



Assembly rejects mask mandate, opts for public education

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

The borough assembly decided not to reinstate a local mask mandate at their Tuesday meeting. Rather, they asked borough staff to pursue a public education campaign strongly recommending that people wear face masks and take other safety precautions during the current surge in COVID-19 cases.

The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was held via Zoom, a reversal from the assembly's short-lived return to in-person meetings. City Hall has been closed since last week due to staff exposure to COVID.

Dorianne Sprehe, with the Wrangell Emergency Operations Center, reported to the assembly that the community had six new cases as of Tuesday evening.

That raises the total in the past two weeks to 34. Of those, 26 were active as of Tuesday, the most at any one time since the start of the pandemic.

"Given the local surge of cases, and the situation around the region and state with case counts and ICU beds, the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) and administration felt is prudent to bring a mandatory face covering requirement back to the assembly for consideration," Borough Manager Lisa Von Bargen wrote in her introduction of the ordinance for the meeting.

The proposed mask mandate carried the same guidelines and enforcement policies as previous mandates. The public would be required to wear masks in indoor public settings and other communal spaces, with some exceptions, or risk a \$25 fine. If approved, the requirement would have sunset on Sept. 7.

"This is an interim measure," Von Bargen said. "Masking up helps us in that interim phase to reset things, to get those numbers to come down."

The mask mandate, and face masks in general, have been controversial topics for Wrangell in the past, just as in much of Alaska and across the country. However, no members of the public asked to speak on the issue

Continued on page 12



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Packing up in style

Kindergartener Leeya Gillen was one of 154 Wrangell schoolchildren who went home Tuesday with new backpacks from the annual Wrangell Cooperative Association event. The backpacks, filled with school supplies, were part of the Tlingit & Haida Central Council's drive to ensure Native children have supplies for school. To guard against COVID-19 infections, the backpack giveaway was socially distanced at the covered basketball court behind Evergreen Elementary School. Classes start Tuesday in Wrangell.

Ferry system hopes for summer return to Rupert next year

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The state ferry system hopes to resume service next summer to Prince Rupert, British Columbia, after a two-year absence due to a customs-clearance issue between the U.S. and Canada.

"We are now working at very high levels to try to get back there," said John Falvey, general manager of the Alaska Marine Highway System. "Rupert is an important port for us."

It's also a historic port.

The Alaska Marine Highway System went into business in 1963, sailing between Prince Rupert and Southeast, before extending its run to Seattle in 1967 and maintaining service to both ports, providing travelers with two options to connect to the North American highway system.

The state stopped service to Prince Rupert in October 2019 after U.S. and Canadian officials could not resolve differences over customs procedures.

The Alaska ferry system had brought customs agents from Ketchikan onboard the vessel when sailing to Prince Rupert so the officers could pre-clear travelers as they boarded for the U.S. Those officers were unarmed, which worked for decades until U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), under the Department of Homeland Security, decided that armed law enforcement officers needed to be present while its agents conducted inspections at the Rupert ferry terminal.

"In order to reduce security risks to the U.S. and provide safety for the traveling public and unarmed CBP officers," the federal agency determined that armed officers must be present at the terminal, the agency said in 2019.

Alaska Transportation Department Commissioner John MacKinnon didn't see why the big deal about needing armed personnel. "I think in the history of access to Prince Rupert, the only issues that have re-

Continued on page 3

Columbia might come back for summer 2022 ferry service

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The Alaska Marine Highway System has put out its summer 2022 draft schedule for public comment, with two potentially big changes from this year: The possible return to service of the Columbia, the largest ship in the fleet, and the possible return to Prince Rupert, British Columbia,

after a two-year absence from the port.

If the Columbia returns, it would give the state ferry system two sailings a week out of Bellingham, Washington, to Southeast Alaska ports.

With the Columbia, Wrangell could get two northbound and two southbound ferry calls a week, double its level of service

with only the Matanuska this summer.

Without the Columbia, the draft summer schedule for Wrangell shows only the weekly stops by the Matanuska — no other ferries would call on the community.

Other than the possible return of the Columbia and service to Prince Rupert, the summer 2022

schedule looks pretty much the same as 2021, with the Malaspina still kept out of work due to costly repairs needed before it could resume sailing, and the state's two newest ferries, the Hubbard and Tazlina, tied up.

The Tazlina is being kept out of service to save money, and the Hubbard will be in the shipyard for installation of crew quarters

so that it can accommodate longer voyages.

If the state restores service to Prince Rupert one week per month, as indicated by a placeholder slot in the draft schedule, the Matanuska would skip Bellingham that week and use the extra time to make an additional round trip through South-

Continued on page 5

Vaccination rate inches higher as COVID surge hits Alaska

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

After starting July at 56%, then moving to 58% on Aug. 1, the rate of eligible Alaskans getting at least their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine has now climbed to 60%.

Though the rate is improving, Alaska is still far behind the national average of 71%, as reported Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Alaska is two-thirds of the way down from the top in rankings of the 50 states.

Just like the state's rising tally,

Wrangell's rate of eligible residents with at least their first shot has climbed from 61% to 64% in the past few weeks, though the community still has the lowest rate among Southeast towns listed on the state's COVID-19 website.

While Alaska's vaccination rate is climbing, the infection rate is rising even faster — driven in great part by the more contagious Delta variant, public health officials said.

As of Tuesday evening, Wrangell had reported 34 cases over the past two weeks, more

than a quarter of all known cases in the community since the pandemic tally started in March 2020. The borough assembly was told at its Tuesday meeting that six of those cases were recorded just that day.

Most of Wrangell's two-week surge in cases are residents who had been in close contact with infected individuals.

State health officials reported about 5,800 cases in the past two weeks through Tuesday, averaging more than 400 new cases a day. The rate was under 100 cases a day six weeks ago.

After setting a record, case counts have been on the decline in Ketchikan, which reported a pandemic peak of 122 active cases last Friday before dropping to 56 on Tuesday, with just two people in the hospital.

Of the cases over the past five months, the Ketchikan Gateway Borough reported 80% were either unvaccinated or their status unknown.

The surge in infections across Alaska has overwhelmed state public health workers assigned to contract tracing, trying to find and alert people who may have

been close contacts of infected individuals.

"COVID-positive individuals are being requested to conduct their own contact tracing," Wrangell officials reported last week. Juneau officials issued the same advisory on Monday.

"If you are advised by someone that you are a close contact, or you believe yourself to be a close contact of a COVID-positive individual, please quarantine and contact your health care provider to test as soon as possible," Wrangell officials advised

Continued on page 12

Birthdays & Anniversaries

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

Thursday, Aug. 26: Kelsey Erickson, Drew Ann Hoyt, Curty Kautz, Kaleb Stough Rifenburg, Rebecca Smith, Tommy Rohr-Wickman.

Friday, Aug. 27: Piper Bunes, Frank Churchill Jr., Alexis Easterly, Krissy Lockabey, Dorothea Rooney; Anniversaries: Dan and Marlene Hoeschen, David and Paula Rak.

Saturday, Aug. 28: Greggy Gifford, Jacen Hay, Don Van Slyke.

Sunday, Aug. 29: Kara Carey, Donna Grover; Anniversary: DJ and Lindsey McConachie.

Monday, Aug. 30: Anniversaries: Andrew and Lauren Helgeson, Jeff and Kay Jabusch, Tom and Seanne Wickman.

Tuesday, Aug. 31: Scott Eastaugh, Joel Peterman.

Wednesday, Sept. 1: Joshua Campbell, Toni Marie Oliver.

Thursday, Sept. 2: Clara Haley, Laura Holder, Ryan Jabusch, Kameron Stough.

Senior Center Menu

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

Friday, Aug. 27

Chicken sandwich, minestrone soup, salad

Monday, Aug. 30

BBQ chicken, baked beans, bread, potato salad

Tuesday, Aug. 31

Sloppy joes, vegetables, bun, coleslaw

Wednesday, Sept. 1

Ham sandwich, tomato soup, salad

Thursday, Sept. 2

Chicken adobo, rice, carrots, spicy fruit cup

Please call the senior center at 874-2066 by 2 p.m. the day prior to reserve a seat at lunch at the center or to request delivery.

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

Ferry Schedule

Northbound

Friday, Aug. 27

Matanuska, 2:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 3

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 10

Matanuska, 4:15 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 17

Matanuska, 4:45 p.m.

Friday, Sept. 24

Matanuska, 3:45 p.m.

Southbound

Monday, Aug. 30

Matanuska, 6:15 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 6

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 13

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 20

Matanuska, 6:30 a.m.

Monday, Sept. 27

Matanuska, 7 a.m.

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



TIDES August 26-August

	High Tides		Low Tides		High Tides		Low Tides	
	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft	AM Time	PM Ft
Aug. 26	03:53	15.6	04:18	15.8	09:51	0.5	10:16	1.7
Aug. 27	04:31	14.3	04:50	15.1	10:23	1.8	10:56	2.2
Aug. 28	05:12	13.0	05:25	14.3	10:57	3.1	11:41	2.8
Aug. 29	06:02	11.7	06:08	13.6	11:36	4.4
Aug. 30	07:12	10.7	07:09	12.9	00:36	3.3	12:27	5.6
Aug. 31	08:44	10.4	08:28	12.8	01:45	3.6	01:35	6.4
Sept. 1	10:05	10.9	09:42	13.2	03:08	3.4	03:01	6.6

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

WRANGELL PARKS AND REC is seeking volunteer coaches to help ensure youth athletes have a fun season of skills and drills, scrimmages and games. The season runs mid-September through early November for kindergarten through fifth grades. Volunteers must pass a background check, commit to 2.5 hours weeknights per week — and it's important to have a general knowledge of the sport. Call 874-2444.

NOLAN CENTER THEATER presents "Jungle Cruise" rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12, for the action, adventure, and comedy film that runs two hours and 7 minutes. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Next weekend: "Free Guy."

CANDIDATE FILINGS for seats on the borough assembly, school board and port commission close Tuesday. Pick up the forms from the borough clerk's office at city hall, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays.

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

COMMUNITY POTLUCK 6 p.m. Friday, at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

BRAVE is hosting its fourth annual Family Resilience Fair noon to 2 p.m. Sept. 11 at the Nolan Center. Learn how your community can help your family. BRAVE is closely watching the Wrangell COVID-19 surge and will make safety decisions dependent on case counts closer to the fair date. BRAVE.Wrangell@gmail.com or 907-204-0530.

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

Continuing Events

PARKS and RECREATION www.wrangellrec.com

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

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

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

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

Open swim, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Monday and Wednesday; 6:30 - 8 p.m. Friday; 1 - 2 p.m. Saturday

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

Weight room available by appointment and at reduced capacity:

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

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

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

Aug. 25, 1921

Sometime ago Col. W.B. Greeley, Chief Forester of the United States, left Washington for the purpose of spending a month in Alaska inspecting the timber, water power and other natural resources of the territory. Upon his return from Alaska, Col. Greeley was interviewed by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer regarding his trip and the quality of the timber in the Alaska forest. Col. Greeley said: "Aside from enormous quantities of good pulpwood and serviceable construction timber, the territory probably contains the largest quantity of clear high-grade spruce to be found in the United States. During the war this spruce passed every test for airplane construction, and it is now being shipped to the eastern states in increasing quantities for car and factory stock and high-grade finish. Alaska contains 100 million cords of

pulpwood. She has the resources to produce 1.5 million tons of paper yearly. That is nearly a third of the paper used in the United States and nearly equal to what we are now compelled to import from Canada. There is a real solution to the paper shortage."

Aug. 30, 1946

The Alaska statehood study, completed by the Alaska Statehood Association, is off the press and is being distributed around the territory. Written by George Sunborg, the report presents arguments both for and against statehood and is probably the most complete work on statehood yet compiled in the territory. Whether you are for or against statehood or just plain neutral, the statehood study is something every Alaskan should read. It's packed with sound information about the territory and how it functions. And if you are a voting Alaskan, better study it before Oct. 8. That's the day Alaska votes on the statehood referendum and every Alaskan should record a ballot at that time so that Congress will know definitely that the people of the territory are either for or against being admitted to the union of states.

Aug. 27, 1971

The city council accepted the bid of grocer Lloyd Benjamin for leasing of six lots on the downtown fill area for a new

supermarket. Benjamin was the sole bidder for the ground on which he plans immediate construction of the store and a parking lot. The 55-year lease calls for an initial annual payment of \$1,158.54 for all six lots, renegotiable by the city every five years. Benjamin, member of a pioneer Wrangell merchant family, operates Benjamins Market. He said the 100 by 120 foot supermarket hopefully will be completed early in 1972. The filled area was created by the city in 1956 and has been subdivided for leases to business. A new city hall was constructed on a parcel near the supermarket site.

Aug. 29, 1996

Nobody wants to think about water and sewer utilities. Nobody wants to do without them either, and it's a fair bet that these are the city services we'd miss most if the city stopped maintaining them. The current system is adequate to current needs, but further growth is hamstrung by lack of expansion of water, sewer and electric lines to new areas around town. Supplying basic utilities is essential if the city is to open up new land for development. Wrangell's Comprehensive Plan was prepared in the early 1980s and is very outdated. The City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission continue to work on land-use and zoning problems, and to develop a new comprehensive plan.

Daylight Hours

Date	Sunrise	Sunset	Hours
Aug. 26	5:41a	7:59p	14:17h
Aug. 27	5:43a	7:56p	14:12h
Aug. 28	5:45a	7:53p	14:08h
Aug. 29	5:47a	7:51p	14:03h
Aug. 30	5:49a	7:48p	13:58h
Aug. 31	5:51a	7:46p	13:54h
Sept. 1	5:53a	7:43p	13:49h

COVID outbreak in Washington distribution center affects Alaska grocers

By CALEB VIERKANT
Sentinel writer

A COVID-19 outbreak that shut down a Washington state warehouse that helps supply Wrangell IGA and other Southeast grocery stores disrupted shipments this month, but the operation has reopened and shelves and coolers are moving back toward normal.

"We didn't get any dry groceries for the past two weeks, we only got our dairy and our meat," Caroline Bangs, with Wrangell IGA, said Monday. "But this week we just

got our freight in and just got eight pallets of dry (goods)."

With the distribution center reopened and filling orders, Bangs expects deliveries will pick up. "We haven't gotten any freeze (frozen groceries) for three weeks now, but they're going to start filling the orders again hopefully next week," she said.

"People have been a little uneasy lately, it seems like, about everything," Bangs said. "Hopefully, this will ease them a little bit."

City Market has not experienced any major supply

issues, said the store's Sharon Hale. The business uses a different supplier, Albertsons (which also owns Safeway), which she said has not had any warehouse shutdowns recently.

Though there may occasionally be some items absent from the shelves at City Market, that likely is due to the manufacturer and not the supplier, Hale said. "Wholesale, we have no problems."

The United Natural Food Inc. distribution center in Centralia, Washington, reported 119 COVID-19 cases among its employees and contractors over

two weeks, prompting the facility close down for a week, effective Aug. 1, according to news reports.

A Bloomberg news report called United Natural "one of the largest wholesale food distributors in the U.S." Even after the distribution center reopened, scaled-back deliveries created shortages, the news report said.

The Centralia facility, south of Tacoma, serves 825 grocery stores in the region, plus a large military operation, according to the newspaper in Centralia.

The pandemic and its hit to the workforce has caused disruptions across the nation's food industry, in production, processing and shipping. Disruptions in the supply chain and a shortage of products, along with a lack of enough delivery trucks and truck drivers, have made it difficult for some stores to maintain inventory.

Some of the shelves at the Petersburg's Trading Union grocery store, which relies on United Natural, were sparse last week, general manager Barry Morrison told radio

station KFSK.

Morrison said he recently ordered more than 700 cases of goods for his shelves, but received just 130 cases as the United Natural Food facility is slowly ramping back into service.

The Centralia distribution center also serves Olerud's Market, in Haines, where co-owner Doug Olerud told the local radio station Monday that he hoped next week's barge delivery might be closer to normal.

"It's been a little chaotic because they missed a week where they weren't receiving shipments, or shipping out anything," Olerud told public radio station KHNS. "They were supplying our groceries out of California out of another warehouse, from the same distributor. ... We didn't receive the majority of our groceries this week."

Olerud said he has been told next week's barge delivery should be back to normal. "But until we see what lands on the barge at the dock next week, we don't have a way to confirm that."



PHOTO BY CALEB VIERKANT/ WRANGELL SENTINEL

Learning to give it their best shot

PGC Basketball, an organization that offers hundreds of camps across North America, came to Wrangell this week for a three-day basketball clinic. DK Klyn (left), one of the coaches, said the clinic is designed to teach kids important principles of both the offensive and defensive game, through classroom and on-the-court sessions. Wrangell's clinic started with drills Tuesday afternoon, with about a dozen participants.



Be Part of the Solution

Protect Yourself and Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Southeast Alaska is seeing a rapid increase in cases of COVID-19. With the rising spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant and the influx of visitors into our communities, it is critical to protect yourself and help stop the spread of COVID-19. Continue to practice social distancing, wash your hands frequently and wear a mask indoors in public and at large gatherings.

If you haven't already, get the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage others to do the same. The vaccine is the best protection against COVID-related illness and greatly reduces your risk of hospitalization.



Sign Up Now

Vaccines are available for everyone ages 12 and up. To sign up for your vaccine or get more information about vaccination and testing services, go to covid19.searhc.org.

SEARHC | healthy is here.

Prince Rupert

Continued from page 1

quired law enforcement have been a couple of people that had too much to drink," MacKinnon told a conference of Southeast community and business leaders in May 2019.

The police requirement stems from a 2015 agreement signed by the U.S. and Canada to upgrade border security, according to news reports in 2019.

Lacking an agreement and funding to contract with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for armed officers to work the ferry loadings, and unable to resolve the issue with U.S. and Canadian officials, the Alaska Marine Highway System ended its service to Prince Rupert.

Service to the port became moot in March 2020 when Canada closed its border at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada reopened its border to U.S. citizens earlier this month.

U.S., Canadian and Alaska officials never stopped working to find a solution to the issue of armed law enforcement officers during ferry calls.

Falvey would not discuss specifics of a possible resolution to the issue. An announcement could come within the next few months, he said.

"Our goal is to get running there May 1," which is why the draft summer 2022 Alaska ferry schedule includes a "placeholder" one week a month for the Matanuska to make two round trips that week between Prince Rupert and Ketchikan, which is about a six-hour voyage north of the Canadian port.

The twice-weekly 17-hour opening in the Matanuska's summer 2022 schedule would allow the ship to run to Rupert and back, with time for customs clearance, loading and unloading.

Travelers and freight haulers long appreciated the option of taking the Alaska ferry to Prince Rupert rather than the longer and more expensive sailing to Puget Sound.

Prince Rupert officials in 2019 said about 14,000 travelers used the Alaska terminal each year.

In addition to resolving the issue between U.S. Customs and the Canada Border Services Agency, the state needs to "lock down what is needed" to upgrade the terminal building and other facilities to accommodate U.S. Customs requirements, Falvey said.

"The old wooden dock is in tough shape," Falvey said. "We believe it will be OK," but to make sure the state would send engineers to inspect the structure.

The state had been looking at making longer-term improvements to the dock before the impasse shut down ferry service in 2019. But strings attached to any federal funds used for the project would require the use of U.S. steel, while Canadian law says not in their country, Falvey said.

If the state is able to resume service to Prince Rupert, he said, it could keep working toward improvements at the terminal, including possibly moving its moorage to the BC Ferries tie-up next door. "They have a beautiful dock," Falvey said. Though the BC Ferries terminal lacks customs facilities, which would require another solution, he said.

The state has a long-term lease on the dock and terminal building, which is owned by the Prince Rupert Port Authority, Falvey said.

FROM THE PUBLISHER

It's time to get COVID under control

By LARRY PERSILY
Publisher

Forget politics, rumors, social media, accusations from all sides and everything else that has turned the vaccination debate into a circus – but without the fun, excitement and cotton candy.

Too many Alaskans are getting sick (about 5,800 cases the past two weeks), too many are ending up in the hospital (121 in beds as of Tuesday), and too many are dying (419 since the start of the pandemic count, as of Tuesday).

Though about two-thirds of the deaths have been recorded in Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Southeast Alaska communities are part of the sad tally, too.

Five residents of the Pioneer Home in Ketchikan who tested positive for COVID-19 died this month. Just in one week, a dozen residents of the 45-bed care home and five staff members tested positive, the state reported.

Three COVID-related deaths have been reported this month at Juneau's Bartlett Memorial Hospital, which last week announced it was suspending non-urgent procedures for two weeks to cope with the surge of COVID patients requiring hospital treatment.

Petersburg has reported three deaths during the pandemic.

One out of 14 Alaskans tested for COVID-19 last week came back positive. The rate hasn't been that high since the scary peak of last December.

All those positive tests are putting more people into hospital beds at the highest number since December. Anchorage emergency room doctors provided an update and stern warning to the municipal assembly last week. "We are on the verge of a hospital system collapse," said Dr. Andrea Caballero, an infectious disease doctor who also works at Providence Hospital.

"That happens when you have the right

number of patients and acuity, staff burnout, which leads to staff shortages, and supply shortages. This is a very, very imminent reality," the doctor said.

Health care officials report that the Delta variant of COVID accounts for more than 90% of new cases in the state, with most of the cases coming from unvaccinated individuals.

Wrangell has recorded 34 new cases in the past two weeks – six on Tuesday alone – more than a 25% increase in the community count since March 2020. The borough closed City Hall due to staff exposure to the coronavirus.

Hopefully, the numbers will get better soon, but maybe not.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, which was not requiring face masks in the classroom or on school buses, reported 59 infections in the first week of the new school year, as of Tuesday.

There is a good answer to the "COVID-19 Summer Surge," as the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium calls it on its website: "With the current spike of positive cases across Southeast and the presence of variants, it is more important than ever to wear a mask in public, get vaccinated, practice physical distancing, wash hands frequently and get tested if you are symptomatic or suspect you have been exposed."

Alaskans are starting to respond, though slowly. The statewide first-dose vaccination rate among eligible Alaskans crept up from 56% several weeks ago to 60% as of Tuesday. The rate for Wrangell also moved the needle a bit during the same period, from 61% to 64%.

Moving the needle by taking the needle is the best answer out there. It's not a guarantee you will not get sick, but health care professionals report you are unlikely to get as sick as an unvaccinated individual. And isn't it better to try to reduce the surge than to walk away and assume you will not end up in a hospital bed?

EDITORIAL

Borough is right to say census got it wrong

It should be pretty easy to look at residential utility hookups, Permanent Fund dividend application statistics, housing occupancy and other data points to refute the U.S. Census Bureau count that shows Wrangell lost 242 residents between the federal government's official tallies in 2010 and 2020.

Anyone who has tried to find housing to buy or rent would certainly dispute the notion that all those people left town, putting empty homes or apartments on the market.

But this mathematical dispute is much more than frustration over tight housing and civic pride, or that some federal agency says Wrangell shrunk. It's real money.

No doubt the bureau's disrupted door-to-door counting at the start of the pandemic last spring and summer made an already difficult job much harder nationwide. Census workers were pulled from the field, and it's hard to get people to focus on filling out forms, answering their phones and, later, opening their doors when their lives are in turmoil.

But all that is an explanation, not an acceptable reason to miscount Wrangell.

Being told that Wrangell is a community of 2,127 rain-hooded souls instead of 2,369 from 10 years ago hurts the pocketbook. Federal assistance for rural schools and payments in lieu of property taxes in the Tongass National Forest are based on each borough's number of residents.

A lot of state programs also include population counts in their allocation formulas.

Borough officials were quick this month to say they intend to research the census numbers and try to figure out what went wrong in the count, while at the same time looking to see what options they have to challenge the bureau's tally.

Wrangell's protest options appear limited. The U.S. Census Bureau does provide what it calls a Count Question Resolution procedure where states and municipalities can ask for a review of the numbers. It's not possible to get a full recount, according to the rules, but Wrangell could argue that specific housing units were erroneously excluded from the count. That may be the only opportunity under the bureau's procedures to challenge the numbers.

Considering the money that is at stake for the next 10 years – until the 2030 census can give Wrangell a do-over – the borough is smart to devote resources in an effort to even partially correct the count, even if it means spending money on an attorney and/or demographer or statistician who specialize in taking on the Census Bureau.

It would be money well spent.

– Wrangell Sentinel

So long Wrangell, and thanks for all the fish!

By CALEB VIERKANT

Did I format my entire letter saying goodbye to Wrangell so I could put a "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" reference in the title? Yes, yes I did.

Looking back on the past three years of my life, I noticed how many of my fondest memories revolve around seafood in some way. Discovering the miracle that is smoked salmon, going fishing with my friends, watching the bears at Anan fatten up on salmon, friends and neighbors offering to share their catches of crab with me, getting to cover an autopsy of a whale for the newspaper, sharing calamari rings with friends at the Stik, the list goes on and on.

All these memories, and many others, have been coming

back to me recently because my time here in Wrangell has come to an end. I moved from a small town in Texas up here to Alaska on a leap of faith, just the promise of a job and hope that everything would work out. I'd never struck out independently like that before. I'm blessed that everything did.

These past three years have possibly been some of the most important of my life. There's nothing like moving 3,000 miles away from everyone and everything you ever knew to a literal island to build confidence and self-reliance.

But that's all over now, and it's time for me to go back to Texas. I don't know what my next adventure will be, but I'm excited to find out. At the same



Caleb Vierkant

time, I'm sad to leave. Life in Wrangell, and working for the Sentinel, has been an incredible experience. It has been a privilege to cover the news. I was proud to be a part of a community that I think truly does its best to come together to support its own.

There are so many people to thank for making my time in

Wrangell as special to me as it has been, but there's only so much space in the paper I can use. So here are a few people that I especially wanted to mention.

The staff (past and present) of both the Wrangell Sentinel and the Petersburg Pilot: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to grow as a journalist and work alongside some truly amazing people.

Tawney and Bella Crowley: Thank you for being some of my first and closest friends I made on this island.

My Dungeons & Dragons group; Tyler Garbisch, Talea Massin, Edith Grover, Kent Rushton and (recently) Cyni Crary: Thank you for being good friends and for all the laughs we

shared every Saturday. I'm excited for our adventures to continue, even as I move away.

The mayor, borough manager, borough clerk and borough assembly: Thank you for your availability and patience toward me as I reported the goings-on in the city, and for making time to answer my questions even with your busy schedules.

Mike Lockabey: Thanks for all the interesting stories about the "good ol' days," and for being a constantly willing and able source of information for stories around the fishing industry.

Maleah Wenzel: Thanks for being a such a good friend! I hope we stay in touch, and we see each other again someday.

Continued on page 5

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
News Editors..... Caleb Vierkant
Office ManagerAmber Armstrong
ProductionOla 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 2021.

Subscription Rates

Local.....\$46
Other Alaska.....\$62
2nd class/Lower 48 & HI.....\$70
First Class.....\$102
Online-only subscription.....\$40

Friends of the Museum looking for new members

By SENTINEL STAFF

Wrangell has a long history and a modern museum that displays the rich heritage of the community and its people. But the volunteer group that supports the museum is short of new members.

The Friends of the Museum raises money to support projects at the keeper of the town's history. "That is our sole purpose," said Michael Bania, who has served as president the past few years.

That includes not only supporting activities at the museum, but also acquisitions for the collection, with fundraising, advocacy and volunteering some time to help with programs.

Before COVID-19 ruined plans for meetings and new membership efforts, the Friends of the Museum counted about 60 members, Bania said. "They were mostly people who had lived here a long time."

Now, the group is at about 40 members and could use more.

In the past few years, the volunteer group has given money to the museum for new display cases that can be adjusted and moved around the building as needed, Bania said. The group also contributed about \$3,000 for materials to rebuild display cases and shelves at the gift shop.

The museum is in the Nolan Center, which opened in 2004. Many of the Friends of the Museum members have been with the group since the planning days of the new home.

While a few summer tourists join the group, which is always appreciated, Bania said, the volunteers are hoping more locals will sign up. Friends of the Museum forms are available at the museum.

Memberships start at \$25 a year for individuals.

"The task recently has been to see if we can get more businesses in Wrangell to contribute," she added.

State trying hard to solve crew shortage on ferries

By LARRY PERSILY
Sentinel writer

The Alaska Marine Highway System is not alone in trying to manage with a crew shortage, nor is it a new problem.

But the fear of COVID-19 is making it worse.

"We've had a slow progression of loss of crew over the years," John Falvey, the system's general manager, said in an interview last week. "COVID has not helped us."

Fear of catching the coronavirus is an issue for recruiting new stewards who work in the galley and dining area, clean the cabins and public areas, he said. "There tends to be a concern now (of COVID) when you look at customer service positions," the same as restaurants and retail businesses are finding it hard to attract new hires, Falvey said.

The biggest staffing shortage is among those unlicensed crew positions, not in the engine room or at the controls, he said.

The system needs 502 crew members to fully staff the six vessels currently in use, and was short about 125 as of last week, Falvey said. That includes the Matanuska, LeConte, Aurora, Kennicott and Tustemena, and the smaller Lituya that shuttles between Ketchikan and Metlakatla.

The full contingent of 502 trained staff allows for normal crew rotations and illness. Anything less creates problems.

That shortage caught up with the operation on Aug. 11, when the Alaska Marine Highway

System had to cancel the LeConte's northbound sailing out of Juneau due to a crew shortage, disrupting travel plans for 84 people. The vessel needs a crew of 24 to operate.

"Given our overall fleet-wide crew shortage, we do see the possibility of more 'no sailings' or sailings being canceled due to this shortage," a state Transportation Department spokesman said that week.

The department has 50 new hires going through the paperwork to start onboard training, Falvey said, and is receiving an average of two responses a day to its nationwide advertising efforts. "We're gaining on it."

Until the system can get back to full staffing, "we're holding people over," asking crew to work back-to-back two-week shifts to maintain adequate staffing, Falvey said.

"There is a global shortage," he said, noting that BC Ferries missed a sailing this month, "which is unheard of for them." The ferry system, which is overseen by the province of British Columbia, was short more than 100 crew members as of early August when it had to cancel two sailings between Victoria Island and its terminal near Vancouver.

The corporation is actively recruiting for about 60 officer positions and 50 other key positions to ensure it has enough crew members in the event of illness or other absences. BC Ferries President Mark Collins said in a prepared statement

Aug. 5: "Unfortunately, the global shortage means qualified mariners are very difficult to find."

A crew shortage was blamed for delays and cancellations at Washington State Ferries in July, as many longtime employees retired when COVID hit and hiring slowed down, an official said.

"You have people giving up their days off over and over and over again and people not going on vacation just to try to keep the system operating," Ian Sterling, with Washington State Ferries, told Seattle television station KIRO in July

The station reported that 57 trips had been canceled this year because of staffing shortages — out of more than 10,000 scheduled sailings.

Crew shortages also can compel ferries to operate at reduced capacity. A ferry between Mukilteo, north of Seattle, and Whidbey Island, operated this past Sunday at just 25% capacity due to a crew shortage, Washington State Ferries announced.

While maintaining full service this year is the immediate concern for the Alaska Marine Highway System, Falvey said the state will need to add 100 additional crew for its plan to bring back the Columbia to service next summer.

"If you put a ship out there, you'd better deliver," he said.

Starting wage for a steward aboard the state ferries is \$21.36 per hour for the Alaska-based jobs.

So long

Continued from page 4

Past and present staff of KSTK: Thank you for the friendly rivalry and the friendships. Also thank you for introducing me to my new love for DJ-ing. Also, thanks to Sage Smiley for all the recipes she's shared with me!

Kem Haggard, Lt. Jon Tollerud, and many other members of Wrangell's religious community: Thank you for welcoming me to your town with open arms, and for always being people I could turn to with personal and newsworthy concerns.

If you don't see your name here, please don't take it personally. It came down to the word count. There are too many people who are important to me in this town to list them all.

While I'm going to Texas, and who knows where else the future will take me, Wrangell will always be with me in my heart. Looking back, I can say that I honestly did my best to report the news fairly, to be a good member of this community, and in my own way make Wrangell a better place than how I found it.

I will miss this place and these people, and I hope to return someday.

But until then, so long and thanks for all the fish!

Editor's note: The Sentinel's new staff member, Marc Lutz, of Lodi, California, is scheduled to arrive in town aboard the ferry Friday, and will be introduced in next week's Sentinel.

Summer 2022 ferry

Continued from page 1

east, including stopping in Wrangell.

Whether the Columbia comes back from its layup in Ketchikan depends, in part, on finding 100 crew members to staff the vessel, said John Falvey, general manager of the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The draft schedule says the

ship will operate May 11 through Sept. 14, with weekly sailings to Southeast from Bellingham, "pending crew availability."

The Columbia, currently in overhaul in Ketchikan, is being used to house crew from other ferries brought to the shipyard for work, saving the state the cost of hotel rooms, Falvey said.

Its return to active duty depends on whether "staffing challenges, a current issue worldwide, can be overcome," the Transportation Department said last week.

The state ferry system this year is understaffed and has been asking crew to work double shifts to keep the vessels operating while the state tries to hire more workers, especially stewards for cabins and galleys. Ferry systems in Washington state and British Columbia report similar staff shortages.

The Columbia, built almost 50 years ago in a Puget Sound shipyard, has 50% more space for cars and trucks than the second-largest ship in the fleet, the Matanuska, which is sailing this summer between Bellingham and Southeast.

If the Columbia comes back to work, the Alaska Marine Highway System would operate the Matanuska northbound out of Bellingham on Wednesdays and the Columbia on Fridays.

The Columbia would stop in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg,

Juneau, Haines and Skagway, catching Sitka on its southbound run, Kerri Traudt, the system's vessel schedule coordinator, said Tuesday.

The state Department of Transportation on Aug. 18 released its draft ferry schedule for May through September 2022 — much earlier than in recent years.

The Legislature and governor agreed this year to appropriate 18 months of funds for ferry operations, rather than the usual 12-month budget, so that the marine highway could prepare its schedule further in advance, making it easier for travelers to plan ahead.

Travelers will be able to book tickets for next summer as soon as the final schedule is adopted, likely this fall.

Written comments on next year's summer schedule are due by Aug. 31, by email at dot.amhs.comments@alaska.gov, or by fax at (907) 228-6873. A teleconference to hear additional comments and consider adjustments to the Southeast schedule is planned for 10 a.m. Sept. 2. The toll-free number is 1-515-604-9000, access code 279613.

The ferry system anticipates it will start accepting reservations this week for the fall/winter 2021/2022 schedule, which starts Oct. 1, Transportation Department spokesman Sam Dapcevich said Friday.

Busy couple of weeks for golf tournaments

By SENTINEL STAFF

Wrangell's Muskeg Meadows Golf Course will be busy the first two weekends of September with four different tournaments.

The Breakaway Adventures nine-hole, best-ball tourney is planned for Sept. 4.

The Club Championship will tee off on Sept. 5, with individual scores.

The three-club tournament in honor of Randy Littleton will be a nine-hole, best-ball

competition on Labor Day, Sept. 6.

The American Legion Auxiliary benefit tournament is planned for Sept. 11-12, also a nine-hole, best-ball event.

All of the tournaments are scheduled to start at 10 a.m., according to Muskeg Meadows.

This coming weekend, the course will be open for golf, disc golf, snacks and beverages from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Oh God! Educate these children...

these children are the roses of Thy garden.

Let thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow, and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty.

Baha'i Writings



State reports 5 deaths at Ketchikan Pioneer Home; all COVID cases

JUNEAU (AP) — The state has reported the deaths of five residents of the Pioneer Home in Ketchikan who had tested positive for COVID-19.

"In the last week, the Ketchikan Pioneer Home has had five resident deaths and there has been a total of 12 residents and five staff test positive for COVID-19 this month," Clinton Bennett, a state Department of Health and Human Services spokesman wrote in an email to the Ketchikan Daily News on Aug. 18. He did not provide a more precise timeline.

The state Pioneer Homes "do not determine the cause of death nor do they see the death certificates of residents," Bennett wrote.

The death total in Ketchikan from COVID-19 as of Aug. 20 was eight, according to the community's pandemic dashboard.

Bennett declined to answer whether the Pioneer Home residents who died had been vaccinated against COVID-19. The Ketchikan home, one of six operated by the state, has a vaccination rate of more than 90% for residents and staff, Bennett wrote. The facility is licensed for

45 beds.

The majority of cases tied to the recent COVID-19 outbreak in the Ketchikan facility "are no longer considered active, but if cases are considered active, they are asked to quarantine for at least 10 days after the positive test," he said.

Bennett said testing is being done every three to four days until two weeks have passed without a positive result.

Ketchikan was hit by 168 COVID cases in the two weeks leading up to Aug. 20, the most in any two-week period of the pandemic. The recent surge represents almost 20% of all the cases counted in the Ketchikan Gateway Borough since the tally started in March 2020.

The state prison in Ketchikan

recorded 12 cases between Aug. 10 and Aug. 17. The long-term care unit at PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center recorded 18 cases — 12 residents and six staff members — between late July and Aug. 10.

Statewide, COVID-19 cases continue to rise, and the state health department on Aug. 18 said the highly contagious delta variant accounts "for almost all newly detected cases" in Alaska. State health officials have continued to encourage vaccinations.

Dr. Joe McLaughlin, the state epidemiologist, told reporters Aug. 19 that the longer that people delay getting vaccinated, "the more likely it is that they will get COVID, and it will be an ongoing threat for months and months to come."

Candidacy filings will close Tuesday

By SENTINEL STAFF

Candidacy filings for Wrangell's Oct. 5 municipal election will close at 4 p.m. Tuesday.

Residents who want their name on the ballot for a seat on the borough assembly, school board or port commission must file their paperwork at City Hall by the deadline.

As of Monday, with a week still to go before the deadline, nine candidates had filed for the positions.

Jim DeBord was the only candidate as of Monday for the two three-year seats on the borough assembly.

Don McConachie Sr. filed for the one-year unexpired term open on the assembly.

Angela Allen, Alex Angerman, Brittani Robbins and Elizabeth Roundtree filed for the two three-year terms on the school board.

Julia Ostrander filed for the one-year unexpired term on the school board.

Incumbent port commissioner John Martin filed for a three-term term; there are two three-year terms up for election this year.

And incumbent port commissioner Frank Roppel filed for the one-year unexpired term on the commission.

SEARHC seeks volunteers for Oct. 5 disaster drill

By SENTINEL STAFF

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium is seeking volunteers to play victims, friends and family members, even news reporters in a mass casualty exercise Oct. 5.

The drill is planned for 3:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Wrangell Medical Center, providing an opportunity for hospital staff "to test their emergency plans and procedures," SEARHC said in its promotional flyer for the event.

"Some (not all) volunteers will receive extensive make-up (moulage) to enhance realism," the flyer said. "Volunteers should understand that this exercise will look and feel extremely realistic."

Whether they are pretending to be a victim, a family member or friend, or reporter, volunteers will receive a profile of the person they are playing to review and study beforehand. "Time will be scheduled to review individual profiles before the exercise begins."

Wrangell has hosted disaster drills in the past. In 2019 a plane crash was simulated at the airport, with 67 people on board during the fictional wreck. This drill was a joint effort between Wrangell's emergency and medical services, and the state Department of Transportation.

Volunteers for October's disaster drill must be 18 or older, or have parental consent to participate. Those wanting to volunteer can contact Michelle Walters at (360) 391-4701, or email Michelle.Walters@tegria.com.

Volunteer slots are limited, and people need to register in advance.

100% Guaranteed not to be the same old office job!

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY

Alaska is amazingly different, which means our employment opportunities are too!

AMHS is on the lookout for focused, hard-working individuals interested in positions in our **Passenger Services** department. Whether your interest lies in a summer job, or permanent work that can start you on the path to building your certifications for a successful maritime career, AMHS is a great place to gain your sea legs. Best of all, you don't need any prior maritime experience to apply!

If you love to travel and meet new people our passenger service employees provide professional customer service and ensure the safety of our passengers while performing tasks in the galley, dining room or cafés, crew mess, staterooms and public areas aboard the ferries.

AMHS offers competitive starting pay and a full benefit package including paid leave, medical & dental coverage, retirement options, and opportunities for advancement. If you're ready for a little more adventure and a little less of the same old thing, check out the full job description at FerryAlaska.com/employment.

The Alaska Marine Highway is a division of the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. AMHS currently operates six ships, two in ready standby status, and one new ship in final design.

AMHS employs approximately 800 employees system-wide.



FerryAlaska.com/employment | 1-800-642-0066

[f](#) [v](#) [i](#) [#alaskamarinehighway](#)

Sitka could see 460,000 cruise ship visitors next year

SITKA (AP) - Sitka could see nearly a half-million cruise ship visitors next year — almost double its previous record — after a new docking agreement was announced with Royal Caribbean Cruise.

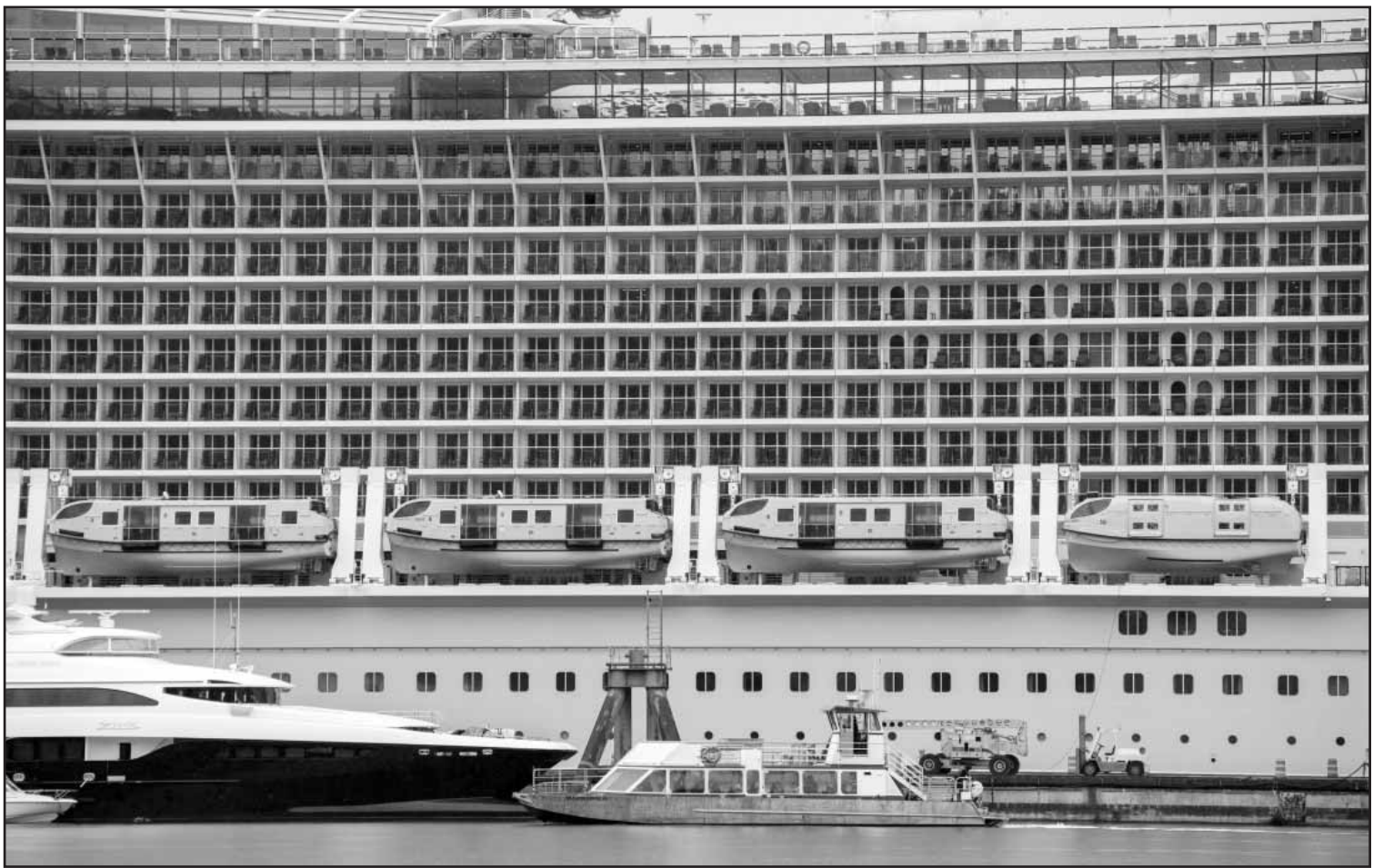
The deal between the cruise line and Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal came as one of the world's largest cruise ships arrived, the Daily Sitka Sentinel reported. "It ensures they have a place to bring their ships and additional ships to Sitka for the future," said Chris McGraw, manager of Sitka Sound Cruise Terminal.

Halibut Point Marine, owned by McGraw's family, is majority owner of the cruise terminal. The Royal Caribbean ship Ovation of the Seas, which is 1,138 feet long — nearly the length of four football fields placed end-to-end — arrived Aug. 17.

Officials said the visit got off to a great Alaska start, with a bear walking along the dock as the ship pulled in.

The ship's arrival marked the formal completion of a cruise terminal dock expansion that McGraw said is the first phase of plans intended to position Sitka as a premier port in Alaska. The Ovation of the Seas, which can hold up to 4,900 guests, brought about 1,500 passengers to Sitka. There were fewer passengers because of COVID-19 mitigation measures.

Sitka could see as many as 460,000 cruise ship passengers next year as a result of the Royal Caribbean's announce-



JAMES POULSON/THE DAILY SITKA SENTINEL VIA AP

The 1,142-foot-long Royal Caribbean Ovation of the Seas docked at the Halibut Point Marine cruise dock in Sitka on Aug. 17. The ship's 14 decks towered over the 132-foot yacht Zenith (left). Sitka could see nearly a half-million cruise ship visitors next year after a new docking agreement was announced with Royal Caribbean Cruises.

ment as well as a new plan for weekly visits by Norwegian Cruise Lines. The Royal Caribbean announcement is expected to result in 200,000 passengers a year to Sitka alone.

The city's previous high for cruise ship visitors was about 289,000 in 2008.

Its expanded 1,100-foot

dock can accommodate two large cruise ships at once. McGraw said Holland America Line's Nieuw Amsterdam and Royal Caribbean's Serenade of the Seas will share the space most Wednesdays for the rest of this season.

He expects large ships to call on Sitka five or six days a week next year.

Hawaii governor asks travelers to hold off visiting for two months

HONOLULU (AP) - Hawaii's governor on Monday asked that visitors and residents reduce travel to the islands to essential business only for the next two months while the state struggles to control COVID-19 as the highly contagious Delta variant spreads in the community.

Gov. David Ige wants to curtail travel to Hawaii through the end of October. "It is a risky time to be traveling right now," he said.

He said restaurant capacity has been restricted and there is limited access to rental cars.

Ige stopped short of a mandate, saying it's a different time now than last year when strict travel rules that required quarantining essentially shut down Hawaii's tourism industry.

"Last year in March, when I first asked for visitors to postpone travel to the islands, we saw a 60% reduction in the traffic to Hawaii," Ige said. Later ordering the mandatory quarantine of all incoming visitors "reduced travel to the islands by 99.5%, essentially 100% of travelers."

Things are different now with vaccines available and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention saying fully vaccinated people can travel domestically.

Ige said he supports Honolulu Mayor Rick Blangiardi's announcement to restrict indoor gatherings to 10 people and outdoor gatherings to 25.

Blangiardi said the rules would take effect Wednesday and would apply to weddings and other events.

He's also urging people to get vaccinated.

Hiro Toiya, the city's emergency management director, cited a mathematical modeling tool from the Georgia Institute of Technology to illustrate risks the community faced from large gatherings.

The modeling shows there is a 20% chance that someone in a group of 10 will have the disease given the number of COVID-19 cases on Oahu now. But in a group of 100, there's a 90% chance someone will have it.

"When you're looking at how transmissible delta is, we really got to control these large gatherings," Toiya said at a news conference. "The status quo is not working, and it's not acceptable."

Multiple Oahu hospitals have filled their regular beds as COVID-19 cases pour into emergency rooms. The city set up a 25-cot tent outside The Queen's Medical Center - West Oahu last Friday to help handle the influx.

Haines questions 17% population drop in census

By MAX GRAHAM
Chilkat Valley News, Haines

The Haines Borough had its largest population decline in history and the largest of any Alaska borough or census area over the past decade, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Haines' population fell by 17.1% — from 2,508 in 2010 to 2,080 in 2020 — with much of the decline outside of the townsite that used to be considered the city of Haines.

But the census numbers don't align with the state Labor Department 2020 borough population estimate of 2,520, which was calculated using 2010 census data and Permanent Fund dividend application numbers. In 2020, 2,289 registered borough residents applied for a PFD, compared to 2,276 in 2010.

It's a similar conflicting story in Wrangell, where the Census Bureau said the count was 2,127 residents, a loss of 242 residents between 2010 and 2020 — about 10% of the population — contrary to the state Labor Department 2020 estimate of 2,379.

Jila Stuart, the Haines Borough's chief fiscal officer, said "it's possible" that the census population data will impact "several state and federal programs" that fund the community.

State and borough officials aren't sure what caused the apparent Haines population decline — or why the census and state numbers don't align. "Haines is definitely one we're looking at and saying, 'Hmm?'" said Eric Sandberg, demographer at the Alaska Department of Labor and

Workforce Statistics.

Some theories are that snowbirds or the pandemic skewed the count or that the census numbers are not accurate because Haines had a low self-response rate: 33.8% versus 54.7% statewide, and 67% nationwide. "Self-response rate" refers to the percentage of households that mail completed forms back to the Census Bureau.

Bureau officials, at least in theory, follow up with households that don't return completed forms.

"It could be Haines has the oldest population in the state. It could be that some of this population is snowbird," Sandberg said. "Maybe snowbirds were counted as residents of their winter communities instead of Haines."

The pandemic might have impacted the count, too. "Maybe people decided to be elsewhere from Haines last year," Sandberg said.

Borough school district enrollment might indicate a population decline but not of the magnitude reflected in the census. Enrollment slimmed by about 13% since the 2010-11 school year. Much of that decline occurred before 2013. Since then, enrollment has remained between 260 and 280 students.

Nationwide there were concerns last year about the accuracy of the census results given that the pandemic interrupted the count. Several municipalities and advocacy groups unsuccessfully sued the Census Bureau for ending data collection two weeks earlier than planned.

Call 874-2301
to subscribe to

WRANGELL SENTINEL



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL VIA AP

This undated photo provided by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control shows a fraudulent COVID-19 vaccination card. A bar owner was arrested on suspicion of selling fake vaccination cards to several undercover state agents for \$20 each. Federal agents this month at the Anchorage airport seized more than 3,000 fake cards shipped in from China.

Agents seize fake vaccination cards sent from China at Anchorage airport

ANCHORAGE (AP) — More than 3,000 fake COVID-19 vaccination cards were confiscated at cargo facilities at the Anchorage airport after they had arrived from China, officials said Aug. 19.

Officers from U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized the cards as they arrived in small packages, said Jaime Ruiz, an agency spokesperson. There were between 135 and 150 packages found in Anchorage, all sent by the same person in China, Ruiz said.

The packages contained small amounts of the fake cards,

about 20 or 25 each.

The cards confiscated in Anchorage closely resemble the authentic Centers for Disease Control and Prevention certificates given out by health care workers when U.S. citizens receive their vaccinations, the agency said. However, this shipment had cards that exhibited low-quality printing.

The seizure comes as a cottage industry for counterfeit cards has sprung up online to accommodate people who say they won't get vaccinated for either personal or religious reasons.

About 3,600 fake cards were found recently at cargo facilities in Memphis, Tennessee, Ruiz said.

The Federal Aviation Administration ranked Memphis and Anchorage among the busiest cargo airports in the U.S. in 2020.

"Getting these fraudulent cards off the streets and out of the hands of those who would then sell them is important for the safety of the American public," Lance Robinson, the agency's director in Anchorage, said in a statement.

Other federal agencies are investigating the shipments.

Former Super Bowl champ comes to Alaska for vaccination drive

ANCHORAGE (AP) - Three-time Super Bowl champion Mark Schlereth returned home to Alaska last week to encourage people to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Service High School alumnus made a halftime appearance last Friday night during his alma mater's game at West High School.

"I just want to encourage everybody to do your part, to talk to your doctor and if it's the right decision for you, please get vaccinated, please take care of one another," Schlereth said Aug. 20.

He has been advocating on social media for COVID-19 vaccines, and he said the NFL Players Association reached out to him about spreading the word in his home state.

"So here I am," Schlereth said.

He played in the NFL as an offensive lineman for 12 years from 1989-2000,

winning Super Bowls in 1991 with Washington and 1997 and 1998 with Denver.

Schlereth, 55, was diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder in 1993 while playing for Washington. He said one of the reasons he got the COVID-19 vaccine was to visit with his mother who has cancer.

"I wanted to spend as much time safely with her as possible ... so it was just a no-brainer for us," Schlereth said.

Schlereth said one of his high school coaches whom he considered a mentor died last week from COVID-19.

"I just lost a dear, dear friend who refused to get vaccinated, so that hit home for me," he said.

On Saturday, Schlereth was at the state Department of Health and Social Services' vaccine booth at the state fair in Palmer.

Police report

Monday, Aug. 16

Harassment.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Tuesday, Aug. 17

Agency assist: Ambulance.
Dog complaint.
Agency assist: Ambulance.

Wednesday, Aug. 18

Dog at large.
Traffic stop: Verbal warning for driving habits.
Papers served.
Reckless driving.
Deer complaint.
Domestic violence order: Violation unfounded.
Citizen assist.

Thursday, Aug. 19

Domestic violence assault: Arrested for assault III/domestic violence, assault IV/domestic violence and violating conditions of release.
Found property: Returned to owner.
Domestic violence order: Papers served.
Warrant arrest: Arrested for failure to appear, violating domestic violence order and assault III (two counts).

Friday, Aug. 20

Dangerous play.

Citizen assist.

Agency assist: Post Office.
Parking complaint.
Search and rescue.

Saturday, Aug. 21

Inmate incident.
Dog complaint.
Intoxicated person.
Dog complaint.

Aggressive dog.

Sunday, Aug. 22

Citizen assist.
Dog complaint.

During this reporting period there were four trespass calls and seven agency assists for the Hoonah Police Department.

GET TO KNOW US

The Wrangell Chamber of Commerce and the Wrangell Sentinel invite you to a chamber members-only luncheon

Get to know the new chamber executive director and staff

And meet with the entire Sentinel team and ask all the questions you want of the publisher

NOON SUNDAY, AUG. 29
AT THE STIKINE INN



N K ELECTRIC

Here to serve all your electrical needs

COMMERCIAL
INDUSTRIAL
RESIDENTIAL

874-2770, #21633

Churches start answering for their Indian boarding schools

By PETER SMITH
The Associated Press

The discoveries of hundreds of unmarked graves at former residential schools for Indigenous children in Canada have prompted renewed calls for a reckoning over the traumatic legacy of similar schools in the United States — and in particular by the churches that operated many of them.

U.S. Catholic and Protestant denominations operated more than 150 boarding schools between the 19th and 20th centuries. Native American and Alaska Native children were regularly severed from their tribal families, customs, language and religion and brought to the schools in a push to assimilate and Christianize them.

Some U.S. churches have been reckoning with this activity for years through ceremonies, apologies and archival investigations, while others are just getting started. Some advocates say churches have more work to do in opening their archives, educating the public about what was done in the name of their faith and helping former students and their relatives tell their stories of family trauma.

"We all need to work together on this," said the Rev. Bradley Hauff, a Minnesota-based Episcopal priest and missionary for Indigenous Ministries with the Episcopal Church.

"What's happening in Canada, that's a wake-up call to us," said Hauff, who is enrolled with the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

This painful history has drawn relatively little attention in the United States compared with Canada, where the recent discoveries of graves underscored what a 2015 government commission called a "cultural genocide."

That's beginning to change.

Top officials with the U.S. Episcopal Church in July acknowledged the denomination's own need to reckon with its involvement with such boarding schools.

"We have heard with sorrow stories of how this history has harmed the families of many In-



ERIN BORMETTI/THE ARGUS LEADER VIA AP

Bernadine Red Bear, relative of Dora Her Pipe Brave Bull, one of the nine children who died more than a century ago at the Carlisle boarding school, cries as she speaks about the returned children at a ceremony July 17 at the Sinte Gleska University Student Multicultural Center in Rosebud, South Dakota.

digenous Episcopalians," read a July 12 statement from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the denomination's House of Deputies.

"We must come to a full understanding of the legacies of these schools," they added, calling for the denomination's next legislative session in 2022 to earmark funds for independent research into church archives and to educate church members.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a U.S. Cabinet secretary, announced in June that her department would investigate "the loss of human life and the lasting consequences of residential Indian boarding schools." That would include seeking to identify the schools and their burial sites.

Soon afterward, she spoke at a long-planned ceremony at the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, where the remains of nine children who died at the school more than a century earlier were

returned to Rosebud Sioux tribal representatives for reburial in South Dakota.

U.S. religious groups were affiliated with at least 156 such schools, according to the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, formed in 2012 to raise awareness and address the traumas of the institutions. That's more than 40% of the 367 schools documented so far by the coalition.

Eighty-four were affiliated with the Catholic Church or its religious orders, such as the Jesuits. The other 72 were affiliated with various Protestant groups, including Presbyterians (21), Quakers (15) and Methodists (12). Most have been closed for decades.

Samuel Torres, director of research and programs for the coalition, said church apologies can be a good start but "there is a lot more to be done" on engaging Indigenous community members and educating the public.

Such information is crucial given how little most Americans

know about the schools, both in their impact on Indigenous communities and their role "as an armament toward acquisition of Native lands," he said.

"Without that truth, then there's really very limited possibilities of healing," Torres said.

Hauff noted that the experiences of former students, such as his own parents, ranged widely. Some said that even amid austerity, loneliness and family separation, they received a good education, made friends, learned skills and freely spoke tribal languages with peers. But others talked of "unspeakable, cruel abuse," including physical and sexual assault, malnourishment and being punished for speaking Native languages.

"Even if some of the children did say they had a positive experience, it did come at a price," Hauff said. "Our church worked hand in hand with the government to assimilate these children. ... We need to acknowledge it happened."

In Canada, where more than 150,000 Indigenous children attended residential schools over more than a century, a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission identified 3,201 deaths

amid poor conditions.

The United Church of Canada, which operated 15 such schools, has apologized for its role, opened its archives and helped identify burial sites.

The Rev. Richard Bott, moderator of the United Church, lamented that "we were perpetrators in this" and that the church "put the national goal of assimilation ahead of our responsibility as Christians."

The Catholic Church's response in Canada remains controversial. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in June that he was "deeply disappointed" the Vatican has not offered a formal apology. Pope Francis expressed "sorrow" following the discovery of the graves and has agreed to meet at the Vatican in December with school survivors and other Indigenous leaders.

In Saskatchewan, bishops have launched a fundraising campaign to benefit survivors and other reconciliation efforts.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, meanwhile, said it would "look for ways to be of assistance" in the Interior Department's inquiry.

Individual efforts are underway, such as at the Red Cloud Indian School in South Dakota, which has formed a Truth and Healing Advisory Committee to reckon with the years it was managed by Catholic orders.

Other churches have addressed their legacy to varying degrees.

Early in 2017, leaders of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) traveled to Utqiagvik, on Alaska's North Slope, to deliver a sweeping apology before a packed school auditorium for the treatment of Indigenous persons in general, and specifically for how it operated the boarding schools.

The Rev. Gradye Parsons, former stated clerk for the denomination, told the gathering that the church had been "in contempt of its own proclaimed faith" in suppressing Native spiritual traditions amid its zeal to spread Christianity, and "the church judged when it should have listened."

"It has taken us too long to get to this apology," Parsons said.

U.S. extends border closure with Canada, Mexico

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government has extended its ban on nonessential travel along the borders with Canada and Mexico to slow the spread of COVID-19 despite increasing pressure to lift the restriction and despite the fact that Canada

opened its border to fully vaccinated Americans two weeks ago.

U.S. border communities that are dependent on shoppers from Mexico and Canada and their political representatives have urged the Biden administration

to lift the ban, complaining that it is crippling business.

But the Department of Homeland Security said in a tweet Aug. 20 that the restrictions on nonessential travel were still needed to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and the Delta variant. It extended the ban until at least Sept. 21.

The department said it is working with public health and medical experts to determine how to "safely and sustainably resume normal travel."

The travel restrictions have been in place since early in the pandemic in March 2020 and repeatedly extended while allowing commercial traffic and essential crossings to continue.

The ongoing U.S. land border restrictions do not bar U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents from returning to the United States from either Canada or Mexico.

Former legislator announces for governor

JUNEAU (AP) - Former state Rep. Les Gara on Aug. 20 announced plans to run for governor in next year's election.

The Anchorage Democrat joins Gov. Mike Dunleavy, a Republican, and former Gov. Bill Walker, an independent, who have previously announced their intentions to run.

Libertarian William "Billy" Toien, who unsuccessfully ran in 2018, is the only official candidate listed so far with the state Division of Elections.

In a statement, Gara cited as concerns state public works construction needs, Alaska's education and university systems and getting more revenue from oil production in the state.

Gara, 58, served in the state House 2003 through 2018 and was known for his advocacy and support for foster care programs, children's services and education funding.

He did not announce a running mate for next year's election. Under a new system approved by voters last year, candidates for governor and lieutenant governor will run as a ticket in the primary, with the top four vote-getting tickets advancing to the general election.

The general election will feature ranked-choice voting, with the fourth, then third and, if needed, the second-place vote-getters eliminated until one ticket is named as the first or second choice by at least 50% of the voters.



I can help you make sure your coverage is up-to-date. Call me today.
907-874-2359

Amy Hemenway
P-W Insurance

220 Front St., Wrangell, AK 99929
inquiry@p-wins.com



Alaska Fish Factor By LAINE WELCH Fisheries columnist

Bristol Bay fishermen team up with baby food company

Nutrition, Native ways and knowing where your fish comes from.

That message forms the nexus of a new partnership of the Bristol Bay Native Corp. (BBNC), salmon fishermen and Bambino's Baby Food of Anchorage.

Bambino's launched the nation's first subscription service with home delivery of frozen baby foods in 2015, and was the first to bring the frozen option to U.S. retail baby food aisles (devoid of seafood).

Wild Alaska seafood has always been front and center on the Bambino menu since the launch of its baby-sized, star-shaped Hali-Halibut portions, sockeye salmon bisque and fillets in 2015. Sockeye salmon teething strips are the newest addition. Those items became an instant hit and are shipped to customers in the U.S. and Canada.

Each outgoing box now contains recipes from the people of Bristol Bay, stories of how traditional foods are rooted in Alaska culture and other infor-

mation about the region provided by the new outreach network.

"We're looking forward to partnering with Bambino's and BBRSDA (Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association) to share the stories of why salmon is so crucial to our region and our shareholders," said Jason Metrokin, president of BBNC.

"We want to ensure that people everywhere and of all ages not only reap the nutritional benefits of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon but are also aware of the origin and sustainability of the region," said Lilani Dunn, marketing director of BBRSDA, operated and funded by the fleet of nearly 1,800 driftnet fishermen with a 1% tax on their catches.

"Bambinos has really built up her business and her brand and it was no secret that her sockeye product was performing really well. And we saw a huge opportunity to tell our stories focusing on the Native families and culture of Bristol Bay and for ourselves in the

marketing program," Dunn said.

"I feel very passionate, along with our partners, about the nutritional benefits of sockeye salmon, especially in young infants and toddlers," she said.

"The beautiful nature of all of this is that we all care about our environment and the health and wellness of our families, and we all want to know where our food comes from," said Zoi Maroudas, Bambino's founder and CEO.

Phytoplankton is good news

Results from the most detailed, long-term cruise by researchers at the University of Alaska Fairbanks showed the largest concentrations of phytoplankton ever seen in nearly 25 years of sampling in a vast portion of the Gulf of Alaska.

Phytoplankton (microalgae) is the base of marine food webs and the massive bloom was spotted in May through September along the Seward Line, a transect of survey stations that begins at the mouth of Res-

urrection Bay and continues south to the outer edge of the continental shelf.

A funding boost from the National Science Foundation added additional lines from the Copper River to beyond Middleton Island, and from Kodiak's Albatross Bank to offshore waters.

The researchers use chlorophyll, the green pigment found in plants, as an indicator of phytoplankton abundance, explained Russ Hopcroft, professor and chair of the Department of Oceanography at UAF's College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences.

"It is the peak production in this system that the whole biology of the Gulf kind of cascades off of, that big infusion of energy and matter into it,"

Hopcroft said.

"Normally the shelf kind of lights up in terms of algal concentration briefly and sporadically," he said. "But this past year, the whole shelf was lit up with high chlorophyll for several weeks continuously, which means that there should have been lots of food available for the things that feed upon the plankton, the fish that feed upon that and then the bigger fish, marine mammals and seabirds that use them. We've never seen this kind of concentration of the phytoplankton in the system."

He added, "In the Gulf, because it's such a seasonal environment, several of the main species rely on this bloom to grow rapidly and store fat up in

Continued on page 11

CLASSIFIED/LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the Matter of the Estate of Charlie L. Traylor: You are notified that the court has appointed a personal representative of the estate of Charlie L. Traylor, born December 3, 1934, died July 13, 2021. All persons having claims against the deceased are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

Case No. 1WR-21-00011PR
Jo Ellen Wendel
PO Box 1672
Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish Aug. 12, 19 and 26, 2021

HELP WANTED

Wrangell Head Start is hiring for a classroom cook. For more information call 874-2455.

FOR SALE

19-foot Glasply, 225 Merc EFI, trailer, downriggers, hydraulic steering, extras, \$8,500. Call 907-660-7400.

FOR SALE

Remote property, Thoms Place subdivision, South Wrangell Island. 1.88 acres, waterfront. Call 907-321-3240.

FREE

Functional office chair. Just squeaks when you move in it. Stop by the Sentinel to pick up.

FREE ADS

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

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

Voter qualifications for the City and Borough of Wrangell, October 5, 2021, Regular Election, are as follows:

1. a United States citizen;
2. registered and qualified to vote in the State of Alaska elections and registered thereat for at least thirty (30) days immediately preceding the municipal election;
3. at least eighteen (18) years of age;
4. a resident of the City & Borough of Wrangell for thirty (30) days preceding the election;
5. not disqualified by reason of having been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude, and if so, that civil rights have been restored, nor disqualified because judicially determined to be of unsound mind.

Voters are cautioned to make certain their residence address is correct on their State Voter Registration. City law requires that each voter shall be registered to vote in the precinct in which that person seeks to vote in order to vote in municipal elections.

Your name must appear on the precinct list. If you are registered in another city, you must change your registration **prior to Sunday, September 5, 2021, to qualify to vote in the Regular Election of October 5, 2021.**

You may ask the Borough Clerk to check the precinct register to assure your qualifications. Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk City & Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

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

Publish Aug. 12, Aug. 19, Aug. 26, Sept. 2, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will hold a public meeting, on Wednesday, September 1, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Borough Assembly Chambers.

Meeting information is available on the Borough's website <https://www.wrangell.com/calendar>.

The public is encouraged to attend. If you would like to submit a comment to the Department Director or to the Board, please email your comment to kthomas@wrangell.com.

Kate Thomas, Parks and Recreation Director
City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

Publish Aug. 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL NOTICE INVITING BIDS Fender Pile Replacement

Notice is hereby given that the City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, will receive sealed bids for the Fender Pile Replacement project. The work consists of all activities necessary to remove and replace eleven creosote timber piles at the City Dock and Barge Ramp facilities and dispose of unused or unsalvageable piles. The Borough's estimate for the project is approximately \$20,000 to \$30,000.

Sealed bids will be received by the City and Borough of Wrangell, P.O. Box 531, Wrangell, Alaska 99929, or located at the Borough Clerk's Office, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, Alaska 99929, until 2 p.m. prevailing time Sept. 1, 2021.

Complete bidding/contract documents for this project are available in electronic form only and can be downloaded from the Borough's website, www.wrangell.com, under the Bids and RFP's section.

Lisa Von Bargaen
Borough Manager

Publish Aug. 12, 19, 26, 2021

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL PUBLIC NOTICE

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

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

- Borough Assembly: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Borough Assembly: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022
- School Board: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- School Board: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022
- Port Commission: Two seats, for 3-year terms
- Port Commission: One seat, for 1-year unexpired term until October 2022

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

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

State will not appeal ruling striking down campaign finance limits

JUNEAU (AP) - The state's decision to not seek further legal review of a split court ruling that struck down several campaign contribution caps in Alaska has been criticized by a state lawmaker who said the state should have pressed forward with a legal fight.

The case was heard by a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Gov. Mike Dunleavy has an obligation to defend the laws of the state, said Sen. Bill Wielechowski, of Anchorage.

"He doesn't get to pick and choose which laws he wants to defend and not defend," Wielechowski said Aug. 18.

Grace Lee, a state Department of Law spokesperson, said in an email Aug. 17 that the department would not seek further review of the decision by the appeals court panel. Lee said this followed "a thorough evaluation of the law, U.S. Supreme Court decisions, and the former and recent 9th Circuit decisions."

"The legislature can introduce and pass legislation setting a new campaign contribution limit, that does not run afoul of the 9th Circuit decision, when it reconvenes in January," Dunleavy spokesman Jeff Turner said by email.

A divided federal appeals court panel in late July struck down a \$500-a-year limit on what an individual can give a

candidate. It also struck down a \$500-a-year limit on individual contributions to non-party groups and a \$3,000-a-year cap on total nonresident donations a candidate for office like state House can raise.

The case dates to 2015 and was brought against the commission by David Thompson, Aaron Downing and Jim Crawford.

The lawsuit said the plaintiffs at the time would have contributed more if allowed in state and local races to their preferred candidates, who were Republican-aligned.

A federal judge in 2016 sided with the state, and an appeals court panel agreed with the findings, except on the nonresident piece. The U.S. Supreme Court later sent the matter back to the appeals court to reevaluate the \$500 caps in light of a prior ruling in a Vermont case.

That led to the July appeals court decision.

Lee said the appeals court panel indicated the \$500 campaign contribution limit "would not be upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court for multiple reasons, including reasons beyond dispute, such as the lack of an inflation adjustment" in state law.

Lee said it was determined the "resources and risks" to pursue further review by a larger appeals court panel "are too great."

Washington state orders mask mandate

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) - A universal mask mandate for indoor public spaces regardless of vaccination status went into effect in Washington state on Monday.

Gov. Jay Inslee announced the expanded mask mandate last week. He also expanded the state's COVID-19 vaccine mandate to all public school employees, in addition to employees at state colleges, and most child care and early learning providers.

The mandates follow weeks of escalating COVID-19 case rates and increasing hospitalizations caused primarily by the Delta variant of the coronavirus. Inslee's office said Washington state

recently broke its record for COVID-19 hospitalizations, which was previously set in December.

The new rules also come after Snohomish, Thurston and Pierce counties issued masking directives, and King County released a universal masking recommendation for residents.

The governor's office is working with state partners to reestablish an enforcement system, according to a spokesperson.

"The governor's office and other state partners are working together on reestablishing an enforcement system. There will be more details in the coming days," the spokesperson said.

Opponents continue fight against Maine salmon farm

BELFAST, Maine (AP) - A large, land-based salmon farming operation in Maine has obtained a key approval it needed to move forward, but opposition to the project remains.

Nordic Aquafarms wants to build a \$500 million, 55-acre salmon farm in Belfast, in the middle of the state's Atlantic coastline. The plant would be capable of producing about 70 million pounds of Atlantic salmon a year.

The company announced last week that it has received a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers permit, which is the final permit it needs.

However, local conservationists are still challenging the salmon farm in court. They have concerns about how the project would discharge wastewater. Environmentalists have also raised concerns about the size of the

salmon farm and its other potential impacts on the community.

The company announced its plans in January 2018. The operation would rely on freshwater from the city and well water, piping its treated wastewater into Penobscot Bay.

Nordic Aquafarms spokesperson Marianne Naess said in a statement that the company is ready to move into the final stages of engineering and construction planning for the facility.

Nordic is based in Norway and operates similar operations in Europe.

Salmon farming is a large business in Norway, Scotland, Chile and British Columbia, with smaller industries in Washington state, California and Maine. Salmon farming is banned in Alaska.

Fish Factor

Continued from page 10

their bodies, just like bears do," he added. "And then they descend deep in the ocean to wait for the following spring to start their lifecycle when they lay eggs. And those babies swim up toward the surface and start the whole process over again."

Alaska's cooler weather this spring and summer can lead to a prolonged bloom, and extra rain provides fresh water at the ocean surface that helps phytoplankton remain closer to the light and build up higher concentrations.

Fake-fish update

Long John Silver's is the first

major national seafood chain to put plant-based "seafood" on its menu, and calls it the "next big wave" after seeing the success of plant-based burgers and chicken.

Last month the company, operator of more than 700 restaurants in the U.S., announced a partnership with Good Catch to test its plant-based Breaded Fish-Free Fillet and Breaded Crab-Free Cake at restaurants in California and Georgia.

"Our plant-based options are slightly more expensive than the crab cakes and sustainably sourced wild-caught cod, pollock and salmon that make up our core menu options," Long John Silver's chief marketer Stephanie Mattingly told SeafoodSource.

Whole Foods Market, owned by Amazon, said nearly half of U.S. consumers are looking for plant-based products, and fish alternatives are on its first-ever list of trend predictions. One is Upton's Naturals Banana Blossom, large, purple-skinned flowers that grow at the end of a banana bunch. Their neutral flavor and flaky texture make it an ideal fish substitute. Another predicted

favorite is Good Catch Fish-Free Tuna made of a blend of peas, chickpeas, lentils, soy, fava beans and navy beans.

Samuels and Son Seafood of Philadelphia is the first company to publicly admit that it is selling genetically tweaked Atlantic salmon made by AquaBounty Technologies, of Massachusetts. The wholesale restaurant supplier services several chains including McCormick and Schmick's, Morton's Steakhouse and The Hard Rock Café.

The fish, which grows roughly three times faster than normal salmon, is the first genetically modified animal to be approved by the federal government for human consumption. Over 80 food companies including Safeway, Kroger, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods have said they will refuse to carry it.

Federal labeling law "directs" companies to disclose genetically modified ingredients through use of a QR code, on-package wording or a symbol. Mandatory compliance takes effect in January 2022, but the rules don't apply to restaurants or providers of meals away from home.

Navajo Nation requires employees get vaccinated

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. (AP) - All Navajo Nation executive branch employees will need to be fully vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19 by the end of September or be required to submit to regular testing, according to an executive order announced by President Jonathan Nez on Sunday.

The new rules apply to full, part-time and temporary employees, including those working for tribal enterprises like utilities, shopping centers and casinos.

Any worker who does not show proof of vaccination by Sept. 29 must be tested every two weeks or face discipline.

"The bottom line is that we do not want to have another large surge in new COVID-19

cases that would harm our health care system and lead to more lives lost," Nez said in a statement.

More than 80% of the tribe's workers are already fully vaccinated but Nez said getting the rest inoculated is needed to ensure the workforce on the reservation can serve tribal members.

The tribe that spans parts of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona reported just 30 news cases on Sunday and no new deaths. The Navajo Nation was hard hit by the virus and closed its reservation for months last year. The tribe has confirmed 32,252 COVID-19 cases and 1,397 deaths.

Vaccine appointments are widely available.



Super-heated air creates 'fire clouds' over western wildfires

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
The Associated Press

PORTLAND - Smoke and heat from a massive wildfire in southeastern Oregon created giant "fire clouds" over the blaze — dangerous columns of smoke and ash that can reach up to 6 miles in the sky and are visible from more than 100 miles away.

Authorities put these clouds at the top of the list of the extreme fire behavior they saw on the Bootleg Fire, one of the largest wildfires in Oregon's recorded history. The inferno covered nearly 650 square miles — larger than the size of New York City — as it raged through a part of the U.S. West that is enduring a historic drought.

Meteorologists also spotted a bigger, more extreme form of fire clouds — ones that can create their own weather, including "fire tornadoes."

Pyrocumulus clouds — literally translated as "fire clouds" — look like giant, dirty-colored thunderheads that sit atop a massive column of smoke coming up from a wildfire. Often the top of the smoke column flattens out to take the shape of an anvil.

In Oregon, fire authorities said the clouds formed between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. each day as the sun penetrates the smoke layer and heats the ground below, creating an updraft of hot air. On this fire, crews saw the biggest and most dangerous clouds over a section of wilderness that's comprised mostly of dead trees, which burn instantly and with a lot of heat.

For four days in a row, the Bootleg Fire generated multiple fire clouds, authorities said. The fire was essentially fully contained last week, after burning for a month.

When air over the fire be-

comes super-heated, it rises in a large column. As the air with more moisture rises, it rushes up the smoke column into the atmosphere, and the moisture condenses into droplets. That's what creates the "fire clouds" that look much like the thunderheads seen before a big thunderstorm.

These clouds, however, hold more than just water. Ash and particles from the fire also get swept into them, giving them a dark gray, ominous look.

And when a pyrocumulus cloud forms over a fire, meteorologists begin to watch carefully for its big brother, the pyrocumulonimbus cloud.

NASA has called the latter the "fire-breathing dragon of clouds" because they are so hot and big that they create their own weather.

In a worst-case scenario, fire crews on the ground could see one of the monster clouds spawn a "fire tornado," generate its own dry lightning and hail — but no rain — and create dangerous hot winds below. They can also send particulate matter from the smoke column up to 10 miles above Earth's surface.

Most of the clouds on the Bootleg Fire were the less-intense fire clouds, but the National Weather Service spotted a pyrocumulonimbus cloud forming on what it called "terrifying" satellite imagery.

"Please send positive thoughts and well wishes to the firefighters. ... It's a tough time for them right now," the weather service said in a tweet.

Both types of fire clouds pose serious risks for firefighters.

Multiple pyrocumulus clouds were spotted for four consecutive days, and one of them on the southern flank of



BOOTLEG FIRE INCIDENT COMMAND VIA AP

Smoke and heat from the massive wildfire created "fire clouds" (pyrocumulus clouds) over the Bootleg Fire in southern Oregon — dangerous columns of smoke and ash that can reach up to 30,000 feet and are visible for more than 100 miles away. Authorities put these clouds at the top of the list of the extreme fire behavior they saw on the largest wildfire burning in the U.S. This July 14 photo was taken with a drone provided by the Bootleg Fire Incident Command.

the fire partially collapsed, causing dangerous winds and embers to fall on crews.

That prompted the emergency evacuation of all firefighters and dirt-moving equipment from that part of the fire line. Authorities said there were no reported injuries.

These types of fire-induced clouds are becoming more common as climate change length-

ens and intensifies the wildfire season across the U.S. West and in other places, including Australia.

Experts with the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory said in a news release Aug. 6 that they are seeing a "record number" of these fire-induced clouds in North America this summer, including in Oregon, Montana and British Columbia.

For example, a wildfire in British Columbia last month that leveled an entire town also generated a pyrocumulonimbus cloud.

Blazes in California in 2020 and in the years before have created multiple pyrocumulus clouds, with the Creek Fire in the Fresno area generating a mighty pyrocumulonimbus cloud last fall.

Assembly

Continued from page 1

at the assembly meeting.

Regardless, assembly members showed reluctance to adopt the mandate.

"We're not going to change any minds by having this today," Assemblymember Ryan Howe said. "People have already made up their minds and they're not going to change them."

Mayor Steve Prysunka questioned why the city was pursuing a full mandate as its first attempt to tamp down the spike in cases, rather than public education. While he agreed the COVID situation is serious, he said the municipality had not done anything to try and educate the public and get them on board with wearing masks voluntarily.

"It doesn't appear that we've made a good-faith effort to get people to comply on their own without a threat," he said.

The assembly considered several approaches, whether they could amend the mandate into a more palatable recommendation, if they could simply postpone the vote, and whether they could revisit the idea of a mandate in the future if it became necessary.

Eventually, members agreed they did not want to move forward with the mask mandate. Instead, they directed Von Bargen and the EOC to put serious effort toward public outreach and education on the importance of wearing masks.

Elsewhere in Southeast, Juneau is under a masking requirement, in addition to limiting indoor gatherings to no more than 20 people — though there is no limit if everyone at the event is fully vaccinated. Bars and restaurants are limited to 50% of their indoor capacity.

Sitka, which has 84 active cases as of Tuesday, is "strongly encouraging" face masks indoors and outdoors when people cannot maintain a safe distance.

The Haines Borough, also hard hit in the COVID surge this month, has advised its residents: "We are all getting tired but we need redouble our efforts. Please wear a mask when you are out and about, please social distance and keep your social bubble small."

COVID numbers

Continued from page 1

last week.

State health officials "are now asking people who test positive to reach out to their close contacts themselves and ask them to quarantine," Juneau Deputy City Manager Robert Barr told his borough assembly on Monday.

Juneau reported 83 new cases over the weekend and Monday. "It's our highest case load to date," Barr said, adding that the numbers are "about double the caseload that we were experiencing in November of last year."

The high number is making it harder to fly people out of Juneau for medical care, he told the assembly. "We continue to struggle quite a bit with medevac capacity, to the point of commonly not being able to medevac people who need to be medevac outside of the community," Barr said.

Juneau officials report many of the recent cases are linked to one of the mines near Juneau, an in-person social gathering, several family groups who all tested positive when they came back to town from travels — and many cases are spreading within households.

The Juneau School District on Tuesday reported 16 positive cases Aug. 18 - 23, with five classrooms closed on Monday to allow for contract tracing. Classes started Aug. 16.

The state's hot spot for school infections has been the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, which on Tuesday reported 68

COVID infections since the start of classes on Aug. 18. The school district is the largest in the state not to require face masks in buildings or aboard school buses at the start of classes.

The district canceled 76 bus routes on Monday due to a shortage of school bus drivers due to infections and quarantines.

Students and staff at the Mat-Su Career & Tech High were required to wear face masks as of Tuesday after the district reported about a dozen new cases at the school.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's vaccination rate is among the lowest in Alaska, at 43% of eligible residents as of Tuesday, according to the state health department COVID dashboard. The Mat-Su Regional Medical Center reported

that every bed in its intensive-care unit was full on Sunday morning — all but one of the patients was sick with COVID-19.

Hospitals across the state had 121 COVID-19 patients as of Tuesday's count.

In a virtual public health briefing Aug. 18, Alaska Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink said working in hospitals right now is "heartbreaking."

"It's the most depressing place I have worked in my career," she said.

"And now we're seeing so many sick people, who it's completely preventable, or at least the majority are preventable," she said. "I mean, it is unvaccinated person after unvaccinated person who's struggling to breathe, saying, 'I didn't think this would be this bad.'"

WRANGELL EYE CARE PRISM OPTICAL OF ALASKA



**VISITING EYE DOCTOR
EVERY OTHER SUNDAY**

*Eye exams, contact lenses
& fashionable eyewear*

Local Eye Care you can count on! Prism is proud to announce a visiting optometrist will be coming to Wrangell every month to assist with your eye care and optical needs. Our new office is conveniently located at **106 Lynch St, Suite C1** (next to the Wrangell Sentinel, across from Stikine Drug). Come in for a free eyeglass adjustment and tune-up.

**For an eye exam appointment or questions,
please call us at: 1-800-701-3999
or schedule online at www.PrismBooking.com/Wrangell**