multiple reasons, said Margosia Jankowski, director of marketing and communications for The Wilderness Land Trust.

It holds important salmon and wildlife habitat, and as part of an old-growth forest it absorbs atmospheric carbon, making it a buffer against climate change, Jankowski said. When considering land parcels to buy for conservation, "climate resilience is definitely one of the functions we look at," she said.

The Wilderness Land Trust is a national organization dedicated to purchasing inholdings

— a term for private land within publicly owned, protected land — and transferring the property to public ownership for conservation. It has protected 586 properties over about 58,000 acres and began working in Alaska in 2017.

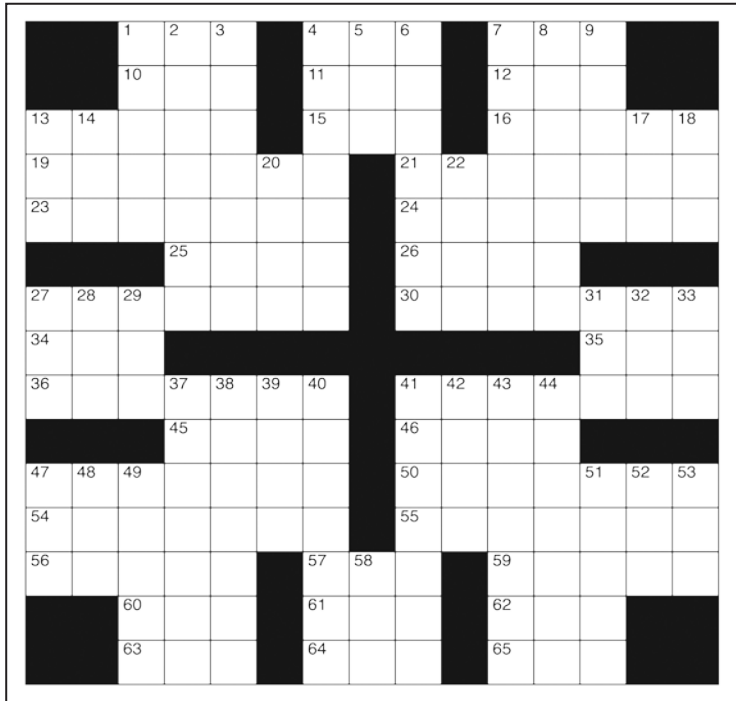
It has two earlier projects in Southeast totaling about 180 acres, both in the Chuck River Wilderness area of the Tongass, Jankowski said. That property is about 70 miles south of Juneau, on the mainland at the head of Wyndham Bay.

The Southeast Alaska Land Trust has already preserved 3,600 acres of wetlands, recreation sites, wildlife habitat, open space and subsistence areas in the region, according to its website.

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

Crossword

Answers on page 12



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between south and southeast
- 4. For each
- 7. Airborne (abbr.)
- 10. Photographs
- 11. They —
- 12. It's important in respiration (abbr.)
- 13. Monetary unit
- 15. Cool!
- 16. A son of Jacob
- 19. Cut off
- 21. Devour
- 23. Agent of one's downfall
- 24. Best
- 25. Network of nerves
- 26. Partner to "oohs"
- 27. Origins
- 30. Sewing utensil
- 34. Alias
- 35. Swiss river
- 36. Greek mythological figure
- 41. Type of whiskey
- 45. Lay to rest
- 46. "Rule, Britannia" composer
- 47. Select jury
- 50. Feeling
- 54. Action regarded as morally wrong
- 55. Makes angry
- 56. Act incorrectly
- 57. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 59. Class of escort aircraft carrier
- 60. To what degree
- 61. Buzzing insect
- 62. The human foot
- 63. "The Leftovers" actress Dowd
- 64. A place to stay
- 65. Sun up in New York

CLUES DOWN

- 1. An involuntary muscular contraction
- 2. Earnest
- 3. Cuts out surgically
- 4. Can't move
- 5. Baseball stat
- 6. British soldier
- 7. Traditional medicine plants
- 8. Political party controlled by managers
- 9. Hebrew prophet
- 13. Supporter
- 14. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 17. Liberty Mutual mascot
- 18. Georgia rockers
- 20. A place where building is done
- 22. Large, deep-bodied fish
- 27. Clothing retailer
- 28. Supplement with difficulty
- 29. Annoy constantly
- 31. Founder of Babism
- 32. Indigenous person in parts of Asia
- 33. Sea eagle
- 37. Leave behind
- 38. Time of day
- 39. Colorless crystalline compound
- 40. They lay out course requirements
- 41. A diamond has three
- 42. Algerian coastal city
- 43. Remove cover
- 44. Rechristened
- 47. Distinctive practice
- 48. Defunct phone company
- 49. Turkish officer of high rank
- 51. Eliminate from the body
- 52. Witness
- 53. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 58. Founding Father Franklin

Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



OBITUARIES

Steven Brian Gerard dies at 54



Steven Brian Gerard

Steven Brian Gerard, of Wrangell, died unexpectedly on Feb. 20, 2024. The family is deeply saddened and shocked by his sudden death.

A celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 5, at City Park in Wrangell. "We ask those attending to write a short story of a happy memory with or of Steven to read at the event," the family wrote.

Steven was born to Arnold and Marilyn Gerard on May 8, 1969, in Watsonville, California. He was the fourth of five children. He attended Thunderbird Adventist Academy and later Pacific Union College. He lived in Phoenix, Arizona, and Wrangell for most of his life.

Steven also loved Mexico and planned to buy a home there where he made some of his favorite memories with family and friends over the years.

It is impossible to sum up Steven's love for life and friends and family in a few paragraphs, his family wrote. "He was such an adventurous person and was always most happy when outdoors, especially around a campfire. As a child he loved to tell long, exciting stories about the bugs and snakes he loved to catch and study. He always had a special connection with animals and nature and people whom he loved. He was drawn to living simply and being around people who also valued honesty, loyalty, friendship and family."

Steven worked in construction and as a fisherman for many years. He was not afraid of hard work and had an ability to fix anything that was broken. He saw value in things that others could not see.

The people who were lucky to know Steven well knew how beautiful he was and that he was also a dreamer with big plans for a wonderful life, his family wrote. Steven was full of a special light and love for everyone and a willing volunteer to help anyone who needed it.

Steven is survived by his mother, Marilyn Gerard; sisters Dana Parfitt, Shelley Maycomber and Lori LeTellier-Moniak; and brother Joe Gerard.

"We will miss him more than words can express and look forward to being with him again in Heaven," his family wrote.

There will be an additional celebration of his life in Arizona.

Brian Hernando Fennimore dies at 53



Brian Hernando Fennimore

Brian Hernando Fennimore, 53, passed away on March 14, 2024, in Wrangell after suffering from brain cancer.

Brian was born on June 16, 1970, in Seattle. He grew up in Wrangell and was a 1988 graduate of Wrangell High School.

After graduating from high school, Brian attended Clover Park Technical School in Tacoma, Washington; Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon; and Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

Brian studied video/audio production at KTOO in Juneau and KTVA in Anchorage.

Brian's passion was music. He enjoyed listening to a variety of different music. He even hosted his own KSTK radio show in Wrangell for a time.

Brian always tried to look for the good in everyday life and to live life to the fullest, his family said. He really cared about people, whether it was a relative or an acquaintance.

"Through his life Brian never lost his very special qualities of showing kindness, practicing humility, and al-

ways putting himself second. Brian's time may have been cut short; he really lead a worthwhile life while he was here! Brian will live in our hearts forever," his family wrote.

He is survived by his mom, Alama "Chicken" Fennimore, and dad LeRoy Fennimore; brother Bruce and wife Carrie Fennimore, of Galena, Alaska; sister Allyson Fennimore, of Wrangell; nephew Nathan Fennimore of Portland, Oregon; godparents Dolly and Dar Water of Anchorage; along with many aunts, uncles and cousins.

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING POLICE DEPARTMENT Police Chief

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications for the position of Police Chief through May 1, 2024, at 5 p.m. The position will be posted for no less than 14 days and will remain open until filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits.

The Police Chief is a management position, responsible for the full scope of Police Department operations including patrol, investigations, corrections, public relations and community education. The position serves under the general direction of the Borough Manager and is accountable for accomplishing departmenta goals and objectives. Advancement to this position is through promotion and compliance with the qualifications of the job.

This is a full-time, salaried position with full benefits, paid at Grade 35 ranging from \$8,362 to \$10,564 per month. The full job description and employment application can be found online at www.wrangell.com/jobs. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Rob Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish April 17 and 24, 2024

CLASSIFIED

HELP WANTED

Join our team as Americans for Prosperity – Alaska Grassroots Associates working part-time for freedom, opportunity and prosperity in Wrangell. Engage with fellow Alaskans by conducting door-to-door canvassing -- no sales. Minimum 20 hours up to 30 hours per week at \$24.50 per hour. Text your name to 907-318-7172 to receive a link to the online application form.

HELP WANTED

Now hiring in Petersburg: Executive Director for Working Against Violence for Everyone (WAVE). Are you passionate about creating safer communities and ending violence? WAVE is seeking a dynamic Executive Director to lead our mission-driven organization. Responsibilities include strategic planning, fundraising, staff management and community engagement. Ideal candidates will have a proven track record in nonprofit leadership, advocacy and a commitment to social justice. Join us in making a difference. Closes April 19. Apply at www.petersburgwave.org/careers

FREE ADS

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

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.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Southeast Alaska Power Agency (SEAPA) will hold a special board meeting electronically on April 25, 2024 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. AKDT in Ketchikan, Alaska. The purpose of the meeting is to consider a contract and resolution. For additional information, please call (907)228-2281.



Publish April 17, 2024

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska will receive sealed bids for the construction of the **WRANGELL AIRPORT AIRFIELD LIGHTING BACK-UP POWER CONNECTION** project. The WORK generally includes mobilization, electrical service equipment, underground electrical systems, cabling, wiring, panelboard and other improvements necessary to provide for a backup power generator connection.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, Post Office Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time on May 1, 2024 and publicly opened and read at that time.

The Contract Documents are available in electronic format and can be downloaded from the City and Borough of Wrangell website (www.wrangell.com) under the Bids and RFP's section.

The OWNER reserves the right to reject any or all Bids, to waive any informality in a Bid, or to make award as it best serves the interests of the OWNER.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish April 3, 10 and 17, 2024

CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE OF JOB OPENING FIRE DEPARTMENT Fire Chief

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications for the position of Fire Chief through May 1, 2024 at 5 p.m. The position will be posted for no less than 14 days and will remain open until filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits.

The Fire Chief is responsible for planning, managing and integrating programs directed at protecting lives and property from losses due to fire and natural disaster. The department's focus includes, and is not limited to, fire suppression and prevention, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, marine/harbor facilities and disaster planning. Advancement to this position is by appointment and requires a demonstrated ability to administer the policies set forth by the Borough Assembly.

This is a part-time, salaried position with full benefits, paid at Grade 24 ranging from \$2,679 to \$3,380 per month. The full job description and employment application can be found online at www.wrangell.com/jobs. Employment is based on a successful background check and pre-employment drug screening.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Rob Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at rmarshall@wrangell.com.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

Mason Villarma, Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish April 17 and 24, 2024

School repairs funding

Continued from page 1

The Senate bill appropriates a little over \$36 million to cover the top 15 items on the Alaska Department of Education's Major Maintenance Grants Fund list. Wrangell's \$6.5 million request for roof, foundation, siding and other repairs to its schools is No. 16 on the list.

The House could add funding to cover more schools when it takes up the spending bill.

Wrangell voters in 2022 approved borrowing \$3.5 million for school repairs, hoping the state would kick in \$6.5 million to cover the most pressing \$10 million worth of fixes and upgrades to the decades-old

buildings.

Separately, the borough earlier this year received a \$695,000 federal grant, administered by the state, for rebuilding the Stikine Middle School roof, and can go ahead on that project and whatever it can afford this year and next with the \$3.5 million from the local bond issue.

Whether the top 15 projects on the Major Maintenance Grants list funded in the Senate's version of the capital budget actually receive state funding is in doubt, however, as Gov. Mike Dunleavy, in his proposed budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1, asked for legislative approval of only the

top two school projects on the list.

This year's list of 97 projects totals almost \$250 million in requests for state aid, similar to past years.

Legislators appropriated significantly more money for the program than Dunleavy requested in 2021, 2022 and 2023, but the governor used his veto powers to eliminate or reduce funding for school repairs each year.

No. 1 on the repairs list is the school in Craig, where middle school staff set out trash cans when it rains to collect water leaking through the roof.

Craig Schools Superintendent Chris Reitan said he was "super surprised" that the Senate was willing to fund the top 15 items on the K-12 major maintenance list.

"This is only the Senate, you know, so it'll have to be worked out with the House and then the governor, but going down 15 projects is a substantial statement by the Senate in regard to the importance of funding for school districts," he said.

Craig is slated to receive almost \$4 million, enough to repair the leaking roof and make the city's schools more accessible to disabled staff, students and visitors.

The Alaska Beacon contributed reporting for this story. The Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. Alaskabeacon.com.

Forest Service

Continued from page 1

with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) who had the opportunity to work in the Wrangell area, while others were longtime residents.

One longtime resident who became part of the team is Dan Flickinger, who had previously worked in the private sector before joining the Forest Service as the new trails and developed recreation manager. "He is (currently) working toward doing timber framing and trying to use local wood to build some shelters out on the Nemo Loop," Houser said.

Another new staff member is interpretation and conservation education specialist Claire Froelich. Originally from Tucson, Arizona, she initially planned to concentrate her studies on health care and considered careers such as dietitian, but first she wanted an adventure.



PHOTO BY MARK C. ROBINSON / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Claire Froelich, an interpretation and conservation education specialist, is among the new U.S. Forest Service staff members in Wrangell.

Going through the SCA and AmeriCorps led her to initially work as an intern for six months with the Forest Service in Wrangell in 2022 and she fell in love with the area. "I spent the next seven months trying to get back here," she said. "It's been going great ever since."

She stays busy as the point of contact or liaison for various events, projects, school programs and partnerships with Wrangell organizations.

Froelich said she enjoys working with the Forest Service staff, as she feels the focus is more community based. "It definitely feels like a family, and we all work together really well."

		T	D	E		N	N	I		N	N	V			
		S	E	P		E	E	B		W	O	H			
R	E	E	M	A		W	B	V		O	D	S	I	M	
S	E	G	V	R	N	E		L	V	D	N	V	C	S	
S	S	E	N	D	V	S		L	E	N	V	P	M	I	
			E	N	H	V			Y	R	U	B			
N	O	B	R	U	O	B		S	U	S	V	A	G	E	P
R	V	A											A	K	A
E	L	B	M	I	H	T		S	E	S	E	N	E	G	
			S	H	V	A		E	T	E	R				
M	U	M	I	T	P	O		S	I	S	E	M	E	N	
E	M	U	S	N	O	C		E	S	I	C	S	B	A	
R	E	H	S	A	D	R		A	C	A	N	C	F	R	A
		A	O	C	E	A		R	E	X	P	I			
		A	B	N		R		E	P		S	E			

PUZZLE SOLUTION

STIKINE RIVER BIRDING FESTIVAL

April 24th - April 28th 2024

Join us in Wrangell this April to celebrate the return of migratory birds from Central and South America. The Stikine River Birding Festival features guided bird hikes, a birding art exhibit, and other family-friendly activities.

Don't miss this opportunity to explore and learn about the fascinating world of birds!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT TRAVELWRANGELL.COM