



## Fish Factor

Site provides fishing-related updates for COVID-19.

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## Unique land

Howard Pass an extreme, inviting place.

PAGE 7



## Alaska's Rookies

The making of an Aleutian powerhouse.

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### KEEPING A DISTANCE



PHOTO COURTESY OF ICICLE SEAFOODS

The crew of the Icycle Seafoods fish processor Gordon Jensen, seen here dockside in Dutch Harbor, have not had any contact with anyone off the vessel since early March when Icycle said it locked down operations and stopped bringing on new crew as a precautionary measure due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

## Togiak herring processor aims for 'zero impact' to communities

*Icycle Seafoods to use floating processor*

BY ISABELLE ROSS  
KDLG News

Icycle Seafoods is the sole processor buying Togiak herring this spring. Chris Pugmire is Icycle's general manager of operations for Western Alaska. He says they have a preventative strategy in place to protect the health of the surrounding communities by eliminating any contact between

them and the processors. They will accomplish this by utilizing a floating processor, the Gordon Jensen.

"Our plan is to bring the Gordon Jensen up to Togiak here at the end of the month. We'll anchor off shore, and we'll keep our crew and staff on board the vessel for the duration of the fishery," he said, adding that Icycle plans to have "zero impact" on the communities.

According to Pugmire, Icycle is not straying much from its normal playbook with regard to the

Togiak herring fishery. The workers on board the Gordon Jensen haven't had contact with anyone off the vessel since early March, when Icycle locked down operations and stopped bringing on new crew members due to the pandemic.

A state mandate requires all critical industry companies to submit a plan for disease prevention. Icycle submitted that plan to the state. They've been working with each location to develop

■ See page 6, **PROCESSOR**

■ See page 3, **GRADUATION**

## Unlaska prom canceled

*Graduation goes virtual as schools remain closed through end of school year*

BY HOPE MCKENNEY  
KUCB News

Gov. Mike Dunleavy announced on Thursday that schools in Alaska will remain closed through the end of the school year.

Unalaska City School District Superintendent John Conwell said local schools will continue home-based education through May 29, 2020.

"For the last two weeks, we've been implementing home-based education," said Conwell. "We're getting some great reports of this working, and we're improving everyday. So we'll continue to provide as high a quality home-based education as we can through the end of the school year."

Conwell said that due to the school closures and coronavirus prevention mandates, the high school prom, which was scheduled for May 2, is canceled. In addition, the Class of 2020 graduation ceremony, scheduled for May 16, will not be held in the high school's big gym.

"We are looking at some other possible events or ideas we can do to celebrate the graduation," said Conwell. "We are waiting on the guidance of the state to figure

## Alaska Native group creates virtual gathering place

*People come together to tell stories, sing during pandemic*

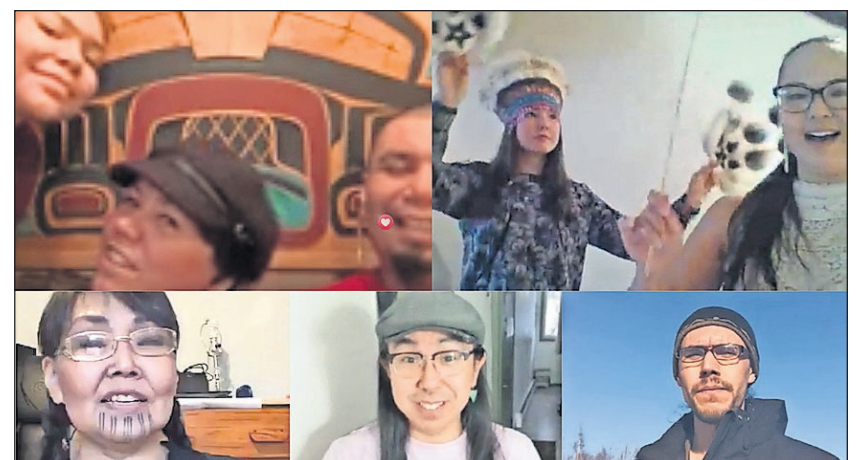
SHADY GROVE OLIVER  
The Arctic Sounder

As calls for physical distancing keep people at home and away from friends and family, Alaska Native community members are coming together online. A new Facebook group, called "Alaska Native Virtual Gathering Place," is providing a space for joy and healing amidst the uncertainty of

the coronavirus pandemic.

"We're going through a collective trauma right now and even if we can't physically gather, we can bring those traditions of communal grief and healing in this new format," said Vera Starbard, one of the group's founders.

Starbard is Tlingit and Dena'ina. She's the playwright in residence at Perseverance Theatre, the editor of First Alaskans Magazine and a writer for the PBS KIDS children's program "Molly of Denali."



Composite image provided by Vera Starbard

Every night at 7 p.m., the "Alaska Native Virtual Gathering Place" Facebook group hosts a live show from someone in the state.

■ See page 12, **GATHERING**



# Edgmon discusses state budget, COVID-19 response

BY CAROLINE LESTER  
KUCB News

The Alaska Legislature passed an operating budget last month, after only 69 days in the Capitol.

KUCB's Caroline Lester spoke with Rep. Bryce Edgmon (I-Dillingham) on Monday about the session, and what lawmakers are doing to address the coronavirus pandemic.

*Q: What are some of the concerns that the state or the legislature is thinking about when it comes to COVID-19 in rural areas and rural communities?*

A: That is the question of the moment, obviously. And I think what's very apparent to all of us is that COVID-19 is coming our way. The best way that I could sort of characterize it is that we're all in over our heads on this because the issue is so large in so many ways.

On the Juneau end of things, we passed legislative bill 241 that had a lot of provisions in it that tries to provide short-term relief to people who would be facing evictions or foreclosures on their homes or utility bills, they weren't able to pay.

We passed the House Bill 308 that increased employment benefits and removed the waiting periods, along with the federal stimulus package

that's coming our way. And then like everyone else, we're waiting to see what the \$2 trillion federal package means for Alaska. And all this in an environment where the state's finances are really taking a hit as well.

*Q: Well, I'd love to sort of get a little bit more into the details of some of this aid. One of the things that we've been hearing about is that all critical access hospitals around the state qualify for funding under the Federal Cares Act. But here in Unalaska, obviously, we don't have a critical access hospital: we only have a clinic which doesn't qualify for that funding. But we're also, I think, by my calculations, the largest rural community without access to a hospital. Is there any sort of alternative funding for clinics or possibilities of funding?*

A: Well, we provided \$88 million for COVID-19 response, and the expectation that the governor, tonight (April 13), is going to sign the operating budget, which will make that money available. I don't have the details at my fingertips as to what that might mean to the clinic in Unalaska, but I would be happy to look more into that. And I'm sure that administrators at the clinic are working overtime to see what, if any, of that can find its way to the clinic.

*Q: One of the things that you mentioned was unemployment benefits for people who've lost their jobs or all the different ways the state is looking to help people who have been impacted economically by this. But one of the things that I keep thinking about is health care coverage for people who have either lost their jobs or suddenly can't afford their premiums. What kind of access to coverage is the state working on, if any?*

A: Yeah, that's a great question. I don't have a good answer for that, at this point. In an omnibus bill that we did pass before we adjourned roughly a week or so ago, we did address the issue in a manner that would provide indemnification for health care workers who might be working on the COVID-19 issue. But in terms of federal benefits, I'd have to look more into that.

*Q: Unalaska has a huge industry presence. And with the governor's mandates, industry is allowed to continue operating and flying people in and transiting around the state. But one of the things that is required is for them to submit plans to the state that explain how they're acting safely and protecting the communities that they're transiting through. So I was wondering how the state is reviewing those safety plans and whether or not*

*communities will have access to those plans?*

A: I think that's a question you should direct to the governor's office. They're the purveyors of these plans. I can tell you there's a lot of concern up and down the district that I represent, all primarily commercial fishing communities — certainly for Unalaska, there's a whole different scale of workforce and involvement of people getting off of boats, right now, not being able to fly out if they wanted to. There is more reacting going on in some sense than there is being proactive because this is so big, and so, something that just none of us ever anticipated.

*Q: A lot of news has been sort of forgotten or skimmed over because of coronavirus coverage. Is there anything that passed in the recent budget that you're particularly proud of or you think is really important for rural communities to take note of?*

A: You know, we got here in January where the revenue picture was much rosier than when we recessed just a short week or so ago. In the meanwhile, we did everything possible to take a balanced approach, to fund education at the recommended level, to provide a little bit more for the ferry system.

In the end, we provided

\$12.5 million more for the university system. We did increase K-12 funding by \$30 million, which brought it up to where it was the year before. And we were able to put some additional money in, like we talked about, for the COVID-19 response. And so, you know, sort of largely kept the status quo budget in place. At the same time, we dug down deep and almost extinguished one last savings account but we felt it was important to provide a thousand-dollar permanent fund dividend to Alaskan residents. But when we do come back to Juneau, it's going to present some pretty tough conditions for us to react to.

The state's fiscal situation is something to keep an eye on because in the midst of all of the downturn in oil prices and stock markets, and the initial money that's going to have to go to fight COVID-19, we'll find ourselves back in Juneau next session with the revenue picture that's going to be diminished. And a savings account that is nearly depleted. And at the same time, maybe additional responsibility to help get Alaska's economy up and running while we're struggling to provide basic services. So, you know, that's pretty weighty topic and one that we probably should talk about in more detail at a later time.

## Adak cleanup contract canceled

*Navy nixes project because of concerns about pandemic*

BY JIM PAULIN

Bristol Bay Times –  
Dutch Harbor Fisherman

A lucrative cleanup contract for old, but still live, ammunition has been blasted to bits by Covid-19 in Adak, in a major blow to the local economy.

"We're just starting to feel the pain on that," said Adak City Manager Layton Lockett of the economic impacts of the March 17 notification from the Navy that the UXO contract was stopped for this year.

UXO stands for unexploded ordinance, in other words explosives left behind by the military after the Navy pulled out of the former Cold War outpost in 1997. Lockett said last week that the contract with the engineering firm Aptim Federal Services, worth millions of dollars, was stopped by the Navy because of concerns associated with the ongoing pandemic caused by the deadly novel coronavirus. There have been no cases of the disease on

the island, he said.

Local financial impacts include "significant losses" in sales taxes paid to the city government as a result of fewer customers spending money locally and flying in and out of town throughout the summer, he said.

The Navy has canceled a barge that would have brought in supplies and equipment for 50 workers, who would have traveled to the distant Aleutian Islands community for high-paying jobs removing old ammunition, Lockett said.

While all but one or two jobs are filled from outside, the imported workers contribute substantially to the local economy, spending money at the one local store and two restaurants, he said. Housing and utilities for the workers is another big economic contributor, involving homes rented from The Aleut Corp., which owns most of the former military base.

"It helps. We're acutely feeling the effects of that," Lockett said.

While in town, the cleanup company also volunteers on various community

maintenance projects. "We get a lot of work done," Lockett said.

Adak is Alaska's most remote community, based on distance from Anchorage, about 1,200 miles away and serviced twice weekly by Alaska Airlines 737 jet service, subsidized by the federal Essential Air Service program.

In another pandemic-related worry, Lockett said that if the Bristol Bay commercial salmon season is canceled to prevent the virus from spreading, barge companies which depend heavily on the salmon trade could go out of business, leaving Adak isolated without a supply chain.

Lockett expects cleanup work will resume next year, under the multi-year Navy contract. He said it has been going on nearly every year since the 1997 closure of the former Adak Naval Air Station.

And while the Navy stopped work on its project this year, Lockett said not all government cleanup work has stopped, because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is still going ahead with its plans for this summer.

## Dillingham City School District provides over 5,000 meals during shutdown

BY TYLER THOMPSON

KDLG News

The Dillingham City School District delivered over 5,000 meals in the past two weeks. The service kicked off at the end of March after the state mandated that schools remained shut down until May 1 due to the coronavirus.

The district ordered shelf stable foods from the Foodbank of Alaska. Business Manager Phil Hulett and 11 other staff members at the school are volunteering to make deliveries Monday through Friday. They start at 10:45 a.m. and follow the normal bus routes. Hulett says they average over 280 stops per day.

"We're just trying to use the funds and resources that we have to provide meals for kids," he said. "And parents — normally these kids would be at school anyway. I have four kids at home, and I know how much groceries my kids put away. Having the meal service delivered helps reduce the

expenses we have as well."

Each package is comprised of a breakfast item, lunch and a snack. If someone is missed, Hulett coordinates with volunteers to setup a delivery or arrange for pickup at the school. The service is also available for anyone 18 years or younger in the area.

"It's not like your name has to be on a list or anything like that," Hulett said. "It's just if you're there, we're going to get you a meal."

Meals can also be picked up at the elementary school from 12:00 p.m. until 12:45 p.m. The service will continue until May 22 when the school year would have originally ended. The school year was officially shut down last week.

Last week, we spoke with educators in Bristol Bay about their adjustments to life outside the classroom. Teachers and staff members are getting creative with curriculums and are stepping up to make themselves available for their students.

# Three tribes ask governor to consider closing fishery

## *Bristol Bay Borough not equipped for pandemic, tribes say*

BY ISABELLE ROSS  
KDLG News

The Naknek Native Village Council, the South Naknek Village Council, and the King Salmon Tribe have joined Dillingham City and Tribe in a call for the governor to put extreme protective measures in place or consider closing the world's most valuable and productive sockeye salmon fishery.

"The Tribal Organizations of Naknek, King Salmon, and South Naknek, consider this pandemic to be of utmost importance. Our people, and our culture are at risk," the tribes said, adding that they are prepared to take more stringent measures.

Naknek and King Salmon are on the same road system, on the east side of Bristol Bay, with an off-season population of under a thousand residents. Dillingham is to the west, with a population of around 2,300 and a small 16-bed hospital — the only one in the region.

During the summer, processors bring in thousands of employees, while thousands of independent fishermen come to the region as well.

In the letters, the groups pointed out that there is no hospital in the Bristol Bay Borough, and extremely limited medical resources and infrastructure. Moving forward with the fishing season went against all guidance on how to prevent an outbreak.

Lorianne Rawson, the tribal administrator for South Naknek, said that 90% of the village's residents are elderly or immuno-compromised, and that they needed to protect those people. The community also had historical experience with this, she said. Her own grandfather survived the flu pandemic of 1919.

"When the Spanish flu arrived, it decimated the village, and the remaining survivors then moved to South Naknek. Historically, it has wiped out our people, and we just don't want it to happen again," she said.

Rawson is also concerned

about the fishermen coming into the region, saying that plans to quarantine in boats weren't realistic.

"Their boats are in boat yards. Their boats don't have a bathroom. They have no way to shower, they can't do laundry, and they can't go to the store to get their food. So how are they going to effectively quarantine on their boats? That's not going to happen," she said.

The Naknek council said much the same in its letter, writing, "There is no way to prevent a potential mass disease situation when processors employ several thousand people, working in close proximity, living in bunk houses, confined to closed campus-style operations. We must consider that a potential mass-outbreak would be disastrous."

The King Salmon Tribe said that the Bristol Bay Borough is unequipped for a pandemic of this proportion, calling the borough's quarantine plan "inadequate."

Joni O'Domin is an administrative assistant for the tribe. "Our health care system here is way too small. We have to go through Kanakanak or Camai, and they have a two-bed emergency room, down at Camai, or trauma room. And it's just too small here," she said.

The Bristol Bay Borough Assembly passed an ordinance this week mandating a 14-day self-quarantine for anyone traveling into King Salmon and Naknek, and granting the borough police the authority to enforce it, as well as the 6-foot social distancing mandate.

Curyung Tribal Council Second Chief Gayla Hoseth in Dillingham said that the processors' plans don't adequately address how they would handle an outbreak.

"That needs to be shown to all the communities before they even come into the area, of what their plan of action is going to be if somebody gets sick. And where are they going to receive their health care, and what is going to be the plan for health care for them," she said.

Meanwhile, the big processors gearing up to operate in Bristol Bay's salmon fishery

this summer have laid out aspects of their safety protocols that they say will allow them to participate safely in the upcoming season amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"We are writing to you to confirm our commitment that we are prioritizing the health and safety of the communities and tribal councils of Bristol Bay," they wrote in a letter to the region's communities.

The 11 companies are North Pacific Seafoods, Alaska General Seafoods, Trident Seafoods, Peter Pan Seafoods, Silver Bay Seafoods, Icicle Seafoods, Ocean Beauty Seafoods, E&E Foods, Leader Creek Fisheries, Deep Sea Fisheries and Copper River Seafoods.

"Honestly, we're not yet sure how this is all going to shake out," said Chris Pugmire, the general manager of Icicle Seafoods, adding that the company understands the communities' position, and that they are in talks with local leaders.

"Our plan is to continue preparing for the season as if it is going to happen, and in so doing, we are and will continue to work with the communities

to ensure that every reasonable precaution is being taken to protect the health, safety and well-being of everyone in Bristol Bay," he said.

An industry task force has set guidelines for participating seafood companies and other stakeholders to use. The processors say that they will incorporate those guidelines into their individual plans. Seven of the processors have posted their plans on the Bristol Bay Borough's website, which range widely in their level of detail.

The companies say in their joint letter that all employees will be verbally screened before being given flight information. Workers will also be medically screened at the Anchorage or Seattle airports, and people won't be allowed in or out of the processor campuses. Employees arriving from other locations must comply with a 14-day quarantine.

The processors also say that each company has the capacity to isolate and care for employees who develop COVID-19 symptoms.

"We will work closely with Camai Community Health


Center to keep employees safely isolated from the community while still ensuring they receive proper medical care," they write.

Employees will be medically screened before the start of each work shift. Processors say they will also try to keep social distancing measures in place as much as possible: they'll stagger coffee and meal breaks, ban group gatherings, and limit the number of plant workers that do necessary business with the local community.

They note that their list of precautions is not definitive, and that plans will continue to evolve as the situation changes, and through discussion with communities and tribal councils.

In a press conference last Thursday evening, Gov. Mike Dunleavy said that the state has a team working to determine whether a fishing season could take place this year. He said that the team was working with local officials, tribal leaders, fishermen and processors.

As of Friday morning no cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the region.



**Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation - Job Listing**

For more information on any of these positions please contact the Human Resources office at:  
PO Box 130, Dillingham, AK 99576  
907-842-5201 ext. 6325 or toll-free 1-800-478-5201 ext. 6325  
[www.bbahc.org](http://www.bbahc.org)

<p><b>Executive/Division Positions</b></p> <p>Chief Operations Officer • 1 full-time</p> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>BH Clinical Director • 1 full-time</p> <p>BH Program Manager • 1 full-time</p> <p>CAC Program Manager • 1 full-time</p> <p>Deputy Director/QA/QI Pharmacist • 1 full-time</p> <p>Laboratory Manager • 1 full-time</p> <p><b>Clinical Positions</b></p> <p>BH Clinician • 1 full-time</p> <p>Dental Assistant • 1 full-time</p> <p>Dentist • 3 full-time</p> <p>Developmental Specialist I or II – ILP • 1 full-time</p> <p>Diabetes Mid-Level Practitioner • 1 full-time</p> <p>Family Physician • 2 full-time</p> <p>Itinerant Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant • 1 full-time</p> <p>Health Educator II WIC/Tobacco • 1 full-time</p> <p>Outpatient Nurse • 1 full-time</p> <p>Pharmacist • 2 full-time</p> <p>Registered Nurse Inpatient/ER • 1 full-time</p> <p>RN Case Manager • 2 full-time</p> <p>Staff Optometrist • 1 full-time</p> <p>CHAP Instructor/Provider • 1 full-time</p>	<p><b>Community Health Positions</b></p> <p>Community Health Aide/Practitioner 6-hour position(s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 – Aleknagik</li> <li>• 1 – Chignik Bay</li> <li>• 2 – Chignik Lake</li> <li>• 2 – Clarks Point</li> <li>• 2 – Egegik</li> <li>• 1 – King Salmon</li> <li>• 2 – Levelock</li> <li>• 1 – Manokotak</li> <li>• 1 – Naknek</li> <li>• 2 – Perryville</li> <li>• 2 – Pilot Point</li> <li>• 1 – Platinum</li> <li>• 1 – South Naknek</li> <li>• 1 – Twin Hills</li> </ul> <p>CHAP Instructor/Provider • 1 full-time</p> <p>EMS Instructor • 1 call-in</p> <p>EMT I – Ekuk • 1 temporary</p> <p>EMT I – Ugashik • 1 temporary</p> <p>EMT – Igushik • 1 temporary</p> <p>Family Service Worker -Manokotak • 1 part-time</p> <p>Mid-Level Family Nurse Practitioner -Togiak • 1 full-time</p> <p>Mid-Level Practitioner NP or PA Egegik • 1 temporary</p> <p>Mid-Level Practitioner NP or PA Chignik bay • 1 temporary</p> <p>Village Based Messenger/Receiver – Pilot Point • 1 part-time</p> <p>Village Based Messenger/Receiver – Egegik • 1 part-time</p>	<p><b>Support Service Positions</b></p> <p>A/R Tech – Patient Accounts • 1 full-time</p> <p>Central Registrar • 2 full-time</p> <p>Central Supply Clerk • 1 full-time</p> <p>Central Supply Van Driver • 1 full-time</p> <p>Clinical Assistant • 1 call-in</p> <p>Collector – Pt Accounts • 1 full-time</p> <p>Cook • 1 call-in • 2 full-time</p> <p>Custodian • 1 call-in • 2 seasonal</p> <p>Electrician • 1 full-time</p> <p>ER Unit Clerk-Inpatient • 1 call-in</p> <p>Food Service Worker/Barista • 1 call-in</p> <p>General Ledger Accountant • 1 full-time</p> <p>Pharmacy Technician • 1 full-time</p> <p>Resident Attendant • 1 call-in</p> <p>Secretary – Grants Dept • 1 full-time</p> <p>Sterile Supply Tech • 1 call-in</p> <p>Van Driver/Medical Supply Clerk • 1 call-in</p>
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Excellent benefit package available to regular full/part-time employees. BBAHC is an Equal Opportunity Employer operating under the Alaska Native and American Indian Preference in Hiring provisions of PL93-638. Pre-employment drug screening and a completed background investigation and determination that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria of the Alaska Barrier Crimes Act and, where applicable, the Indian Child Protection Act, are prerequisites to hiring.

LIST SUBJECT TO CHANGE LAST UPDATE 4/15/20

## GRADUATION

FROM PAGE 1

out what we can and can't do."

In order to follow mandates that include social distancing and non-congregating, Conwell said the administration, parents, and high school seniors have begun looking at some other, possibly virtual, ideas to celebrate the senior class.

"We will be working hard to come up with some ideas for making this a memorable year

for the seniors, in a positive way, because they've had a pretty rough year," said Conwell. "So we're really going to do our best to try to do something to make it memorable and fun, even though we are under these very unusual circumstances."

Conwell said the community should anticipate and prepare for a graduation event that will look and feel much different from past graduations. The school district will provide graduation event plan updates soon.

# OPINIONS & IDEAS

## Make the most of stimulus, focus on essentials

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Arctic Sounder welcomes letters to the editor. General interest letters should be no more than 300 words. Thank you letters should be no more than 150 words.

Letters should be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday for consideration in the next week's edition of the newspaper. However, meeting that deadline is no guarantee that the letter will be published.

All letters must include the writer's name, address and daytime telephone number. Only the writer's name and city or village of residency will be published. This newspaper also reserves the right to edit letters for content, length, clarity, grammar and taste.

Unsigned letters will not be published. Third-party and open letters also will not be published. Letters that may put the writer or this newspaper in legal jeopardy will not be published.

Letter writers are encouraged to use e-mail — the fastest and most efficient method for submissions. However, we also welcome letters by fax, by mail or those hand-delivered.

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Some Alaskans got a boost in their bank account balance as the first \$1,200 federal pandemic stimulus checks started to flow. While it might be tempting to spend this money on things that will ease the discomfort of isolating ourselves from our friends and neighbors, there are a lot of reasons to think carefully about how you use this money.

Obviously, if you are out of work, especially if you are self-employed or a small business owner whose business is among those being placed on a mandated hiatus, the money is most likely going to be sucked up by the already-mounting list of bills. But for those whose lives have yet to feel the crunch of the world-wide economic freefall, this may seem like "free money," a windfall that would be well spent on a bigger television screen or a Amazon shopping spree.

Not to be a kill-joy, but that might be a poor choice at the moment. Alaskans, and Americans across the nation, are only just beginning to feel the brunt of the economic impact of the coronavirus. In most regions, restaurants and stores have been shut down for less than a month. That's not enough time to see what kind of trickle-down effect all that



Carey Restino

economic inactivity is going to have. As time goes on, many businesses may have to raise prices, communities may have to raise taxes, and inflation may begin to take a big bite out of our household budgets.

Right now, however, those things haven't really kicked in. The cost of goods and services are pretty much the same as they were before coronavirus took over our lives. So we have an opportunity to make the most of this \$1,200 bonus to set ourselves up for success in the coming weeks and months.

The first thing we can all do is fill up our fuel tanks. Gas prices are at an all-time low around the state as oil prices drop due to a global price drop in crude oil. While that's bad news for the state, which depends heavily on high oil

revenues to fund state services, it's good news for homeowners looking to save some money on the cost of heating their homes and running their boats, cars and four-wheelers. Even if prices aren't low in your community, filling up your fuel tank is a great investment for your household — it's the equivalent to money in the bank.

Another thing to consider using your federal stimulus check for is paying off debts, especially credit card debts with higher interest rates. If inflation kicks in and causes the cost of basic goods to rise, you will be grateful to have one less bill to pay in the future.

If you are all caught up to date on those household basics, consider investing in things that will contribute to your household's efficiency. Here's the kicker, though. These should be needs, not wants. If your freezer is on its last leg and you know you need a new one sometime in the next year, this is a great time to make that investment. If, however, your fridge works fine, but you'd like a stainless steel version, that's not what we're talking about. Think about what is likely coming at you in the coming months in terms of major expenses — car repairs, a new well pump, etc. The more you take care

of today, the less stress you'll have later when things may be more challenging.

Another idea for smart ways to use this economic stimulus money is for education. Is there a certification, education program or training program you can take that will make you more employable or allow you to earn more money? Since so many programs are now offered online, there are plenty of opportunities that can be accessed right from our couch. Even something as simple as an online typing program may open up more doors once the threat of coronavirus has abated. For many of us, this is one of the few times we have had abundant time to devote to an education program. Make good use of that time by investing in yourself.

While there are varying theories about how severe things like inflation might be in the coming months and years, the bottom line is that there is more we don't know than we do know about what the future holds. This is a good time to take care of the necessities of life and set ourselves up for a less stressful economic future. While it may not be as fun as a new Xbox, chances are we will thank ourselves later for making good choices.

## Rushing Pebble Mine review right now is reckless

Recently, the Pebble Partnership announced that despite the global coronavirus crisis, the project is moving forward with the backing of the U.S. Army Corps' rushed timeline to grant a needed federal permit by 'mid-2020.' This is outrageous, as Bristol Bay residents are scrambling to respond to this global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Our largest town in the region recently urged the governor to shut down the \$300 million fishery, our main economic staple, in a bid to save lives. Now is not a time for a rushed permit decision on Pebble when federal workers and our communities are focusing on a proper response to this international crisis.

As a member of the Curyung Tribal Council in Dillingham, as well as a fisherman who was born and raised in Bristol Bay, all of this is extremely concerning from every angle. Before this pandemic, we were worried about the environmental impacts that the proposed mine brings to our renewable and sustainable resource. Now



**BY VERNER WILSON III**

For the Bristol Bay Times -  
Dutch Harbor Fisherman

we are worried how coronavirus can devastate our communities and industry that we heavily rely on as thousands of outside workers are trying to come to our villages. Our communities and tribes are scrambling with plans to prevent death and disaster in our families. Tragically, we aren't new to pandemics. The 1918 Spanish influenza killed many of our ancestors (as many as 60%, according to what my Elder stated) the following year in 1919 when disease spread throughout our region, leaving many of my Elders and ancestors homeless.

Bristol Bay is an international resource, and we usually have seafood workers coming from around the world each summer. As such, we are naturally upset that the spread of this global virus could have profound impacts

in our communities, especially for our much-respected Elders that are especially at risk.

It's reprehensible that Pete Kelly — as well as both Pebble and the Army Corps of Engineers — announced that despite this crisis, they are continuing to rush this politically motivated permit timeline to help Pebble. This is despite Bristol Bay's largest tribe, a cooperating agency, requesting a proper review extension during this trying time. The Army Corps, sadly, didn't grant this despite their trust responsibility to listen to our tribes. Federal agencies reviewing this permit shouldn't rush on anything else except to battle the coronavirus! Their decisions on what to prioritize will undoubtedly have profound impacts on many Alaskans. Pebble's not worth a rushed, flawed and inadequate review process while the federal and state governments are strained in their war against COVID-19.

The Army Corps and the state need to refrain from working on, let alone finalizing, Pebble's environmental

impact study and making a Record of Decision during this global emergency. We all still have so much work to do on both Pebble's application, but most importantly, to combatting this novel coronavirus. Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan rightly expressed concern about this timeline. Rep. Don Young and Gov. Mike Dunleavy must act to delay any review on Pebble at the state and federal level. Bristol Bay, the state and federal government have too much to bear right now.

Hopefully in 2020, we'll remember our leaders doing the right thing to protect the health and well-being of all Americans and those in Bristol Bay, from both the coronavirus and rushed environmental reviews. Our world's future is in the balance. It's up to them to protect our livelihoods and, ultimately, our lives.

*Verner Wilson III is a member of the Curyung Tribal Council in Dillingham, Alaska; he was born and raised salmon fishing in Bristol Bay.*

# Alaska's economic pain is just beginning

The immediate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Alaska has been dire. In the past three weeks, more than 36,000 Alaskans have filed new unemployment claims — more than 10% of the state's total workforce. When it will be safe for Alaskans in nonessential industries to return to work remains an open question. But the extent of the economic carnage Alaska will face in the months and years ahead will stretch far beyond the pain Alaskans are feeling today.

A year from now, there could be a vaccine for the novel coronavirus. But there can be no vaccine for the near-collapse of Alaska's major sources of revenue.

## Shuttering service industry

It's safe to say that Alaska's restaurants, bars and brick-and-mortar retailers have never seen an economic event this devastating. Although these industries have seen tough times before — the oil price collapse of the late 1980s, for instance — there has never been a catastrophe that so completely unraveled their ability to do business.

Although some restaurants are managing to limp along on takeout and delivery business, many aren't able to hang on. As of April 1, 14% of Alaska restaurant owners surveyed by

the Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association said they planned to close their establishments for good. That number will grow the longer shelter-in-place mandates are in place.

This isn't to say that those mandates should be relaxed or abandoned: They're the only effective means of controlling an airborne virus for which there is no vaccine. Easing them now would likely lead to a surge in COVID-19 cases that would overwhelm our hospitals and inflict even greater economic damage. Simultaneously, we must acknowledge the impact they have on our service industry and work to blunt that damage as much as is possible — on the governmental level, through aid measures such as the CARES Act, and on an individual level, by continuing to support local businesses to whatever extent is possible for us.

## Dark days for oil

Even more ominous for Alaska's longer-term fiscal prospects is the historic collapse in oil prices that has accompanied COVID-19. A precipitous drop in global demand resulting from travel restrictions around the world, coupled with a production standoff between Russia and Saudi Arabia, sent prices for North Slope crude plunging

as low as \$21.80 per barrel, a low not seen in close to two decades.

Even as the production war may be nearing its end, a massive supply glut and questions about how long travel restrictions will persist mean there will be no quick recovery from these lows. And that means hundreds of millions of dollars less revenue each year for the state, even if production continues at present levels. And the ripple effects are spreading. ConocoPhillips this week announced it's halting exploration work on the Slope. There are signs of trouble for the BP-Hilcorp deal in the wake of news that low oil prices could impact Hilcorp's ability to repay its lenders. The state Department of Revenue forecasts that oil prices will average \$37 per barrel this year, just more than half of the previous year's forecast.

Hundreds of millions less revenue for the state means hundreds of millions of dollars lost that would have helped pay for education, transportation, health care and public safety in Alaska. It means the Legislature's task of balancing



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the state budget while preserving state services will be far more difficult. And it means we must be realistic: The free ride we've been getting on the back of abundant revenue — receiving services we don't pay for and receiving a share of state money to boot — is over. It has to be. We must be honest with ourselves about that, and have a frank, fact-based conversation about what we can do to fund the budget now that oil tax revenue is much diminished.

## Delays for COVID-19 relief

All of the dark clouds in the future could be compounded by our current situation. In the short-term, the pressing need for COVID-19 aid to individuals and businesses has yet to be met. The \$1,200 relief checks to every American, the most meaningful direct federal aid, have yet to land in bank accounts as Alaskans enter their third week under shelter-in-place orders (the first checks are supposed to start going out in a few days, according to the Treasury Department). Many Alaskans seeking unemployment are also seeing long delays, as state officials strain to deal with the massive influx in new claims.

And for businesses, relief is tangled in crossed wires and red tape: A federal small business loan fund called the

Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, intended to give affected businesses as much as \$2 million in immediate assistance, is buckling under a flood of new applications and has told prospective borrowers that new loans will be capped at \$15,000, a pittance for most. State aid, largely to be administered by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, is slated to be reserved for those with existing loans under current rules, leaving many unable to participate. It's a welcomed effort, but that aid has yet to flow to businesses that are eligible.

Navigating Alaska's fast-moving economic disaster is a bit like running whitewater rapids — you have to worry about the rocks dead ahead first, while also keeping an eye on potential dangers beyond. State and federal officials must act quickly to keep us off the rocks in the short-term, while Alaskans and their leaders look ahead and plan for the long stretch of rough water to come.

*Editorial opinions are those of the Anchorage Daily News editorial board, which welcomes responses from readers and a broad range of viewpoints. Editorial board members are Ryan Binkley, Andy Pennington, Tom Hewitt and Andrew Jensen. To submit a letter or longer commentary for consideration, email commentary@adn.com.*

# Alaska needs infrastructure support as part COVID-19 relief

During their Town Hall call-in session last week, Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan touched on an infrastructure stimulus package that could move through Congress soon — what many are calling Phase 4 of legislation that provides relief to families and businesses across the U.S.

Our state's economy has already been facing challenges, and the recent coronavirus pandemic has compounded them. Right now, the Alaska Permanent Fund and our primary industries of oil, tourism and fisheries are taking an especially hard hit, and we don't know when it will let up.

There's no doubt our state's economy needs a shot in the arm, and the infrastructure stimulus package would be an important help for all Alaska. Not only will jobs in essential services be created, but well-constructed and maintained infrastructure will continue to keep us safe and allow us to

connect to our communities across the state.

Building roads, updating airports and renovating hospitals now pumps much needed dollars into communities and prepares us to be up, running and improved moving into the future.

According to the Alaska Infrastructure Report Card, there's important work to be done across our state. That report recommends that we create a plan for both immediate and long-term capital replacement projects, ensure we are safely and effectively maintaining what we've already got, keep up our infrastructure improvement efforts, and look for innovative solutions when it comes time to replace our roads, bridges, airports and much more. Now is the time to tackle those recommendations.

Like many Alaskans, I've traveled off the road system. Not long ago, I took a trip to Ketchikan. It still amazes me that trips like that are made possible through countless roads and bridges, three

went into helping me arrive in that town is something I've learned not to take for granted. During this journey, I made professional connections and new friends, and I got to support local businesses and organizations. But trips like this cannot happen without safe infrastructure.

We are especially aware today how important broadband connectivity is for staying in touch. But I encourage us to remember how our roads, bridges, airports, ferries, ports and railroad connect us too. They allow us to work and be with loved ones and create a valuable link to our neighbors and fellow citizens.

Without infrastructure, we become isolated. We are all navigating new norms



### BY MATT EMERSON

For the Bristol Bay Times - Dutch Harbor Fisherman

when it comes to connecting and distancing ourselves, but someday we'll get to spend time together again. If nothing else, the isolation we are currently facing offers us time to reflect — and reflection leads to opportunities.

Now many Alaskans are reaching out to help neighbors, support local restaurants and small businesses, and provide provisions to health care workers — and that list of kindnesses goes on and on.

Please take a moment to consider how our infrastructure allows these helping

acts to happen in our own towns and throughout Alaska, and then consider how, when the time is right, we can do even more to connect to and help one another.

We need to stay working, safe and connected. Please join me in supporting this infrastructure stimulus package. Truly, it is an opportunity all Alaskans can get behind and support.

*Matt Emerson is the President of PDC Engineers and has been working in Alaska's engineering and construction industry since 1986.*

## Answers to page 10 puzzles

M	A	G	I	C	F	E	B	B	L	A	B
O	V	O	L	O	A	L	L	B	R	A	C
T	I	E	I	N	U	F	O	I	O	W	A
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S	P	L	I	T	R	O	T	D	I	N	G
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6	4	8	7	1	2	5	9	3
9	7	1	8	5	3	6	2	4
7	6	9	5	2	1	4	3	8
8	2	5	4	3	7	9	6	1
1	3	4	9	6	8	7	5	2
3	9	2	1	7	5	8	4	6
5	8	7	2	4	6	3	1	9
4	1	6	3	8	9	2	7	5

# Website connects fishermen with info, federal relief

*Fishermen can apply for a program that offers \$350 billion in low-interest loans*

**H**ow can fishermen be sure their vessels are clean of coronavirus contamination? Where can they find out about relief funds that are newly available for fishermen?

COVID-19 has Alaska's seafood industry traveling in uncharted waters as more fisheries continue and get underway, and fishermen and processors prepare for a salmon season that's just a month away. Information in an upside-down world changes daily, making it tough to plot a course.

United Fishermen of Alaska has crafted a "one stop shop" for the latest fishing-related COVID-19 updates, including onboard checklists for fishing vessels and tenders, protocols for crews coming and going and more.

"We have all the mandates the state has put in place, the UFA updates that we send out weekly, helpful documents to download, the onboard procedures telling fishermen what they need to do to have a season, and a tab for economic relief and links to other resources and websites," said Frances Leach, UFA executive director.

Fishermen can apply for a Paycheck Protection Program that offers \$350 billion in low-interest loans to small businesses implemented through the Small Business Administration.

Also offered are low-interest loans related to COVID-19 impacts for businesses with up to 500 employees, up to \$2 million per business, with relaxed collateral requirements.

And for the first time,

because fishermen are designated as "essential U.S. food producers," they can apply for extended unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.

"Deckhands who work under 1099s previously were not eligible for unemployment. Now that has changed and if you are working under a 1099 you are eligible for unemployment and you can apply under the state," Leach said.

"Federal law now extends UI benefits for the first time to the self-employed. This is a brand new program, and we are diligently working with the U.S. Department of Labor to address the requirements and system preparedness including: I.T. upgrades, training and staffing to accommodate the added workload," Tamika Ledbetter, Alaska Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development commissioner, wrote on April 2 in the Anchorage Daily News.

Ledbetter added "the federal legislation extends the eligibility period by 13 weeks and includes a weekly benefit payment of \$600. Both the currently covered unemployment insurance recipients and the newly covered self-employed will be eligible for the \$600 payment."

Fishermen also will get a \$300 million chunk of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in direct assistance that also includes charter and subsistence fishermen, processors, fishery dependent businesses and coastal communities.

"This assistance is structured similar to fishery disaster payments, but the delivery of the funds will be quicker by



**FISH FACTOR**  
Laine Welch

allowing the money to be awarded on a rolling basis, even while a season is still underway, and forgoing the usual requirement for the Governor to declare a disaster," the UFA website says. An additional federal relief package also is in the works.

United Fishermen of Alaska is the nation's largest commercial fishing trade group with 35 member organizations. Leach said a top priority today is protecting communities while the fleets go fishing.

"We are fully aware that communities are very concerned about allowing commercial fisheries to happen in their regions," Leach said. "Since day one, our first priority was 'how can we protect these communities while still having a successful fishery?' Our first effort has been to put protocols in place to protect communities and fishermen so that we are not continuing to spread this virus and put undue burdens on communities."

## Fish on!

Since January, fishing has been ongoing for Alaska pollock, cod, perch, rockfish and a big mix of other whitefish from the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea.

Kodiak's roe herring fishery kicked off on April 1 with a nearly 1,500 ton harvest limit. About eight boats are out on the water amid reports of lots of good fishing.

Kodiak also will get a Dungeness crab opener on May 1.

Bering Sea crabbers by last week had taken 90% of their 30.6 million-pound snow crab quota.

At Prince William Sound, 93 boats signed up for the shrimp pot fishery that runs from April 15 through the 26. The catch of big spot shrimp is set at 68,100 pounds.

A sablefish fishery for 167,000 pounds also opens at PWS on April 15 for 56 permit holders. Alaska halibut landings were nearing 730,000 pounds out of a 17 million-pound catch limit; sablefish (black cod) catches topped 2.5 million pounds out of a 26 million-pound quota.

A bait herring fishery at Upper Cook Inlet opens from April 20 to the end of May. A combined take of 150 tons can be taken from four areas by a fleet of 10 to 20 set-netters or drift gillnetters. A smelt fishery will open May 1.

There is some rare good news for chinook salmon in Southeast Alaska. Winter troll catches drive the summer numbers and a slight 3,000 fish boost through March 15 means the summer harvest will top 201,100 kings for all users - that's 65,000 more chinook salmon than last year.

## Buy/eat/repeat

How can Americans help a seafood industry and fishing communities clobbered by the coronavirus?

"Just buy seafood, eat seafood and repeat! We need to support our nation's seafood communities by doing that as often as we can," said Linda Cornish, president of the nonprofit Seafood Nutrition Partnership which last week launched a 12-week "Eat Seafood, America" campaign in collaboration with 22 major industry groups.

Called the "Seafood4Health Action Coalition," their "rapid response" goal is to help Americans stay healthy during the health crisis while also

boosting the seafood economy.

The campaign urges people to build support for the 'eat fish' effort by sharing pictures of their seafood meals on social media.

"Follow the hash tag #eat-seafoodamerica, post a photo of their meal and share it on Instagram, Twitter or whatever social platforms they use. Go out there and urge people to buy seafood. It's as simple as that," Cornish said.

More than 60% of America's seafood is eaten in restaurants and the eat seafood campaign encourages people to continue to order their favorites and do take out at restaurants or retail stores.

Grundens, for example, is promoting sales at [www.localcatch.org](http://www.localcatch.org). And more fishermen are talking about selling their "catch of the day" directly from the docks.

While Americans are hunkered down at home, Cornish said they still can take their taste buds on vacation.

"Think about going on a trip to Alaska and ordering some wild Alaska seafood. You've been wanting to go to Maine so try some lobsters or oysters or mussels, or go on that Florida trip or to the Gulf. And there are so many seafood varieties you can have something different every day," she said.

Along with supporting fishing dependent towns and families, Cornish pointed out that the healthy attributes of seafood might help protect against the coronavirus.

"Whatever coast you're on, whatever segment of the supply chain you're on, we all need help," she added. Seafood is so good for you and I think the message is for people to try and get yourself as healthy as possible. Eat seafood, America and let's get through this together. We can do it."

## PROCESSOR

FROM PAGE 1

customized protocols and procedures to ensure what Pugmire calls "the best prevention measures possible.

"We are obviously looking at how we can minimize the number of employees that we are bringing into our locations, and as you mentioned, the turnover, and the means in which we bring people to our locations so that we're not exposing folks to the communities in which we operate," he said.

The processor is using a screening process for employees, developed by HealthForce Partners, LLC, a third-party occupational health service, which involves temperature screening and asking workers

where they have been.

In an email, Icicle Public Affairs Manager Julianne Curry said they were working on a plan to include fishermen in efforts to protect the community. As for the processing facilities, Icicle's plan may include requiring employees to remain on company property at all times, allowing only essential personnel to visit the facilities, and modifying mess hall and galley operations to reduce the risk of transmission. According to Curry, Icicle also has space for employees to quarantine in the event of illness.

Pugmire said that Icicle's other facilities in Bristol Bay are isolated, and he thinks that minimal contact with the communities is possible. Still, he acknowledged that those

measures only go so far, and that until a rapid test becomes available, Icicle will face many of the same challenges as other stakeholders in the fishing industry in terms of testing workers, hence the need for a preventative strategy.

The market for herring has declined in recent years — even before the COVID-19 pandemic Trident Seafoods pulled out of the fishery. Still, Pugmire said, Icicle is holding out optimism despite the uncertainty surrounding this season.

"We feel that it's going to be strong enough to certainly justify the effort, but beyond that, I wouldn't even feel comfortable speculating, 'cause there's just so many variables right now that could influence market conditions and — I mean,

we're always optimistic," he said.

Two seine boats and three gillnetters are expected to tap the 80 million-pound quota in Togiak this spring. Tim Sands, an area management biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, said the shrinking participation from processors and fishermen is due to the lack of market for herring.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Fish and Game's research as well. Sands said that this year, they are not bringing a field crew out to sample the commercial catch.

"The one processor is going to have a floating processor, so it's going to be harder for us to get samples from them, versus if they were in Naknek and we could just go down to the

plants and get them," he said.

Sands will also be the only person conducting aerial surveys. While that's not ideal, Sands said, they will work with the data they have.

The last few years have seen early starts to the Togiak fishery due to warm winters. But this year, biologists are expecting that to change.

"We anticipate a later spring this year than the last several years, and so with that will be a later herring fishery. So the last couple years, middle of April, last week of April, things have kind of got going," said Sands.

This year, Sands said they're expecting the fishery to open around the first week of May.

Contact the author at [isabelle@kdlg.org](mailto:isabelle@kdlg.org) or 907-842-2200.

## ALASKA SCIENCE FORUM

## Alaska's Howard Pass is an extreme, inviting place

*Brooks Range pass home to a wealth of historical artifacts*

BY NED ROZELL

University of Alaska Fairbanks

Howard Pass, a rock-stubbed tundra plateau in the western Brooks Range, is one of the lowest points in the mountains that arc across northern Alaska. It is a broad gateway between the great drainages of the Colville and Noatak rivers.

Scientists who have visited the lonely spot say Howard Pass is noteworthy for two reasons — it features some of Alaska's most extreme weather and, curiously, the area has an abundance of archaeological sites.

Jeff Rasic is an archeologist for the National Park Service who has sifted through wet soil near Howard Pass. The pass, named for U.S. Navy explorer William Howard (who traversed it during an expedition on April 21, 1886) is more than 100 miles away from the closest villages today, Ambler and Kobuk, both to the south.

Howard Pass was not so quiet over the past 11,000 years. In the area, archaeologists have found hundreds of house remains, tent rings, food-storage pits, scattered stone chips from tool makers and cairns that resembled humans to help drive caribou into traps.

"People took advantage of caribou, fish, muskox, berries, waterfowl — and in the earliest period, probably bison," Rasic wrote about Howard Pass, a tundra bench several miles wide that caribou from the Western Arctic herd still click through during seasonal



Photo by Ken Hill, National Park Service

A National Park Service climate-observing station in Howard Pass, a broad crossing of the Brooks Range between Alaska's North Slope and the Noatak River drainage.

migrations.

This food-rich area has another side to its character. Howard Pass's Inupiaq name is Akutuq, a word for a treat made of whipped animal fat, sugar and berries. Natives gave the pass that name because the wind-tortured snow patterns there reminded them of akutuq.

National Park Service scientists in 2011 installed a rugged weather station at Howard Pass as one of 50 similar climate stations in hard-to-reach park lands across Alaska. The stations are battery and solar-powered, and send their data in blips to orbiting satellites.

That information has included — on Feb. 21, 2013 — a wind-chill temperature of minus 96.9 degrees Fahrenheit.

The air temperature that day was minus 45.5 F. The wind blew at a sustained 54 mph.

"This was not an isolated event," Pam Sousanes of the National Park Service said of the Howard Pass windchill. "Similar conditions have been recorded in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017."

The average wind chill for Feb. 12-16, 2014 was minus 84.5 F, when the highest wind gust through the pass was 103 mph. Wind chills of minus 70 or colder have been recorded each year.

This low spot in the western Brooks Range becomes a wind tunnel when a great atmospheric-pressure difference exists between Alaska's North Slope and the rest of the state. Cold air from the north rips

southward through the pass.

"The wind chill can be so severe as to freeze to death caribou caught there by a winter storm," wrote Ernest Burch in the book "Alliance and Conflict: The World System of the Inupiaq Eskimos." He wrote, "After every bad blow the Eskimos used to go into the pass to look for well-preserved caribou carcasses."

Sousanes and her colleague Ken Hill have replaced the wind monitor on the Howard Pass station every year; the steel mast that holds it up is pocked by rocks and ice.

Minus 100 degrees does not seem to mesh with human occupation; nor does a place with no firewood.

However, not only is the pass loaded with archeological

sites, a few of them are winter dwellings, Rasic said, with half the living area underground and featuring cold-trap tunnels at the entrances.

Why might people have chosen a spot with such inhumane conditions?

"It's a reliable place to harvest caribou, and there are lakes with fish," Rasic said. "If you are someone trying to escape clouds of mosquitoes, winds aren't necessarily bad. And maybe a windswept place is good for winter travel — hard and crusty, good to get around on."

Since the late 1970s, the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Geophysical Institute has provided this column free. Ned Rozell is a science writer for the Geophysical Institute.

## Life at home: Is it Week 2, 3 or 40?

What do you do if you are Italian and stuck at home all day? You order a gabillion dollars' worth of groceries and cook it all, even if there is no one else in the house to eat it except you.

Based on this premise, I am proud to now announce that I have chicken broth, chicken soup, chicken salad, broiled chicken, boiled chicken and a meatloaf in my refrigerator. I have a gallon of my mom's Sunday sauce in the freezer, accompanied by about three gallons of beans and cabbage soup. Yep, I may die of COVID-19, but I will be the most



BY ELISE PATKOTAK

For the Bristol Bay Times - Dutch Harbor Fisherman

well-fed dead person you will ever see.

Here's a tip I learned while experimenting in my kitchen: If you make your meatloaf exactly the same way you make your meatballs, you end up with one giant meatball. And that means that if you want to make a nice tomato sauce for spaghetti, you just cut up some in the sauce and simmer it until the meat is falling

apart. Add to pasta with some Parmesan cheese on the top and enjoy.

If you are not a person attempting to eat their body weight through this epidemic, I'm not sure what other indoor activities I can recommend. Washing your sheets twice a week seems a futile exercise. Rearranging teabag boxes that you never use but always buy because the names seem so tasty only takes 10 minutes at best — and that's even if you do it alphabetically based on real fruit content. I have straightened out everything in the house that could possibly be

straightened. I washed all the dogs' toys and spent an hour carefully dividing them between upstairs and downstairs. Because as we all know so well, dogs will never carry their toys from one floor to another in your house.

I know we will probably survive this, no matter how scary it seems right now. And it seems very scary. I am honestly terrified of putting my head out the door for fear some long-lasting airborne virus will find me. So, I will continue on my quest to find things to keep me occupied that don't scare the dogs or birds. I make no promises,

but I might soon have some great suggestions for walking around your house putting plants in different spots to see where they look good and get lots of sunlight. You can kill an hour easy with this if you walk slowly enough. I'll check back with you in a week to tell you if it is a good exercise or if my plants are now trying to run away from home. Sheesh — you finally give them all the attention they seem to have been craving and what is your reward? They look at you as though you've lost your mind

## SPORTS

## Rookies: The making of an Aleutian powerhouse

*King Cove coach says he stepped into golden opportunity*

BY TOMMY WELLS

Bristol Bay Times-Dutch Harbor Fisherman

When the 2020 season came to an abrupt halt in early March, not only did it end the athletic careers of many Alaska players, it brought the curtain down on one of the most dominating teams in the state's history — the King Cove Rookies.

After winning a state's best 55 straight games, including the 2019 state championship, the Rookies will send their own version of the "Big 3" into the collegiate ranks, and their head coach into an extended vacation to Texas.

"We can only imagine how awesome it would have been to have seen them perform in the game that they know best and have played together since the first grade," said Lamar.

Lamar said the emergence of the Rookies as one of the state's superpowers was a culmination of several things that happened in the Aleutians, beginning more than a decade ago when the city's Elders began opening the city gym to younger athletes at 7 p.m. every evening. Among the young players that turned out every evening was a core group that included Elaina Mack, Jalaya Duarte, Sadie Newton, Leilonnie Brandell and Madeline Newman.

"They showed up to play the game they love more than almost anything, basketball," said Lamar. "Through their love of the game they developed a chemistry that can only be made through time spent on the floor with the same



Photo provided by Gary Lamar

Jalaya Duarte, Sadie Newton and Elaina Mack were teammates on the King Cove Rookies girls' team, which was on its way to the top when the Alaska high school basketball season was brought to a halt in early March.



Photo provided by Gary Lamar

The King Cove Rookies' season, which was on a roll thanks to players like Elaina Mack, was cut short when the 2020 Alaska sports season ended prematurely in early March.

teammates. They all knew when and where each were going to be on the floor. They never needed to look and see where the others were when they passed the ball. That's

where the magic is in this whole thing."

With the chemistry being created, Lamar said he stepped into a golden opportunity.

One of Alaska's most successful coaches before arriving in King Cove, Lamar helped transform the Rookies' talent into a team that averaged well over 60 points per game every night en route to winning four straight conference titles.

How good was King Cove? Consider this:

The Rookies had a unique season. The team faced a schedule in which they played almost all of their games against Class 3A and Class 4A programs. Midway through the season, they beat the No. 2-ranked Class 3A team in the state.

"Granted, they played junior varsity 4A teams, but some of those JVs moved down varsity players to play them," said Lamar, who led the Point Hope Harpooners to the 8-man

football championship prior to coming to King Cove. "All this while going undefeated for the second year in a row. That is almost unheard of in any state, especially with their schedule."

During the season, the Rookies finished most of their games via the mercy rule — a running clock once a team attains a 40-point lead.

Two seasons ago, they finished every game at the Alaska State Tournament via the mercy rule.

Lamar said the talent on the King Cove squad was second to none, regardless of classification.

"While Elaina Mack was this year's 1A MVP, and arguably the best player in the state, she was surrounded by a group of all-state players that made her even more dangerous.

Mack, who is headed to the University of Alaska Anchorage on a basketball scholarship, averaged over 40 points per game this season. The sharpshooter made 127 3-point shots in just 25 games.

Duarte, who will be enrolling at the University of Alaska Fairbanks as a pre-med student, was among the state's top rebounders with over 14 rebounds per game as she dominated the boards. She averaged a double-double for the season. She averaged more than 12 points per game.

Sadie Newton also played a big role for the Rookies.

"Every time a team decided they wanted to double up on Elaina, all she did was pass the ball to Sadie and she lit the scoreboard up like a Christmas tree," Lamar said of the team's third all-state selection this year.

Newton will be attending the University of Alaska Southeast for early education.

Rounding out the team

were several other stars, including one of the state's top ball stealers in Leilonnie Brandell and one of the quicker defenders anywhere in Madeline Newman.

"You could say we were loaded for bear," said Lamar, who has amassed more than 1,100 career coach in wins in football, basketball and volleyball. In his career, he coached 10 teams in Alaska and has gone to state with all 10 teams — winning state with six.

Other than being able to play for a second state title, Lamar said he wished for only one thing — a chance to face off with the state's best "all-star" squad, Anchorage Christian.

"It would have been fun to have played ACS as they seem to have the best players from all over Anchorage and a few from the villages," he said. "All of our players have had the same zip code since kindergarten. They have many players that three years ago had different zip codes. It would have been a battle."

Lamar, who was among a handful of shooters contending for a spot on the U.S. Olympic team prior to becoming a coach, said he felt blessed to have had coached the Rookies through their successful run, and hopes that the King Cove girls' program continues to extend its win streak.

"I thank God for all the talent these young ladies have and for the opportunity to have been able to coach them," said Lamar, who announced earlier this month he would be stepping down as head coach/principal at King Cove at the end of the school year to "take a break for a year."

"I think I'll be back," he said. "I just want to take a year off and do something a little different."

## State says fishing for sport and personal use remains open

*Residents should fish close to home*

ALEX DEMARBAN

Anchorage Daily News

State officials announced on Monday that sport and personal use fishing will remain open in Alaska, though anglers must still follow public health mandates.

"Although travel between communities is prohibited under the issued health mandates,

the public may still travel to fishing locations," the Alaska Department of Fish and Game said in a prepared statement.

When people travel outside their communities to fish, they must fish as close to home as possible and practice social distancing, among other recommendations. The state also recommended that they wear protective face masks.

Food and other supplies for the trip must come from the fisherman's home community.

"Don't plan on buying food,

drinks or even fuel (if possible) after you begin your trip and until you return home," the statement said.

Fishermen must follow published fishing regulations for the 2020 season, the statement said.

The Kenai River Sportfishing Association expressed support for the decision in a statement. It will allow Alaskans to maintain access to sport, guided sport and personal use fisheries during the COVID-19 crisis, the statement said.

The state has determined that guided fishing is critical infrastructure and is an industry allowed to continue operating with special plans in place to prevent the virus from spreading.

Critical infrastructure includes: "Fishing, including persons engaged in subsistence fishing and in the fishing industry including the fisherman, processors, guides, and transporters of the fish as well of those under contract with the fisherman, processors, guides,

and transporters for provisioning," the state has said.

"Governor Dunleavy, Commissioner (Doug) Vincent-Lang, and Commissioner (Adam) Crum have been very responsive to working with the public to ensure opportunity for Alaskans to harvest food, while working to protect the public health," said Ben Mohr, executive director of the association. "We believe the administration recognizes that hunting and fishing in Alaska are critical activities."



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**Choggiung Limited | P.O. Box 330 | Dillingham, Alaska 99576**

Forms can be found online at: [www.choggiung.com](http://www.choggiung.com)

Questions, please call 1-907-842-5218

**APPLICATION DEADLINE IS MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2020 5:00 P.M. AKST**

## State's unemployment system is swamped by applicants

*Alaskans report long waits, confusing messages and few answers amid rush*

**JAMES BROOKS**

Anchorage Daily News

Alaskans applying for unemployment say they're feeling frustrated by clogged phone lines, uncertain regulations and a confusing application process. On Thursday, for example, the Alaska Department of Labor said Alaskans can apply weekly for unemployment, instead of every two weeks, as had been the practice before now.

Meanwhile, the state agency in charge of unemployment has been scrambling to hire workers, upgrade equipment and implement a swath of rule changes ordered by elected state and federal officials. Relief and retroactive payments are coming, they say, but many Alaskans worry whether it will come in time for them to pay bills.

Hans Moody had worked for RavnAir, loading and unloading aircraft in Kodiak for 23 years. On Sunday, he learned along with the rest of the state that Alaska's largest rural airline had declared bankruptcy. Moody, whose wife is collecting disability, joined more than 30,000 Alaskans who have filed for unemployment in the past three weeks.

"If I don't get my unemployment, I don't know what we're going to do," Moody said.

Three weeks ago, anticipating the surge to come, state officials urged Alaskans to file for unemployment online. That remains the advice today.

"The best thing people can do with unemployment claims right now is file online," said Rep. Ivy Spohnholz, D-Anchorage and chair of the Alaska

House's committee on labor and commerce.

But if Alaskans run into a problem with that online process, they see a prompt that tells them to call the Department of Labor, and that has been a problem for many.

In Kodiak, Moody first filed for partial aid because he was told that his hours were being reduced. The next day, he was told he didn't have a job at all. When he tried to update his application, the online process prompted him to call.

Three weeks ago, department officials said Alaskans could leave call-back numbers if they didn't want to wait on hold, but the number of calls has grown so large that even that system has been overwhelmed. Now, callers say they're hearing a prerecorded message that disconnects the phone line at the end.

That's what happened to Kendra Skultka of Sitka, a former commercial fisherman who worked at a restaurant until it closed during the coronavirus pandemic.

"You can't get through," she said. "This is over a week into calling, and I still have yet to get through to anybody."

Rachael Byrd, who was general manager of Juneau's Salt restaurant, said she applied March 22 but ran into an issue.

"I kept calling and calling, never getting through — days in a row," she said. "They're so, so flooded with people."

In Kodiak, Moody even tried the department's fax number, without response so far.

"Right now, the phone system only allows 250 calls at a time," Spohnholz said. "That's just nowhere near enough."

Amanda Filori, a Juneau artist, offered a handful of tips that she said worked for her: Call early (call centers open at 9 a.m.), wait on hold, be polite and read the unemployment pamphlet before calling.

She said she had the best luck calling the statewide toll-free number. There also are separate numbers for claim centers in Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks. She got her first deposit Wednesday.

In the past three weeks, 36,211 people have filed for unemployment insurance benefits, or more than 10% of all workers in the state of Alaska at this point in the year. Many more Alaskans are believed to be out of work but have not filed for one reason or another.

Labor Commissioner Tami Ledbetter said Wednesday that "there are approximately 100 staff currently assigned to the processing of unemployment insurance claims."

That includes normal technicians, people the department has reassigned, and six former employees who came out of retirement to help.

"An additional 75 staff will be hired this week," Ledbetter wrote by email.

She also said that anyone whose application is delayed will receive retroactive payments effective as of the date they lost their job or had their hours reduced, back to March 1.

Sen. Click Bishop, R-Fairbanks, was commissioner of the state Department of Labor in 2010, the last time unemployment applications peaked. (That peak was less than a third of the current weekly volume.)

In 2010, it took four to six weeks to train additional staff needed to process claims.

"When I was commissioner during the Great Recession in 2008, we had one room on the second floor dedicated just for a classroom, training new claims takers," he said.

This time around, Bishop said his former agency is also "looking at doing an accelerated version" of training for new workers.

Spohnholz said she was told the agency is also upgrading its phone and computer systems. A separate phone line, 1-866-377-0126, has been set up to help people who have technical problems with the online application system, rather than their particular application.

"I would tell people to keep calling. I know it's frustrating, but it's frustrating for (workers) too, because they're breaking new ground. It is going to take them one, to three to four weeks on the outside to get this running. Once it does, it will be efficient," Bishop said.

The complaints aren't universal. Symaron George of Haines said her online application, filed March 30, went through "without a problem," but she was disappointed that her payment did not include a promised federal stimulus or an extra payment approved by legislators. That extra payment was authorized for Alaskans who care for children or dependent adults.

"My unemployment just barely covered my electric with \$20 left over for two weeks. It's a scary and frustrating situation and more communication about it from the state would be nice," she said.

On March 27, President Donald Trump signed the CARES Act, which would boost the maximum unemployment payment by \$600, cover self-employed workers normally ineligible and extend the period that Alaskans can claim unemployment. Gov. Mike Dunleavy said Wednesday that payments will go out as soon as possible.

"CARES program coverage for the self employed will be operational in the next 3 to 4 weeks," Ledbetter wrote by email. "Income verification, USDOL reporting agreements, staff training, and a new

requirement to deduct federal withholding tax are currently in the works. Once operational, individuals may be eligible for \$600 per week, plus the a state benefit which will closely mirror the current coverage for insured workers."

Beau Sylte of Sitka said that can't come soon enough. He managed to get through by phone but said that as a self-employed freelancer, the system wasn't ready for him.

"It was a really frustrating call," he said.

Though many changes are still in the works, Ledbetter said the department has already eliminated the requirement that Alaskans prove they are seeking work while unemployed and has waived a one-week waiting period for benefits.

"All applicants who previously received notification that their application was incomplete due to the actively seeking work requirement will be notified this week that their applications are approved," she said.



**REMEMBER  
THE 3 R'S:  
REDUCE.  
REUSE.  
RECYCLE.**

### CROSSWORD

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### THEME: FAIRY TALE CREATURES

**ACROSS**

1. \*Like many mythical creatures
6. Second mo.
9. Spill the beans
13. Convex molding
14. “\_\_\_ the President’s Men”
15. Ankle support, e.g.
16. Make a logical connection
17. \*E.T.’s craft?
18. Des Moines native
19. \*Fire-breather
21. \*Household spirit
23. Tucker of “Modern Family”
24. Antonym of is
25. \*Grimm’s Queen \_\_\_
28. Tailor-made
30. Showing on TV
35. “All’s well that \_\_\_ well”
37. Golly!
39. Punctuation mark
40. Seaport in Yemen
41. Hitching post?
43. Additionally
44. Poison ivy or Poison oak
46. One more than The Beatles
47. Hold as a conviction
48. \*Mrs. Potts or her son Chip
50. Andrew Sean Greer’s 2017 Pulitzer-winner novel
52. Toast choice
53. Jack and Jill’s water jug
55. “\_\_\_ Now or Never”
57. \*Horse’s cousin
61. \*One of the seven dwarfs
64. Ascetic holy Hindu
65. HHS agency
67. Relating to #25 Across
69. Banana treat
70. Go bad
71. Australian canid
72. Lou of “Walk on the Wild Side” fame
73. Card in the hole?
74. “The Forsyte \_\_\_,” pl.

**DOWN**

1. Wisecrack
2. Like a zealous fan
3. Regular attendee
4. Hipbone-related
5. Cuban music genre, pl.
6. \*Half-man, half-goat
7. \*Santa’s helper
8. Splotches
9. Arch on a face
10. Croquet turf
11. Popular smoothie berry
12. Well, to Sofia Loren
15. Relating to living organisms
20. Opposite of alpha
22. Genetic initials
24. Parents hope to do this with values
25. \*Beauty’s beau
26. Empower
27. Dropsy
29. \*Big Bad One
31. Yellow brick one
32. Feeling worse than before
33. \*Like Curious George
34. \*Garden dweller
36. Finger move
38. Moneyed one
42. Pine product
45. Choose not to do something, 2 words
49. Toni Morrison’s “\_\_\_ Baby”
51. 1862 plots, for short
54. Prefix for below
56. Old photo color
57. Stalin’s domain
58. Back of the neck
59. Not active
60. Past tense of chide
61. Fill beyond full
62. Sound of passing bullet
63. \*Baba \_\_\_
66. \*Who Bugs Bunny talks to?
68. Numbers, abbr.

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### TUNDRA | By Chad Carpenter

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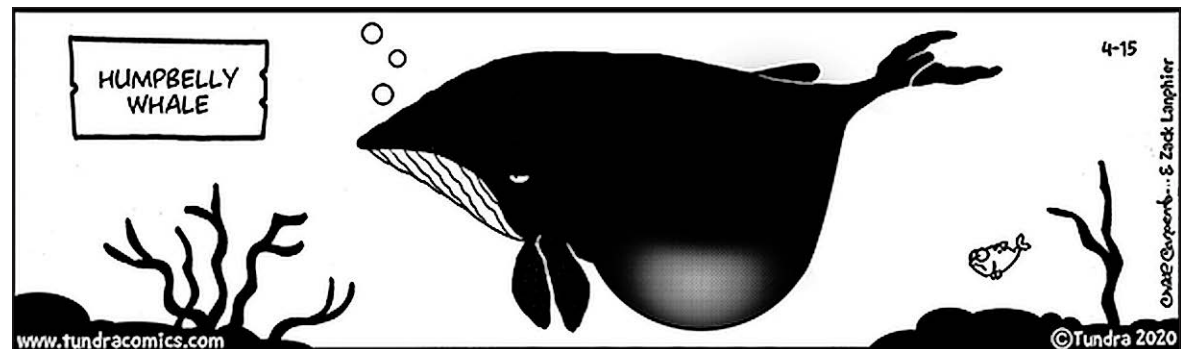
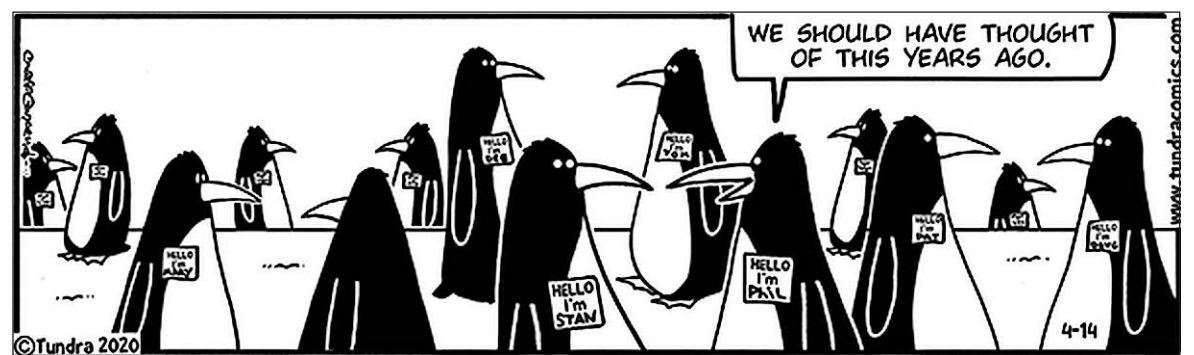
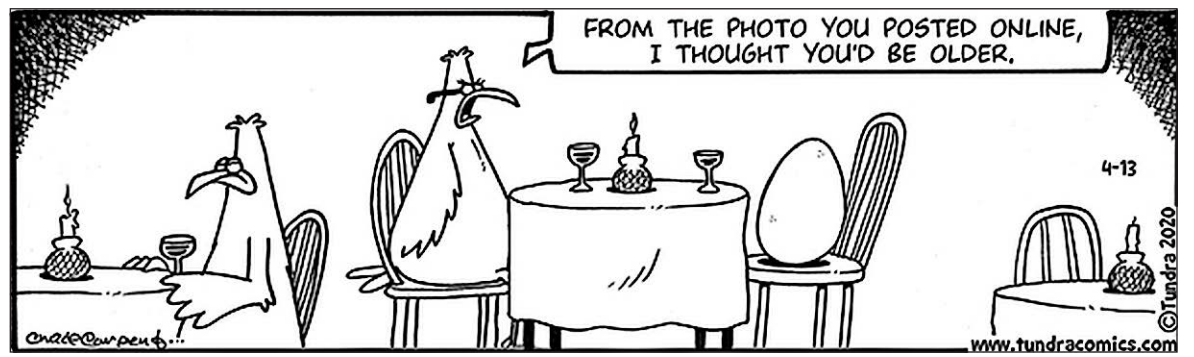
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### SUDOKU

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**FOR SOLUTIONS TO THE CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU PUZZLES, SEE PAGE 5.**



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## GATHERING

FROM PAGE 1

The group was inspired by the similar “Social Distance Powwow” page, formed by people in the Lower 48, she said. As of Monday, the larger powwow group had more than 150,000 members from across the country and has become a hub for sharing videos featuring dances, songs and words of encouragement.

“They’re a great, active group and it made me feel so good watching all these Native people singing and drumming and dancing,” Starbard said.

She and “Gathering Place” co-founder Erin Tripp, a Tlingit theatre artist based in Juneau, began the Alaska version after several large Native events were canceled over concerns about COVID-19. The annual Cama’i Festival and Native Youth Olympics were put on hold, as was the biennial Celebration in Juneau.

“Our cultures focus more on the community over the individual,” said Tripp, who is Deisheetaan from Yéil Hít. “We’re not the only person going through this. It’s a shared experience. There is healing in sharing our songs, stories, wisdom with each other.”

Anyone who is a member of the group can post to the feed. The organizers have also set up a series of recurring events to build consistency for people. Those include scheduled nightly shows at 7 p.m., along with games for prizes and more.

Upcoming livestreams will feature guests like singer Stephen Blanchett, on Monday, who many may know from the group Pamyua, and the North Slope’s own Cordelia Qigñaaq Kellie on Friday.

“Vera and Erin reached out to me and asked if I would like to be involved in the gathering, through sharing of song and story,” said Napiryuk Polly Andrews, of Chevak, whose Cup’ik name means “to sharpen.” Andrews was one of the earliest guests on the nightly show.

When social distancing began in Alaska, she had just returned home from visiting Chefnak, where her children shared their First Dance Ceremony with the community that is the hometown of her husband, singer and songwriter Aassanaaq “Ossie” Kairaiuak.

“The ceremony, which had been practiced since ancestral times among our Yup’ik/Cup’ik people, was practiced to honor the accomplishments of our children, and our connection with land and culture,” Andrews said. “This ceremony was attended by the communities of Chefnak, Toksook Bay, Tununak, Nightmute and Chevak. When we were all together, in this space, drumming and dancing, you could feel the joy and the strengths of our Alaska Native people resonate strongly. This was a feeling of wholeness, connectedness and strength that was ancient. With the news of the first COVID case in Alaska, and the news that gathering places were closing across our state, we knew we were among the last to gather and dance for an unforeseen amount of time.”

When she came back to Anchorage, she felt it was a gift she needed to continue. So, she accepted the invitation.

“One thing that my husband has said wisely in the past (is), ‘Being rooted in culture comes with a responsibility.’ Part of our responsibility as Native people is to share our cultural gifts and values with others,” said Andrews.

During an hourlong livestream on Friday, Andrews shared stories from her family, sang songs and talked about the challenges of adapting to life under quarantine. Her video has since been viewed more than 300 times and inspired a wealth of conversation.

“Our songs, dances, stories and our ancient practices translate to health and wellness in our Native communities,” she said. “Our ways are our resilience. And in times of challenge and adversity, this is how we heal together. During this time, our community has been challenged to explore creative ways to continue our healing practices — to practice the ancient value of gathering in ways that heal. And with that, our Native community has risen above the challenge, and created space for our songs, dances and stories to connect with people’s hearts.”

The practice of seclusion or distancing is not an unfamiliar one to many Alaska Native cultures, Starbard said. But the foundations are still collective.

“We gathered during

harvest, we gathered during the preparing of food. We gathered in the rearing of children, and we gathered to barter, drum, dance and share story,” said Andrews. “An example of our gathering together in the Yup’ik culture was the qasriq, a multipurpose gathering place. Young boys were taught skills such as making tools and listening to stories about hunting. Various men and Elders from around the community taught the young boys in the qasriq. This place was also used as a gathering place during dance ceremonies. This value to gathering together — and the collective nature of our people — is inherent in all of us. We were all once this way. In many areas where we come from — our villages — we may not be economically strong, but we are culturally strong. And it’s this that sustains our people.”

Regardless of other changes that have happened over time, these values are still important.

“Every Alaska Native culture has traditional gatherings all throughout the year, and they are integral to our sense of connection to each other as clan members, tribal members, families,” Starbard said. “We have always known in our cultures that physically gathering to celebrate, to grieve, to commemorate was the healthiest way to ensure strong relationships.”

Those gatherings may be virtual now, instead of physical, she said, but their power to heal remains, even through challenging times like these.

“Particularly because we live in such a digital age, it’s possible for us all to still connect in different ways while still maintaining our physical distance,” said Tripp. “This is not to say it isn’t hard. It still is. But I’ve seen a lot of wonderful and creative ways people have used the internet to connect with friends, loved ones, their community, or even outside of the internet, like those videos you see of people singing together from their apartment windows. It’s been a great reminder for me that we’re not alone, and we’re all in this together.”

Join the Alaska Native Virtual Gathering Place by searching for it on Facebook and sending a request. Livestream schedules are posted and updated regularly.

# Structure fires in Naknek, Pilot Point result in two deaths

BY ISABELLE ROSS  
KDLG News

On April 5 and 6, structure fires in two communities resulted in two deaths, as well as the total loss of the buildings. No foul play is suspected at this time, troopers and police report.

Two people died in two separate structure fires in the first week of April. One was in Naknek, the other in Pilot Point.

The Village Public Safety Office in Pilot Point reported a fire at a residence on the night of April 5 to Alaska State Troopers, who responded along with the State Fire Marshal. It burned into the next morning, resulting in a total loss of the structure. Troopers report that one person died in

that fire.

On the morning of April 6, the Bristol Bay Borough Police notified the State Fire Marshal’s Office of a fire at a residence in Naknek where one person died. Chief of Police John Rhyshek said the fire completely burned down a single-story ranch style home. Two deputy fire marshals from Anchorage responded to assist borough police in their investigation.

No foul play is suspected in either fire at this time, though the investigations are ongoing. The remains of both people were sent to the state medical examiner in Anchorage for identification.

Contact the author at [isabelle@kdlg.org](mailto:isabelle@kdlg.org) or 907-842-2200.

## PATKOTAK

FROM PAGE 7

and try to back away as quickly as possible when you start heading for them. You know it’s bad when even the plants are running away from you.

I’ve decided that I will only read books about how hard life was in the past, so that the present will not seem so insurmountable.

Once you’ve read about how people handled human waste in places like London in the 1700s or 1800s, having to parse your toilet paper squares is suddenly not such a hardship.


It also reminds me that as bad as the world may seem right now, there were times in

the past when it was so much worse. Our ancestors survived, and so will we.

Now let’s get back in that kitchen and see what you can make with all those items at the back of your closet and refrigerator that you bought swearing you would use. Now’s the time. What can you make with that strange flour, weird condiments and unrecognizable leftovers from the freezer?

My nonna would have fed her family for a week on that. So now you have the challenge.

Elise Patkotak is a columnist and author. Her book “Coming Into the City” is available at [AlaskaBooksandCalendars.com](http://AlaskaBooksandCalendars.com) and at local bookstores.



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