



Wrangell, Alaska  
July 26, 2023

# WRANGELL SENTINEL

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## Washington ferries suffer similar problems as Alaska state system

By LARRY PERSILY  
*Sentinel writer*

The Washington State Ferries system still has not returned to its full pre-pandemic schedule, coming up short due to fewer riders, an inability to recruit, hire and train onboard crew, high rates of retirements and resignations, and a "lack of vessels due to unanticipated breakdowns and an aging fleet."

Some sailings have been canceled for lack of crew, and a few routes are running at reduced service.

It sounds a lot like the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The Washington state system, which has been around since 1951, 12 years older than Alaska's ferry service, has 21 operable ships, down from 24 just four years ago, said John Vezina, director of planning, customer and government relations.

It's similar to Alaska, which has sold or scrapped four of its vessels in the past five years.

Washington needs a minimum of 19 vessels to maintain a full summer schedule in Puget Sound, Vezina said. But it's challenging. There are not enough drydocks in the area to work on all the ferries in the winter, so some ships get pulled from service during the summer.

And, like Alaska which op-

erates two ships more than 40 years old, some of Washington's vessels date back to the 1960s and 1970s. "We have to spend money to keep those going," said Vezina, a former Alaskan who is well familiar with the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Washington went a decade without building any new ships, 2000-2010. It was a self-inflicted wound. "Washington does a lot by (voter) referendum," Vezina explained. A 1999 anti-tax ballot initiative abolished the state fee for vehicle tags — the revenues had gone to the ferries. "We lost all our dedicated funding," Vezina said.

The ballot initiative was later declared unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court, but lawmakers responded by repealing the tax anyway.

Motor fuel taxes help fund the Washington Department of Transportation, but as people drive less, drive more fuel-efficient vehicles or drive electric vehicles, motor fuel sales — and tax revenues — are in decline, according to state reports. That's even with a tax of 49.4 cents a gallon, the third highest in the nation. The state tax rate in Alaska is eight cents a gallon, unchanged in 53 years.

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## WCA Earth Branch seeks volunteers for first fix-it clinic

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
*Sentinel reporter*

When a beloved pair of jeans rips or a wooden chair gets wobbly, it's tempting to go shopping or log on to Amazon and order a replacement. However, mending and repairing old items is a cheaper and more sustainable alternative to buying them new. The Wrangell Cooperative Association's upcoming "fix-it clinic" aims to create a space where community members can share their repair knowledge and where people can come to get well-loved items fixed.

Volunteers with repair skills are needed, and the event is slated to take place in mid-August. More details will be announced as it draws closer.

Environmental stewardship is a big part of WCA Earth Branch's mission — the goal of the clinic is to share skills that can help community members make sustainable choices.

"It is to promote sustainability and the reuse of items instead of tossing items and buying new," said Alex Angerman, the Tl'átk - Earth Branch coordinator at WCA. The clinic will also showcase Wrangell's skilled repair-people, "(showing) the community who they can go to if they want something fixed."

In the coming weeks, Anger-

man plans to start reaching out to potential volunteers with various repair skills.

Community members with skills to share can also reach out to her. Sewing and mending, wooden furniture repair, electrical repair for small household appliances and basic automotive work — "these are all things that we're looking for," she said. "We're hoping that the community can bring these people out of the shadows."

Ideally, the clinic will involve a combination of repair and education. Instead of just changing the oil on multiple cars, an automotive volunteer might walk attendees through the process so that they can do it on their own. "It could be up to the discretion of each person that's volunteering," Angerman said, to determine the ratio of education to repairs that they want to take on.

This year will be the first time WCA has ever held an event of this kind. Because the clinic is so new, she isn't sure how many volunteers and attendees will participate, but she hopes that it will be successful enough to become a recurring event. "We can do it yearly if it becomes something people really like."

WCA's Tl'átk - Earth Branch

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## Not out of the woods yet



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Austin O'Brien, staff timber officer with the U.S. Forest Service in Wrangell, looks over an area of trees south of Pats Lake that has been damaged due to an infestation of the blackheaded budworm that began in 2020.

## Budworm outbreak shows signs of ebbing in Tongass

By MARC LUTZ  
*Sentinel editor*

Scientists and staff with the U.S. Forest Service are hopeful that the blackheaded budworm outbreak that began three years ago throughout the Tongass National Forest is beginning to decline.

Data collected earlier this year revealed not only the extent of the damage done by the half-inch insect but evidence showed the worms are dying off.

Elizabeth Graham, an entomologist with the Forest Service, said in a news conference on July 20 she has seen firsthand that there is lower activity of the bug on Douglas Island near Juneau, and that many are "sickly." Since Juneau and Haines were on the northern fringe

of the outbreak, she suspects other areas, including Wrangell, are further along in the recovery process.

Outbreaks typically last about three years. The last time the Tongass endured a budworm outbreak was from 1992 to 1995. Budworms usually succumb to viruses and parasitic wasps, reducing their numbers.

Diagnosing a virus-stricken worm is sometimes a challenge, Graham said, but "when they get that virus, they get real gooptified."

Earlier this year, Forest Service staff conducted aerial mapping of the 17-million-acre Tongass, noting areas of deforestation. Then, on-the-ground data collection in certain areas

Continued on page 4

## The fun has BEARly begun BearFest kicks off 14th year this week

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
*Sentinel reporter*

From mouthwatering berry pies and plant-based ice creams to Appalachian bluegrass songs and visual arts workshops, Wrangell's BearFest will be a feast for all the senses.

This 14th celebration of one of Alaska's most beloved mammals will offer a multitude of opportunities for attendees to learn about the natural world, share their talents and celebrate the state's unique wildlife and environment.

Here are some highlights from the packed event schedule:

Georgia-based guitarist Matt Eckstine will keep festival-goers in a celebratory mood starting with a performance at the BearFest dinner and auction, 6 p.m. at the Stikine Inn on Friday, July 28. The tickets are sold out for the dinner, but the following day he'll offer a jam session and music workshop at 2 p.m. at the Nolan Center where community members can share their improvisational chops.

"We're going to be down there jamming at the Nolan

Center," he said. "If there are any people that are into acoustic music, bring your instrument down. We're just going to do some picking and grinning — no pressure, nothing serious."

Non-musicians are also welcome at the workshop. "If people want to come and just listen, we'll just play songs," he added.

Eckstine has performed at BearFest three times in the past with a variety of different groups, starting in 2016. Wrangell reminds him of his hometown — "it's beautiful to explore a new area of the world with music and just really fortunate to be getting the call to come back," he said.

The schedule starts with several workshops on Wednesday, July 26, continuing through Saturday, July 29.

An addition to the schedule is a building-a-business workshop at 2 p.m. Wednesday at the Nolan Center, led by Marc Wheeler, of the Juneau-based nonprofit Spruce Root which helps people start or grow their business.

At 4 p.m. on Friday, July 28, there will be a presentation on Tlingit heritage and cul-

ture at the Chief Shakes Tribal House, featuring dancers and storytellers.

A series of symposiums will focus on bear research, particularly at the Anan Wildlife Observatory.

The first two symposiums will cover the Anan wildlife observatory's past, present and future, explained U.S. Forest Service Ranger Tory Houser. Researcher Danielle Chi, who is co-presenting with Houser, studied bear and human interactions at Anan in the late 1990s and early 2000s. "From that research, we created most of our management strategy," said Houser. "I am talking about all of the management strategies that we have been doing at Anan over time, in reaction to the research."

The Wednesday symposium with Chi and Houser and the Thursday symposium with new Anan researcher Kayleigh McCarthy — both at 6 p.m. at the Nolan Center — will look at management challenges at the site from different angles.

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## Birthdays & Anniversaries

The Sentinel extends its best wishes to everyone listed in the chamber of commerce community birthday calendar.

**Wednesday, July 26:** None.

**Thursday, July 27:** Ann Johnson, Khai McCloskey.

**Friday, July 28:** Michael Reese Guggenbickler.

**Saturday, July 29:** Jeffrey Brown, Devlyn Campbell, Katie Hagan, Alice Hunt Rooney, Sheila Short; Anniversaries: David and LeAnn Bryner, DJ and Lindsey McConachie.

**Sunday, July 30:** Scott McConachie.

**Monday, July 31:** Dino Brock.

**Tuesday, Aug. 1:** Jean Brown, Kadin Messmer, Brynlee Young; Anniversary: Doug and Pam McCloskey.

## Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

**"BEARS IN JULY" QUILT SHOW**, through Monday, July 31, at the Nolan Center.

**COMMUNITY POTLUCK** at 6 p.m. Fridays through August at the sheltered site on Nemo Point Road. All are welcome.

**"READ WITH A RANGER,"** sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service, at 11 a.m. Fridays through July 28. Join Forest Service naturalists for a summer of nature-themed books and fun activities. Meet at the gazebo outside the Irene Ingle Public Library.

**MUSKEG MEADOWS** will hold the BearFest nine-hole best-ball golf tournament on Saturday, July 29. A KSTK golf tournament sponsored by AP&T is set for Sunday, July 30. The tournaments start at 10 a.m.; register by 9:30 a.m.

**COMMUNITY MARKET** from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, July 29, at the Nolan Center. Check out the locally grown and handcrafted items.

**FAMILY POTLUCK PICNIC** from noon to 3 p.m., Sunday, July 30, at Shoemaker shelter, hosted by Pioneers of Alaska Igloos Nos. 15 and 21.

**NOLAN CENTER THEATER** "Sound of Freedom," rated PG-13, at 7 p.m. Friday, July 28, and Sunday, July 30. The action biography drama is 2 hours and 11 minutes; tickets are \$7 for adults, \$5 for children under age 12. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**CAMP LORRAINE**, a Christian summer camp for kids between the ages of 8 to 16, is planned for July 30 through Aug. 6. The camp is on Vank Island. The cost is \$199. Application available online: [www.alaskacamps.org](http://www.alaskacamps.org).

**BACK-TO-SCHOOL REGISTRATION** for grades K-12. Online registration will be live on Aug. 11. In person registration on Aug. 14 in the Wrangell High School commons for grades K-12. Times, fees and active links will be announced closer to the events. School begins on Aug. 24.

**RETRO DISCO ADULT PROM** at 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19, at the Elks. Light refreshments and beverages available for purchase. Estavan's Taqueria will be outside the Elks at 8:30 p.m. to fuel up your dancing machine. Tickets are \$25 until Aug. 5; after that they will be \$30. Tickets can be bought from Wrangell Burial Assistance board members or venmo @wba\_99929. All proceeds go to Wrangell Burial Assistance.

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

- **FOREST EXPLORES**, 10-11:30 .m. on Tuesdays until Aug. 8 at the Volunteer Park. Open to 6-10 years old. Join Claire Froehlich with the U.S. Forest Service to learn the ins and outs of the Tongass National Forest with games, quizzes and fun challenges. \$25 fee.
- **BEACH EXPLORERS**, 9 a.m. to noon. Monday, July 31 and Friday, August 4 at the first shelter in City Park. Open to 6-8 years old. \$25 fee.
- **POWER HOUR**, Noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays through August for weights, cardio racquetball, wall-ball at the recreation center. Join us for a workout. Must be 17 years and up with a waiver on file. Daily rates apply. Passes and punch cards can be used. No administrative services will be available. Check in with the staff to sign-in.

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

## Senior Center Menu

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

**Thursday, July 27**

Burger deluxe, potato salad, watermelon

**Friday, July 28**

Turkey vegetable soup, fruit slaw, half a cheese and tomato sandwich

**Monday, July 31**

Closed. Shelf-stable meal and fruit cup delivered on Friday, July 28.

**Tuesday, Aug. 1**

Half an egg sandwich, potato soup, sunshine salad

**Wednesday, Aug. 2**

Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, cabbage slaw

Call the senior center at 907-874-2066 24 hours in advance to reserve a seat at lunch or to request delivery. The senior van is available to take seniors to medical appointments, errands such as collecting mail, getting prescriptions or other essential items.

## Ferry Schedule

### Northbound

**Sunday, July 30**  
Columbia, 1:15 p.m.  
**Sunday, Aug. 6**  
Columbia, 4:45 p.m.  
**Sunday, Aug. 13**  
Columbia, 1:45 p.m.  
**Sunday, Aug. 20**  
Columbia, 3:45 p.m.

### Southbound

**Wednesday, Aug. 2**  
Columbia, 6:15 a.m.  
**Wednesday, Aug. 9**  
Columbia, 8:30 a.m.  
**Wednesday, Aug. 16**  
Columbia, 6:15 a.m.  
**Wednesday, Aug. 23**  
Columbia, 6:15 a.m.

All times listed are scheduled departure times.

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

## Tides

### High Tides

### Low Tides

	AM		PM		AM		PM	
	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft	Time	Ft
July 26	07:28	11.1	07:44	14.2	01:09	3.3	01:01	4.2
July 27	08:52	10.9	08:48	14.6	02:16	2.7	02:02	5.0
July 28	10:10	11.4	09:51	15.3	03:28	1.8	03:13	5.3
July 29	11:16	12.3	10:51	16.3	04:36	0.5	04:25	5.1
July 30	12:13	13.4	11:47	17.4	05:37	-1.0	05:30	4.4
July 31	....	...	01:02	14.6	06:28	-2.3	06:26	3.4
Aug. 1	00:39	18.3	01:48	15.6	07:15	-3.2	07:16	2.4

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

**July 26, 1923**

The water has been so low in the city reservoir the past week as to be a serious matter. On this account, the linotype machine and printing presses in the Sentinel office, which are run by water power, have been shut down the entire week. Naturally, we regret the shortage of reading matter in this issue, but we have no apologies to offer. We feel we have more than done our duty in attempting to get out any kind of a newspaper at all under such a tremendous handicap.

**July 23, 1948**

A group of members from the Emblem Club and Elks Lodge are going to give the hometown folks a showing of the famous New York stage comedy "Here Comes Charlie" Sunday afternoon and Monday evening at the ANB Hall. The Sunday afternoon show will be at a children's matinee starting at 2 p.m. Adults attending will pay the regular adult price of 75 cents.

**July 27, 1973**

Wrangell's All-Star Womens Baseball Team defeated the Petersburg Womens Team 25-6 during the season's first inter-city game Sunday before a big crowd. A PFI-sponsored intermediate-age group team from Petersburg took the second game by a score of 19-12 against an alternate team of players from the Wrangell womens softball league. The Wrangell All-Stars coach, Cliff Chamberlin, described his players as "the cream of the crop, comprised of the best individuals on the four teams in the city womens softball league." After the all-stars blazed their way to a decisive victory in the first game, the Petersburg girls team, ages 11-13, defeated a secondary team of Wrangell women players in the final late afternoon game. Although the playing field had been drenched by early morning rains, evident by large puddles around the baselines, Fay Khort, co-captain for the Petersburg teams, commented that "rain or shine, win or lose, the girls like to get over to Wrangell for a visit and to have a great

time playing ball." Mrs. Khort is a former Wrangell resident.

**July 23, 1998**

Visitors to the Petroglyph Beach may soon be able to walk there from the ferry terminal via a beach boardwalk, and once there they would be able to rest on one of the benches providing a comfortable viewing platform. Spotting scopes, sidewalks, and covered platforms were just a few of the topics discussed during a meeting concerning the popular beach area with the state Office of History and Archeology on July 8. Several groups met with the state's planning team to discuss the Petroglyph Beach access situation. According to Theresa Thibault, the state has already been working to replace the existing boardwalk with a more user-friendly version. Although it will be easier for hikers to get down to the beach and walk among the ancient rocks, the days of making rubbings and handling the original carvings may be nearing an end as the rubbings wear down the carved images.

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FREIGHT FOR LESS



# Downtown beautification project seeks volunteers to adopt garden beds

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

Whether you have a green thumb or are all thumbs around greenery doesn't matter. If you want to help beautify downtown, the Parks and Recreation Department is looking for you. And your thumbs.

Six garden beds throughout the downtown need to be adopted by volunteers who will weed, clean, water and maintain the spots. Another six have already been adopted.

"The beautification of downtown Wrangell is everybody's responsibility in that your community is what you make of it," said Lucy Robinson, director of Parks and Recreation. "This isn't just for visitors, this is for us. When you have a nice downtown district, it encourages patronage and people to come out and explore and be a part of the community."

She said the department is looking for people who would like to get out and get active and possibly socialize with other volunteers. The initial cleaning shouldn't take much, since Parks and Recreation advisory board member Cindy Martin has been going around and doing some light upkeep to the various beds that remain unadopted.

Some folks, like Georgia Selfridge, have adopted two beds. She adopted the planters and areas around the new public restrooms across the street from Angerman's and the bed across the street from Rayme's Bar at the intersection of Front Street and Case Avenue.

"She said she wants the worst beds because she wants the biggest challenge," Robinson said.

The Rayme's location is one of the bigger spots and has needed help, said volunteer Nancy Delpero, who adopted the bed in front of the dentist's office at the



PHOTO BY MARC LUTZ/WRANGELL SENTINEL

Nancy Delpero, left, and Lori Bauer work on the garden bed on the corner of McKinnon and Front streets next to the dental office in May 2022. The two unofficially adopted the bed a couple years ago, and the Parks and Recreation Department is now seeking volunteers to adopt six other downtown beds.

corner of McKinnon and Front streets. She is also a Parks and Recreation advisory board member. She said the Rayme's location needs a weed barrier and bark chips laid down, which could be a group effort. "Then it will look fine," she said.

Delpero adopted her spot along with Lori Bauer and they have been keeping it up for a few years. Though no new flowers, shrubs or other plants need to be planted, she and Bauer did replace dai-

sies that were proving to be high-maintenance and requiring extra water yet kept dying.

"I have more of those astilbes (false goat's beard) with the pink plumes," Delpero said. "Lori actually planted some at the Elks (bed). There were daisies planted in there but they got trampled on the Fourth of July. Astilbes will be pretty nice because they have a pop of color."

Other than experimentation with the astilbes, the existing plants will suffice for now, Robinson said, since they have to think ahead. Plants also have to be a certain height so as not to obstruct the view of drivers.

"My focus would be, how are we going to manage this over the next 10 years, what do we want it to look like, and how can we keep it simple?" she explained.

Volunteers do not necessarily need to have their own gardening tools, since the Parks and Recreation Department has loaner tools.

There were only 11 beds to be adopted, but then Delpero, Bauer and Bonnie Demerjian noticed the strip between the Stikine Inn and the post office needed some work. They cleaned up the site and added it to the number of places to be kept up. Robinson said the spot "needed something," and the work the volunteers did made a difference.

"If you go into some of the other communities in Southeast, you'll see how beautifully the grounds are kept," Delpero said. "We're certainly getting more visitors from cruise ships, but we need a certain level of maintenance to look like somebody cares about our town. It really is just to see we have pride in our town."

Those who wish to volunteer can call 907-874-2444 to sign up. Robinson said it's a community effort and comes down to being everybody's responsibility.

"I just like to encourage people to think about that," she said. "Oftentimes, when you're driving (you might say), 'Oh, they should do this, and they should do that.' Who is 'they'? How can we make it more of, 'Hey, I see a problem. How can I help with that?'"

# Women's 'fun and frolic' golf tournament to raise money for Cancer Care

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

Want to golf for a good cause? The WMC Foundation and SEARHC are offering the women of the community an opportunity to do just that at the Rally for Cancer Care fundraiser at Muskeg Meadows on Aug. 5.

The event will feature a luncheon, beverages, prizes, a silent auction and a "fun and frolic" golf tournament — a non-scored, no-skills-necessary take on the game. The tournament is ladies only, but organizer Patty Gilbert said she "wouldn't mind men attending" the lunch, games and auction.

The fundraiser will support the WMC Foundation, a charity that subsidizes travel and housing for cancer patients in small communities throughout Southern Southeast. Small, local med-

ical providers often do not offer the kind of specialized treatment that cancer patients require, meaning that these patients have to travel to receive care.

"We give up to \$1,200 per year for patients who are seeking cancer care and treatment outside of the community," explained Gilbert, whose husband started the WMC Foundation.

People submit receipts for their travel and lodging expenses that can then be reimbursed by the foundation. The funds cover communities of 5,000 people or less south of Petersburg.

As of last month, the organization has granted nearly 200 requests for financial assistance — coming to about \$150,000 total — since its founding around 2010.

The upcoming cancer care rally is the organization's only annual fundraiser. Last year, the event brought in nearly \$17,000 and this year, "we'd like to raise more," Gilbert said. In past years, the organization made its services available to Juneau residents, but the larger city's high demand for assistance sapped the foundation's resources and it had to limit its coverage to smaller communities.

SEARHC has signed on to provide goody bags, games with prizes and booths that will share informational material about cancer and early detection.

The golf game itself is designed to be lighthearted and low-pressure. Teams can be any size and participants don't need

experience — or even their own clubs. "We don't play ... the normal golf," Gilbert said. She loves to see so many women out on the course during the fundraiser. Non-golfers can opt to come for the lunch, games and socializing.

"The money goes to our community," she said, "to help them with housing and travel during a very stressful and difficult time. It's our opportunity to

give back to the community."

Registration for the golf tournament starts at 9 a.m. and the event begins at 10 a.m.. Tickets cost \$35 each and include lunch — drinks and games will cost extra, so have cash on hand. The luncheon, tournament and auction will end around 2 p.m. Contact Gilbert at 907-305-0777 for more information.

## Correction

The map-reading and eyesight challenged publisher last week mistakenly referred to Hat Island as being just offshore Zarembo Island, when anyone else would have known that it is off Woronkofski Island. The case of mistaken identity occurred in the Sentinel's news story about the boating mishap on July 12.

## Celebration of Life

**Crystal Jordan**

Saturday July, 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm  
Harbor Light Assembly of God



Please come share your favorite memories and fun stories as we offer our love and support to her two beautiful daughters.

Light Refreshments will be served.

This is a casual family/kid friendly event.\*  
We hope you will join us.



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Time to stop being afraid for no good reason

By LARRY PERSILY  
Publisher

Like many kids, I grew up afraid of lots of things. Maybe I had a longer list than many, but I'm sure they all made sense at the time: Dentists, needles, bees, snakes, putting my head underwater, roller coasters, heights, fastballs thrown anywhere near my head, pimentos stuffed in green olives. I suppose that last one was more a dislike than a fear, but you could always spot my plate at holiday dinners — it was the one with piled-up pimentos that I had carefully picked out of the olives.

The dentist scared me so much I would often go without Novocain because I feared the needle more than the drilling. Proof that not only is fear irrational, it's stupid. Particularly in my case. I never lost a tooth naturally (some dental condition I never understood), so every baby tooth had to be pulled. The dentist would yank them four at a time, and send me home with the pieces in a plastic box. I'm not sure why, but maybe he thought seeing the teeth would make me less afraid next time. Didn't work.

Bees scared me so much I was able to outrun my first sting until I was in my 60s. That took a lot of running. The stinger finally stuck on a camping trip when I grabbed a wine glass, not noticing that the bee had established first dibs. I guess it's the same as trying to take away a beer from someone watching their favorite football team.

I did try overcoming my fear of drowning by taking a kayak class about a decade ago. OK, it was to impress a girlfriend who put kayaking above all else in life, even me. But if I could calm my fear of going underwater and improve the

relationship at the same time, it was worth a try. At the first class, the instructor told us to flip the kayaking and practice getting out of the thing upside down and underwater. Sure, easy for him to say, but it doubled my fear.

I suggested that he teach us instead how NOT to roll the kayak. Then I wouldn't need to know how to escape. He gave me one of those looks that said: "Are you going to be a problem in class?" I dropped out of the class and the relationship later ended.

When I was young and my full-time pastime was going to the public schoolyard to throw a baseball against a chalk batter's box on the wall, I could take a shortcut through the grounds of Our

Lady Gate of Heaven Catholic school across the street. Except I was afraid of the kids, who looked like they wanted to beat up anyone who didn't belong, especially some goofy looking Jewish kid with glasses. Chicago was a deeply segregated city

in the 1950s and 1960s.

Decades later, I dated a woman (yes, a Catholic) who had grown up in a neighborhood just a few miles from mine in Chicago. We both had heard of the other's neighborhood, but neither of us had ever been. We knew not to stray into unknown territory.

Over the years, I've come to realize that my fears — even the pimentos — were silly, and sometimes mean. Especially my fear of Novocain (love it now), and Catholic students, who probably were only protecting their venerated statues from our baseballs.

Too bad we can't set aside our suspicions of people who are different from us. There's far too much politically motivated fear in the world based on religion, ethnicity and race. It's getting worse, not better, and it hurts everyone.

I've come to realize that my fears were silly.

Washington ferries

Continued from page 1

It wasn't until 2018 that Washington launched a new ferry, and the next new ship will not join the fleet until 2027, at the earliest, Vezina said.

Another similarity between the two states' ferry systems is wanting to keep ship construction jobs at home. Alaska has in the past forsaken the competitive bidding required to use federal dollars, giving all its work to the shipyard in Ketchikan. Washington did much the same. "We have a build-in-Washington law," Vezina said, which precludes opening the work to out-of-state yards at the cost of lost federal funding.

The Washington Legislature has relented a bit and given some flexibility to the ferries to send work out of state, he said.

The two ferry systems are substantial-

ly different in their job, crew numbers and distances covered. Whereas Alaska's routes can last days, with staterooms for passengers, all of Washington's ferries run short trips around Puget Sound, all under an hour.

Washington's onboard crew totals about 1,700, roughly four times the size of Alaska, but the two share in common a shortage of workers in most every job category on the ships.

Salaries are not that far apart. The starting wage for a first-year ordinary seaman, a deck worker aboard the vessels, is \$25.66 an hour in Washington versus \$28.42 for the Alaska Marine Highway, effective July 1 under their respective union contracts.

Washington workers, however, are due for a substantial raise under their contract effective July 1, 2024, to \$27.20 an

hour, narrowing the pay gap with Alaska, where an ordinary seaman will go to \$29.24 under their contract next year.

The two systems share in common a decline in ridership, even as travel picks up post-pandemic. As of July 9, Washington's passenger loads were still down about 25% from their 2019 peak. Ridership ranged between 22 million and 25 million a year between 2002-2019.

In Alaska, however, ridership on the Southeast ferries plummeted from 372,000 passengers in 1992 to 152,000 in pre-pandemic 2019, and still have not recovered anywhere close to that level.

The inability to fully staff the ships is part of the reason for reduced service. Alaska lost almost two ferry crew members to retirement and resignation for every new hire 2020 through 2022, according to the state Department of

Transportation. Washington did better, though it added only a net gain of 61 new hires last year after accounting for crew who left the job.

Vezina, who has been with the Washington State Ferries for about seven years, said management has been telling legislators for years "we have a silver tsunami coming," as older workers retire. Half of the system's senior officers will be retiring within the next five years, he said.

To fight the tide, Washington pays for new-hire training for U.S. Coast Guard certification and goes into middle schools and high schools to talk up maritime jobs, Vezina said.

"There is a lack of respect for the trades," he said of the reluctance of some jobseekers to work for the ferries. "There is a general lack of emphasis on our maritime careers."

Budworm

Continued from page 1

would show whether the damage caused by the worms was top kill or total destruction of the trees.

Austin O'Brien, the timber staff officer in Wrangell, said he hesitates to call the declining numbers of blackheaded budworm a recovery, but the outbreak has diminished.

He believes the outbreak this time around was only made worse by prior damage done by sawfly to the hemlock trees the worms tend to feast on. "One or the other by themselves is not nearly as impactful," O'Brien said. Combined, it's easy to see

the affected trees. Sawflies are another defoliating insect in their larval or worm stage.

The results of the damage can be seen from many vantage points throughout Wrangell, appearing as long grayish-brown swathes of trees surrounded by greener growth.

"The hemlock sawfly targets second- and third-year needles of a tree, whereas the black-headed budworm focuses on this year's growth," O'Brien said. "When you get the two of them together, it basically defoliates the entire tree."

Although the outbreaks aren't necessarily good for the timber

industry, they can be beneficial from an ecological standpoint, said Molly Simonson, a silviculturist with the Forest Service.

"One of the benefits to a standing tree dying is that it can take a long time for it to fall to the ground," she said. "One of our concerns would be if there is a lot of large woody debris (fallen) down that could impede deer movement."

Trees that die and eventually rot and fall to the forest floor would also open up the canopy, allowing other flora to grow and thrive. It could create an avenue for more red and yellow cedar trees to spring up.

"There's a chance for other species to take hold if it's been hemlock-dominant," Simonson said. "Old-growth forest continues to change over time, especially because of these mortality events."

Another challenge faced by Forest Service staff is determining which trees are affected by the worms or disease and those that are eaten by another ravenous creature, the porcupine.

O'Brien said it's not uncommon to see a tree that looks as though it has been destroyed by the worms. Upon closer inspection, the bark has been stripped away. A prickle of porcupines will tackle a hemlock like a buf-

fet, eating its outer defenses and leaving it to die before moving on to the next meal.

But as for the trees impacted by the budworms, expect healing to occur, Simonson said.

"The forest is entering recovery mode right now," she said. "The trees will look bad for a few years but are slowly starting to grow new needles. We expect most trees to recover from the outbreak."

Those who want to learn more about the blackheaded budworm and its impact on the forest can attend a talk Graham will be giving at BearFest at 1 p.m. Thursday, July 27, in the Nolan Center classroom.

EDITORIAL

If it's broken, someone will know how to fix it

If there ever was a town well suited to a fix-it clinic, it's Wrangell. The community's residents pride themselves on adapting, making do with what is available, repairing and reusing and repurposing most anything and everything that can find a second or third life on the island.

They're not hand-me-downs. A better way to think of it is good as new, or close enough.

Which is why the fix-it clinic tentatively set for mid-August is a perfect fit for Wrangell. It will be the first time for such an organized second-hand revival.

The WCA Earth Branch has taken on the job of rounding up volunteers willing to share their knowledge and repair skills. The hope is that those in town who know more than their neighbors will share their fix-it tools and skills with socket wrenches and vise-grips, soldering irons and steam irons, electrical cords, drapery cords and fixing the zipper on your favorite pair of winter cords.

A well-done repair can extend the life of small household appliances and fix the wobble and wiggle in furniture — maybe even restore your vacuum to that dog hair mean machine you remember.

It's a matter of economics and environmental responsibility. Fixing anything is better than putting everything in a landfill.

"We're hoping that the community can bring these people out of the shadows," Alex Angerman, the Tl'atk - Earth Branch coordinator at WCA, said of the call for volunteers. "It is to promote sustainability and the reuse of items instead of tossing items and buying new," she said.

More details will come later, as the Earth Branch starts to assemble a lineup of tune-up, cleanup and fix-up specialists. More than just getting the job done one time, the idea is that the skilled will help teach the less skilled how to do the job on their own in the future, which fits right in with the intent of providing a lasting benefit for the community.

Anyone interested in volunteering for the clinic can call Angerman at 907-874-4304, or email igapcoord.wca@gmail.com.

"All the fixins'" sounds good with burgers, pizza and nachos. It's just as good with small appliances.

- Wrangell Sentinel

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# Pizza run brings slice of reality to residents of Port Protection

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

When people choose to live in a remote area, they give up certain things like grocery stores, movie theaters and, probably most importantly, pizza deliveries.

That's why residents of Port Protection were thrilled when Nic Martin and Brian Schwartz showed up on July 15 with 18 pizzas from Nic's Place pizzeria.

Not only was it a chance to expand the reach of Nic's Place and bring some happiness to the community on the north end of Prince of Wales Island about 47 nautical miles west of Wrangell, but it was also something Martin had in mind for some time.

"I thought about this quite a while ago, the thought of getting on the show," he said.

"Port Protection Alaska" is a reality show produced by National Geographic that focuses on the lives of some of town's residents who are living an off-the-grid, subsistence lifestyle. It shows the challenges of fishing, hunting and growing their own food, while trying to live without things most people would take for granted.

"I threw (the idea) at Brian (Schwartz), and as soon as I threw it at him, he just started running," Martin said. "He's like, 'Yeah!' He's got that young blood, full of ambition. He's on it like a bird dog."

The duo coordinated with friends in Port Protection to make the 90-minute trek to sell pizza, enduring choppy water in a smaller vessel piloted by Schwartz. They kept the pizzas warm by putting them in a fishing tote, which was heated up with a packable generator Martin had set up.

Aside from frozen pizzas sold at the general store, Port Protection doesn't have restaurants or places for the residents to go for dinner.

"Everyone was so excited when Nic and Brian came around the corner in



PHOTO COURTESY OF NIC MARTIN

From left: Nic Martin, owner of Nic's Place pizzeria, and his friend Brian Schwartz delivered 18 pizzas to Point Protection residents Breanna Miethe, Oliver Johnson, Shilo Shervey and Carl Hernandez on July 15.

the Alaska Charters and Adventures jet boat," said Breanna Miethe, who appears regularly on the show and has lived in Port Protection for six and a half years. "There was a crowd of hungry locals waiting to greet them at the community dock. We were all so impressed to see that the pizzas were still hot after the boat ride."

Miethe, 31, along with partner Oliver Johnson, also 31, are both originally from Wrangell. They made the decision to move to Port Protection after having

hand-trolled there for a few summers. Miethe also spent time there with family while growing up.

She said some of the things that make a remote lifestyle appealing are also some of its biggest challenges.

"The benefits of living remote is just getting away from the distractions and day-to-day stress of town life," she said.

"You appreciate all the little things that you tend to take for granted or don't have the time to think about while living in town."

Miethe added that the independent lifestyle can be rewarding, depending on how well a person can adapt to isolation and physical work.

"The independent lifestyle comes with a lot of work, and you can't always prepare for every situation that gets thrown at you," she said. "The harsh winter months are very hard to endure. The planes don't run out to us with supplies and mail for a month sometimes, and the road access to the other communities gets snowed over so you have no choice but to just wait it out."

One episode of "Port Protection" from the most recent season shows Miethe and Johnson hunting for a black bear, while other residents grapple with gardening and other challenges.

Film crews are typically on site from March to October. Martin said he spoke with field producer Chad Fraser about possibly featuring a future pizza delivery on the show. There's no guarantee that it will happen, but Martin was hopeful.

As he gets older, Martin said he could see himself living a more remote lifestyle since he already hunts for his own food, processes it, forages for mushrooms, fiddleheads and berries, and makes his own jellies and jams. "I like that lifestyle, that mentality," he said. "Then again, it would get pretty lonely. I'd be like, 'I just want a burger, a soda, something like that.'"

Even though residents of the small town cook and share dishes with each other during their community barbecues, Miethe said she, Johnson and others living in Port Protection always welcome deliveries.

"We do love our independence out here, but we all love good food just as much, so there will always be a positive response and appreciation for any delivery service willing to make the long journey to us," she said.

## Fix-it clinic

Continued from page 1

was formerly known as the IGAP department, a name that referred to the federal Indian General Assistance Program grant that it administers. Changing the department's name was "one of the first things I did when I stepped into this role," said Angerman. "It mostly was because a lot

of people didn't know what IGAP was or stood for." The new name reflects the full scope of the department's work, which involves more projects than just those that fall under the IGAP umbrella.

The name is also part of the WCA's ongoing cultural revitalization efforts. *Tl'átk* means "the earth we stand on," according to the branch's website. The

name "reflects our deep appreciation for the natural world and our commitment to environmental stewardship," the site reads. "By embracing the Lingít language, we honor the Indigenous heritage of the region and strive to create a more inclusive and culturally aware workplace."

Potential clinic volunteers can reach

out to Earth Branch by calling WCA at 907-874-4304, stopping by the office 1002 Zimovia Highway, emailing Angerman at [igapcoord.wca@gmail.com](mailto:igapcoord.wca@gmail.com) or messaging her on Facebook. She is happy to communicate with potential volunteers through whatever method is most convenient for them. "Really, any way is fine with me," she said.

## BearFest

Continued from page 1

"From Danielle, (listeners) are going to get a really good sense of how bears use Anan and how they might react to people 30 years ago," said Houser. "We've had a lot of changes since that time and that's what I'll be talking about." She hopes that audience members will draw their own conclusions about what is happening to the bears. The following day, McCarthy will present her research focusing on recent changes at Anan.

For the final symposium on Saturday, audience members will turn their attention northward as University of Alaska Fairbanks faculty member Todd Brinkman shares his knowledge about the changing landscape of human and polar bear interactions in Alaska.

Brinkman is a wildlife ecologist who focuses on large mammals, including deer, moose, caribou and bears. At BearFest, he will be "talking about how climate-related changes in our environment, especially sea ice ... (are) increasing the frequency and the likelihood of human-polar bear encounters."

Sea ice is critical habitat for polar bears, he explained, and as it shrinks, polar bears spend more and more time on land, increasing the chances that they will run into people. His focus is on promoting positive wildlife interactions and minimizing

harmful or negative ones.

"If we think about most of our 'wildlife problems,' I kind of find it funny that we call it 'wildlife problems,'" he said. "Because it's often people prob-

lems related to wildlife."

His talk is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Saturday at the Nolan Center.

An addition to Saturday's schedule is a workshop on bee-

keeping at 1 p.m. at the Nolan Center, led by beekeeper Christina Wuerker.

A race and a raffle drawing will close out the festivities on Sunday, July 30. The race

has marathon, half-marathon and 5k options — registration takes place at 7 a.m. at the Nolan Center.

The full event schedule is available at [alaskabearfest.org](http://alaskabearfest.org).



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# Cross country team prepares to run down goals in season

By MARC LUTZ  
Sentinel editor

This year's Wrangell High School cross country team has some big running shoes to fill.

Last year, the boys team placed first at regionals and first at state, which was a first-ever accomplishment for the team. Some of those runners are returning and head coach Mason Villarma has big hopes for the athletes.

"I think the men will definitely look to repeat a state championship," he said in an interview on Friday, July 21. "I think the women — Southeast looks really weak — so I think they can win a regional championship. Anything can happen at state if we make that benchmark."

The season, which begins Wednesday, July 26, and ends Oct. 7, is seeing a lot of interest on the part of student-athletes, Villarma said. Twenty kids showed up to the preseason meeting, 13 boys and seven girls, nine of which were freshmen. Returning athletes include Daniel Harrison, Boomchain Loucks, Ian Nelson, Jackson Powers and Mia Wiederspohn.

Villarma anticipates about 10 kids from the preseason meeting will show up at the first practice and by the third week he'll have his permanent roster in place.

The head coach believes Harrison has another state title in him, as he won first place out of 82 runners at last year's state meet in a time of 17:29.1 and an average

pace of 5:38 a mile.

"I still think he (Harrison) will retain a state title, unless Boomchain has something to say about it," Villarma said. "Boomchain has put in a lot of work over the summer. He did a University of Arizona running camp this last week. He's been crushing early mileage already, working on his base. I think that he'll keep Daniel honest. Anything can happen. I think those two will be competing for a state title."

Some of the incoming freshmen look to have good potential, including Harrison's younger sister Alana Harrison, who regularly practiced with the high school team while she was in eighth grade.

Villarma hopes to build up the women's program this year and sees potential in Alana Harrison, Wiederspohn and Della Churchill.

There are still some challenges to overcome, however, such as competing in larger meets. Last year, the runners were a little overwhelmed when competing at Palmer High School north of Anchorage.

"We performed decent in the grand scheme of things," Villarma said. "We beat a lot of big schools that we shouldn't even have been competing with. (The kids) didn't respond well to running in a really packed field. That race was bigger than their state meet. There was a bit of an initial shock."

Villarma said he plans to keep the team in Southeast

until state. They will consider extending the season for athletes who want more of a challenge, which could include running in Washington or Oregon at competitions like the Nike Cross Nationals.

"I think we're going to keep to the Southeast meets this year and focus on strengthening those up," he said. "Sitka is really competitive at the 3A level. For us, it's like we know at least we'll have a dual meet with Sitka in a competitive way. I think if we want to branch off into bigger-caliber meets, we'll do so after the state meet for those (runners) that want to continue."

Wrangell is a 2A division team. Divisions are based on school enrollment size.

The team's first race will be on Sept. 2 in Klawock. On Sept. 9, Wrangell will host a meet at Muskeg Meadows.

"I'm just really looking forward to working with these kids," Villarma said. "There's just a lot of potential for a lot of these athletes to move on to compete at the college level. I think the Harrisons, Boomchain, the freshmen, I think they have the prospects of pursuing that if that's what they want to do. It takes a high level of commitment. I want to get them to that place if that's where they want to be."

Villarma's other goal is to build the cross country program to be as big as possible, surpassing the number of athletes the wrestling program gets every year. "That's kind of a benchmark for us."

# Whale Pass 10-year-old wins medals at national taekwondo tournament

By CHRIS BIERI  
Anchorage Daily News

Whale Pass youngster Jesse Dempsey started practicing taekwondo as a kindergartner with a very simple goal: to help control his temper.

In the past five years, Jesse has made strides toward that objective and progressed his skills to the point where he could compete at the international level. And recently the 10-year-old has found plenty of training partners in his small town on Prince of Wales Island.

Despite a population that rarely crests above 100 even during the busy summer season, Jesse is one of 10 kids practicing the martial art in Whale Pass.

"We needed him to learn control and discipline," said his mother, Michelle Dempsey. "We started him in martial arts and it made a huge difference."

When Jesse started taekwondo, his family

lived in Texas. When they moved to Alaska a year ago, he wanted to continue his training.

Senior Master Dometrius Hill, who had trained Jesse in Texas, offered to continue instruction over Zoom. The ATA (formerly known as the American Taekwondo Association) version of taekwondo he teaches has a centralized curriculum helpful for remote learning. Still, Hill said, it isn't quite the same as being in person.

"Nothing replaces that face-to-face connection of being in the same space," he said.

With Jesse acting as a hands-on helper, the Whale Pass group has grown to include more than three-quarters of the kids who attend the school, according to Michelle Dempsey. Their ages range from 7 to 16.

While making progress on his temper, Jesse now enjoys another aspect. "Mostly because of the self-defense," he said.

Taekwondo is a Korean martial art that revolves around kicking and punching.

It's been an Olympic sport since 2000 and included a number of forms. This month at the World ATA Championships in Phoenix, Jesse competed in eight events and won three medals. As a brown belt in the 11- to 12-year-old category, he earned medals in creative forms, extreme forms and extreme weapons.

Hill said kids who struggle with impulse issues can gain another form of reinforcement in a group.

"Not necessarily negative, but calling out behavior that's positive and reinforcing the positive," he said. "That's where we're at now, instead of a sport or a competition where I have to beat you to win, it's an activity where I need you to win so we can all win."

That was the case for Joseph Hillis, who trained with Jesse leading up to the recent Worlds in Phoenix. Joseph's father, Cody Hillis, said he's noticed the two boys making strides in both personal and athletic ven-

tures.

"At their practices they're pushing each other," Hillis said. "That's a big thing. When you just have one person there it doesn't help you to exceed your current levels. ... I think the attitudes have got a lot better too, and I'd like to see it keep going."

Michelle Dempsey said she's looking into fundraising to continue the training for the larger group, including buying mats. Now they do some outdoor training, and since the school doesn't have a gym, they end up training in other rooms. She and Hill both said they'd like to see a larger group head to the Lower 48 for major tournaments in the future.

"We'd like to do some fundraising so the rest of the world can see how awesome these kids are in Alaska," Hill said. "They're humble, they're respectful and they're hard workers. And that's what we want all our kids to be like."

# Helmet camera records video of Juneau man's drowning in Mendenhall Lake

By BECKY BOHRER  
Associated Press

A Juneau man inadvertently filmed his own drowning on Mendenhall Lake with a GoPro camera mounted on his helmet, but authorities who recovered the camera have not yet found his body, officials said July 18.

Alaska State Troopers said teams would continue to search the lake for the body of Paul Ro-

driguez Jr., 43. Troopers said a helmet with a camera attached to it that was confirmed to have belonged to Rodriguez was recording on July 11 when his kayak overturned and he went into the water.

"The recording continued showing that the kayak overturned due to a strong current coming from the glacier," Troopers spokesperson Tim De-

Spain said by email.

DeSpain said the helmet was found on the lakeshore. He said it was turned in to troopers on July 17.

Juneau police said Rodriguez was believed to have gone missing on July 11 somewhere in the vicinity of the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. Police received a report July 16 from U.S. Forest Service employees that a vehicle

had been parked at the recreation area since July 11 and determined it was registered to Rodriguez.

Rodriguez's son, Jaden Rodriguez, said his father was kind-hearted and enjoyed being outdoors, doing activities like fishing, paddleboarding and snowboarding. Rodriguez also was a gifted photographer, his son said.

He said Rodriguez's life changed for the better when he found God, and Rodriguez would often tell him that life is short.

"He was a good person," he

said.

According to police, Rodriguez's roommate reported last seeing him on July 10, and friends said a social media post by Rodriguez on July 11 showed a kayak on a beach that appeared to be near Nugget Falls, which is in the recreation area and along the lake.

A kayak had been found floating unattended on the lake July 11 that police said resembled the one in Rodriguez's post. As authorities put the pieces together, a search got underway.

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THE SOURDOUGH LODGE



# Assembly, school board, port commission candidacy filing to open

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

At the upcoming municipal election on Oct. 3, the community will head to the polls to share its vision for Wrangell's future. But before that can happen, engaged community members need to declare their intention to run for elected office.

Starting on Tuesday, Aug. 1, eligible candidates will be able to submit their candidacy for one of four available seats.

Two three-year seats on the borough assembly will be on the ballot: Anne Morrison and Ryan Howe's terms end this fall. These elected volunteer positions help guide the direction that the borough government takes by voting on ordinances and resolutions, listening to the will of the public and representing the community's interests to municipal officials.

In the coming years, major decisions about developing the Alder Top Village (Keishangita.ʼaan) subdivision, repairing or rebuilding the Public Safety Building and selling the former hospital property will come before the assembly, so the winning candidates will have opportunities to shape the town's development.

Assembly members are "an integral part of local government," said Borough Clerk Kim Lane. "They are the decision-makers for contracts and projects, any kind of amendments. Without them, we can't function."

"If you have a voice in the community, have it on the assembly," she continued. "That's where it counts."

Assembly candidates must be registered voters in the borough, with at least one year of residency.

On the school board, the three-year seat held by Esther Aaltséen Reese will be on the ballot. School board members make decisions about curriculum, staffing and the district's budget. They also hold school officials accountable to the policies and goals of the district.

School board members must be registered voters to serve.

Gary Morrison's three-year term on the port commission is coming to an end. "Although they are an elected body, they are more of an advisory board," Lane said of the commission. "The ones that are typically on the port commission, they're either in the industry or they frequent the harbor often." The commission weighs in on tidelands leases or purchases, and any changes in harbor fees or harbor-related municipal code.

Port commission members also must be registered voters, at least 21 years old.

To file for any of the seats, stop by City Hall to pick up a packet between Aug. 1 and Aug. 31. Candidates must submit a declaration of candidacy and get signatures from 10 qualified voters to be eligible to run.

As borough clerk, Lane is well-versed in the workings of municipal government and is able to act as a resource for any assembly, school board or port commission hopeful who may have questions about the filing process or the rules and responsibilities of elected positions. She is happy to walk candidates through the open meetings laws and parliamentary responsibilities that they would be taking on if elected.

"My job is to help the assembly and guide them when needed," she said. "I'm here to offer assistance. I really feel like if you can vote, you can run."

She hopes to see a full ballot at the Oct. 3 municipal election, since it would provide community members with the most robust set of choices for the management of their town and its schools and harbors.

"I appreciate anybody who steps up and serves," said Lane. "My hat is off to them."

# Canadian wildfire smoke makes brief appearance over Southeast

By LEX TREINEN  
Chilkat Valley News, Haines

Canada's worst-ever wildfire season has choked much of North America with dangerous smoke for months, coupling with deadly heat around the globe in a summer that's focusing the world's attention on the perils of climate change.

By last week, some 42,000 square miles had burned in Canada — half again more than the entire Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. About 900 fires were actively burning, with only about one-fifth considered under control.

"I watch this pretty much 24/7," Mark Smith, the air quality meteorologist for the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, told the Chilkat Valley News in Haines last week.

The state of Alaska put out an air quality advisory on July 13, warning of potentially unhealthy air throughout Southeast. The smoke alert said the air quality level for the entire panhandle — from Skagway to Ketchikan — dropped from

"In past eight years, we've only had one or two days impacted by smoke. This year could be a year we're impacted."

Mark Smith,  
air quality meteorologist,  
Alaska Department of  
Environmental Conservation

"good" to "moderate."

The advisory ended on July 15.

Smith said unofficial air quality readings showed particulate in the air mostly in the "good" range throughout the period of the advisory. Air quality is measured by what's known as the Air Quality Index, which measures fine particles in the air on a scale of 1 to 500.

"The highest I saw around Haines was up to 56, which is right in the threshold between good and moderate," said Smith.

Nearly 900 wildfires were burning in

British Columbia as of July 17. Scientists say the burning is exacerbated by climate change, which has led Canada's temperatures to warm at about twice the rate of the global average.

Smoke from the fires continues to cause harmful air quality across the Eastern U.S., but mid-July winds started to shift to push some of the smoke toward Alaska. Most of the particulate is traveling high in the atmosphere — 10,000 to 15,000 feet in the air — which doesn't cause any public health concerns. But Smith said if the winds stop blowing,

particulates can settle into the river valleys.

For now, there are some things to be grateful for, Smith said. Alaska's wildfire season has been well below average in terms of acres burned. So far most of the smoke has stayed in the upper atmosphere and hasn't settled down. Siberia hasn't had major wildfire activities, which sometimes send smoke to Alaska. Many of the Canadian fires were tamped down by recent rainfall.

Smith said it's rare for Southeast to have serious effects from wildfire smoke. The last time he remembers was in 2019 when Southcentral Alaska had one of its worst fire seasons ever. Still, he said, summer is far from over.

"In the past eight years, we've only had one or two days impacted by smoke," he said. "This year could be a year we're impacted."

The Associated Press contributed reporting for this story.

# State loses lawsuit over contaminated lands given to Native corporations

Alaska Beacon

A federal judge on July 18 dismissed a year-old lawsuit by the state against the federal government over liability for contaminated land given to Alaska Native corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

No Alaska Native corporations or Native groups joined the lawsuit, and in an order published July 18, Judge Hezekiah Russel Holland found multiple problems with the state's arguments, ultimately ruling that they should be dismissed.

The state had argued that three prior acts of Congress required the Department of the Interior to deal with contaminated sites, formerly owned by the federal government, that were given to Native corporations.

Attorneys representing the Department of the Interior disagreed, saying those laws only

required the federal government to identify contaminated sites and come up with plans for cleaning them up.

Holland agreed with the federal attorneys' arguments, concluding, "Defendants were under no directive to undertake remediation of contaminated lands, nor to implement a plan for such remediation."

The dispute centers on dump sites, fuel depots and other pollution on land the federal government transferred to Native corporations over the years since the 1971 law.

"There were well over 1,000 contaminated sites that were conveyed, as part of the 44 million-acre settlement for dealing with Indigenous land claims," said Jason Brune, commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation, in an interview with Alaska public radio. "They were given damaged

goods."

In a written statement, state Attorney General Treg Taylor said the state is considering an appeal.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Envi-

ronmental Protection Agency is preparing to distribute \$20 million in grants intended to clean up contaminated Native corporation-owned sites. The estimated cost to clean all the sites is in

the tens of billions of dollars.

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## Obituary

# Former resident Clint Miller was on 1952 state championship team

Former Wrangell resident Clint Owen Miller, 87, died April 27 in Sitka.

He was born on Nov. 16, 1935, in Hutton Valley, Missouri, to Stanton Miller and Eva (Williams) Miller. His family lived in Missouri and moved to the shipyards near Portland during World War II, then to logging camps in Idaho after the war, finally settling in Wrangell.

Clint grew up in Wrangell, attending school and graduating from high school. As a freshman, he played center for the team that beat West Anchorage for the 1952 Alaska State Basketball Championship, "an honor for which he is remembered in Wrangell still," his family wrote. In 2002, Clint returned to Wrangell for a 50-year reunion of the championship team. "Wrangell had a special spot in Clint's heart, as he would return to visit his parents and friends and to take his kids moose hunting and fishing at the family cabin up Elbow Slough on the Stikine River."

After high school, Clint worked construction and had the opportunity to train in Juneau to become a powderman. With his blasters license, he got a job offer to come to Sitka to work on the original Blue Lake Dam project. He was on the next flight and Sitka became his home. In 1960, he married Marina Panamarkoff in St. Michaels Cathedral.

Following work on the dam, Clint worked for Standard Oil, was public works foreman for the City of Sitka, and retired in 1991 as the highway maintenance foreman for the state Department of Transportation. "Clint's work, work ethic and commitment to keeping Sitka's highways safe was beyond measure."

After a few years of retirement, Clint decided to go back to work. He bought, owned and operated Southeast Tree Service. After several years, he retired again. In 2018, after experiencing increasing dementia symptoms, Clint moved into the Sitka Pioneer home un-



CLINT OWEN MILLER

til his hospital admission in late March. "Clint was strong until the end and passed away peacefully with family at

his side."

Some of Clint's best times included traveling with his family, fishing for sockeye salmon and smoking and jarring his prized fish, woodcutting, and any activity that allowed him to help others.

Clint is survived by his wife of 63 years, Marina (Panamarkoff) Miller; children Mary Miller, Mike Miller and Kathy (Steve) Miller; his cherished grandchildren Mashaya Sulser and Taylor Huddleson; and numerous nieces and nephews. Also surviving include special friends he adopted as family: Sandra Moller, Elizabeth Samson, Abby Forrester, Maria Estela Hernández De la Torre Johnson and countless others including his granddaughter Mashaya's buddies.

Clint is preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Norman Dale Miller and Robert Darrell Miller. Condolences can be sent to the Miller family, PO Box 2995, Sitka, AK. 99835.

# Alaska leads nation in error rate for determining food stamp benefits

By ANNIE BERMAN

Anchorage Daily News

Recently published federal data shows that Alaska's payment error rate for administering food stamp benefits was the highest of any state during the past fiscal year.

Between October 2021 and September 2022, the Alaska Division of Public Assistance reported a payment error rate of nearly 57%, compared to a national average of 11.5%.

Public assistance advocates say the error rate, which measures how accurately a state agency processes federal benefits, sheds light on continued problems at the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, which for nearly a year has struggled to process applications for food stamps and other federal benefits for tens of thousands of vulnerable Alaskans.

"Our state SNAP agency has clearly been struggling for quite some time to administer the program efficiently," said Cara Durr, chief of advocacy and public policy at the Food Bank

of Alaska. "So it's not surprising that our error rate is so high. And it's just another reason why increased staffing and technology for the Division of Public Assistance is so important."

No financial penalties have been levied against the state, but that could change if the error rate stays above the national average for two consecutive years, officials say.

The error rate is a measure of "how accurately state agencies determine a household's eligibility and benefit amount," according to the federal Food and Nutrition Service, which distributes federal food stamp benefits — also referred to as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. The rate includes both overpayments and underpayments.

The error rate is typically published yearly, but no data was available during the pandemic while renewals were happening automatically. Alaska wasn't the only state to report an increased error rate since the rates were last published: The national overpayment rate rose from

6.18% in 2019 to 9.84% in 2022, prompting bipartisan concerns among members of Congress about mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

State health officials say Alaska's high error rate is a reflection of a mistake the Alaska Division of Public Assistance made when interpreting a federal waiver that allowed state agencies to forgo regular eligibility checks for food stamp recipients during the pandemic.

Automatic renewals were supposed to end in January 2022. But Alaska continued to renew applications without eligibility checks until around July 2022, when a quality control worker at the state agency realized the mistaken interpretation of the waiver, according to Tama Carson, deputy director of the Alaska Division of Public Assistance.

"That's a very high number. But what's important to understand is the number is due to the misapplication of a waiver," Carson said. "If we had interpreted the waiver correctly, we would not have had this huge

error rate. We would have probably been in the middle of the pack."

Out of a sample of 680 SNAP case files in Alaska from last year that were reviewed by the quality control team, 461 were determined to be correct while 229 were flagged for errors, according to Carson. Of those, 192 were erroneous due to the waiver misapplication, and just 37 were true overpayments or underpayments, Carson said.

"There's nothing in these numbers that would indicate fraud, or clients getting too much," she added.

In an emailed statement, Stacy Dean, the top-ranking nutrition official at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, wrote that the federal agency was working with Alaska to finalize a corrective action plan "that will put them on a clear path to reduced errors going forward."

Those fixes include staff training on how to work more efficiently and avoid errors, implementing longer recertification periods to cut down on work for both clients and staff, hiring more staff and making technol-

ogy improvements, Carson said.

While other states had also misinterpreted the waiver, Carson said Alaska's error rate was higher because benefit allocations here on average are much larger than other states' due to high food costs and larger household sizes, especially in rural Alaska.

Carson added that at this time, no financial penalties were being levied against Alaska for their error, nor would Alaskans be required to pay back any benefits they received due to the misinterpretation. But continued mistakes could result in penalties.

This is at least the second time this year that Alaska Division of Public Assistance actions have prompted federal involvement. Earlier, the state's SNAP backlog prompted a sharp federal warning and corrective action plan to address the backlog that had left thousands of low-income Alaskans, a majority whom are families with children, without food assistance benefits for months on end.

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# Former Ketchikan legislators complete 925-mile row from Seattle

By HEIDI EKSTRAND  
Ketchikan Daily News

Working together in long, tandem strokes, Terry Gardiner and John Sund rowed beneath looming cruise ships along Ketchikan's waterfront on July 10, then turned into Bar Harbor to meet a couple dozen friends and family waiting for them on shore. It was the end of a 925-mile rowing trip from Seattle to Ketchikan for the two men, born and raised in Ketchikan, now in their 70s.

The two have been partners in personal and professional escapades for years. Gardiner served in the Alaska House of Representatives through the 1970s, with Sund working as his chief of staff. Sund was elected to the House in 1983 and served until 1988.

In 1981, Gardiner, Sund, and a team of partners formed Silver Lining Seafoods. Starting with a small processing plant in Ketchikan, the company grew to include shoreside locations in six Alaska communities. The company later merged with Lafayette Fisheries and its fleet of floating processors to form NorQuest Seafoods.

Gardiner and Sund retired after the company was purchased by Trident Seafoods. They both now reside in the Seattle area.

But retirement opened up a completely new chapter for the two. Gardiner estimates they've accumulated about 4,500 miles of hiking, and now rowing, in recent years. They've hiked the length of the 2,650-mile Pacific Crest Trail between Canada and Mexico, as well as the 800-mile Arizona Trail.

The two actually started their rowing trip last year, intending to make the voyage in a single year. But a health issue for Gardiner in Port Hardy, British Columbia, resulted in a Canadian Coast Guard medivac and the trip was curtailed. Gardiner recuperated without incident, and this year they trailed the boat back to Port Hardy and resumed the trip. It didn't start out well.

At the end of the first day, Sund jumped out of the boat and onto a log atop a pile of rocks to scout a camping spot. The log promptly collapsed beneath him, crashing onto the oars and the side of the boat below. Sund suffered a gash to his leg that is still healing a month later, but the boat wasn't damaged.

On the second day, they encountered fiercely towering ocean swells and wave action termed "clapotis waves," or "rebound waves," where incoming ocean swells make landfall and



PHOTO BY FELIX WONG

Terry Gardiner, left, and John Sund greet well-wishers at Ketchikan's Bar Harbor on July 10 after completing a 925-mile rowing trip from Seattle.

bounce back, creating a wildly churning sea. They finally sought refuge for a break by hanging onto a giant kelp bed, as an anchor, behind a small island with a little protection from the wind.

"It was the biggest, most dangerous, scary part of the trip," Gardiner said.

Despite the dramatic start, the two raved about the people they met along the way, the cultural and historic aspects of the country they traveled through, and the enormous amount of wildlife they encountered daily.

The food wasn't bad, either, with tacos made daily with fresh salmon, halibut and ling cod.

Near the end of the trip there were some sentimental moments, too.

Gardiner started gillnetting in the Tree Point area, south of Ketchikan, when he was 16, and fished there for 14 years. As they rowed through that stretch, Gardiner regaled Sund with stories of his adventures — and mishaps.

"For 10 miles every rock had a story — and it usually had a net on top of it," Sund recalled. "So first you had the story of how the net got on the rock, and then you had the story of how he got the net OFF the rock."

On their last night the two camped in a small cove Sund calls "Pot Cover Cove." He remembers commercial trolling there as a youth with his father, Art

Sund. To wait out stormy weather, his dad had rigged a stainless steel wire around a cedar tree on shore. He would set an anchor from the bow of the boat off the beach, then back the stern of the boat up to the cable, latch onto it, and secure the boat between the two points.

Some 60 years later, Sund and Gardiner spotted the cable still there.

"It was kind of a cool way, for me anyway, to end the trip," Sund said.

With the trip completed, there is the question of what to do with the 17-foot Whitehall rowboat.

Linda Gardiner and DeeDee Sund are reportedly lobbying to sell the boat and recoup some of their expenditures. "The boys" won't exactly commit to a plan. "There's a little push/pull there," Sund admitted.

For now, they're going to take the boat to their cabin at Hollis on Prince of Wales Island. They'll remove the solar panels and other modifications they made for their long-distance travel.

"And then we're going to row our grandkids around," Gardiner said.

Heidi Ekstrand is a former editor of the Ketchikan Daily News, and currently serves as chair of the Ketchikan Community Foundation Advisory Board.

## Alaska signs Republican letter opposing federal rule to protect medical records

By JAMES BROOKS  
Alaska Beacon

Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor joined 18 other Republican attorneys general last month in a letter calling on the federal government to preserve state governments' access to private medical records.

That access could be used to restrict access to abortion and gender transition care.

The attorneys general are opposing a proposed federal rule that would "prevent private medical records from being used against people for merely seeking, obtaining, providing, or facilitating lawful reproductive health care."

Idaho, which has criminalized abortion, passed a law this year that prohibits adults from helping minors obtain an abortion in another state. Other states that have criminalized abortion are considering similar acts, and the proposed federal rule would hamper the ability of those states to enforce their laws.

"The letter speaks for itself," Taylor said by email. "While this rule would have no effect on Alaska because abortions are legal, the rule seeks to thwart other states that have made a different policy decision on abortions post the Dobbs v. Jackson decision. This letter is about preserving states' rights in the face of federal overreach and that is why Alaska joined."

The right to abortion access in Alaska is protected by Alaska Supreme Court precedent, and justices here have repeatedly determined that the state's right to privacy applies to abortion access.

Some Alaskans seek specialty abortion care in Washington state, but that state was not a signatory to the letter, and Washington state lawmakers there have passed a medical shield law intended to specifically protect residents of other states who seek abortion care there.

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, which supports abortion access in Alaska and nearby states, said it was nevertheless appalled by the attorney

general's decision to sign the letter, in part because it violates the spirit of the Alaska Constitution's right to privacy.

"It's sickening and unacceptable," said Rose O'Hara-Jolley, Alaska state director for Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates.

It isn't a states' rights issue, said Mack Smith, communications manager for Planned Parenthood Great Northwest and Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates. "Really, what it comes down to is controlling people's options. And I think that we can all be honest at this point that these politicians and these lawmakers aren't going to be happy until abortion is not an option for anyone in any state," Smith said.

Asked whether Alaska plans to pursue information on abortion procedures in other states and whether Alaska would provide that information to other

states, Taylor said, "The answer is an emphatic, 'No.'"

Even if that's the case, O'Hara-Jolley said, the letter is still dangerous because it spreads fear and could result in misinformation.

"When people see this headline that their medical information could be shared, it has the potential, the real-world consequences, where now people may not be open and honest with their doctors," they said.

"If it starts with abortion, and people are afraid to talk to their doctor about that, where does it go next? Are they coming for birth control records? When a state is allowed to open up medical records like that, it should be extremely alarming to everyone."

The Alaska Beacon is an independent, donor-funded news organization. [Alaskabeacon.com](http://Alaskabeacon.com).

## Police report

**Monday, July 17**  
Welfare check: Person was fine.

**Tuesday, July 18**  
Summons service.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.  
Agency assist: Warrant.  
Lost property.

**Wednesday, July 19**  
Theft.  
Agency assist: Department of Transportation.  
Agency assist: Ambulance.  
Agency assist: Wrangell Medical Center.  
Traffic hazard: Two juveniles on scooters in Shoemaker parking lot crossed in front of a vehicle and were almost hit.  
Dog complaint: Citation issued for objectionable animal.

**Thursday, July 20**  
Unsecured premises: Truck door left open.  
Agency assist: Wrangell Medical Center.  
Parking violation: Vehicle

moved.  
Agency assist: AP&T.  
Found property.  
Parking complaint.  
Violation condition of release.  
Driving complaint: Motor scooters driving out onto City Dock.

**Friday, July 21**  
Assault.  
Agency assist: Line crew.  
Agency assist: Hoonah Police Department.  
Concerned citizen.

**Saturday, July 22**  
Traffic stop.  
Curfew violation.  
Agency assist: Oregon.  
Agency assist: Nolan Center.  
Animal complaint: Neighbor dispute.  
Animal complaint.  
Agency assist: Ambulance.  
Warrant arrest: Arreseted on warrant for violation of condition of release.

**Sunday, July 23**  
None

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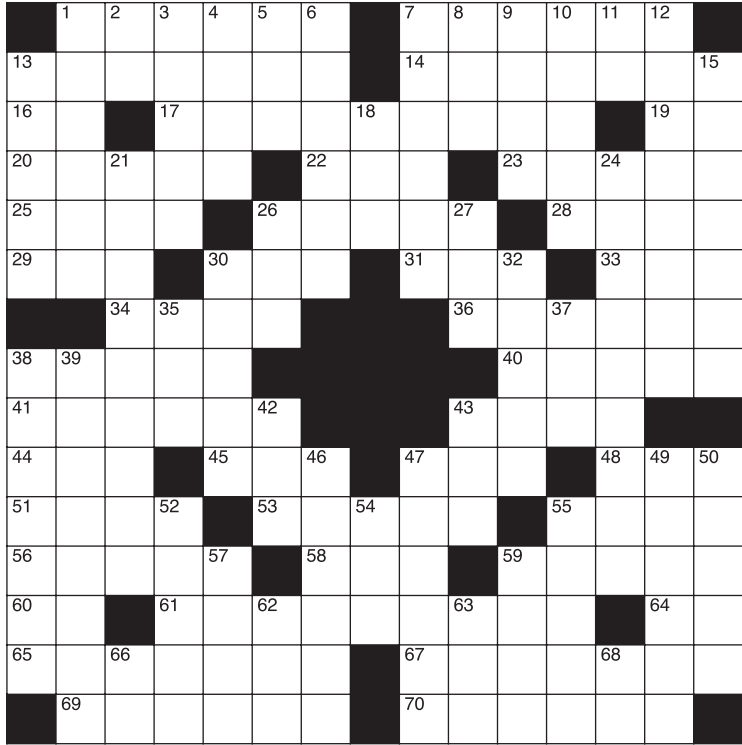
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# Crossword

Answers on page 12



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bonus materials
- 7. Formal names
- 13. Free from restraints
- 14. One who scrapes away
- 16. Type of device
- 17. Skin cancers
- 19. The Show Me State
- 20. Plate glasses
- 22. Red-brown sea bream
- 23. Small (Fr.)
- 25. Flightless Australian birds
- 26. High IQ group
- 28. Stiff structures
- 29. Revolutions per minute
- 30. Where a bachelor lives
- 31. Licensed for Wall Street
- 33. A place to park
- 34. Energy, style and enthusiasm
- 36. An important creed in Catholic Church
- 38. 18-year astronomical period
- 40. Furies
- 41. Removes from the record
- 43. Noted child psychiatrist
- 44. Feline
- 45. High schoolers' test
- 47. Not happy
- 48. They \_
- 51. On top
- 53. Precious stones unit of weight
- 55. Moved quickly
- 56. Seagulls
- 58. A seed with hooks or teeth
- 59. Partner to "oohed"
- 60. Exclamation of surprise
- 61. Most unpleasant
- 64. Organization help service members
- 65. Type of cockatoo
- 67. Humorous criticisms
- 69. Went through and organized
- 70. Wakes up

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Settle in tents
- 2. Big
- 3. Books
- 4. Masses of eggs in fish
- 5. Language
- 6. Not standing
- 7. Chinese philosophy
- 8. Computer giant
- 9. A device to catch
- 10. Emits coherent radiation
- 11. Actor O'Neill
- 12. Smallest interval in western music
- 13. Not lower
- 15. Revolves
- 18. Leavened bread
- 21. Number above the line in a fraction
- 24. Cable
- 26. Adult male
- 27. Airborne (abbr.)
- 30. Bullfighting maneuvers
- 32. Broadcast
- 35. \_ Angeles
- 37. Vehicle
- 38. Not religious
- 39. North American peoples
- 42. A baglike structure
- 43. Body art (slang)
- 46. Picked for a role
- 47. Actress Tomei
- 49. Former hoopster "Big Country"
- 50. Icelandic poems
- 52. More pleasant
- 54. It can add flavor to meat
- 55. Self-immolation by fire rituals
- 57. Expression of annoyance
- 59. \_ Spumante (Italian wine)
- 62. Consumed
- 63. Body part
- 66. Thus
- 68. In reply (abbr.)

# Medical student comes to Wrangell through rural health care program

By CAROLEINE JAMES  
Sentinel reporter

A medical student is visiting the Wrangell Medical Center for a month this summer to learn more about rural medicine and prepare herself for a future as a physician in Alaska.

Christine Richter, who recently finished her first year at the University of Washington School of Medicine, arrived in town July 22 and will stay until Aug. 19. "I was so happy when I saw I got placed here (in Wrangell)," she said. Though she was born and raised in Anchorage, she hasn't had the opportunity to explore much of Southeast and looks forward to her time in town.

As an undergraduate at University of Alaska Anchorage, Richter studied the natural sciences, but wasn't sure what she wanted to pursue after college. Then, two weeks after she graduated, her mother had a ruptured brain aneurysm and needed emergency surgery. Thankfully, there was a specialist visiting Anchorage for a few weeks, or else Richter's mother would have had to take a three-hour flight to Seattle for treatment.

The experience, said Richter, "really sparked my interest in working in the medical community, particularly in Alaska," where treatment is often less accessible than it is in the Lower 48.

Richter enrolled in medical school

Continued on page 11



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTINE RICHTER

Christine Richter, who is working at the Wrangell Medical Center for a month this summer through WWAMI, poses with her golden retriever, Bailey.

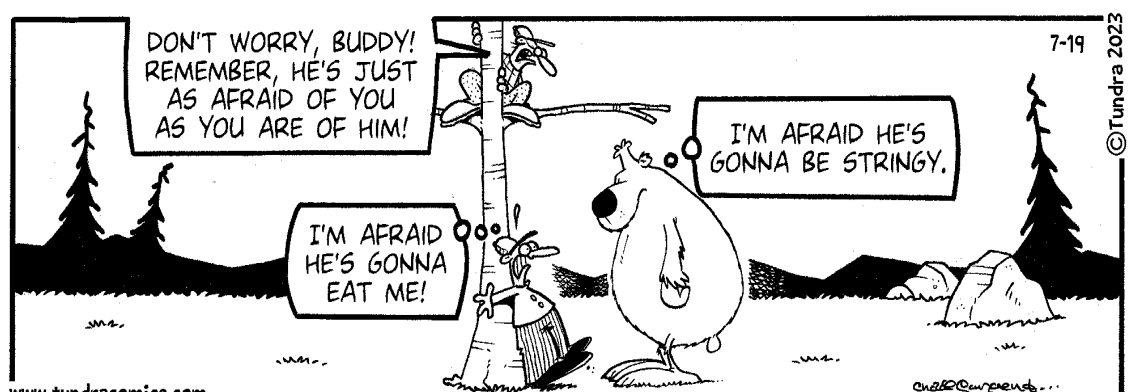
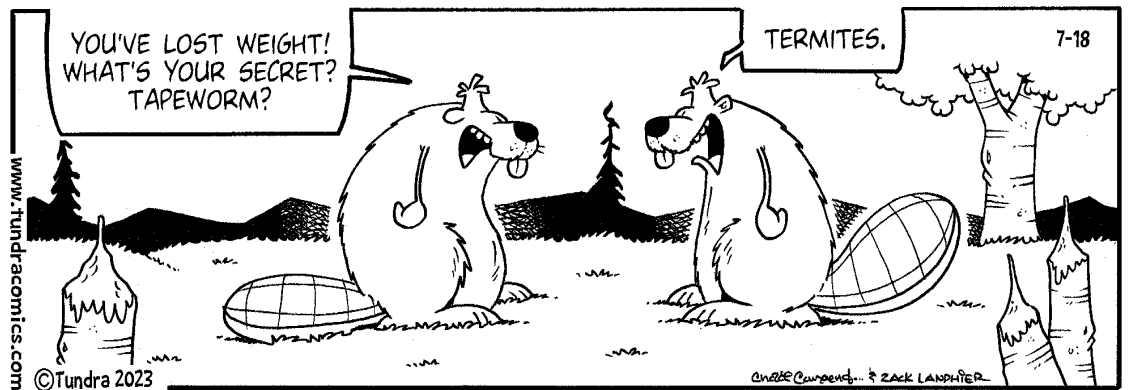
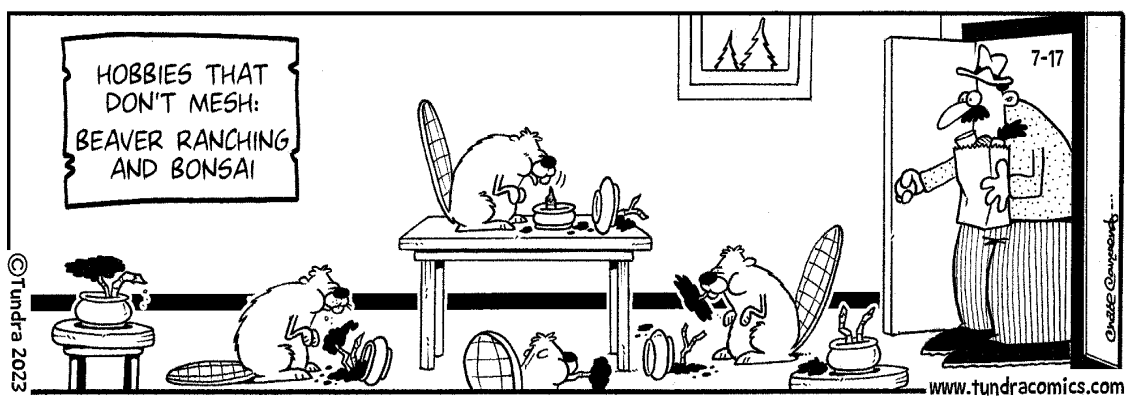
## Ritter's River

by Marc Lutz



## Tundra

by Chad Carpenter



### CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Nolan Center Coordinator

The City & Borough of Wrangell is recruiting for a Nolan Center Coordinator to help develop and organize programming that supports the museum and community events throughout the facility. This person will work closely with the Nolan Center Director to supervise staff and support in developing and working various museum programs, events, movies, retail sales and daily operations.

Applicants must be willing to work a flexible schedule which requires evenings and weekends on a regular basis. This is a full-time (40 hours per week) position with full benefits, at Grade 12.

The full job description and employment application can be found online at [www.wrangell.com/jobs](http://www.wrangell.com/jobs). To be considered for this position, submit a cover letter, resume and completed employment application to [cyni@nolancenter.org](mailto:cyni@nolancenter.org) or in person to City Hall. This position will be opened until filled.

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

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



# Medical student

Continued from page 10

at the University of Washington, where students choose to either participate in a research project after their first year or visit a rural community to learn more about the challenges of rural medicine. Richter's interest in accessible care in Alaska motivated her to opt for the Rural Underserved Opportunities Program.

Rural medicine is "an important part of how medicine in our state functions," she said, and she looks forward to "learning more about how health care is delivered in a more remote area." She also hopes to get to know the community and experience Wrangell life during the few weeks she'll have here.

When she isn't assisting Dr. Lynn Prysunka at the Wrangell Medical Center, she plans to explore Petroglyph Beach, Anan Wildlife Observatory and the island's many beautiful hiking trails. While on the job, her responsibilities may include taking medical histories, talking to patients and gaining hands-on medical experience.

During the program's four-week immersion rotation, medical students work with local physicians to provide health care in underserved areas throughout Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho. These five states comprise

the WWAMI program, an acronym that stands for the names of the member states. WWAMI is a collaboration between six universities across the Northwest that allows students to pursue opportunities across the region.

During her undergraduate

years, Richter researched ways to diagnose gastric cancer in Alaska Native populations, who have historically been left out of scientific studies and who are at a high risk for the disease. Currently, the cancer can only be diagnosed using an invasive procedure. The lab Rich-

ter worked in was seeking ways to identify its presence through blood tests. "We just really wanted to make sure that (the Alaska Native population is) being adequately represented," she said.

In the future, Richter hopes to

provide health care in her home state. "There's a huge need for it in Alaska, as I'm sure everyone knows," she said. "For me, it's a huge part of giving back and giving the best care that you can in the state."

## NATIONAL FOREST TIMBER FOR SALE NOTICE INVITING BIDS Tongass National Forest

The YODER Sale is located within T64S, R84E, SECTIONS 23 & 24 COPPER RIVER MERIDIAN. The Forest Service will receive sealed bids at Wrangell Ranger District before or at the time of public bid opening at 2 p.m. local time on Aug. 29, 2023, for an estimated volume of 26.62 MBF of Western Hemlock sawtimber, 80.17 MBF of Western Red Cedar sawtimber, 4.24 MBF of Sitka Spruce sawtimber, and 20.95 MBF of Alaska Cedar sawtimber marked or otherwise designated for cutting.

The Forest Service reserves the right to reject any and all bids. Interested parties may obtain a prospectus from the office listed below. A prospectus, bid form and complete information concerning the timber, the conditions of sale and submission of bids is available to the public from the Wrangell Ranger District. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

**Publish July 26, 2023**

## WRANGELL COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION Request for Proposals

Wrangell Cooperative Association Tl'átk | Earth Branch, a federally recognized tribe, is soliciting proposals and rate information from experienced professionals to provide their service for a climate adaptation planning grant.

For more information and to request a copy of the RFP, please contact Alex Angerman at (907) 874-4304, ext. 103, or email [igapcoord.wca@gmail.com](mailto:igapcoord.wca@gmail.com). A copy of the RFP can be picked up at the office (1002 Zimovia Highway, Wrangell, AK 99929) or downloaded at [wcatribe.org/earthbranch](http://wcatribe.org/earthbranch). Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please leave a message if we miss your phone call.

Deadline: 4 p.m. (AKST), Thursday, Aug. 3, 2023.

**Publish July 26 and Aug. 2, 2023**

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Electric Utility Superintendent Wrangell Municipal Light and Power

The City and Borough of Wrangell is recruiting for an **Electric Utility Superintendent** to lead the Borough's Light and Power Department. The position will be posted for no less than 9 days and will remain open until filled. Applications will be reviewed as soon as July 10, 2023.

Under the direction of the Borough Manager, the Electric Utility Superintendent plans, directs, coordinates and supervises the activities and personnel of Wrangell Municipal Light & Power, including all construction, operations, personnel and maintenance activities in the department.

The Superintendent performs regular evaluations and directs maintenance tasks to ensure proper generation and distribution operations, oversees the operation, maintenance and repair of the diesel generating plant and distribution system. They are responsible for all electrical maintenance, new work in the power plant, overseeing and performing building maintenance, and repair duties to ensure that all power plant structures and distribution infrastructure are safe and operating efficiently. Additionally, they provide leadership to all electrical employees, prepare an annual budget for the electrical department and reports to the Borough Manager on the electrical department's operations.

Preferred education and experience include completion of an electrical apprenticeship program or trade school diploma, as well as extensive industrial maintenance and electrical work experience. Requires experience with contract bidding, good verbal and interpersonal skills, thorough knowledge of required electrical codes and standards as well as the ability to inspect building electrical systems. Mechanical knowledge and skill to oversee operations, maintenance and repair of diesel generators safely and efficiently is expected.

This is a full-time, salaried position with full benefits, at Grade 30. The full job description and employment application can be found online at [www.wrangell.com/jobs](http://www.wrangell.com/jobs).

To be considered, submit a cover letter, résumé and completed employment application via email to [rmarshall@wrangell.com](mailto:rmarshall@wrangell.com), or in person to City Hall, 205 Brueger St., Wrangell, AK 99929.

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

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

**Publish July 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2023**

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Wrangell Public Works Water/Wastewater Treatment Operator Level 1

The Wrangell Public Works Department is currently accepting applications for the position of Water/Wastewater Treatment Operator Level 1.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 19 with a starting wage at \$25.26 per hour. Employment is based on qualifications, a successful background check, and pre-employment drug screening. This position is part of the IBEW Collective Bargaining Agreement.

The full job description and employment applications are available at City Hall (202 Brueger St., Wrangell) and can also be found online at [www.wrangell.com/jobs](http://www.wrangell.com/jobs). Applications shall be returned to Robbie Marshall at City Hall, 205 Brueger St. (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929 or via email at [rmarshall@wrangell.com](mailto:rmarshall@wrangell.com).

This position will be posted for no less than nine days and will remain open until filled.

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

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

**Publish July 19 and 26, 2023**

## NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the estate of David Kenneth Hartung, Notice to Creditors is hereby given that Christine H. Smith has been appointed personal representative of the above named estate. Pursuant to Alaska Statute Title 13.16.450, all creditors are hereby notified to present their claims within four months after the date of first publication of this notice or said claims will forever be barred. Claims must be filed with the court (Case No. 3AN-23-01032PR) or be presented to:

Estate of David K. Hartung  
c/o Barlow Anderson, LLC  
420 L Street, Suite 310  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**Publish July 12, 19 and 26, 2023**

## CITY and BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Wrangell Public Works Water Treatment Operator Lead

The Wrangell Public Works Department will accept applications for the position of Water Treatment Operator Lead. This position will be open until filled. This is a permanent position with all City and Borough benefits. This position is part of a collective bargaining agreement.

The Water Treatment Operator Lead is the final step on the multi-stage Water Treatment Operator career path. The Water Treatment Operator Lead supervises the Water/Wastewater Treatment Operator and the Water/Wastewater Treatment Apprentice and provides leadership, mentorship and training to other operational staff and serves in a lead capacity for operations.

This position is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the City's surface water treatment plant, the water supply reservoirs and related equipment, either personally or through subordinate staff. Responsibilities include performing process control sample collection, sample analysis, and modifying chemical and physical parameters in order to adjust the treatment process. A Water Treatment Operator Lead collects samples of influent and effluent at various stages of processing to ensure high quality drinking water. Independent or cooperative work with others is required under the daily direction and supervision of the Public Works Director.

This is a full-time, hourly position with full benefits, paid at Grade 25 with a starting wage at \$32.19 per hour. Employment is based on a successful background check, pre-employment drug screening and the ability to satisfy requirements of the Water Treatment Lead Operator job description.

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

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

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

**Publish July 26 and Aug. 2, 2023**

## CLASSIFIED

### LAND FOR SALE

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

### FREE ADS

Do you have something to sell? Having a garage sale? Looking to buy something? Classified ads for individuals and community groups are free in the Sentinel. Contact Amber at 907-874-2301 or email [wrgsent@gmail.com](mailto:wrgsent@gmail.com).

### STAY UP TO DATE

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

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**WRANGELL SENTINEL**



# Harvesting beach plants can teach healthy lessons for life

By Vivian Faith Prescott

We're harvesting goose tongue to dry for distribution to local elders. I'm also going to experiment with pickling it. Goose tongue is a beach plant called suktéitl' in the Lingít language, hlgit'ún t'áangal in Xaad Kíl, the Haida language, and its scientific name is *Plantago maritima*. It's known as sea-plantain and saltgrass.

Goose tongue is found in Alaska, Arctic regions, Europe, Northwest Africa, parts of Asia and South America. There are four other subspecies found throughout the world, including one that grows near mountain streams in the alpine.

In Wrangell, I don't have far to go to harvest goose tongue. I ride my e-bike along the ocean-front path to meet my family at Shoemaker beach. My sister and my mother are waiting for me at a picnic table set on a small lawn. My mother is visiting from Oregon and my younger sister, who lives in Wrangell, wants to learn about harvesting goose tongue.

I park my bike and we walk down a small dirt road to the beach to greet grandson Jonah, who's accompanied his auntie to harvest. This is the first time I've spent time with him since COVID hit in 2020. I gasp — Jonah will be going into fifth grade and he's already taller than I am. Jonah has been my goose tongue harvesting partner since he was a year old.

The morning tide has swept over the intertidal zone, leaving hundreds of the salty delicious plants dotting the shore. Before we harvest, I point out how we're going to learn to identify the poisonous look-alike, arrowgrass. I walk over to the patch of goose tongue and my



PHOTO BY VIVIAN FAITH PRESCOTT

Goose tongue in a cedar beach basket in Wrangell.

family follows.

"Here's the arrowgrass," I say, pointing at a big clump of beach grass. I pick a leaf of the arrowgrass and one leaf of goose tongue to show them the difference.

The arrowgrass has narrower grass-like leaves and the goose tongue blades are flatter and a bit wider. Their growth appear-

ance and blossoms are similar. A valuable harvesting technique that I learned from Vivian Mork Yéilk', my daughter, is to take a piece of the poisonous plant with you to use as an identifier.

"Before we harvest," I say, "we thank the plant for giving itself for our nutrition."

We bend down to the plants, and I say, "Gunalchéesh suktéitl', Gunalchéesh suktéitl'." One of the reasons I say thank you out loud is to let critters know I'm in the area. One never knows what will be ambling down the beach in search of the same greens.

I reach and pinch the plant at the base, explaining how to do that gently without pulling up the plant from its roots. We can use scissors too, but they want to use their hands. I instruct them how to plant it back into the sand if you pull it out by accident. I've also instructed my family to take only a few leaves from each plant. With their bags in hand, my family heads off through to harvest.

I kneel on wet sand to pick a few more leaves, then crawl on my hands and knees to reach for another nearby cluster. My fingers pinch the base of long, tongue-shaped leaves. Beside

me, blades of wide grass dampen the bottom of my cedar bark basket. I walk the beach from plant to plant like a grazing deer, sometimes bending, sometimes kneeling, and occasionally nibbling leaves. Nearby, I hear Jonah speaking to the plant: Gunalchéesh suktéitl'.

This day's adventure is a learning opportunity. It's been a few years since Jonah harvested suktéitl', and it'll be the first time my sister has harvested since she's been an adult. Learning from the ocean, the beach and forest is important to our family, and for my Tlingit grandchildren's cultural knowledge.

Here are some goose tongue lessons I've learned over the years that I'm teaching my family:

1. Take an elder; take a youth: Inviting both elders and youth is one way to perpetuate cultural activities. In Indigenous cultures, knowledge is best handed down by doing and listening to stories of life experiences.
2. Be aware: Choosing a spot to harvest goose tongue means to know the land/beach. Know its history and know its contemporary state. Is there pollution from homes, businesses, etc.? You'll want to harvest on a clean beach.
3. Be respectful: Harvesting beach greens is all about respect — you don't want to damage the area so you can continue to come back.
4. Make good memories: Incorporate language instruction, storytelling and even a picnic into your harvesting day.
5. Be prepared: Wear appropriate clothing for the weather, especially shoes or boots for the type of beach. Bring the right harvesting bag, basket, or backpack. Waterproof is good.
6. Thrive in your community: Goose tongue plants grow in groups. They're a good example of living cooperatively in a local environment.
7. Only take what you need: Don't overharvest. Leave some for the animals and birds.
8. Be tender: Sometimes children can be overzealous harvesting plants. Show them how to be tender. Goose tongue harvesting time is a good time to talk about the role of being kind

in our world.

9. Enjoy the moment: Harvesting from the land teaches us to enjoy the moment the plants/berries are ripe. Goose tongue harvesting with family, friends, and community allows them to enjoy life's moments with you.

10. Tidal relationships: Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge by teaching the Raven and the old tide woman story into your harvesting day. Dolly Garza also has a great book available for free from the University of Alaska Sea Grant called "Tlingit: Moon and Tide."

We stroll along the beach, making our way through the plants, bending, picking, bending, picking. We talk story and my mother reminisces about picking goose tongue as a kid, about her first home up the Stikine River. Goose tongue is one of the plants I learned about early in life. Someone must've taught me. It was likely my grandma Ruth or my mother.

After an hour of wandering through the goose tongue patch I've picked enough. Jonah, with a shorter attention span, has already wandered farther down the beach to play on a large stump. My mother is now exploring the nearby berry bushes.

Soon, my family and I will say our goodbyes, declare it a good day, and go on our separate ways. For now, though, with a full basket, I sit on a log at the wrack line, brush a sandflea off my sleeve, and chew a blade of tart goose tongue.

Time drifts like surf scoters on waves until I sense the blanket of sea raising her head from the pillow of slack tide, then turn, flowing back to wash her wild garden with ancient brine. Gunalchéesh, suktéitl', for your lessons of knowledge, memory, community, and more, and especially the gift of family and food.

Wrangell writer and artist Vivian Faith Prescott writes "Planet Alaska: Sharing our Stories" with her daughter, Vivian Mork Yéilk'. It appears twice per month in Juneau's Capital City Weekly and is reprinted in the Sentinel.

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PUZZLE SOLUTION

## CONTEST DEADLINE IS FRIDAY!

Entries in the Sentinel's News Quiz are **DUE BY NOON FRIDAY, JULY 28.**

**\$500 in cash prizes** for the readers who can correctly answer the most questions from the news reported in the Sentinel July 5, 12 and 19.

The questions were printed on the back page of the Sentinel those three weeks. You can get the past issues at the Sentinel office, or read them at the Irene Ingle Public Library, or subscribers can go online and see a PDF of the entire paper.

Limit one entry per person. Send your answers by email to [sentinelquiz@gmail.com](mailto:sentinelquiz@gmail.com), or drop them off at the Sentinel office.

