

The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

The Aleutians and the Pribilofs



Bones to pick
Ancient whalers' enduring impact
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Michelle Ridgway with *Aureophycus* from the Starya Artil patch on St. George Island.

Courtesy photo/ Karin Holser

Rare kelp found in Pribilofs

'Missing link' in sea plant evolution at St. George Island

ALASKA NEWSPAPERS STAFF
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Twenty-five students in the Pribilof Island Marine Science Camp have discovered the second-known population of a new species of large brown marine algae, *Aureophycus*, near St. George Island.

The kelp was discovered during the 11-day Pribilof Island Marine Science Camp in July, while elementary and high school students were studying the area's seawater temperature, salinity, marine habitats and sea creature biology.

The students used sophisticated instruments like hydrophones for recording fur seal sounds, fine-meshed chambered nets to survey local plankton and robotic underwater cameras to see sealife.

During an early field trip, a 20-meter

See Page 8, Kelp

Research goal: More king crab in every pot

This juvenile king crab was raised from hatching at the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery and is approximately 5 months old.

Courtesy photo / Ben Daly



Two-year old hatchery project working to restore population

JEFF STEPHAN, HEATHER MCCARTY AND GALE VICK
For Alaska Newspapers

The "Deadliest Catch" it's not, but the results of a research project in Seward might be just as intriguing to skippers of the rugged Bering Sea crab fleet as the next installment of the adrenaline-pumping television show. After all, the goal of the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRAB) program is to fill king crab pots throughout Alaska.

The tiny king crab clinging to tufts of artificial

seaweed in conical shaped tanks in the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery in Seward were hatched by a team of scientists and research biologists in the early phases of a project designed to help restore long-depressed king crab stocks. The project is a unique partnership between the crab industry, coastal communities, Native groups, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the University of Alaska Fairbanks School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences (SFOS) and the Alaska Sea Grant college program.

In only its second year, AKCRRAB's research team made great progress in 2008 toward mass production of juvenile king crab and successfully launched a host of scientific studies that should result in greatly improved information about

See Page 9, Crab

Caster's Cutthroats meet one more time

Alaska Scouts recall World War II duty

MIKE PETERS
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As they scouted the Aleutian Islands for the U.S. Army during World War II, sometimes they feasted on Dall sheep, hauling the choice meat in by backpack to their remote camps.

Other times, after going hungry for days, they'd dig up the sweet roots of basket grasses. The outdoor skills of that hardy outfit — Alaska Natives, trappers and prospectors who knew how to live off the land — kept them alive as they monitored the Japanese-occupied islands of Attu and Kiska.

The hardiness and derring-do of these men, and their unconventional mix of Army and backwoods garb, led to a gritty nickname that stuck to the unit: Caster's Cutthroats.

Three grizzled veterans of that unit — the Alaska Scouts, or more formally the 1st Combat Intelligence

Platoon (Provisional) — came together at the Anchorage Museum last month. It was their first meeting in decades for Earl Acuff, Ed Walker and William "Billy" Buck, and the three surviving Scouts told their stories to a crowd gathered to open a year-long exhibit at the museum that salutes the 66 Alaska Scouts as war heroes.

"A band of woodmen fighters like this hasn't been seen since the Alamo, and probably will never be seen again," said author Jim Reardon, who has written a "faction" book that weaves the history of the men into a fictional narrative. Reardon appeared on a panel with the three surviving Scouts and later signed copies of his book, which like the men is called "Caster's Cutthroats."

The men, most Alaska Natives like William "Billy" Buck, were recruited by the Army for their outdoors skills after it became likely that Japanese forces would invade the Aleutians. The islands were remote and scattered in a wide area; the climate was often harsh: "It was like having another enemy: The weather," says Buck.



Courtesy photo

William "Billy" Buck in wartime.

See Page 10, Cutthroats

DH 10-9-08



Pen Air cuts flights, lays off 15 pilots

Fuel budget increased to \$8 million by last month

ALASKA JOURNAL OF COMMERCE

Peninsula Airways Inc. laid off 15 pilots early in September and parked three of its turbo prop 19-passenger aircraft in an effort to cut costs after a year of high fuel prices.

"We had a huge deficit that we had to make up over the rising costs of fuel, so I had to trim our operations back," said Danny Seybert, chief executive officer at Pen Air.

Fuel prices rose above \$4 a gallon for jet fuel in July, but fell below the \$3 a gallon mark during the second week in September.

Seybert said the airline's fuel budget swelled to \$8 million by September and that the company's budget was now \$6 million over budget. Pen Air operates on a March 31 fiscal year, Seybert said.

"Since we had an immediate need to find \$6 million, I decided to park the Metros, lay off some of the pilot workforce and increase ticket fares 17 percent, and we are also cutting back service to some destinations for a 15 percent reduction," he said. "Still this only makes us \$3 million closer to a \$6 million deficit."

The airline will continue to operate in this mode until spring, Seybert said.

Peninsula Airways was started by Seybert's father, Orin Seybert, in 1955 from Pilot Point. The company started operating as Pen Air in 1991, after an agreement with Alaska Airlines to become a code sharing and mileage point partner.

Code sharing is an arrangement where another airline operates flights using the reservation codes and flight numbers of a dominant airline.

PenAir, Alaska's largest commuter airline, normally operates as many as 40 aircraft providing scheduled service to 36 communities throughout Southwest Alaska.

Natives question Palin's support

Some say governor fails to give issues a hearing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin routinely notes her husband's Yup'ik Eskimo roots. But those connections haven't erased doubts about her in a community long slighted by the white settlers who flocked to Alaska and dominate its government.

Since she took office in 2006, many Alaska Natives say they've felt ignored when she made appointments to her administration, sided with sporting interests over Native hunting rights and pursued a lawsuit that Natives say seeks to undermine their ancient traditions.

Alaska's population today is mostly white but nearly a fifth of its people are Native Americans — primarily Alaska Natives. Blacks and Asians combined make up less than 10 percent of the state's population.

As a result, race relations in Alaska are different from those in other states. Palin inherited a complex, sometimes strained relationship with Alaska Natives. There is a wide economic disparity between its predominantly white urban areas and the scores of isolated Native villages, and competition between sport hunting rights and tribal sovereignty.

Early in her administration, Palin created a furor by trying to appoint a white woman to a seat, held for more than 25 years by a Native, on the panel that oversees wildlife management. Ultimately, Palin named an Athabaskan Indian to the game board, but not before relations were bruised.

When a game board chairman suggested Alaska Natives missed a meeting because they were drinking beer, the remark struck a chord since the Alaska Native community is wracked by alcohol abuse. Palin, a candidate for governor at the time, asked him to resign.

Critics felt the man's remarks rose to the level of misconduct that would have allowed the governor to fire him and were appalled Palin didn't do more to get him off the board once she became governor later that year.

"He should have been removed," said Lloyd Miller, a tribal rights attorney based in Anchorage. "When your conduct fractures the public trust, it's misconduct."

When Palin this summer fired Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan, a Native, she replaced him with a non-Native. His successor resigned after 10 days on the job, when a previously undisclosed reprimand that stemmed from a sexual harassment claim against him came to light.

The Monegan firing is the subject of two state investigations. Palin is accused of firing Monegan because he refused to fire her sister's former husband, a state trooper.

Two weeks after she was tapped as John McCain's running mate, Palin named a Native to Monegan's old position.

Palin spokeswoman Sharon Leighow said the governor's Cabinet members and chief



Roy Corral/Alaska Newspapers

Emil Notti, right, a prominent Alaska Native leader, was appointed by Gov. Sarah Palin, left, as commissioner of the Department of Commerce. Notti was appointed at the beginning of Palin's term in office and continues to hold the position.

advisers represent the state's diversity. For example, Palin's communications director, Bill McAllister, is part black. Her commissioner for the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Emil Notti, is a noted Alaska Native leader. "The governor is colorblind when it comes to hiring," Leighow said.

As a result, race relations in Alaska are different from those in other states. Palin inherited a complex, sometimes strained relationship with Alaska Natives.

But Duke University political science professor Paula McClain, who went to high school in Alaska and now specializes in minority relations, said Palin's actions suggest she has "a political tin ear or that she simply doesn't care."

"In a state like Alaska, how can you not be aware of how not reappointing a Native is going to play? At best, she's naive," McClain said.

Alaska Natives — the term includes indigenous Eskimo, Aleut and Indian populations — tend to lean Democrat. Many prominent Native leaders have endorsed Democrat Barack Obama for president.

But the mother of Palin's husband, Todd, is a quarter Yup'ik Eskimo. Each summer, he heads to his birthplace in Western Alaska to work in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery.

Palin's family ties would suggest she would be more sensitive to Native issues, said Stephen Haycox, a University of Alaska

Anchorage history professor. But in her 21-month tenure, the governor has used those ties mostly to highlight her experiences in commercial fishing, moose hunting and general outdoorsmanship.

"She has not manifested, so far, any extraordinary measures on behalf of Alaska Natives," Haycox said.

Alaska Inter-Tribal Council chairman Mike Williams of Akiak said he's been seeking an audience with Palin to address tribal concerns ever since she was elected governor, but her staff keeps telling him that her schedule is full.

"She's so busy that she doesn't have time for the tribes. There needs to be respect and a dialogue," said Williams, who is also Yup'ik Eskimo.

This time of year, Williams is busy putting away meat, fish and berries for the winter — supplies that are critical to survival in cash-poor rural villages — and he said he wants to explain to Palin how increased pressures from sport hunting and fishing as well as oil and mining have eroded native hunting lands.

Palin's director of Community and Regional Affairs, Tara Jollie, a member of the Chippewa tribe of North Dakota, said the popular governor's schedule is busy, but she has attended events such as the yearly gathering of the Alaska Federation of Natives and a recent bridge dedication honoring a native leader.

Jollie also said many of Palin's initiatives, like energy assistance and sharing state revenues with municipalities, are particularly important to the rural Natives coping with some of the highest fuel costs in the nation.

"It's her nature to want the best for all Alaskans," said Jollie. "She would treat her native constituency exactly the same as any other constituency."

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Emergency fuel helps Adak survive

Debt, state revocation disrupt utility service

MARGARET BAUMEN
Alaska Journal of Commerce

Emergency fuel shipments from the Aleut Corp. are keeping the city of Adak's generators going for now, but officials of the regional Alaska Native corporation said Oct. 2 that state aid was needed to bail out the city.

"We don't want them to go without electricity," said Thomas Mack, president of the Aleut Corp., in Anchorage. "We are trying to get it resolved, the quicker the better."

Adak, population 136, lies on Kuluk Bay on Adak Island, 350 miles west of Unalaska.

Since July, the city has had intermittent problems getting fuel from the Aleut Corp. because the city was in arrears on paying the corporation's subsidiary, Aleut Enterprises, for the fuel, said city clerk Chrissy Dushkin.

Meanwhile Aleut Corp. was in arrears paying sales tax to the city, "because they wanted to deduct it from our (fuel) bill," Dushkin said.

Dushkin estimated that the city owed Aleut Enterprises about \$500,000 for fuel, a debt that in part was the result of Adak Fisheries owing the city upward of \$600,000

in sales taxes and utility bills.

The city manager, with approval of the City Council, can disconnect power from a delinquent utility subscriber, but the council as whole has never approved a disconnect for Adak Fisheries, Dushkin said.

Meanwhile, on Sept. 23, the Regulatory Commission of Alaska released an order finding that good cause exists to revoke the certificate of public convenience and necessity held by the city of Adak, doing business as Adak Electric. RCA scheduled a public workshop in Anchorage for Oct. 20 for individuals or entities interested in providing electric service to Adak.

RCA officials cited the utility's continuing struggle in providing adequate, safe and reliable utility service in Adak as a reason to revoke the certificate.

Aleut's Mack said his company wants the city of Adak to have a viable power plant, but can only do so much.

"We have been putting a little Band-Aid on the problem extending them fuel," he said. "We are not helping the situation by just giving them fuel; we are throwing good money after bad."

Adak Fisheries, which processes cod, halibut, sablefish, crab and pollock, is the mainstay of the Adak economy when things are going well, said Dave Frasier, a government

relations spokesman for Adak Fisheries.

But Adak Fisheries currently is experiencing hard times, as competition to process fish has grown in recent months. The company owes thousands of dollars in unpaid fuel bills to the city and Aleut Enterprises, the fuel division of the Aleut Corp.

There is also plenty of friction between the city of Adak and the Aleut Corp. On Sept. 19, in the wake of an Adak City Council agreement with Aleut Enterprises, city clerk Dushkin, city manager Steve Hines and City Council member Will Tillion tendered their resignations. According to Tillion, the trio resigned in protest of council action without the advice of the city attorney.

Tillion said the deal to allow fuel delivery included a provision that forgives the Alaska Native corporation for removing copper components from the electric distribution system that belongs to the city of Adak.

Other council members were under duress to sign the agreement because they were worried about a power outage, due to lack of fuel causing the clinic and school to close, he said.

Unfinished business

The fuel shortage resulted in some 200 contractors, on the island to clean up unexploded ordinance left over from World War II, leav-

ing earlier in the season than usual because there was no guarantee utilities would be available, Dushkin said. Contractors normally leave in October, but the last three planes out were pretty full, she said.

The residents, however, are staying on. "I guess we could all pack up and leave, but to where?" she said.

Adak Fisheries, meanwhile, is working with North Pacific Fishery Management Council, which will introduce a discussion paper at its October meeting to give more protection to Eastern Aleutian Island communities for processing Pacific cod.

From 2005 to 2007, vessels harvesting Pacific cod delivered up to 84 percent of the fish to the Adak shoreside processor, but when the crab-processing sector was consolidated in 2008, landings to Adak Fisheries dropped to 37 percent, Frasier said.

This happened because some processor vessels that previously worked in the crab fishery were suddenly freed up and began competing to process Pacific cod. While Adak Fisheries processed black cod and halibut in summer months and some crab in winter months, Pacific cod is its most important fishery.

To process the Pacific cod, Adak Fisheries imports workers from outside the area, because most adult Adak residents are already employed. Adak Fisheries does pay sales taxes on behalf of the fishermen who sell to them, and pays a raw fish tax to the state, which passes it on to the city of Adak.

Along with the processing competition, Adak Fisheries has had challenges in getting its processed fish to market.

"We are at the end of the line," Frasier said. There is no scheduled service from domestic vessels and processed fish for domestic markets can't be shipped on a foreign processor.

The council's discussion paper notes that the American Fisheries Act, the federal crab rationalization program and Bering Sea Aleutian Island Amendment 80 program all allowed for consolidation that freed up some processing sectors to compete for harvests that in the past went to shoreside facilities at Adak. The council will consider options to protect processing efforts at Adak, which provide several hundred jobs annually.

NEWS IN BRIEF

AMHS releases 2009 schedule

The Alaska Marine Highway System announced the release of its 2009 summer sailing schedule for its 11 vessels serving 32 ports between Bellingham, Wash., through Prince Rupert, British Columbia and west to the Aleutians.

"The early release of next summer's schedule resulted from a cooperative effort between the governor's office, the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the Marine Transportation Advisory Board and members of the public," said Jim Beedle, deputy commissioner of marine operations.

Beedle explained that the early schedule release might give Alaskans better and easier opportunities to plan business and vacation travel needs.

"Releasing the schedule as early as we did should bring an added possibility of increased ridership on the AMHS next summer," Beedle added.

The new schedule is available online and reservations can be booked at www.ferry.alaska.com.

Bingo returns to the Senior Center

On Oct. 5, Bingo began at the Father Ishmail Gromoff Senior Center in Unalaska after a summer-long hiatus. Game will resume on the first and third Sunday of every month. Doors open at 4 p.m. and games begin at 4:30 p.m. The permit number is 2057. For more information, call 581-5195.

CALENDAR

Send updated event information to vbarber@alaskanewspapers.com by noon on Wednesdays for it to appear in the next week's edition of *The Fisherman*.

Tuesday, Oct. 14

• 7 p.m. City Council meeting. Meets are held at City Hall on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month.

Thursday, Oct. 16

• 7 p.m. School board meeting. Monthly meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of every month.

Sunday, Oct. 19

• 4:30 p.m. Bingo! at the Father Ishmail Gromoff Senior Center. Doors open at 4 p.m., bingo begins at 4:30. Takes place the first and third Sunday of the month. For more information call 581-5195.

DC-6 GOES OFF THE AIR



Roy Corral/Alaska Newspapers

A small crowd in the background gathered at Northern Air Cargo on Sept. 30 to witness the final flight of its DC-6 cargo aircraft. The company, which added three Boeing 737-200 jet aircraft to its fleet in 2007 and is considering expanding with additional aircraft, decided to retire its two active DC-6s. The 1950s-vintage aircraft provided service throughout Alaska's remote villages for NAC for the past 39 years. The company will donate one of its DC-6 to the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum.

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Tracking Palin's opposition to Native rights

BY LLOYD MILLER AND HEATHER
KENDALL MILLER
For Alaska Newspapers

Perhaps no issue is of greater importance to Alaska Native peoples as the right to hunt and fish according to ancient customary and traditional practices, and to carry on the subsistence way of life for future generations. These rights are not just a matter of custom, they are a matter of necessity in a state where Native villages are spread across a largely roadless area covering 375 million acres, and where subsistence foods are still fully 60 percent of the local diet.

But Gov. Sarah Palin has consistently opposed those essential and fundamental rights.

As soon as Palin was sworn in as governor she set a firm course against Native subsistence rights. One of her very first decisions was to continue litigation that seeks to overturn every subsistence fishing determination the federal government has ever made in Alaska. The goal of Palin's lawsuit (now known as Alaska v. Kempthorne) is to invalidate all the subsistence fishing regulations the federal government has ever issued to protect Alaska Native fishing in navigable waters. If successful, Palin's attack would move every subsistence issue into the courts and thus tie up Alaska Native subsistence for generations. The reason is no secret: to diminish subsistence fishing rights in order to expand sport and commercial fishing.

As it turns out, last year the federal court in

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Alaska rejected Palin's main challenge. The court held that in 1980 Congress had unequivocally granted the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture joint authority to regulate and protect Alaska Native (and even non-Native) subsistence fishing activities in most navigable waters. But that defeat has not deterred Palin.

Today Palin continues to argue in court that federal subsistence protections are too broad, and should be narrowed to exclude vast areas from subsistence fishing in favor of sport and commercial fishing. Palin opposes subsistence protections in marine waters, she opposes subsistence protections on many of the lands that Alaska Natives selected under their 1971 land claims settlement, and she opposes subsistence protections in many of the rivers where Alaska Natives customarily fish. Palin even opposes subsistence fishing protections on Alaska Native federal allotments, even though those riverside allotments were deeded to Native people purposely to foster Native subsistence activities. In less than two years, Palin has proven herself no friend of Alaska Native subsistence.

In her short tenure, Palin has also tried to overturn critical federal protections for Alaska Native customary and traditional uses of game, again simply to enhance sport hunting. Palin's attack here has targeted (among others) the Ahtna in Chistochina, and

although the federal court last year rejected this challenge, too, Palin has refused to lay down her arms. The battle has thus moved on to the appellate courts. In both hunting and fishing matters, Palin has challenged critical protections that Native people depend upon for their subsistence way of life, merely to enhance sport fishing and hunting opportunities. She has tolerated leadership on her state regulatory boards that is openly hostile to Native people, including people who have gone so far as to suggest, when chairing public hearings, that all Native people are drunks. Palin's lawsuits are more than insensitive; they are a direct attack on Alaska Native people.

Sadly, Palin's campaign has not stopped with her attacks on subsistence. At the very same time that she has challenged federal subsistence rights, she has waged a second battle against tribal sovereignty. While Palin pays lip service to the fact that Alaska tribes are federally recognized, it is an empty statement because she insists they have no authority whatsoever to act as sovereigns despite that recognition — unless, she argues, the state first permits a tribe to take some particular action. So unyielding is Palin on tribal sovereignty issues that she has sought to block Alaska tribes from even exercising authority over the welfare of Native children — again, unless the state through its courts first authorizes a tribe to act. It is a position that is so extreme that, not only have the federal courts rejected it, but even her own state courts have rejected it. Nonetheless, Palin stubbornly refus-

es to relent, regardless of the consequence for village children caught in the middle of the resulting jurisdictional nightmare.

A third prong in her assault on Native people has been Palin's refusal to accord proper respect to Alaska Native languages and Alaska Native voters, by denying language assistance to Yup'ik-speaking voters. As a result, this July the governor was ordered by a special three-judge panel of federal judges to provide various forms of voter assistance to Yup'ik voters residing in Southwest Alaska. Citing years of state neglect, Palin was ordered to provide trained poll workers who are bilingual in English and Yup'ik; sample ballots in written Yup'ik; a written Yup'ik glossary of election terms; consultation with local tribes to ensure the accuracy of Yup'ik translations; a Yup'ik language coordinator; and pre-election and post-election reports to the court to track the state's efforts.

Palin's record is clear, and measured against some of the rights that are most fundamental to Alaska Native tribes — the subsistence way of life, tribal sovereignty and voting rights — that record is a failure.

Lloyd Miller and Heather Kendall Miller each practice law in Anchorage, representing Native American interests. The views expressed here are theirs alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of their respective employers or their clients.

Fishery council delivers responsible management for catches

DAVID WITHERELL
for The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

The recent opinion piece in the Sept. 19 Fisherman by George Pletnikoff, "Fish, baby,

COMMENT

fish' isn't responsible management," is apparently based on a fundamental misunderstanding of federal fisheries management, and thus compels me to respond.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council was established in 1976 to allow local fishermen to participate in the development of fishing regulations right here in Alaska, rather than in Washington, D.C. Management measures developed by the council must be approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service, and must comply with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as well as all other applicable federal law.

The council is accountable to the American public through these laws and regulations, and not to the fishing industry, Greenpeace, or any other group.

Pletnikoff argues that because some council members are fishermen, the council sets catch limits too high and allows overfishing to occur, and thus reforms are needed. Yet this argument is patently false.

In the North Pacific, catch limits are established annually based on comprehensive stock assessments prepared by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Biologically sustainable catch limits are set by scientists on the Scientific and Statistical Committee, and not by council members. The scientific committee has never set a catch limit that allows overfishing. This practice has proven so successful in the North

Pacific that it is now federal law and applies to all regional fisheries in the United States. By law, the council can never assign total allowable catch limits higher than the sustainable limits set by the scientific committee. As a result, no stock of groundfish off Alaska is overfished or subject to overfishing, period.

Ironically, every point that Pletnikoff raises in his opinion piece illustrates how the council provides responsible stewardship of the marine resources off Alaska.

For example, he notes that Pacific Ocean perch and yellowfin sole stocks were depleted by foreign vessels in the 1960s. What he fails to mention is that these same stocks were rebuilt by conservative management measures implemented by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and are now at very high biomass levels and support sustainable fisheries.

Pollock stocks increase and decline in response to environmental effects on production and survival of young. As a result, biomass can increase or decrease from year to year. Biologically conservative catch limits, which are established by scientists rather than council members, are adjusted to constrain catches relative to projected stock biomass and trends.

For example, biomass of Bering Sea pollock is currently declining from the 2004 peak abundance level. In 2008, catch limits were reduced by 24 percent, resulting in substantial economic losses to the fishing industry. Yet Pletnikoff discusses the recent reduction in pollock catch limits as an indication of mismanagement. The exact opposite is true. The first tenet of good

fisheries conservation is to reduce catches during years when stock productivity is low.

Alaska's fisheries generate thousands of jobs, contribute millions of dollars to the economies of coastal communities across Alaska and provide high quality nutrition for people around the world. Yet Pletnikoff maligns industry and commerce, and implies that marine fish extraction is inherently bad and should be curtailed. The fact is that federal law requires fisheries to be managed for optimum yield, which includes commercial and recreational harvests for the benefit of U.S. citizens.

The North Pacific is recognized as having one of the best science-based fisheries management programs in the world, and has become a model for responsible fisheries management in the United States. In fact, most of the world's fish catch that is certified as environmentally safe and sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (an independent, international, nonprofit group) is caught off Alaska.

I urge readers to get unbiased facts from the National Marine Fisheries Service at www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch.

— David Witherell is the deputy director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. He holds a master's degree in fisheries management, is a certified fisheries professional, and has authored numerous peer-reviewed scientific papers on ecosystem-based management and fisheries conservation. He can be reached at David.Witherell@noaa.gov.

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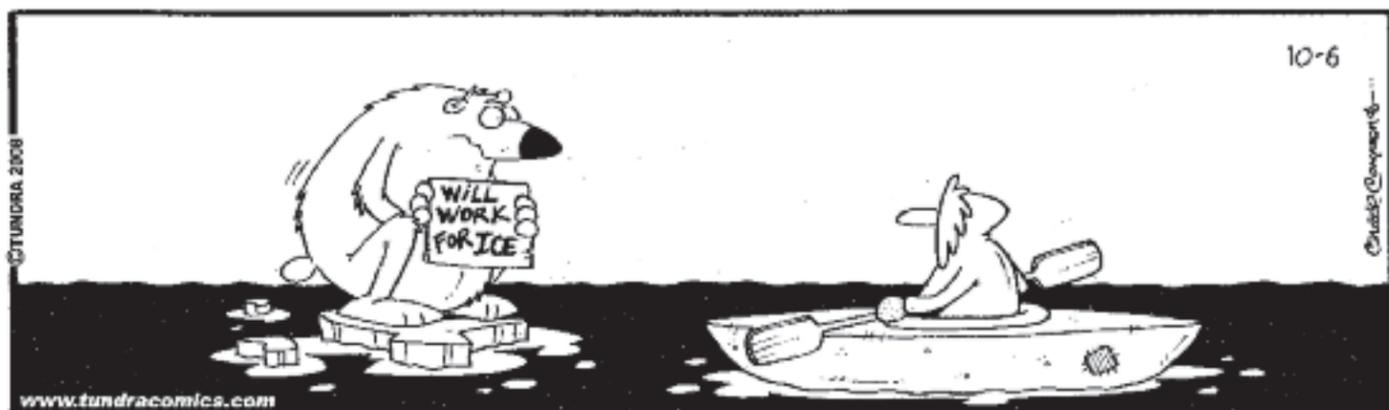
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TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



Demand for king crab likely to boost prices

An eager market will be competing for reduced supplies of king crab this winter and that is likely to boost prices for fishermen.

A fleet of about 86 boats was on its way to the Bering Sea last week for the October 15 start of king and Tanner crab fisheries. For Alaska's largest king crab fishery at Bristol Bay, crabbers will drop pots for a total catch of 20.36 million pounds of red king crab, compared to 20.38 million pounds last year. Ten percent comes off the top for the CDQ



LAINE WELCH
For Alaska Newspapers

FISH FACTOR

per-pound basis.

Retail sales are key to the king crab market in the U.S. and reduced supplies have pushed up wholesale prices by nearly 40 percent for imported product (primarily from Russia). Talley said some major U.S. buyers may forego king crab until after the prime holiday sales season when prices may soften.

Alaska crabbers have proposed an opening price of \$5.15 a pound for red king crab, according to market expert John Sackton of Seafood.com. That compares to of \$4.35 a pound last year. Fishermen receive a base price and then a final adjustment after the crab is sold.

Alaska crabbers compete with Russia and Norway in world markets, and fishermen there also are negotiating for higher prices this year.

In other crab news, the catch quota for Bering Sea snow crab (opilio Tanner) is reduced by 7 percent to 58.5 million pounds, compared to 63 million pounds last season. The harvest for bairdi Tanners, the larger cousin of snow crab, also decreased to 4.3 million pounds, a reduction of 23 percent. There will again be no fisheries for king crab at the Pribilofs and at St. Matthew Island, although blue king crab

On the Web:

See how wind can power fishing boats at:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mFXxroPmqg

(Community Development Quota) allocation, designed to help the economies of remote Western Alaska communities that border the Bering Sea.

While U.S. king crab buyers might be tightening their belts due to the sluggish economy, that's not the case for Alaska's No. 1 customer: Japan. According to market analyst Ken Talley of Seafood Trend, demand for Alaska king crab is strong in Japan and that should be reflected in higher prices. Imports of frozen crab into Japan through June dropped 27 percent from a year ago, and average wholesale prices increased by 41.5 percent on a

stocks there are on a slow but steady rebound.

Celebrate seafood month

October is National Seafood Month – a distinction proclaimed by Congress a quarter century ago to recognize one of our nation's oldest industries. Government figures show that nationwide, the seafood industry provides more than 250,000 jobs and contributes \$60 billion to the U.S. economy each year. Alaska deserves special merit during Seafood Month, as it produces over half of our nation's seafood – more than all the other states combined. For 19 years in a row, Dutch harbor has ranked as the nation's No. 1 port for seafood landings. The seafood industry is Alaska's No. 1 private employer. It ranks second only to Big Oil for the tax dollars it pumps into state coffers.

More fish facts: Americans eat just over 16 pounds of seafood per person each year. (Compared to 63 pounds of beef.) America's seafood favorites have remained largely the same for five years: shrimp, canned tuna, salmon, pollock and tilapia. The nation's seafood appetite is being fed mostly by foreign imports—nearly 80 percent of all fish and shellfish eaten in the U.S. comes from other countries.

Speaking of other countries — that 16 pounds of seafood that Americans eat pales when compared to other parts of the world. The Japanese, for example, eat 146 pounds of seafood per person each year. U.N. figures

show that in Greenland, it's 186 pounds and 200 pounds per person in Iceland. The country with the lowest per capita seafood consumption is Afghanistan at zero.

And where in the world do people eat the most fish? The South Pacific islands of Tokelau, where each person eats more than 440 pounds of seafood every year.

A green expo

The first Green Industrial Business and Career Expo is set for Oct. 10 at the Puget Sound Industrial Excellence Center. Generating electricity from geothermal energy is a main topic and will include a presentation by Bernie Karl of the Chena Hot Springs Resort. The expo also includes workshops where industrial firms can learn about energy efficiency, how to reduce emissions, and "green collar" jobs of the future. Sponsors include the Seattle Office of Economic Development, Seattle Community College District, the National Wildlife Federation and the Manufacturing Industrial Council of Seattle. (www.nwgreenexpo.org.)

Pacific Marine Expo will take place Nov. 20-22 at the Qwest Center in Seattle. The event features four tracks: safety, workboat, fisheries/fisheries business and charter boats. Keynote speaker is Dr. Jim Balsiger, NOAA Fisheries director, who will discuss Marine Fisheries in Transition. www.pacificmarineexpo.com.

Regulators OK commercial, charter halibut catch split

Plan based on population cuts take from two to one

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Federal regulators have approved a plan to apportion available halibut in two Alaska regions among commercial and the charter fleets.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council on Saturday voted 10-1 for the plan in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska, aimed settling a long-running fish feud between commercial halibut fishermen and charter boat operators who allow thousands of tourist and residents to catch halibut with a rod and reel.

The vote followed three days of public tes-

timony. The plan must be approved by the U.S. Commerce Department secretary.

Commercial fishermen sought the split to limit the growth of charter catches.

Charter boat captains asked the council not to limit the number of fish their clients can take home.

The lone council member voting no, Ed Dersham, said he could not support the plan because it "does not meet the test of fair and equitable."

Dersham has operated a salmon and halibut charter boat business out of Anchor Point on the Kenai Peninsula.

The plan approved Saturday could lead to a lower halibut bag limit for charter boat anglers — one halibut instead of two.

A limit would kick in during times when the halibut population is low.

Charter captains say their customers cannot tolerate a one-fish bag limit and would likely cancel trips.

When federal fishery regulators tried to enforce such a limit this summer in Southeast Alaska, where the charter catch is growing strongest, charter boat captains went to court to block the regulation.

Council member Gerry Merrigan, a commercial halibut fisherman from Petersburg, made the winning motion Saturday. He defended his plan as fair to both fleets.

Merrigan said commercial fishermen have strict catch limits that float up or down with halibut abundance but the charter fleet faces

no such restrictions.

Part of his plan would allow charter captains to lease catch rights from commercial fishermen to allow charter anglers to keep more than one halibut per day.

Charter captains decry the high cost of leasing. They say the commercial fleet historically has caught the bulk of the halibut and will continue to under the council plan.

The council is made up mostly of government and industry representatives from Alaska, Washington and Oregon. It helps regulate fisheries off Alaska by making recommendations to the U.S. commerce secretary.

Some council decisions can take a couple of years or more for regulations to take effect.

World War II submarine USS Grunion found off Aleutians

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Navy has confirmed the wreckage of a sunken vessel found last year off Alaska's Aleutians Islands is that of the USS Grunion, which disappeared during World War II.

Underwater video footage and pictures captured by an expedition hired by sons of the commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Mannert L. Abele, allowed the Navy to confirm the discovery, Rear Adm. Douglas McAneny said

in a news release last week.

McAneny said the Navy was very grateful to the Abele family.

"We hope this announcement will help to give closure to the families of the 70 crewmen of Grunion," he said.

The Grunion was last heard from July 30, 1942. The submarine reported heavy anti-submarine activity at the entrance to Kiska, and that it had 10 torpedoes remaining forward. On the same day, the Grunion was

directed to return to Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base. The submarine was reported lost Aug. 16, 1942.

Japanese anti-submarine attack data recorded no attack in the Aleutian area at the time of the Grunion's disappearance, so the submarine's fate remained an unsolved mystery for more than 60 years, the Navy said.

Abele's son's, Bruce, Brad, and John, began working on a plan to find the sub after finding information on the Internet in 2002 that

helped pinpoint USS Grunion's possible location.

In August 2006, a team of side scan sonar experts hired by the brothers located a target near Kiska almost a mile below the ocean's surface. A second expedition in August 2007 using a high definition camera on a remotely operated vehicle yielded video footage and high resolution photos of the wreckage.



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Report shows jobs growth, loss moves with oil prices

Alaska lags behind Lower 48 in industry employees

ERIC LIDJI
Petroleum News

When North Slope oil production peaked 20 years ago, around 8,500 people worked in the Alaska oil industry. With production today down 70 percent from those highs, the oil industry now employs around 12,600 people in Alaska, a record for the state.

The difference? The price of oil today is five times higher than the price in 1988.

Over the past two decades, the growth and contraction of oil industry employment in Alaska has moved nearly in lockstep with global oil prices, despite statewide production rates declining almost every year and a variety of tax and royalty systems.

The jobs figures come from a new report by the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development that examines the role the oil industry plays as an employer in Alaska, both compared to other industries in the state and to other oil producing states across the country, like Texas, Louisiana, California and Wyoming.

"We have record numbers of people in Prudhoe Bay, and we're producing a third as much oil," said Neal Fried, the state labor economist who wrote the report. "I just find that fascinating."

The report shows Alaska entering a phase where oil production is spread across more fields and producing oil from the old giants requires more workers than ever before. Also, while Alaska follows national employment trends, it often lags behind the Lower 48.

As an employer, the Alaska oil industry makes big waves with small numbers.

The roughly 13,000 people employed by oil companies and the oil field support industry in Alaska make up only 4 percent of the statewide work force, but collect around 10 percent of all wages earned in the state.

Moreover, the oil industry accounts for nearly 30 percent of the total gross state product.

Prices have long driven jobs

Nationally, oil prices have long driven employment, despite production rates.

Take Wyoming, a major gas producing state with a long history of oil production.

When employment fell to 6,250 in 1971, the state produced around 150 million barrels of oil at an average price of \$4 a barrel. A decade later, with prices closer to \$35 a barrel, employment peaked at 22,500, even though production dropped to 120 million barrels.

The recent spike in oil industry jobs in Alaska comes during an extended run up in

prices, which have doubled over the past two years, and jumped five times since 2001.

"If we're looking at \$50 oil, I'm sure employment would not have grown the way it did," Fried said. "Maybe it wouldn't have grown at all, or grown very little."

Something similar happened in the years immediately following the peak of Alaska oil production in 1988. The first Gulf War pushed prices up around the world, and by 1991, with oil production down 10 percent, oil industry employment in Alaska reached 10,700 jobs, a milestone unsurpassed for 15 years.

In 1998, with prices averaging around \$19 a barrel and production declines gaining momentum, oil companies started developing a slate of new North Slope fields like Alpine, Tarn and Badami, leading to the first year of major jobs growth since 1991.

But as oil prices fell 30 percent that year, down to \$13 per barrel, record jobs losses followed. Oil industry employment dropped below 8,000 for the first time since 1983.

Prices and employment don't always run along parallel tracks, either.

Between 1994 and 1998, the oil industry in Alaska gradually lost jobs even as oil prices slightly rose, albeit remaining at or near historical lows.

Alaska lags behind Lower 48

But while fluctuating oil prices often predict jobs growth and loss, Alaska usually lags behind other oil-producing states in jobs growth.

Last year, Texas produced nearly twice as much oil as Alaska, but employed nearly 17 times as many people. Some of that can be attributed to the oil company headquarters based around Houston and Dallas, but California under-produced Alaska by 8 percent last year, but still employed 60 percent more people within the industry.

Unlike the mix of large and small oil fields dotted across Texas and California, most of the oil produced in Alaska comes from just two fields: Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk.

So while Alaska supplied 14.5 percent of the total oil produced domestically last year, the state is home to just one-third of 1 percent of the total production sites in the country. This is probably why Alaska employed less than 3 percent of the oil and gas work force in the country in 2007. Employment at Prudhoe Bay remained fairly steady between 1990 and 2004, despite a gradual decline in oil production.

Some of that is starting to change though.

The past three years have seen work to bring Alpine satellites online, to develop previously uneconomic heavy and viscous oil resources and to replace corroded pipelines at Prudhoe Bay, as well as unprecedented activity by independents and new players.

While the support industry continues to grow much faster across the Lower 48, Alaska outpaced the rest of the country in jobs growth among oil producers through the first seven years of the decade.

Following those 15 years of steady employment, the Prudhoe Bay work force jumped 50 percent between 2004 and last year, topping 9,000 people.

"It takes more people to get a barrel of oil out of the ground," said Bill Popp, president and CEO of the Anchorage Economic Development Corp. "The days of easy oil are behind us."

Other factors play into jobs

Oil prices certainly aren't the only factor in jobs creation, of course.

Following that record employment year in 1991, a restructuring among several major oil producers in the state led to 1,300 jobs being cut in Alaska, even though oil prices remained unchanged. And as prices remained level over the ensuing six years, jobs cuts slowly brought the industry work force back to 1988 levels.

And a major oil spill at Prudhoe Bay in 2006 led BP to hire hundreds of workers to rebuild corroded pipelines, a project likely to have moved forward without high prices.

During that same time, new technologies made it possible for companies to produce more oil from fewer wells and with fewer people. Fried noted in his report that the oil industry is often ranked among the most productive industries in the country.

Taxes still a wildcard

Although the report describes a situation where statewide jobs growth is often at the whim of global markets, it doesn't address how taxes, one of the few economic factors the state can control, might impact the relationship between prices and employment.

At least on the surface, changes to the state fiscal system over the past 20 years appear to have done little to alter the basic relationship between prices and employment, though whether the jobs growth could be greater or the losses could be less is open for debate.

Legislation in 1989 raising or maintaining the tax rate on Prudhoe Bay, Kuparuk and Endicott preceded several years of rising prices and jobs growth.

Meanwhile, jobs losses in 1987, 1992 and 1999 came not only during low-price periods, but also at times when regressive elements in the prevailing tax code meant the state took a greater percentage of the well-head value of each barrel of oil.

Because tax codes don't change as frequently as markets, it can be hard to measure the direct impact on jobs, especially in the short term, according to Matthew Berman,

an economist with the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

"It's unlikely that you would see a direct effect ... Generally, it's a second level effect to market," Berman said.

During legislative hearings last year leading to a revision of the state petroleum tax code, those who argued against increasing taxes, especially during a period of declining production, claimed it would stunt jobs growth, or even lead to losses.

But the revisions also expanded the tax credit program for exploration work.

The upcoming drilling season, the first where recent tax changes would factor in to company exploration decisions, is expected to be among the busiest in recent years. But even with recent volatility, prices remain above \$100 a barrel.

Popp suggested Alaska might see jobs growth during sustained high prices, and could probably do little to stave off jobs cuts during sustained low prices, but that the fiscal system could become a pivotal force in jobs creation during periods of midrange prices.

Nevertheless, Popp believes it will take a few more years to see how the recent tax changes will impact jobs creation.

"I think the jury's still out on that," Popp said.

Growth depends on finds

Even with continued high prices, the state Labor Department report suggests recent jobs growth might be temporary without "other major developments or discoveries."

As Alaska matures as a basin, however, independent companies and new players have already started exploring for relatively smaller reservoirs passed over by larger companies.

New oil production from the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and offshore prospects in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and in Bristol Bay, along with a natural gas pipeline and associated gas production in the future would further diversify the industry in Alaska.

'Joe Six-pack,' finds representation by Palin

Spouse's 401(k) took a hit, vice presidential nominee said

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin portrayed herself Tuesday as a champion of everyday people while noting her family's stock portfolio took a \$20,000 hit last week.

"It's time that normal Joe Six-pack American is finally represented in the position of vice presidency," the Republican vice presidential candidate told radio talk show host Hugh Hewitt.

Palin said if she and John McCain win, they will "put government back on the side of the people of Joe Six-pack like me."

Palin said she and her husband, Todd, have been affected by the economic downturn.

"I know what Americans are going through," she said a day after a record 778-point plunge on Wall Street. "Todd and I, heck, we're going through that right now even as we speak, which may put me, again, kind of on the outs of those Washington elite who don't like the idea of just an everyday, working-class American running for such an office."

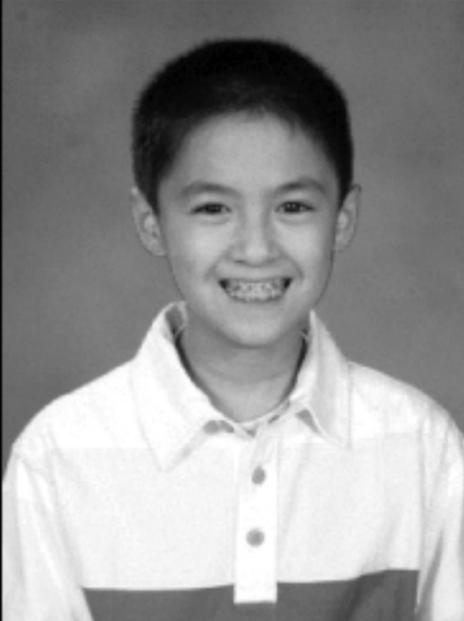
Palin makes \$125,000 yearly as governor, and her husband makes about \$90,000 a year combined from his commercial fishing business and his part-time job as a production operator on the North Slope.

Palin said her husband's 401(k) retirement account lost probably \$20,000 recently as the market dropped.

According to the most recent state financial disclosure forms, filed March 10, 2008, the Palins had about \$164,699 in a private investment account and \$198,102 in a separate retirement account.

Unalaska Student of the Week

September 22nd - 26th



Vincent Naanos

Congratulations!

The 5th/6th Grade Department honored Vincent Naanos as Student of the Week for the following reasons:

- Vincent's school work is always top notch. He always makes an effort to do his very best. Vincent often comes into the classroom before school begins in order to work on assignments and often stays after school. He is a fantastic artist and incorporates his artistic abilities into other subject areas. Two things about Vincent that I really appreciate are his politeness and friendliness. He is a wonderful student to have in class.
—Cathy Lutz, 5/6th Grade Teacher
- Vincent is a great role model to all of his peers in the fifth and sixth grades. He's respectful, helpful, caring, and a very hard worker. His work is always done with great pride and he strives to go over and beyond with tasks that are asked of him!
—Hannah Bunzel, 5/6th Grade Teacher
- Vincent is a great student in music. He is energetic, and asks great questions. As a classmate, he is kind, helpful and creative in his thinking. Mr. Naanos has what it takes to accomplish whatever he sets his mind too, and it is a privilege having such a polite and attentive student in music class.
Congratulations Vincent!
—Jonathan Disher, Music Teacher
- Vincent is the son of Vicente and Virginia Naanos

Congratulations, Vincent!



Unalaska residents eat until they're blue in the face

Blueberry bash brings in about 150 delicious entries

VICTORIA BARBER
vbarber@alaskanewspapers.com

About 150 Unalaska bakers took advantage of a bumper blueberry crop for the annual Blueberry Bash on Sept. 28. They were competing for top blueberry-baking honors, but getting a taste of the results made everyone a winner.

The Blueberry Bash is an event that's half bake-off, half dessert potlatch, and is put on every fall by Unalaska Pride, a community-based, grassroots organization that encourages civic pride in Unalaska.

"We wanted to change the face of the community to reflect that it was people's home, it wasn't just a work camp, and people cared about the island," said event organizer Annabelle Wilt in explaining the origins of the Bash.



"If you couldn't find a blueberry this year you weren't looking. They were huge and big and wonderful."

—Vicki Peck

Wilt said that at Unalaska Pride's first group meeting in 1998, members brainstormed ideas for activities that would bring the community together and celebrate the nature and culture of the island. Someone mentioned a blueberry themed bake-off "we grabbed it up and ran with it." (Wilt said she couldn't remember why other island berries — such as salmonberries, moss berries, or cranberries — were passed over for the honor.)

Blueberry Bash entries are organized into 10 categories. Some are the kind you'd expect in a baking contest — pies, jams and jellies, breads and muffin and a category for youth ages 12 and under.

Other categories are more unconventional — best imitation blueberry, biggest blueberry (the competition on that one, Wilt noted, is



Courtesy photo/Jane Bye

Richard Bye's blueberry s'mores were one of the more unconventional blueberry treats

fierce), and "miscellaneous non-edible," a category that's seen blue-berry tie-died t-shirts, lip balm, play dough or blueberry jewelry.

To judge the competition, Wilt said Unalaska Pride tried to select the most impartial 18 people they can find on the island — generally that means newcomers — people



Courtesy photos/Wendy Hladick

Dejah and Jenna Wilson smile after winning their prize for blueberry crunch coffee cake in the Youth 12-and-under category. Top left: Vicki Peck holds the grand prize for her blueberry cheesecake

fresh off the boat (or PenAir flight) ideally, who have not yet formed blueberry biases. Then there is the School District science teacher who carefully weighs and measures the circumferences of berries to determine who gets the prize for the biggest blueberry.

There were about 150 entrants in this year's competition, about twice as many as last year. Wilt said that she believes that the big pool of competitors came down to one critical factor this year, the blueberries themselves.

Perhaps it was the snow cover over the winter, or the moist, cool spring, but whatever the cause, "the blueberries were so bountiful year, it was just a fantastic blueberry season this year," said Wilt.

Two-time grand-prize winner Vicki Peck agreed.

"If you couldn't find a blueberry this year you weren't looking," said Peck. "They were huge and big and wonderful."

Peck said that her winning recipe for blueberry cheesecake was inspired by the abundance of two ingredients — blueberries of course, and cream cheese.

Peck said her husband "came in from Anchorage with a big thing of cream cheese, and you don't use three pounds of cream cheese lightly," said Peck.

Peck said her husband picked her all the blueberries for her recipe, which calls for well over a gallon to make a fresh blueberry topping for one cheesecake.

Peck said that she's participated in the

event for years.

"It's a positive thing for the entire community and I'm glad to be a part of it," said Peck. "There were so many really nice desserts there and I think it says a lot about a community when they can come together and bake something that they know will be eaten by the hordes."

Wilt said that every year the Bash takes on a life of its own, but although the structure can be "loosy-goosy" it's always a fun time to get together and enjoy Unalaska bountiful berries.

"It's a great fun family event," said Wilt. "I love the thought of people going up to the hills and picking the wild berries and going home and creating something and entering it and sharing with the community."

Victoria Barber can be reached at (907) 348-2424 or toll free at (800) 770-9830, ext. 424.

Prize-winning plan

Want to try Vicki Peck's grand-prize winning recipe for cheesecake with fresh blueberry topping? The cheesecake should be made a day ahead and left to cool overnight in the refrigerator. The toppings can be made ahead or on the day of serving if given enough time to cool completely.

UNALASKA BLUEBERRY CHEESECAKE

Crust:
2 cups crushed plain vanilla wafers
1/3 cup melted butter
2 tablespoons sugar

Filling:
2 3/4 lbs cream cheese at room temperature
2 cups sugar
1 tablespoon vanilla
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/3 cup whipping cream
4 eggs
1 cup blueberries
Flour

Fresh blueberry topping:
1 gallon plus 2 cups fresh blueberries
5 tablespoons of cornstarch
3/4 cup sugar

Cream cheese frosting:
4 ounces cream cheese
1/2 cup of sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups whipping cream

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Make the crust: mix crushed vanilla wafers with melted butter and sugar. Push the mixture into the bottom and up the sides of a spring form pan. Bake crust at 350 degrees for ten minutes.
3. Make the filling: In a large bowl, mix together the cream cheese, whipping cream, sugar, vanilla and cornstarch until creamy. Beat in eggs one at a time. Set aside about 1 and a half cups of the

filling, then pour the rest into the prepared crust.

4. Roll one cup of blueberries in flour, then sprinkle on top of the batter and lightly push down with the back of a spatula. Top with enough filling to cover. This will create a blue "ribbon" when the cake is sliced.

5. Bake the cake for 1 hour, 15 minutes at 325 degrees with an oven-proof dish of water in the oven to keep it moist and prevent cracks. The cake is done when it set enough so that when you jiggle the pan the entire cake jiggles as a whole (not just the middle). Turn off the heat and let the cake sit inside the cooling oven, then cool it further by keeping it in the refrigerator overnight.

6. Make the topping: Cook down about 1 gallon of cleaned blueberries, starting at low heat and then increasing temperature as the juices are released. Cook about 15 minutes or until all the berries have popped, then mash with a potato masher.

7. Strain the berries twice using a cheesecloth, a berry bag, sieve or other strainer, using a coarser strainer the first time and a finer one the second.

8. Mix 2 cups of the strained blueberry juice with cornstarch and sugar, and cook until it becomes thick and unclouded. Let the mixture cool completely.

9. Gently fold in about 2 cups of fresh blueberries. This should result in a topping that stiff enough to stand on its own.

10. Carefully remove the cooled cheesecake from the spring form pan and set on the serving dish. Make a cream cheese frosting by mixing 4 ounces cream cheese with one half cup of sugar and a teaspoon vanilla. In a separate dish, whip 2 cups whipping cream, and then add the cream cheese and sugar mixture. Put the frosting in a pastry bag and pipe around the edge of the cake (this will help prevent the blueberry topping from spilling over the sides of the cake).

11. Fill in the top of the cake with the blueberry topping, and spread out to the whipped cream

Have an opinion?

Submit your items to

The Dutch Harbor
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Photo courtesy Kristi Morgan

Sarah Morgan, a Pribilof Marine Science Camp student, examines kelp tissue.



Photo courtesy Michelle Ridgway

Alexay Lestenkov closely examines crustaceans he collected from kelp windrows on St. George Island.



Courtesy Photo

St. George Island School students sorting and pressing marine algae from their "Seaweed Safari."

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The Visitor	Don Don't Mess with the Zohan	The White Lizard (Horror)
The Happening	Love Finds a Way (Horror)	Crucible of the Deal (Horror)
Wave Hell in a Cell	Wave Union (Horror)	War Inc.
Hook Brooks Hunter Slayer	Devil's Chair (Horror)	OCT 21ST:
Lower City Vengeance	Legend of the Black Scorpion	Miss of the Splendorman
OCT 24TH	Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull	The Strangers
Shrek	Brotherhood of Blood (Horror)	Exploit - Political Abuse Journal
Dark Room (Horror)	Room 202 (Horror)	Ironlike Ink
The Struggle (Horror)	Trackman (Horror)	The Lazarus Project

BEST SELLERS:

Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	Baby Mama
UFC 88	Kami Life
Second Step City	What Happens in Vegas
Iron Man 2	Scoop King 2
High School Musical 2	From the Hip
For North	John Wayne Blood Brothers
The Hitman	WWE Great American Bash 2008
Run Fatboy Run	Street Kings
Deception	Smart People
Wave Summerland 2008	The Secret
88 Minutes	The Art of War 2
State of Honor	Standup Troopers 3
Speed Racer	It's a Girl
Love Him	The Last Winter
Hooked on You 7 DVD	WWE Countdown Series 2008
Forbidden Kingdom	Super High 10

CHILDRENS / FAMILY MOVIES:

Disney's Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs	Poof's Halloween
Disney's Jungle Book 2	Stephen Reedy Platinum 10/7
Disney's The Princess and the Frog	Vegetable Soup
Disney's The Princess and the Frog	Do Nothing 1 DVD
Disney's The Princess and the Frog	Disney's The Princess and the Frog
Disney's The Princess and the Frog	Trunked (Disney) 10/23

COLLECTIONS / SPECIALS MOVIES:

Desperate Housewives 4	According to Jim Season 1 DVD
Smallville Season 7	Samurai & Sons
Grey's Anatomy Season 4	Complete Series 10.2.8
July & Amy Season 2	Good Times
The Mindy Project	Complete Series 10.2.8
Complete Series 1 DVD	It's a Girl
It's a Girl	Complete Series 10.2.8
It's a Girl	Complete Series 10.2.8
It's a Girl	Complete Series 10.2.8
It's a Girl	Complete Series 10.2.8

Kelp ...

From Page 1

hydrophone cable and the catchment end of a plankton net slipped away into the depths of Zapadni Bay. When science camp director Michelle Ridgway went diving to retrieve the equipment, she swam into a bed of unusual kelps.

"I knew it the moment I saw it," Ridgway said.

Colleagues at the 2008 NPRB Marine Science Symposium had announced the finding of a new kelp species and genus at Kagomil Island just months before. Scientists had reported beds of the new kelp were found only around one single island in the Aleutian Islands, possibly due to volcanic activity causing unique growing conditions for the species.

Researchers assigned the common name "golden V kelp" to the large new kelp species. Specimens collected by Ridgway, students and volunteers with the St. George Island Science Institute were much smaller than those described from the Aleutian population. Locals now refer to it as the "St. George Island mini-V kelp," or simply "mini-V."

Recognizing that the basic structure was similar to the new algae, and like nothing she had encountered in 22 years diving in Bering Sea kelp beds, Ridgway immediately preserved and shipped tissues to the molecular geneticist who named Aureophycus, Dr. Hitoshi Kawai at Kobe University in Japan.

On Aug. 26, his lab reported results from examining the St. George Island kelp tissue showing that both the microscopic cell structure investigations and preliminary molecular analysis of the rbcL sequence exhibited a "perfect match" for the new genus. Further analysis is necessary to determine whether

the St. George Island kelp population is in fact a new and separate species.

Local school students, Ridgway and Pribilof islanders have identified three small, nearshore patches of the kelp. They will continue mapping the distribution of the mini-V kelp, as well as initiate in situ and laboratory studies on its growth, development and survival strategies.

"This species is a 'missing link' in kelp evolution in the North Pacific," said Kawai. "Its means of survival, ability to adjust to climate change and reproductive processes remain a mystery."

Kawai and Ridgway hope to collect fertile specimens in order to attempt to culture this rare species. To date, no reproductive tissue has been found at the Kagomil site, therefore future studies and possibly preservation of the species may rely on lab culture in Japan or here in Alaska.

Meanwhile, eager student scientists have continued collecting information on seawater conditions where it grows, surveyed beaches on St. Paul and St. George islands for signs of the rare algae, and will prepare for more in-depth exploration of the seas around their Bering Sea island home next spring.

The Pribilof Island Marine Science Camp was led by Oceanus Alaska and supported through generous donations provided by the Pribilof School District, Traditional Council of St. George, St. George Island Institute, Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers, SeaPerch Organization, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Alaska SeaGrant, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association, U.S. Coast Guard R/V Healy, North Pacific Research Board Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystem Research Program research expedition III 2008, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Springboard STEM Program and Tanaq Corp.

Crab ...

From Page 1

Alaska's king crab stocks. The project is focusing its research on eventually rehabilitating stocks of Kodiak red king crab and Pribilof Islands blue king crab, but the technology and research also can be used to help restore king crab populations in Kachemak Bay, Southeast Alaska or anywhere else in the state.

The hatchery's production biologists were very successful in spawning both stocks of crab this year, producing 40,000 juveniles or 10 percent of the hatched larvae, compared to only 1 per cent in 2007. The hatchery team's goal for 2009 is to improve overall survival rates through the larval stages to more than 50 percent.

For comparison, a successful hatchery program for Chesapeake Bay blue crab produced 5 percent survival to the juvenile stage in its first few years.

At the same time, project scientists are engaged in several projects that will increase the information available to state and federal researchers and the resource agencies that manage Alaska's important king crab stocks. These include:

- Studies of predation of juvenile crab by a host of predators, such as rock sole and Pacific cod;
- Experiments with tagging, a challenge with crustaceans that continually shed their shells;
- Identification of substrate preferences of both crab larvae and juvenile crab;
- a cataloging of the genetic makeup of wild king crab stocks throughout the state;
- Studies that examine the interaction

between wild and hatchery-produced juveniles; and

- Dietary requirements of larvae and juvenile king crab.

AKCRRAB also plans to conduct habitat studies around the Pribilofs and Kodiak to determine the location of preferred habitats in the two regions, continue with genetic research and gather other information that should significantly improve the tools available to resource agencies to effectively manage the king crab resources of Alaska.

The project is developing understanding of hatchery-based crab culture to produce enough healthy juvenile crab for a rehabilitation and enhancement program by 2011. Much work needs to be accomplished over the next three years, and some research will continue beyond that point. In addition to supporting the rehabilitation goal, the research thrust of the project will substantially increase the body of knowledge available to state and federal resource managers regarding the early life stages of king crab.

On the Web:

For more information about the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology Program, visit the Web site at: http://seagrant.uaf.edu/research/projects/initiatives/king_crab/general/

The best science in the world by itself will not be enough to make the stocking of juvenile king crab a reality. That is a decision that can be made only after the agencies, king crab industry and coastal communities closely examine the costs and benefits of a rehabilitation program. AKCRRAB will analyze the economic feasibility of rehabilitation programs as production costs become known and critical issues such as tagging or marking hatchery juveniles are resolved.

The success of producing juvenile crab is the highlight of recent AKCRRAB activities, but the harvesting of this year's egg-bearing female blue king crab from wild stocks might be the activity most worthy of a spot

on the "Deadliest Catch." A variety of circumstances delayed this activity last season to the point where the crab had to be taken through the ice offshore of Little Diomed Island by local subsistence harvesters with assistance by Nome Alaska Sea Grant marine advisory program agent Heidi Herter. Just keeping the catch alive for the helicopter ride back to Nome was quite a challenge. Funding for the project has come from a variety of sources, including contributions by the

crab industry and coastal communities, federal and state grants, and support from Sea Grant, SFOS and NMFS.

All three authors are members of the AKCRRAB steering committee and were involved in the founding of the program.

Campaign tries to explain Palin's Putin comment

Russian military incursions non-existent in recent years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gov. Sarah Palin cites vigilance against Russian warplanes coming into U.S. airspace over Alaska as one of her foreign policy credentials. But the U.S. military command in charge says that hasn't happened in her 21 months in office.

"When you consider even national security issues with Russia, as (Prime Minister Vladimir) Putin rears his head and comes into the airspace of the United States of America, where — where do they go? It's Alaska," the Republican vice presidential nominee said in an interview with CBS News' Katie Couric.

The spokeswoman for the McCain-Palin campaign, Maria Comella, clarified in an e-mail to The Associated Press that when "Russian incursions near Alaskan airspace and inside the air defense identification zone have occurred ... U.S. Air Force fighters have been scrambled repeatedly."

The air defense identification zone, almost completely over water, extends 12 miles past the perimeter of the United States. Most nations have similar areas.

However, no Russian military planes have been flying even into that zone, said Maj. Allen Herritage, a spokesman for the Alaska region of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

"To be very clear, there has not been any incursion in U.S. airspace in recent years," Herritage said.

What Palin might have been referring to was a buffer zone of airspace that extends beyond the 12-mile strip. Although not recognized internationally as America's to protect, the military watches it.

That zone is where there have been

increased Russian bomber exercises — about 20 incidents in the last two years. When Russian bombers enter that expanded area, sometimes called the outer air defense identification zone by the military, U.S. or Canadian fighter jets are dispatched to check them, Herritage said.

Asked about Herritage's statement, Palin's foreign policy adviser, Steve Biegun, insisted the candidate's position was correct. Russia's "old behaviors" of aggressively flying into U.S. airspace have been exhibited recently, he said.

"Gov. Palin told me that when Russian aircraft buzz American airspace and U.S. aircraft are mobilized at Elmendorf Air Force Base, she is informed by her National Guard commander," said Biegun, who did not offer any additional explanation for the contradiction.

"The point she was making is that the geographical location of Alaska has unique attributes. This doesn't happen to many states in the union," Biegun said. "Her point was that she's pretty up close to some of the big issues of international affairs."

Herritage said Air Force officials discussed with Palin instances of Russian planes entering the buffer zone and the U.S. response during their annual statehouse briefing in February.

It could not immediately be determined how many times Palin had been notified in real time of Russian planes having entered the buffer zone. Maj. Gen. Craig E. Campbell, the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard, did not immediately return calls and e-mails.

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William "Billy" Buck in wartime.

Courtesy photo

Cutthroats ...

From Page 1

The unit was the brainchild of Col. Lawrence V. Castner.

"Most people don't realize that Castner was physically crippled," says Earl Acuff, now a retired brigadier general who served in Korea and Vietnam after his Alaska Scout days. "But he knew the kind of men it would take to get the job done out there."

Acuff said Castner wanted men who knew the terrain, had unusual skills and were stealthy.

At the beginning of the war, Acuff was sent out to a remote Aleutian island to be a lookout for enemy activity. After sending regular radio reports for a while, the Army told Acuff to go silent, but then forgot that order and began to worry that something had happened to him.

"So we go out there to find him - recover his body is what we're really thinking," says Walker. "And as we approach the shore, this guy comes running down this huge mountain like it was nothing. By the time he got to us, he wasn't ever breathing heavy."

So much for the "deceased" Acuff, who promptly hauled the group's gear over the mountain to their quarters. Walker watched in amazement the next day as Acuff collected a crab dinner for his guests.

"I asked where his crab traps were and he looked at me like I was crazy," Walker said. "He just stripped off and dived out of the boat. We watched him on the bottom, picking up crabs, setting them aside, picking up others. Then he came shooting up to the sur-

face and dropped two BIG ones in the bottom of the boat."

"That enough?" he asked. "We assured him it was. I'd never seen anything like it."

But he'd see a lot more like it, as the men spent years building their own boats and dogsleds, hunting and fishing to feed themselves, and getting on and off islands where Japanese soldiers might be waiting.

"The Army had us build a dogsled for freighting," says Buck. "They needed guys who knew how to tie rawhide. We made the sleds out of birch, because they would be durable and light. Then they took our model to a factory in the Midwest and made 10 copies out of hickory." He shook his head. "It was nice and strong wood, but too brittle in cold weather."

"I think we learned more from them than they did from us because they had all this experience in Alaska," said Acuff, 90, a regular Army officer who had been stationed in Montana and Idaho before coming to Alaska. "The scouts were all very talented outdoorsmen. They could live and operate anywhere."

Much of the Scouts work involved airstrips: Looking for the enemy's, of course, but also finding suitable sites for planes to use on islands near those occupied or threatened by the Japanese.

Buck said his best memories involved rescue work.

"I remember when a B-17 bomber crashed out there with six crew members - 29 miles from Cold Bay. I led the party to find them. They'd been out five days, and the leader said they wouldn't have survived another night."

"There was a wounded man with a head cut - he wouldn't allow any anesthesia. So the medics applied alcohol and gave him six stitches in his head."

"Then we had to repair the plane to fly it out of there by stretching tarps over the wing, which was in tatters," he said. "I don't know how it worked, but it did."

But Buck also remembers some good times, from the camaraderie of the Scouts to a visit by film star Olivia de Havilland, whom he personally escorted.

The Scouts sometimes engaged the Japanese, especially when the island of Attu was re-taken. One Scout died in that campaign, which claimed 550 American and 2,350 Japanese soldiers' lives.

Walker remembers being in the first rubber boat that landed on the second major island held by the Japanese: Kiska. "But they had all gone by the time we landed," he said.

Later, the men returned to Fort Richardson and helped survey western Alaska - "we were loaned to the Navy for that," said Buck. The unit was deactivated in 1946.

Buck, now 87, and his two 90-year-old colleagues were awarded medals for their service at the museum event. Buck now lives in Glennallen; Walker came from Palmer and Acuff from Virginia.

Col. Suellyn Novak, retired U.S. Air Force colonel and president of the Alaska Veterans Memorial Museum, said the project to document the Scouts and their work started with an oral history by Buck Delkette, a fourth Scout who died recently and who was honored posthumously with a service medal.

Novak told the crowd that the Alaska Veterans Memorial Museum, which has been seeking a site and funding, might open as early as 2011 in partnership with a National Guard Museum at Kulis Air Force Base in Anchorage, which is scheduled to be closed.

The Battle of the Aleutian Islands effectively ended in May 1943, when American forces defeated the Japanese at Attu Island at the cost of about 550 American and 2,350 Japanese lives. The Army also stormed Kiska Island in August that year, but by that time the Japanese had already abandoned it. Walker said he was in the lead boat for that assault, the last major operation for the scouts.

They returned to Fort Richardson and helped survey western Alaska until the unit was deactivated in 1946.

Mike Peters can be reached at mpeters@alaskanewspapers.com or at (907) 348-2433 or (800) 770-9830, ex. 433.

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Recycling machine gives old oil new life

Invention can save villages thousands of dollars a year

BY ALEX DEMARBAN
Alaska Newspapers

A program that has removed mountains of junk from hard-to-reach villages will expand next summer when it helps villages along the Yukon River turn used engine oil into valuable heating fuel.

With heating fuel costing more than \$6 a gallon in much of rural Alaska, the recycling effort will be a bonus for villages that have stockpiled hundreds of gallons of old oil over the years.

The nonprofit Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council launched the effort in Nenana last year, said Jon Waterhouse, council director. It used \$70,000 in mostly federal grants to buy a little-known machine called a WOTEC – short for Waste Oil To Energy Converter.

By blending used oil with a big batch of heating fuel and cleaning the mixture, the big, boxy machine allowed the village of 550 near Fairbanks to create more heating fuel to warm the clinic, said Edna Hancock, tribal administrator.

The machine saved the village around \$2,000, but could have saved twice that if the tribal government had more manpower, she said. There's a lot more old oil to process and generators in town keep making more.

The savings may not sound like much, but they can help small villages that rely on grants to leverage more state and federal support, she said.

"It shows we're being prudent and trying to clean up the environment around us and utilizing our funding in a better way," Hancock said.

The oil recycling falls under the council's backhaul program to clean the Yukon River watershed by helping villages remove rusting four-wheeler frames, beat-up trucks, old freezers and any other rubbish that can't be burned away.

The junk has sat in villages for decades because transportation costs are so high. The council worried that battery acid, old oil, Freon and other waste would leak onto the tundra and pollute the salmon-rich river, Waterhouse said.

To remove the junk, the council in 2004 lined up shipping firms to haul it out for free. With the council's help, the trash ends up at recycling companies in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Seattle.

Getting oil out of the villages was another matter. Freight companies charge high prices to move it because it's hazardous, Waterhouse said.

That's why the council installed the WOTEC machine in Nenana. After it worked so well there, the council bought a smaller version and paid the distributor in Alaska, Jon Ward, to create stainless steel



Alex DeMarban/Alaska Newspapers

This crew helped get junk out of Alakanuk through a program organized by the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council. Crowley Maritime Corp. hauls the junk for a small fee to Nenana, where the watershed council picks it up to distribute it to recycling companies. From left are Flora Phillip, tribal environmental director, Jessica Tyson, environmental assistant, and Gary Murphy, a temporary employee.

housing to protect it from the weather.

The result is a \$35,000 portable unit the size of an entertainment center that fits in small airplanes. The watershed council plans to fly it to several villages next year, Waterhouse said.

The WOTEC machines were invented in 1996 after East Coast farmers sought a way to re-use old oil, said Otto Jacobi, one of the inventors.

Less than 100 have been sold around the world, with many of the sales in Alaska, said Jacobi, who owns OS Environmental in Roanoke, Va.

They're often used by mining operations or at power plants with large generators that use a lot of oil, including at Eareckson Air Station on Shemya Island in the Aleutians, he said.

The new, portable WOTEC will help Alakanuk, a village of 681 near the mouth of the Yukon River, said Flora Phillip, environmental coordinator for the tribal government.

Last month, she and other tribal workers carted junk to the river bank along their village. They planned to get rid of dozens of snowmachine cowlings, scores of tires and rusty vehicles, plus freezers, fuel barrels and bicycle frames.

Phillip figured the scraps – which included a red Sno Cat and a battered police truck – amounted to some 70,000 pounds.

The backhaul program is no longer free

for many villages. Tug operators like Crowley and Northland Services began charging 10 cents a pound this year to cover increasing fuel costs, said Waterhouse.

Still, that's far below the standard shipping cost and nothing compared to the cost of leaving the junk in the village, said Phillip, the tribe's environmental director.

"Our village looks a lot healthier, cleaner," she said.

As for recycling fuel next year, she said people have been bringing 55-gallon drums and buckets full of oil to a container van in the village. It will be good to put the oil to use so it doesn't sit in the village for years, she said.

Alex DeMarban can be reached at 907-348-2444 or 800-770-9830, ext. 444.

Alaska's Russian neighbors protest U.S. oil plans

FISHERMAN STAFF
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Natives of the Russian Arctic living near Alaska fear U.S. intentions to resume developing oil and gas resources on Chukotka Sea shelf may lead to an ecological catastrophe, reports Russia's RIA Novosti news agency.

According to the report, representatives of Natives in Russia's far eastern Chukotka Peninsula have called on the American people, Arctic countries, the international com-

munity and greens to suspend the development of hydrocarbons in the area until ecologically safe ways of transporting them from the Chukotka Sea shelf are found.

On Sept. 16, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill permitting oil and gas development on the U.S. sea shelf except for the Gulf of Mexico area. It also recommended that President Bush implement the construction of a pipeline to transport gas from the Alaska coast as soon as possible.

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Senate passes legislation changing wages to locality pay

Alaska, Hawaii federal workers helped by Stevens-Akaka bill

ALASKA NEWSPAPERS STAFF
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Retirement benefits are looking better for Alaska's federal employees after a recent Senate vote.

The Senate, on Oct. 1, unanimously approved legislation sponsored by Sens. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, and Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, to replace Alaska and Hawaii federal employee cost of living allowances with the locality pay system that has long been in place in the Lower 48. The legislation was co-sponsored by Sens. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii.

"Under the old version of the COLA system, Alaska retirees simply weren't getting the same deal as those in the Lower 48," Stevens said. "Alaskan federal employees nearing retirement absolutely should not have to relocate in order to guarantee a better retirement. With these changes, Alaska won't be losing those highly skilled, seasoned employees."

"Alaska's federal employees have told us loud and clear that they want to receive locality pay which counts toward retirement, like federal employees in other high cost parts of the country, instead of their present tax-free cost of living allowance," said Sen. Murkowski. "It is important that we implement this change now."

Alaska and Hawaii are the only states in which federal employees do not receive locality pay. Because cost of living allowances is not taxed, it is not considered part of an

employee's base pay for retirement purposes. Locality pay, on the other hand, is taxable income and is part of an employee's base pay. This means employees in Alaska are retiring at much lower pay rates than their counterparts in the Lower 48.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management has been seeking to slowly phase out the cost of living allowances system in favor of the locality pay system. The Stevens-Akaka legislation will speed up the process. The result will be that the new system will be fully implemented in three years rather than the seven suggested by personnel management office.

The legislation is intended to benefit all federal employee groups whose Lower 48 counterparts currently receive locality pay. Employees who will soon be forced to retire because of age and those intending to retire within three years will be able to buy into the

program to ensure that they may participate in the new system.

The bill also includes language to assist postal employees, who are not eligible to receive locality pay in the Lower 48, in retaining their cost of living allowances benefits in Alaska and Hawaii. While postal employees will remain under the cost of living allowances system rather than locality pay, the 25 percent cap on cost of living allowances will no longer apply. The cost of living allowances rate will follow the locality pay rate, which is expected to be 27.65 percent or higher in Alaska.

"No Alaskan should have to worry about their retirement, and that is even more important with the current financial crisis," Stevens said. "It is vital to guarantee Alaskan federal employees the locality pay that they deserve."

7 Palin aides to testify in abuse-of-power probe

Investigator to release results of work Friday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seven aides to Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin have reversed course and agreed to testify in an investigation into whether the Republican vice presidential nominee abused her powers by firing a commissioner who refused to dismiss her former brother-in-law.

There is no indication, however, that Palin or her husband will now agree to testify in the legislative inquiry, which has dogged her for the past several months and could hurt John McCain in the final weeks of the presidential race.

Palin, a first-term governor, is the focus of a legislative investigation into her firing of Public Safety Commissioner Walt Monegan a year after she, her husband and key advisers

began questioning him about getting rid of a state trooper who had gone through a nasty divorce with her sister.

Monegan says he was dismissed because he wouldn't fire the governor's former brother-in-law, but Palin contends he was dismissed for insubordination. McCain operatives called Monegan a "rogue" who repeatedly tried to work outside normal channels for requesting money.

Lawmakers subpoenaed seven state employees to testify in the inquiry but they challenged those subpoenas. After a judge rejected that challenge last week, the employees decided to testify, Alaska Attorney General Talis Colberg said.

Democratic state Sen. Hollis French, who is managing the investigation, said that, following the court ruling, he again asked Palin and her husband, Todd, whether they planned to testify.

"We've had no response," French said Sunday.

Palin says the legislative inquiry has become too political and she believes that only the state's personnel board should investigate the firing. Todd Palin has agreed to speak with investigators for that panel but not for the legislative inquiry.

The governor has the authority to fire the members of the personnel board.

Alaska's Supreme Court, meanwhile, is considering whether to block the findings of the legislative inquiry. The high court scheduled arguments for Oct. 8 over whether the case is being manipulated to hurt Palin before Election Day on Nov. 4.

The decision by the state employees to testify will not affect that appeal, said Kevin Clarkson, a lawyer for five Republican lawmakers who brought that challenge.

The independent investigator conducting the probe plans to turn over his conclusions on the case by Oct. 10 to the Legislative Council, the body that authorized it.

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Listings for the community calendar are free. The deadline for submission is Thursdays at 5 p.m. the week prior to the newspaper's weekly publication date.

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Enrollment numbers passing at charter school

Closure is called unlikely as critical count goes on

MATT NEVALA
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The number of children attending the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School in Anchorage appeared robust last week so as to allow students and staff to concentrate on more pressing matters — things like preparing reindeer and buffalo hides to make drums and making sure every last berry collected during a recent harvesting trip is put to good use.

The Native charter school, the first of its kind in the Anchorage School District, opened its critical enrollment period Sept. 29 with 156 students and ended the first week of the four-week period Oct. 3 with 158 students.

“We’re growing and growing,” said principal Tim Godfrey.

The school, which teaches academics with a touch of Alaska Native culture, must average 151 students during the state’s official counting period to remain eligible for state and local funding. With only 150 students, the school is eligible for \$600,000. With 151 or more students, it’s eligible for \$1.2 million. School capacity would be capped at 200 students.

Enrollment numbers at the Native charter school fell below expectations when school opened with 133 students in August, and the Anchorage School District had hinted the school may have to close. But that plan didn’t seem likely as the calendar turned to October.

“We’re marking those days off as they come,” Godfrey said of the enrollment counting period. “We have to move on and not sit here and think about (the enrollment numbers).”

The Native charter school — open to all students in grades kindergarten through sixth —

■ On the Web:

For more information about the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, visit www.asdk12.org/schools/anccs/pages/index.html.

witnessed a steady stream of families enrolling students after they moved to Anchorage from rural Alaska in August and September. School district and city officials recently announced an influx of 400 new Native students have arrived in Anchorage since the year started.

It is believed many of the families made the move because of higher living costs in rural Alaska, especially energy costs. Godfrey said he couldn’t speak specifically about the status of those 400 new Native students.

“We have to move on and not sit here and think about (the enrollment numbers).”

— Tim Godfrey, principal

“We are taking in students coming in from the villages, our doors are definitely open,” Godfrey said. “I’m under the impression some of the families are moving (to Anchorage) not because they want to, but out of necessity.”

Godfrey said the school will soon offer bus service to some of the students who have difficulty getting to the northeast Anchorage location. The school is expected to move into a nearby permanent location after the winter holiday break in early 2009.

Matt Nevala can be reached at 907-348-2480 or 800-770-9830, ext. 480. The Anchorage Daily News contributed to this report.



Roy Corral/Alaska Newspapers Inc.

Alaska Native Cultural Charter School kindergarten teacher Veronica Kaganak uses teaching methods based in Native ways of instruction and learning.

Advocacy group assails care of Alaska Guard

Report paints problems, but state officials disagree

MATT NEVALA
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A national military advocacy group says the post-deployment challenges facing Alaska’s Army National Guard are more daunting and widespread than any the group has seen.

Veterans for America, a Washington, D.C., group originally known as Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, released its preliminary report after three members of the group spent a week in Alaska.

The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs responded with an Oct. 2 statement. It said the preliminary findings report does not appear to be comprehensive or scientific and is filled with inaccurate assertions regarding the Alaska Army National Guard.

Veterans for America’s report said it reviewed the needs of Alaska’s citizen-soldiers and the resources in place to meet them. It said the needs of Alaska’s Guard members and their families far outstrip the available help.

“I just hope the initial reaction (to the report) is not defensive,” said Adrienne Willis, VFA’s director of communications and co-director of its National Guard program. “We put as many caveats on it as we can, the Alaska National Guard leadership is doing everything it can and working extremely hard.”

“It’s an impossible task and we want to help.”

The state called the VFA report’s conclusion that the Alaska Army National Guard should not continue to deploy in support of the global war on terror “unsubstantiated.”

“We are experienced, skilled professionals who meet the needs of Alaskans and the nation whenever we are called upon,” said Lt. Gen. (Alaska) Craig E. Campbell, adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. “The Alaska Army National Guard is constantly working with its soldiers, families and organi-

zations such as Veterans Affairs to ensure the highest level of services and care are provided.”

The report features an introduction, an overall list of problems and proposals for assisting the Alaska National Guard.

VFA said the greatest challenge facing the Alaska National Guard members is access to care. The report said:

* More than one-quarter of Alaska Guard members live in rural areas, more than 60 miles from the nearest Veterans Affairs (VA) health care, and many live in such remote areas that they do not have access to Tricare — Department of Defense-sponsored military health care facility — providers.

* For Guard members living in remote villages, it can cost more than \$1,500 to travel to Anchorage for appointments. VA will reimburse this money, however, the soldiers need to pay upfront. In Bethel, Alaska Native elders and local village safety officers had to help soldiers play for their travel and lodging.

* There are no Tricare providers in the villages, so as a practical matter many rural Guard family members lost all health care when their loved one was deployed.

* Alaska benefits for state employees who are deployed are paltry relative to other states.

* Alaska’s Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program, which aims to improve post-deployment screening and information sharing, is just getting started.

Willis wouldn’t give the names of Guard members VFA spoke to during the trip, which included stops in Anchorage, Wasilla, Fairbanks, the Kenai Peninsula, Bethel and Kwethluk.

In defense of the findings, the state said Gov. Sarah Palin has advocated for increased benefits to Alaska National Guard members. This year, she signed into law a provision that waives the fee for hunting and fishing licenses to Alaska National Guard members. Educational

benefits for Alaska National Guard members have also increased under her leadership.

With the backing of Palin, federal law changes have also increased benefits to soldiers. Alaska is one of five states that provide veterans with home loans from the proceeds of issuing the tax-exempt Qualified Veteran Mortgage

Bonds. The Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home was accredited by Veterans Affairs, and now qualified veterans living at the facility will have up to 30 percent of their personal monthly expense for care paid for by the VA.

VFA made a number of proposals to assist the Alaska National Guard. Some of the suggestions included:

* The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium should accept reimbursement from the VA to cover post-combat care for rural Guard members who have served overseas post Sept. 11, 2001.

* Palin should make the face-to-face mental and physical screening mandatory as part of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program.

* The state must ensure Alaska has an adequate number of geographically-distributed family assistance centers.

* Palin should expand the state’s grant program that provides emergency financial assistance for Guard members and their families.

“We’re trying to help,” Willis said. “We’re not trying to get anyone fired. We’re addressing the issues.”

Willis said VFA will produce a more detailed report sometime soon.

Matt Nevala can be reached at 907-348-2480 or 800-770-9830, ext. 480.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Workshop offers home heating help

An upcoming workshop offered by the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will offer ideas and techniques to help residents lower home energy bills.

Extension energy and housing specialist Rich Seifert will lead a cold climate home-building techniques workshop on Oct. 18. The workshop will focus on insulating homes and will cover options for retrofit, and radon and indoor air quality, ventilation, roofs and permafrost. The workshop will run from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. in Schaible Auditorium. Participants receive a free manual with a CD.

For more information, contact Seifert at 907-474-7201 or at ffrds@uaf.edu.

Company offers 'Sarah-Cuda' bow

A western Ohio manufacturer has designed a custom-designed hunting bow inspired by Republican vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

Lakota Industries Inc. in Xenia announced its "Sarah-Cuda" bow last week in honor of

the Alaska governor's "lifelong passion for the sport of hunting."

The pink camouflage bow weighs 3.4 pounds and is designed to accommodate female hunters and archers.

Lakota chief executive Dick Williamson says the bow also pays tribute to women who "bear the responsibility of family and work while strengthening the moral fiber of society."

The company will donate 10 percent of Sarah-Cuda proceeds to the National Association for Down syndrome. The 44-year-old Palin is a mother of five who gave birth earlier this year to a son with the genetic condition.

Stebbins man dies in ATV crash

A 37-year-old Stebbins man is dead and another man injured after their all terrain vehicle crashed near the Western Alaska village of Saint Michael.

Alaska State Troopers say Glen Tom died over the last weekend of September and 51-year-old Leo Kobuk Jr. of Stebbins was treat-

ed for injuries.

Troopers say Tom was the driver of the ATV and Kobuk was his passenger at the time of the crash.

According to troopers, Tom lost control of the vehicle, which dove into a ditch. Neither man was wearing a helmet.

Noorvik man faces 20 years

A 35-year-old Noorvik man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for sexual abuse of a minor.

David Foster was sentenced in Kotzebue Superior Court to serve 30 years in prison with 10 years suspended and 25 years probation.

Alaska State Troopers in February received a report that Foster had sexually abused a victim living in his home and that the abuse had occurred for more than a year.

Foster was arrested. He pleaded guilty in June.

Noorvik is a community of 636 on the Kobuk River about 45 miles east of Kotzebue.

Museum of North finalists picked

Three finalists have been chosen to fill the director's position of the University of Alaska Museum of the North.

Chosen for onsite interviews at the museum in Fairbanks were:

* Meredith Lane, a private consultant who was most recently the public and scientific liaison for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility in Copenhagen, Denmark.

* Frederick Sheldon, the director of the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Sciences and professor in the LSU Department of Biological Sciences.

* Shelby Tisdale, the director of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture and the Laboratory of Anthropology in Santa Fe, N.M.

The director's position will come open at the end of the year with the retirement of Aldona Jonaitis, who has led the museum for 14 years.

MATTER OF RECORD

Any charges reported in these statements are accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

POLICE

Sunday, Sept. 21 – 9:57 a.m. A man called regarding his brother, who he had not seen since his brother received his permanent fund dividend check. Officers found the intoxicated brother at a friend's residence and asked that he contact his family. 1:19 p.m. Emergency Medical Services volunteers provided medical care to a man with a head injury. 1:20 p.m. Officers assisted EMS personnel with a patient. 5:20 p.m. A landfill employee advised he was doing some work which might activate the automated fire alarms. 9:05 p.m. Dispatch received a third-party request for a tow truck for a disabled vehicle blocking a roadway.

Monday, Sept. 22 – 2:34 a.m. A 911 hang-up call was received at Unalaska Department of Public Safety. An officer responded to the originating location and determined there was no emergency. 8:51 a.m. A request was received from a private business to tow a disabled vehicle off the company property. An officer advised the complainant of their right to tow the vehicle at their own expense. 3:10 p.m. A complainant reported construction equipment and vehicles were blocking a roadway. An officer advised the site manager of the complaint, and the situation was rectified shortly thereafter.

Tuesday, Sept. 23 – 6:42 a.m. A caller reported a propane grill hanging off the road. Officers were unable to locate said item. 2:30 p.m. A report of a vehicle driving off-road on OC property. An officer advised OC personnel of the incident. 3:25 p.m. An officer provided a subpoena service. 5:28 p.m. A driver reversing out of his driveway continued across the street and backed into a car parked on the opposite side of the roadway. Both vehicles sustained minor damage.

Wednesday, Sept. 24 – 3:10 p.m. An officer initiated an investigation into a defendant who had fled the jurisdiction, contrary to court orders. 6:15 p.m. A woman called regarding her brother, from whom she had not heard for several days. Officers found the intoxicated brother at a residence and advised the sister of his condition.

Thursday, Sept. 25 – 12:56 a.m. An officer issued a citation to a man who was driving a vehicle with expired registration. 1:30 a.m. Officers contacted a group of intoxicated men who were arguing outside a bar. The men indicated the argument was not serious, and they left shortly thereafter. 2:38 a.m. An abandoned vehicle was impounded at the airport. 4:23 a.m. Emergency Medical Services volunteers provided medical care to a woman with a foot injury. 4:24 a.m. Officers assisted EMS volunteers with patient care. 8:59 a.m. A cat was turned in for adoption or destruction. 5:57 p.m. Smoke from burning food activated a fire alarm in a city building. 10:55 p.m. A woman reported someone had stolen her daughter's bike. The situation is under investigation. 11:40 p.m. A security officer observed two men, one of whom was bleeding, push each other and then run into a hotel room. Officers responded, contacted the two intoxicated men and determined there had been no assault or other criminal activity.

Friday, Sept. 26 – 12:52 a.m. An officer observed several drunken men who appeared ready to drive away from a bar. The prospective driver was contacted and strongly encouraged to take alternative transportation. He wisely chose to do so, and the group left in a taxi. 5:04 a.m. A complainant reported a vehicle speeding in an area frequented by pedestrians. Officers did not locate the suspect vehicle. 10:26 a.m. An officer conducted random taxi inspections after receiving a complaint about some cabbies offering unauthorized fares. The officer found no evidence of wrongdoing. 7:18 p.m.

A drunken, mumbling man reported his wife was missing and he was unable to locate his wallet, which contained a significant amount of money. The drunken man knew where his wife was and found his wallet after he looked for it. 10:31 p.m. A caller reported he heard what sounded like footsteps and a door slamming, in what should have been a deserted warehouse. An officer responded and found no footprints around the door in question, and determined the noise was likely the wind blowing the door shut. 11:17 p.m. Dispatch received a 911 call with suspicious background noise and conversation; attempts to phone back were unsuccessful. When contact was finally made with the caller, he reported there was no emergency. 11:27 p.m. A caller reported what sounded like a jet engine near the landfill. An officer responded and found nothing of interest. 11:36 p.m. A man reported one of his tenants was kicking doors and yelling, and then kicked the landlord. Karl Kinser, 49, of Seattle, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and subsequently struck one of the arresting officers. He was additionally charged with assault in the fourth degree. 11:40 p.m. An officer observed a man sleeping at a table in a bar. The man was awakened and advised not to return to any licensed alcohol establishments this evening. 11:51 p.m. A taxi driver requested assistance with a drunken, belligerent, inarticulate fare. The responding officer attempted to discern where the man wished to go, but he continued to create problems for the driver and was eventually asked to leave the cab. 11:59 p.m. An officer observed several youths behaving suspiciously and stopped to speak with them. Two of the three exhibited numerous indicators of intoxication and admitted to consuming a significant quantity of alcohol, which they had purchased at a local liquor store. Drug paraphernalia were also found in their possession. Both juveniles were charged with minor in possession and returned to their father.

Saturday, Sept. 27 – 12:54 a.m. Gashmaw Desalegan, 35, of Unalaska, was charged with furnishing alcohol to a minor after officers investigated a case in which two high school-age students had purchased and consumed a large amount of alcohol. 12:51 p.m. A caller reported that Geoffrey Edwards, whose court-ordered release stated he was not to communicate with his former vessel crew, had spoken with several of them. Edwards, 33, of Washington, was arrested and charged with violating conditions of release. 4:45 p.m. A vehicle without a trailer was parked in the vehicles-with-trailers only parking area at the Alyeska boat launch. An officer issued a citation. 6:20 p.m. Unisea Security requested assistance with an inebriate who refused to leave the premises. The management had asked that he not return because of his obnoxious demeanor and recent vomiting in front of the bar entrance. An officer advised the man that he would be arrested if he returned to the bar. 6:41 p.m. Dispatch received a parking complaint at Intersea Mall. A citation was issued. 7:48 p.m. A caller requested a man, who had been staying at a trailer on her property, be issued a trespass advisement. An officer agreed to do so if the man, who had already left the property, could be located. 11:02 p.m. A caller expressed concern about the size of a bonfire on the beach. An officer verified that the size fell within fire safety regulations.

Sunday, Sept. 28 – 12:19 a.m. A caller reported a vehicle blocking a driveway. The driver removed the vehicle shortly after an officer arrived. 12:26 a.m. An intoxicated man was escorted from a bar and told he was too drunk to return that night to any licensed alcohol establishments. He left in a taxi. 2:19 a.m. An officer observed an intoxicated man standing next to the road, and asked if he needed assistance. The man said he was simply resting.

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OPEN: 9/27/09
CLOSE: 10/27/2008
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Ancient whalers leave their mark on the north

Old homesites still impact water chemistry of lakes

NED ROZELL
For Alaska Newspapers

The high arctic is one of the farthest places from most of the 6 billion people on Earth, but Canadian researchers have found that the far north holds some of the oldest evidence of human impact on a lake's ecosystem.

John Smol, of Queen's University in Ontario, is a frequent visitor to Canada's high arctic, a treeless world of tundra, lakes, and constant winds.

From about A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1600, the Thule people—descendants of the Native whalers of northern Alaska—lived in the area, making homes out of rocks, peat and whale bones. Though the Thule people left the area about 400 years ago, Smol and his colleagues found that the ancient people changed the water chemistry of local lakes and Thule homesites are still affecting lakes today.

Smol is a scientist who reconstructs the past by looking at ancient creatures preserved in the muck at the bottom of lakes. He's most interested in diatoms—single-celled algae with cell walls made of glass. This glass, or silicon dioxide, makes diatoms last hundreds of years; diatom skeletons are a major component of the sediment at the bottom of lakes.

Smol and Marianne Douglas from the University of Toronto have sampled lakes and

ponds in the high arctic for about 20 years. Their goal is to track past climate by seeing changes in diatom species over the years. Almost all the waters they sampled have been very low in nutrients, but lakes near abandoned Thule whaling sites are often high in nutrients and contain many diatoms that are different than those found in other lakes.

One lake showing evidence of ancient whaling activity is located on Somerset Island in Canada's arctic, at a latitude farther north than Barrow.

About 1,000 years ago, Natives from northern Alaska moved eastward into Canada's high arctic, bringing along their whale-hunting skills and tools.

The hardy people used skin boats called umiaks, which allowed them to harpoon whales in open water. James Savelle of McGill University, the archeologist on the team, estimated that the Thule people used up to 60 percent of each whale carcass.

"They used bones (for rafters and wall supports), blubber for heat, and the meat as food," Smol said. "They were an ecologically efficient people."

Preserved by a climate that resembles a freezer for nine months and a refrigerator for the other three, the crumbled whale-bone structures of the Thule are easy to find in the wide-open country, and the Somerset Island site contains the remains of 11 whale bone houses and at least 125 bowhead whales. In a lake nearby, Smol and his colleagues found elevated levels of phosphorus, organic carbon, and calcium. The nutrients have nurtured the growth of mosses and certain



Courtesy photo / J.M. Savelle

Researcher Allen McCartney stands near a dwelling made from whale bones on Bathurst Island in Canada's high arctic. Scientists have found that the people who lived at these ancient sites changed the chemistry of nearby lakes, perhaps the oldest evidence of mankind altering an aquatic ecosystem in Canada or the U.S.

groups of diatoms.

The Thule people left the site about 400 years ago, probably due to a decline in bowhead whales caused by the increasing summer ice cover, Savelle said. When they moved on, they left behind faint but lasting evidence of their stay.

"It's ironic," Smol said. "We tend to think

of the high arctic as pristine, and I think we now have one of the oldest records of human impact on an aquatic ecosystem."

Ned Rozell is a science writer at the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska Fairbanks. This column first ran in 2004.

Top five Alaska businesses culled from ranks of Native corporations

Business magazine notes highest gross revenues

MARY LOCHNER
mlochner@alaskanewspapers.com

The top five revenue-generating Alaska businesses are Native corporations, and the top two – Arctic Slope Regional Corp. and Bristol Bay Native Corp. – reported more than \$1 billion dollars in gross revenue each for the fiscal year 2007.

The businesses were honored as Alaska Business Monthly magazine held its annual awards banquet for the state's top 49 money-makers on Sept. 29 at the Dena'ina Convention Center in Anchorage, in partnership with the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce.

Out of the 49 Alaska businesses that made the list, 18 were Alaska Native corporations. Businesses that made the list represented \$11.8 billion in total combined annual revenue, and of that total, Alaska Native corporations comprised \$7.8 billion.

Debbie Cutler, editor of Alaska Business Monthly, said Alaska Native corporations have come up in a big way since the magazine started publishing the list, called the AK 49ers, 24 years ago.

"When we first started, there were only a

handful of Native corporations on the list," Cutler said. "Arctic Slope had just 55 million in total revenue, placed No. 13 on the list and had 400 employees. Now they employ 7,400, their revenues topped \$1 billion, and they're first on the list. We've seen other Native corporations follow this trend."

Regional corporations such as Arctic Slope and Bristol Bay aren't the only boats riding on the wave of that trend. Chenega Corp., a village corporation whose shareholders originally hail from a community near Cordova, placed No. five on the list, with \$768 million in gross revenue in 2007. The Eyak Corp, which ranked at No. 12, saw the biggest jump in gross revenues out of all the AK 49ers, expanding from \$95.73 million in gross revenues in 2006, to \$231.01 million in 2007 — a 141 percent increase.

Alaska Native corporations were formed as part of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which was passed by Congress to settle the land claims of indigenous tribes, who were, in some cases, being encroached upon by competing land claims of the state of Alaska after the Statehood Act. As part of the federal settlement, Alaska Native groups gave up claims to most of the lands and received, in exchange, certain assets, including the option to form regional and village corporations in part with money from the federal government. Shares were originally made available to

Alaska Natives born before Dec. 18, 1971, although amendments to the act allow corporations to extend shares to younger generations who might not have received shares as gifts or inheritance from older relatives. Today there are 13 regional corporations and more than 200 village corporations.

Benefits beyond dividends

Corporation leaders attending the awards ceremony noted that Native corporations provide benefits to their shareholders that go beyond merely paying out dividends.

For example, Chenega's village corporation has played an important role in rebuilding the community after the 1964 earthquake tsunami, director of corporate communications Karen Rogina said. The natural disaster claimed the lives of 26 members of the Chenega village, and many of the villagers were displaced, although some settled back in Chenega Bay, Karen Rogina said. The village corporation, founded in the 1980s, helps maintain a sense of community among the people of Chenega, invests money in cultural preservation programs, and has helped to rebuild the new village site, Rogina said.

Tara Sweeny, Arctic Slope Regional Corp.'s vice president of external affairs, said the corporation works to promote its shareholders' Inupiat heritage and traditional way of life. She said ASRC based its 2007 strategic plan

on three pillars: economic growth, generational transmission of values to younger shareholders and focus on sustainable development in the region.

"We can balance economic development with subsistence needs," Sweeny said. "We provide a voice to ensure development takes place on our terms, in an environmentally sound manner, to protect our traditional subsistence."

Providing scholarships for education and vocational development is another way Alaska Native corporations could invest in shareholders, said Bristol Bay Native Corp. director of shareholder and corporate relations Jason Metrokin. He said BBNC's education foundation paid out \$230,000 in scholarships last year to shareholders. Chenega Corp. and ASRC also have scholarship programs for shareholders.

Ensuring that regional and village corporations are financially sustainable for future generations is part of what drives Native corporations to succeed, said company representatives at the AK 49ers awards banquet.

"It's important for the corporation that we continue to stay the course as defined by the board of directors," Sweeny said. "It's the integration of Inupiat values, a strong business sense and disciplined approach to investment, that will allow us to handle the challenges of the future."

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