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ANCHORAGE PRESS



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Koot's 50 YEARS!
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Readers: We were lied to.

THEY SAY THE FIRST ISSUE IS THE HARDEST, and that it's smooth sailing after that. (A parenthetical from Nat: This is actually specifically something that Veri assured me of.) Well, we got this second issue to print, but… it wasn't pretty. Our team hauled ass to get art, stories, ads and distribution in on time. It was awesome, and we hope you love it. (If you hate it, feel free to buy an ad in the next edition to broadcast your take!)

September has not been without lows: We got our car stolen at a conference. We didn't get the dream office space we were hoping for. The postal service is crumbling and some of our papers got delivered three weeks late—and we're still building all our systems so they can get delivered at all.

But we've primarily been racking up huge wins. Most importantly, we hired our new, incredible arts and culture editor, Hannah Dorough, a product of Anchorage who's worked in publishing in New York City. Most selfishly, our rental car was recovered—with bobbleheads intact! If not Nat's badminton rackets. (A parenthetical from Veri: If I have to hear any more about these badminton rackets… More about these things on our website.) We also had the privilege of working with two fabulous guest editors who helped curate a Native New Year section that's full of humor, thoughtfulness, vision and voices that are new to the Press.

We've been continuously awed by how much support and excitement (and scrutiny!) the Press has gotten. Here are a few small announcements that we hope will clarify how we're thinking about the next few months:

1) We're excited to feature consistent columns and columnists, but first: We want to work with a lot of different people, get to know their styles, and figure out which voices and perspectives feel most exciting, challenging, and new for us to platform. To that end, we're not going to announce any consistent columnists until the new year. Being deliberate takes time!

2) We want to work with as many folks as possible without a) us burning out or b) giving short shrift to quality of work. So, if you want to work with us, or write an opinion piece for us, please reach out first to editor@anchoragepress.com—it's unlikely we will take any pieces that are pre-written before an initial discussion with us. The journey of collaboration and quality is long and winding, and we really appreciate you bearing with us.

3) If you're stoked to touch paper, we need help with distribution! Email us at publisher@anchoragepress.com and we will get you a delivery route. And maybe a newsboy cap if you hit your targets. :)

4) We're printing on a monthly cadence, and we aspire to throw a party each month to celebrate us. Because why not? And also to keep finding fun ways to hang out, promote local artists and venues and restaurants, and stay loose. If you're reading this—it might not be too late! Come to Van's Dive Bar at 7 p.m. Oct. 1 for a wild ride.

You all are thinking ten steps ahead of us–and that's awesome. Please keep sending us feedback, by email or at https://tinyurl.com/AncPressFeedback.

We also aim to have some more casual hangout spaces where you can drop by and ask us anything — and watch out for some other, low-stakes ways to keep chatting about all the things that keep us coming back to Anchorage for more, including a new WhatsApp group.

With the WhatsApp group, we're testing new ways of reaching and communicating with readers—it's a space for our editors and reporters to share notes, news and details that don't fit on our website or in our print paper but that we think readers might find useful. Check us out here: https://tinyurl.com/anchorage-press-whatsapp

Personal message from Mike Dunleavy

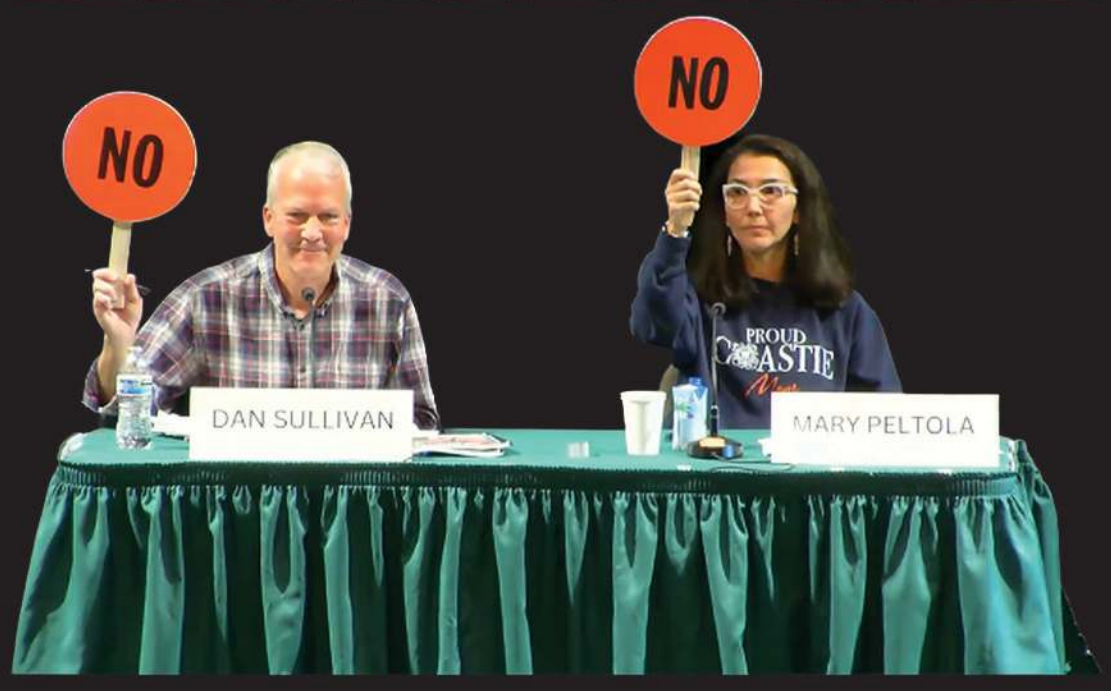




Can Yes Man Dan think for himself?







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Opinion: How pro-business Republicans see an impending "calamity" in the November elections

A resource industry executive weighs in anonymously.

Our general policy is to consider anonymous sources when there's significant value in the information they have to share, and when they face significant risk if their identity is exposed. In this case, we think this piece, submitted by an anonymous natural resource industry executive, provides valuable insights into the way Alaska's business community is looking at this year's election—insights that we wouldn't otherwise have access to. Let us know if you have concerns or questions: editor@anchoragepress.com.

SAY WHAT YOU WANT about Republican Mike Dunleavy, Alaska's governor for the past eight years. I didn't always agree with him. He picked some annoying social issues to take stands on, and he was obsessed with the Permanent Fund dividend.

But the guy was a great backstop to block bad ideas from the Legislature that would have hurt Alaska businesses. And now, it looks like we're in for a big change.

A Democrat from Southeast Alaska, Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, is likely to be our next governor. Both the House and Senate look like they're going to be led by mostly Democratic coalitions.

Which means: Tax increases are definitely on the table, with the oil industry on the chopping block. Calamity is the word many of the people in my conservative-leaning, pro-business world would use. Folks are already talking about how they're going to try to protect themselves in Juneau; lobbyists who have good relationships with Democratic legislators are going to be in demand.

I want all Alaskans to know how people in the resource industries see this. And how annoyed I am at the Alaska Republican Party's inability to develop a coherent strategy for the governor's race, to recruit viable legislative candidates and to stand up a get-out-the-vote effort to help save U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan.

So, I'm writing this op-ed. It has to be anonymous, though—our companies don't want the exposure or political risk that comes with speaking publicly, and official messaging would have to be formally approved and sanitized.

I can also offer some insight into why JKT is likely to win.

For one thing, everyone knows many conservatives aren't going to rank all three GOP gubernatorial candidates, so votes are going to be wasted. But also, some of us can't really get behind any of the Republicans—myself included.

I don't care much about the social stuff, and I think if you're out there promising a full Permanent Fund dividend, you can't do basic algebra. So, I don't have a home with Bernadette Wilson. Dave Bronson is a nice guy, and I respect his military service, but his time as mayor of Anchorage failed the governance test. Treg Taylor seems like a pro-business, relatively reasonable guy, but he's also coming from fifth place in the primary and doesn't seem to be moving the needle.

Jonathan makes me uneasy. He's from Southeast Alaska, where people often take for granted the oil industry's contribution to the state economy, and the contributions of other non-fishing resource industries. He and his running mate don't have kids, and I'm worried that will make it hard for them to appreciate the needs of Alaska families. And while he seems like a pretty sincere guy, and has picked up some business experience since leaving the state House, he hasn't been through the pressure cooker, and I don't know if we can trust what he's telling us on the campaign trail.

All that said, people have started noticing: He's not AOC.

First, some of the names we've been hearing from his camp as far as possible natural resources commissioners are old hands, not populist cowboys.

Also, we know Jonathan wants to raise taxes on oil companies structured as S-corps—specifically, on Hilcorp. But he's also made clear that he thinks the oil industry shouldn't be the only thing on the menu: He's said that individual Alaskans should be part of the budget solution, too, likely through a sales or income tax.

We won't say this out loud, but yeah: There's a degree of openness to playing ball with resource industry tax increases if they're part of broader fiscal reform. Especially if Jonathan follows through on what he's been telling people, which is that he'd want to pursue taxes only through a careful study process—and with our industries participating. If things get cooked up in secret and airdropped onto the House or Senate floor at the last second, that's a recipe for disaster—and while four years is enough time to destabilize an industry, without collaboration, it's not actually enough time to make lasting improvements. Given some of the Democrats who are likely to be part of the next Senate majority, I'm still worried things get out of hand and lead to bad policies passing unchecked.

I do think the next four years are going to suck for whoever's in power—so I also wouldn't be devastated to see the Democrats taking the hits that will come with being in charge. We've gotten lucky with oil prices going up and fixing some of the budget problems this year. But they're not going to stay up forever, and we are all pretty confident that the next governor is going to face a hard reality when it comes to taxes and budget cuts.

And: If we end up handing control of the House, the Senate and the executive branch to the Democrats, hopefully it will light a fire under the Republican Party. It's so frustrating how disorganized and ineffective they've been this year. In addition to the governor's race debacle, there are plenty of Democratic legislators running unopposed.

If the sweep happens, I hope it's a come to Jesus moment.





In Alaska governor's race, millions of state dollars for mining roads and oil exploration are at stake.

The leading candidate for governor wants to "completely reassess" the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority and the projects it's funding. By Max Graham

Some of Alaska's most polarizing development projects — from oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to a mining road in the Northwest Arctic — share a key feature.

They're under the direction of the same state-owned corporation, one that's been a lightning rod for diverging visions of Alaska's economy and future.

In the past year, the board of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, or AIDEA, has approved some $250 million for Arctic oil exploration and two separate mining road proposals.

But only a fraction of that money has been spent. The projects haven't been built.

And now, with Alaskans set to elect a new governor Nov. 3, AIDEA's fate is in limbo.

If Democrat Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, the current frontrunner, wins the race to succeed outgoing Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy, the export authority could be poised for a sharp change in direction.

In a recent interview, Kreiss-Tomkins said he's been "frustrated" by the authority, citing concerns about a lack of transparency and a sense that it's "rogue and off on its own."

If elected, Kreiss-Tomkins said, he would "completely reassess everything that AIDEA is looking at."

Boosters and critics

Other issues — the Permanent Fund dividend, oil taxes, education — have dominated the discourse in this year's governor's race.

But political observers agree that the next governor's approach to AIDEA could also have big implications for the state's finances and nationally significant development proposals across Alaska.

Among the projects being led by AIDEA are the Ambler Road, a proposed 210-mile mining road that would run through northern Alaska and across a national preserve; the West Susitna Access project, a separate mining haul route through a remote stretch of the Susitna Valley, west of Anchorage; and oil development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

All three of those projects face aggressive, organized opposition, including from conservation groups and some tribal governments.

For years, AIDEA has drawn strident criticism that it's wasting public dollars with risky investments and evading accountability. A report written by two economists and released a few years ago by the conservation group SalmonState concluded that AIDEA had cost Alaskans $10 billion over four decades.

But the export authority and its supporters dispute that, noting that it pays annual dividends to the state's general fund that have totaled about $500 million since the 1990s.

Boosters, including Kreiss-Tomkins' opponents, say AIDEA is a useful tool for encouraging resource extraction in a state where early-stage development can often be too expensive to attract private investment.

One of the three Republican candidates for governor, former Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson, told the Anchorage Press he thinks AIDEA's current executive director, Randy Ruaro, has done a good job. If anything, he said, he'd like to see the agency do even more to promote development.

"I wish they'd be a little more aggressive," said Bronson.

"My philosophy is: Get it done," he added. "We've got to monetize, in a responsible way, our natural resources."

The other two Republican candidates, conservative activist Bernadette Wilson and former Alaska attorney general Treg Taylor, did not respond to interview requests. But observers say they're unlikely to take AIDEA in a markedly different direction.

"If the next governor is a Republican, you're not going to see an appreciable change in AIDEA's approach," said Rep. Andy Josephson, an Anchorage Democrat who's been a critic of the export authority in recent years.

Governor has appointment power

The Alaska Legislature created AIDEA in 1967 to promote economic growth by financing businesses across the state. It has made some profitable investments, including a haul road built decades ago to connect the Red Dog Mine to a port in Northwest Alaska. But the authority has lost money on other ventures, including a troubled North Slope oil project and an Anchorage seafood processing plant.

AIDEA inhabits a strange niche in state government: It's a self-funded public corporation, meaning its finances are independent from the state's main operating fund and the legislative budget process.

The authority also does not report directly to the executive branch. But the governor still has substantial sway, appointing the board members who oversee it.

Five of AIDEA's seven board members are appointed by the governor directly, while members of the governor's cabinet — the revenue and commerce commissioners — fill the other two seats.

State law says AIDEA board members serve two-year terms "at the pleasure of the governor," meaning that the governor can remove them at any time. The board often turns over at the start of new administrations.

Kreiss-Tomkins said he would explore his options. He didn't rule out the idea of firing current board members, saying he would be "fully informed by what the legal parameters are."

"If I'm fortunate enough to be elected, I think most people in leadership positions are assuming that they will be off to new adventures," Kreiss-Tomkins added.

Proposed reforms

AIDEA critics also support policy changes like requiring legislative approval for spending above a certain threshold and legislative confirmation for board appointees.

State legislators have proposed various reform bills in recent years, but to no avail — in part because they didn't have a clear path through Dunleavy's office.

"The governor would veto that thing so fast your head would spin," said Josephson, who has supported more oversight.

While serving in the state House, Kreiss-Tomkins backed legislative approval of AIDEA board members.

But in a recent interview, he would not commit to pushing any specific policy changes. He also would not take a position on some of the authority's more controversial projects, including the Ambler and West Susitna road projects — even though leading anti-Ambler advocates have publicly supported his campaign.

In the House, Kreiss-Tomkins voted for resolutions supportive of opening the Arctic Refuge to oil development. In the interview, he reiterated that support, but he said a "strong assumption" was that private companies would show interest in the refuge — and he's skeptical of the state "sinking resources" into an area private industry isn't investing in.

Like Kreiss-Tomkins, Bronson would not comment directly on AIDEA's role in specific projects.

But he said he would support financial decisions, like buying oil leases in the Arctic Refuge, "if the return on investment is there."

"If they can come in and jump-start a program and get us to a return on investment at a sooner date, if they can monetize our resources earlier, then I support it," Bronson said.

One of AIDEA's staunchest supporters in the Legislature, Republican Rep. Kevin McCabe of Big Lake, said electing Kreiss-Tomkins could jeopardize projects like the West Susitna road, which is in McCabe's district.

"We've seen governors shut things down before," he said. "I think it's entirely possible that JKT, should he get elected, could do that."

But McCabe also expressed some uncertainty about Kreiss-Tomkins' approach, given that "he says that he's a pragmatist and that he understands the need for resource development."

"I just am not sure where he would go," McCabe said.

About the election, he added: "We are all watching it very closely."

Look out below! *Invasion of the parachute press*

Art by Madelyn Joan | Words by Max Graham

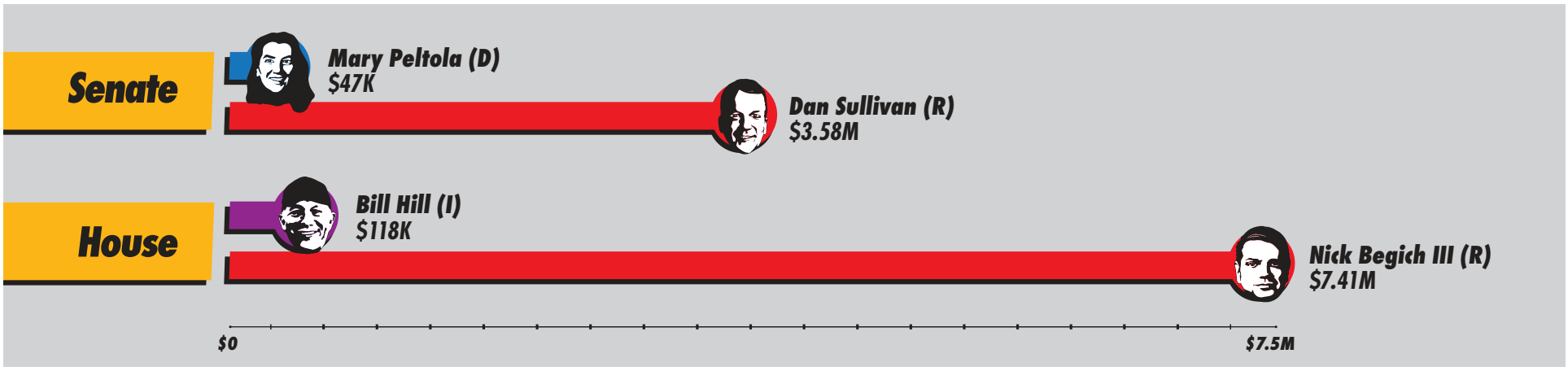


It's election season, which means it's time for hordes of Outside reporters to parachute into Alaska. Each will follow a similar playbook: interview a fisherman or two; attend a candidate forum; talk to a centrist political insider (Scott or Jim); interview an Alaskan who is not a fisherman but who maybe hunts or mushes or identifies as Indigenous; and then—with all of the wisdom and expertise accrued in three days, or possibly one big, fact-filled week!—make the following points:

- Alaska has something called "nature," which is "pristine."
- Alaska is unique. (So unique!)
- Alaskans are nice. But also, they're angry. Boy, do they get fired up when you take away their salmon!
- Alaskans care more about their neighbors than about national politics. Can you fucking believe that?
- Alaska is Republican, but it's turning purple, except it's still quite red, except where it's not. I am confused.
- Alaska has a *different* voting system, where voters rank choices. I am able to explain it to you because I spoke to a centrist political insider.
- Glaciers in Alaska are melting! Especially one called Exit Glacier! Climate change, baby!
- Okay, but really: The only reason you need to care about Alaska right now (or at least until the next election rolls around) is that one Mary Peltola might beat one Dan Sullivan (or two, actually) in a tight election, which could shift the balance of power in the United States Senate.
- Also, there is a guy named Dan Sullivan—not to be confused with U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan—who lives in a small Alaskan fishing town called Petersburg. Fun fact, and you should really trust the experts on this one: Petersburg is "tiny."
- Mary Peltola is very Alaska Native, but she may not be Alaska Native enough. You know who is an authority figure on this? It is I, a non-Native journalist from an East Coast urban area.
- Mary Peltola is nice.
- "Nice" is the wrong word, according to nine anonymous former Mary Peltola staffers.

Show us the money!

A look at the minimum disclosed value of assets reported by four Alaska congressional candidates



*Separate from assets, Peltola reported **$342,400** in total income in 2025 and 2026 from Holland and Hart, the law firm where she worked as an advisor. The firm's clients include businesses like oil and gas company Diamondback Energy, coal mining company Signal Peak Energy and industrial giant 3M, as well as the City of Kotzebue in northwest Alaska, though a campaign spokesperson would not identify any of the clients she worked with.*

*Peltola also reported **$15,000** in total income in 2025 and 2026 from a fellowship at a limited liability company called Prometheus. Her disclosure says Prometheus is based in Anchorage, though no such company currently exists in the state of Alaska's corporate records, and her spokesperson would not share any information about it in response to questions from the Anchorage Press.*

*Separate from assets, Hill reported **$244,000** in gross income in 2025 from his commercial fishing operation — a drift gillnet boat in the Alaska salmon fishing hub region of Bristol Bay. His fishing permit is the single most valuable asset he reported — his financial disclosure pegs its worth at between $100,000 and $250,000, though online permit brokers allow for a more precise valuation of some **$180,000**. Like many fishermen, though, he owes more than **$200,000** on loans he's taken out to pay for his boat, the Vellamo, as well as engine upgrades.*

*Sullivan reported owning between **$1 million** and **$5 million** in stock in RPM International, the coating, sealant and building materials company founded by his grandfather and now led by his brother. The New York Times reported earlier this year that he has sold as much as **$800,000** in company stock over the past eight years, and he reported as much as **$15,000** in dividends and capital gains in 2025.*

*Sullivan also reported jointly owning a rental property in Girdwood, the ski town outside of Anchorage, valued at between **$250,000** and **$500,000**, which generated between **$5,000** and **$15,000** in income in 2025.*

*Begich reported owning between **$500,000** and **$1 million** in Bitcoin cryptocurrency, and sold a stake in a construction management software business, Raken, for between **$250,000** and **$500,000**.*

*He also reported owning sports cards valued at between **$1,000** and **$15,000**; a spokesperson declined to share details about what kind of cards. He also owns silver and gold.*

*Begich owns up to **$15,000** in stock in Tesla, the electric car company led by Elon Musk; plus an investment in a North Carolina self storage and real estate company, Mitra San Antonio, valued at as much as **$250,000**; plus an interest in a multifamily property in Seward, on the Kenai Peninsula, valued at as much as **$100,000**.*

Graphic by Zac Bentz, words by Nathaniel Herz

Data for this graphic was drawn from each candidate's financial disclosure. The disclosures require candidates to list assets and income not in exactly dollar amounts but in ranges — from $15,001 to $$50,000, for example — so numbers listed here are minimums. The disclosures also include assets that the politicians describe as being jointly owned with a spouse; the law does not require candidates to report personal residences except those that generate rental income, so those are not included here.

One of the starkest contrasts in Alaska's federal races for Senate and House this election season is about money.

Two of the candidates, from rural Alaska and running to the left of two Republican incumbents, have few assets to their name.

Mary Peltola, a Democrat running for the U.S. Senate against incumbent Republican Dan Sullivan, has as little as $47,000 in assets, according to the financial disclosure she was legally required to file as a candidate.

Bill Hill, an independent challenging incumbent GOP U.S. Rep. Nick Begich III, reported assets valued at as little as $119,000. (Candidates are not required to report their personal residences.)

Begich and Sullivan, meanwhile, are both multi-millionaires.

The contrast is figuring into both campaigns, as progressives call out what they describe as Sullivan's "soaring" stock portfolio and attack Begich as an "Epstein class elite" with "billionaire buddies."

We wanted to share more of the hard facts about each candidate's financial situation, so we dug deep into their disclosures. Here's what we found.

For challengers, few assets but substantial income

For candidates, it's not exactly the best look to pay yourself a salary from your campaign; donors, presumably, would rather see their money spent on stuff that translates directly into votes.

But the Federal Election Commission allows it, and both Hill and Peltola are doing so. Hill says it's a necessity.

The only candidate who agreed to be interviewed about his finances, Hill lives in the Bristol Bay salmon hub town of Naknek, where he has a home. For the campaign, he's relocated to Anchorage, where he acknowledged — a little reluctantly — that he's living with one of his children to save money.

Paying himself a small salary, some $700 a week, was a "tough call" and something he'd prefer not to do, Hill said. Nonetheless, he added, "trying to live on the road and maintain a life back in Naknek is just not doable, with what we're taking home."

Hill has stressed his financial situation on the campaign trail, where he inveighs often against "the billionaires" and refers to himself as a "thousandaire." But, like Peltola, while he reports few hard assets, he did report substantial income in 2025.

That includes $244,000 from his commercial fishing operation last year — though Hill stressed that that was a gross figure. He paid his crew more than $100,000, he said, and there are other expenses — insurance and fuel, plus required payments on more than $200,000 in loans he took out to buy his boat and upgrade his engine.

Hill also reported an annual pension of $82,000 from his years working as a school superintendent and teacher. But he says his income only goes so far in rural Alaska, where costs are high: Gas in Naknek, he said, recently went from $6.70 a gallon to nearly $9.

"When your food prices and your fuel prices go up, we all feel it," he said. "I think I have a clear perspective, unlike any other candidate in this race, on the impact that decisionmaking in Washington, D.C. has had on Alaska lives."

Peltola also reported significant income on her financial disclosure, which covered 2025 and part of 2026.

That income included $342,000 from Holland & Hart, the law firm she worked at after losing her 2024 bid for re-election to the U.S. House — plus $95,000 from two different fellowships, and a campaign salary of some $1,300 a week.

"Mary has spent her entire life fighting for Alaska communities, and she will continue to do so in the United States Senate," Child said in a short prepared statement. "Mary has been taking on the rigged system in D.C. that has been propped up by Sullivan and his special interest backers."

Incumbents push back

Both Republicans rejected the idea that their wealth puts them out of touch with the needs of everyday Alaskans.

"Congressman Begich's personal finances have no impact on his legislative decisionmaking process," Silver Prout, a spokesperson for Begich's congressional office, said in an email.

A spokesperson for Sullivan's campaign, Nate Adams, said that "representing Alaskans isn't about what's in your bank account, it's about what you do for theirs." He also rejected attacks that Sullivan has personally profited from his position in the Senate, saying that "the bulk" of the senator's investments are in mutual funds that any American can purchase.

"And, his investments have underperformed the market during his time in the Senate, which is hardly the portfolio of someone gaming the system," Adams said.

Much of Sullivan's wealth is tied up in RPM International, a publicly traded company founded by his grandfather in which the senator holds between $1 million and $5 million in stock, according to his financial disclosure. On top of his $174,000 U.S. Senate salary, he reported roughly $100,000 in additional income largely in the form of dividends, interest and capital gains on investments.

Begich, by contrast, reported a diverse array of investments spanning conventional stocks and bonds to cryptocurrency to holdings of gold and silver. In total, his assets are worth at least $7.4 million, according to his disclosure.

Prout, Begich's spokesperson, did not respond to an email requesting details about some of his holdings.

But in a previous email, she said that Begich "has not bought or sold any individual publicly traded stocks during his time in Congress, in order to expressly avoid any real or perceived benefit from his own policy work."

"Congressman Begich believes that congressional service is an opportunity to give back and to serve the people of Alaska and the nation, not to obtain greater wealth by trading on inside information," Prout said.

Dancing in the dark: the rise of Terrorwave

By Robin O'Donoghue







Clockwise from above: Dancer Brooklyn, Terrorwave founder Scarlet Redd and DJ Akira on stage in the Koot's Ice Bar. Upstairs in the Russian Room, Scarlet Redd enjoys a drink prepared by Jacob Brety. Attendees at Terrorwave wear their sunglasses at night. (All Stephanie Sterling for the Anchorage Press)

It's 10 p.m. on a Tuesday at Chilkoot Charlie's, the Spenard nightclub, and as you walk deeper into the maze of rooms, the sound of heavy bass gets stronger.

Inside the Ice Bar, the dance floor is packed with people in black clothing adorned with chains and spikes, swaying to the hypnotic beats of darkwave music. On stage, two dancers flank the DJ and rev up the crowd with a vampy performance.

At 11 p.m., there's an announcement, and the crowd scatters to form a perimeter. They watch as Alex Edwards prepares to hang from the ceiling—using specialized piercing hooks placed under the skin of each of their knees.

As a metal cover of Britney Spears' "Toxic" plays over the speakers, ropes are attached to the hooks and Edwards is hoisted up by a pulley system until they're dangling upside down.

The crowd goes wild.

Welcome to Terrorwave—a once-every-two-weeks, queer-friendly goth party at Koot's that's become wildly popular since launching five months ago.

Edwards, a professional piercer at an Anchorage shop, is no stranger to the art of suspension.

Last summer, with a group of friends, they even pulled a car across C Street with hooks attached to their back. But the crowd at the mid-August Terrorwave took things to a new level.

"That was the most nervous I've been since my first time," Edwards said afterward. "I got my Spider-Man kiss with my partner, and that's really what helped me stay up there."

Edwards was just one of the attractions at Terrorwave: The recurring parties feature dancers, music, live performances, tarot readings, costume contests and more.



Onlookers cheer while Alex Edwards hangs above the dancefloor, suspended by piercing hooks placed under the skin of each of their knees. (Stephanie Sterling for the Anchorage Press)

Put on who I really am

The events began in May, when 21-year-old Scarlet Redd approached Koot's management and pitched the idea.

Redd, who grew up in Anchorage, began experimenting with her personal style as a teenager. She credits her experience as a dancer with helping her embrace the goth aesthetic.

"That's when I realized I could be naked, creepy and scary," she said.

Redd's idea of a goth night event stemmed from a fetish-themed fundraiser she attended last spring at Mad Myrna's, the longtime gay club downtown—where she found a community interested in gothic music and culture that wanted more chances to meet up.

A series at Koot's seemed like a natural progression.

Since the 1970s, the club has been a staple in Anchorage nightlife and a hub for subculture, with events ranging from electronic dance parties to burlesque shows and everything in between.

As the idea of Terrorwave spread, Redd pulled together a group of friends, including Akira, a DJ who had recently moved to Anchorage, and they got to work.

"By June we had really exploded," said Redd. "It's really crazy. I never expected it to blow up the way it did, but I think it just was meant to work out."

Akira, who became Redd's Terrorwave partner in crime, first arrived in Alaska through the military, where they struggled to balance the required conformity with their personal style and individuality.

"It was a damn near impossible task," they said. "You have to look like everyone else. You have to act like everyone else. You have to talk like everyone else. You have to stand, shit, sit, and eat like everyone else."

They added: "It was only on the weekends where I could finally take off that mask and put on who I really am."

Both Akira and Redd wanted a space where everyone feels safe being their authentic selves, including queer people.

"I'm straight as hell but I was raised by women and drag queens," Akira said. "I grew up watching drag movies and going to drag shows. I'm very much into that culture."

Redd added: "If there's a problem, that person's escorted out immediately. We don't tolerate any kind of harassment or bullying."

Creating connections

Jacob Brety can attest to that.

The 30-year-old bartender has worked at Koot's for four years and, at each shift, proudly sports colorful makeup, elaborate eyeliner and striking outfits that could be straight out of a graphic novel.

For Brety, who's worked at each Terrorwave event, the parties connected him to a new, hidden community in Anchorage.

Since the parties started, Brety has noticed more and more new faces around the bar, even on nights when Terrorwave isn't happening—which he takes as a sign that people are finding a sense of community at Koot's.

"I didn't know any of these people existed at all," he said. "There's so many of them, and it's like, every week, more of them show up—and it's really cool."

For Brety and many other Terrorwave participants he's talked to, the parties are creating connections people didn't know they were missing. He encourages people to see what the parties are about—even if they sound different, or if the name "Terrorwave" may not exactly project a warm or inviting vibe.

"I didn't feel accepted anywhere," Brety said. "But it's nice to be embraced for what you are."

He added: "This is one of the few places that I found that I'll actually achieve that goal."

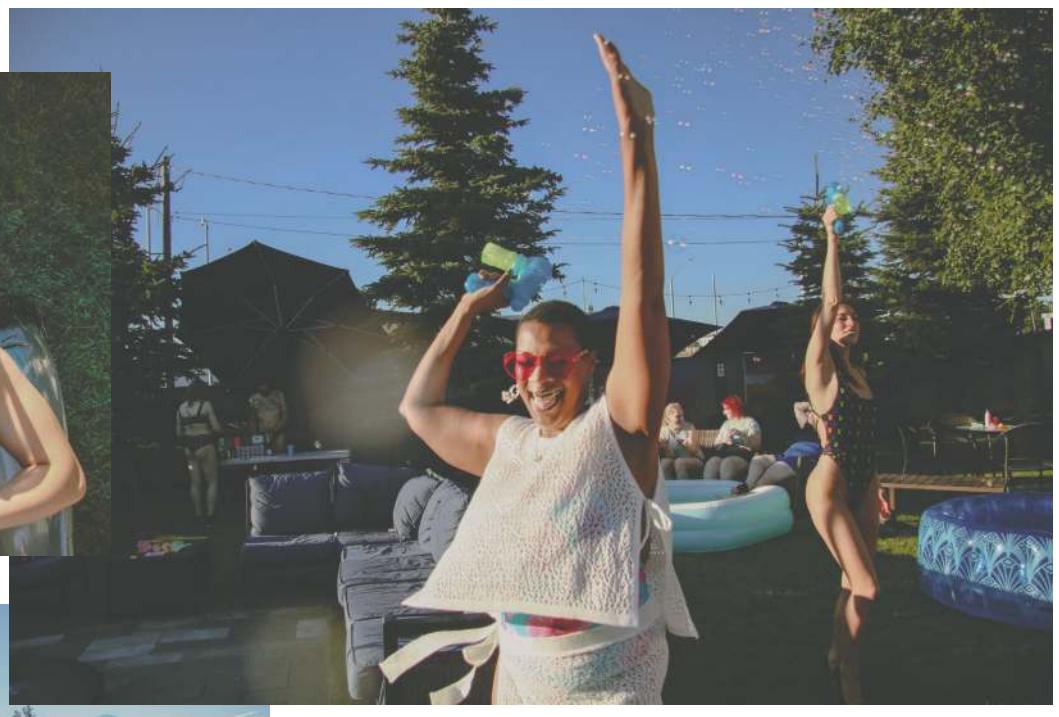
TERRORWAVE

Every other Tuesday at the Koot's Ice Bar and Russian Room from 9 p.m.-closing.



In Cherry Bomb, Anchorage's queer women get a new space to "feel safe and be hot"







"Create the gay shit you want to see in the world."



By Stephanie Sterling for the Anchorage Press

Sterling shot these scenes on film, with developing donated by MediaM Film Lab, mediamfilmlab.com

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, Kendra and Mercedes Arciniega, married entrepreneurs, have built their business, Arciniega Street Productions, brick by bedazzled brick—becoming a fixture in Anchorage's drag scene and producing series events with names like VIBES, Late Night Snax, Drag Loteria, Lights Down Low, Sapphic Speed Dating, and one of their most successful: Cherry Bomb.

"You get to decide what your world looks like," Kendra says. "We started Arciniega Street because we both wanted to build the community we needed when we were younger. We had no queer representation in our schools, much less our city. It was very scary growing up here as a gay kid. And like, sometimes you have to—not me quoting Gandhi, bitch—like, be the change you want to see. But, like, create the gay shit you want to see in the world. Be the gay bitch you wish to see in the world."

While Mad Myrna's and The Raven are pillars of the queer community and nightlife in Anchorage, they lean toward catering to gay men, not necessarily lesbian women. Kendra says: "God love our two queer bars in Anchorage, but they're not for us. They're for everyone. Gay men are always at the center of queer culture and queer nightlife and, like, where do we go?"

Last year, they saw their chance for a more sapphic-focused party. Together, they created Cherry Bomb, a monthly pop-up event designed by and for BIPOC lesbians to meet each other openly.

"Everything we come up with has to have some kind of interactive element, because that makes it special and a little more elevated," Kendra says.

For "Cherry Bomb: Pool Party", pole and go-go dancers performed among wading pools and lawn chairs—inviting camp, playfulness, and sexuality without stigmatization.

"As long as you're sapphic and/or queer or trans, and you want to dance, and you want to feel safe and be hot, you're welcome here," Kendra says. "We're always going to prioritize BIPOC performers. We're always going to prioritize lesbians and sapphics. We're always going to include trans people in our casting. We are always going to include strippers in our casting because those are the mothers of pole—and they face a tremendous amount of stigma for doing what they do."

Love Letter to Fall

"Moose Ridge"

Sometimes it's good to get lost in the woods
—not like Frost said—
But just tossed by the roots before crashing into bed
Bicycle tires caught by muddy mire
And slippery leaves tricking your senses on every turn

I drag my frame along Moose Ridge
"I'm too old for this," I think, slinking my way over
single-track that's double my pay grade
But the golden canopy and cotton-candy clouds
pull me deeper and deeper into the forest

Nature implores us to wander
And autumn is her most alluring guide
So I follow her up the mountainside...

—Kathryn Moore

GET PAID TO HELP FOLKS REMEMBER TO

VOTE!

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Remind people in your community to vote
and **earn up to $250**.

Scan the QR code to sign up as a mobilizer.

Alaska Voter Hub

Alaska Voter Hub is a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan organization and does not support or endorse candidates or political parties.

Alok writes and jokes about gender, and they're coming to Anchorage.

First, they took our questions.



HAVE YOU EVER BEEN CONFUSED about the difference between she/they and they/she? How do you start conversations about gender with people who don't get it? What do you say if someone uses the wrong pronouns?

Comedian, performing artist and activist Alok Vaid-Menon (they/them) has the answers.

Internationally renowned for their humor, writing and leadership, Vaid-Menon has become a leading global voice discussing complex issues around gender and self-expression, with millions of followers on social media.

Their work spans research on gender neutrality, self-determination, violence against trans and gender-nonconforming people, and more—and includes a book, Beyond the Gender Binary.

"Gender is not what people look like to other people; it is what we know ourselves to be," Vaid-Menon writes. "No one else should be able to tell you who you are; that's for you to decide."

These are subjects that come up regularly in Alaska's politics and Alaskans' personal relationships, but they're not always discussed openly or directly.

For a few nights in the coming weeks, though, Alok will address them onstage, with performances in Anchorage on Oct. 3, in Fairbanks on Oct. 4 and in Juneau on Oct. 5.

In advance of those shows, Vaid-Menon agreed to answer some of the Anchorage Press staff's most burning questions on gender, pronouns and the politics around them. The interview, conducted by email, has been lightly edited and condensed.

Anchorage Press: What questions do you have about queer culture in Alaska?

Alok Vaid-Menon: What's it like for rural queers in Alaska? Are there drag queens that perform in rural areas?

AP: Have you seen someone change their mind to become supportive of gender expansive and trans people? If so, what do you think influenced them?

Vaid-Menon: Yes. Me.

I used to be one of the most virulently transphobic people I knew. So much that I sought my own eradication. I had absorbed the idea that people like me were unacceptable. What changed me was not winning an argument. It was meeting people who were funny, brilliant, complicated, ordinary, beautiful human beings, not abstract concepts, who loved me more than I hated myself.

And it was through loving them that I found the possibility of loving myself.

AP: What's the funniest one-liner to correct someone's misuse of my pronouns?

Vaid-Menon: Better luck next pronoun.

AP: What's your favorite way to casually drop your pronouns when you meet someone?

Vaid-Menon: It's nothing fancy. I literally just say, "Hi, I'm Alok. I use they/them pronouns."

AP: What are some of your suggestions for how Alaska media can challenge readers' understanding of queer and nonbinary culture in a way that creates more understanding than division?

Vaid-Menon: So much of the public conversation about trans people is shaped by projections and disinformation rather than the facts of our lives. I see the role of journalism not to reproduce or profit from manufactured controversy, but to affirm what is true.

Good journalism requires stating the truth, even when the truth has been made controversial. Media outlets should refuse the idea that fairness means putting fact and misinformation on equal playing fields.

AP: Visibility of trans and other queer people can lead to more understanding and normalization, but it can also lead to tokenization and harm. How do you navigate that tension?

Vaid-Menon: There is no one-size-fits-all answer to visibility. It's something that I am constantly renegotiating.

I have a close-knit group of friends who buoy me, which means I don't outsource all of my need for recognition or validation to an audience. Sometimes, I can start performing for other people's expectations or confuse being seen with being understood. But my friends help anchor me back in my purpose and who I am outside of public perception.

AP: I'm a straight cisgender male who wants to show solidarity with my nonbinary community. Sometimes, when corresponding with conservative people, I delete the pronouns in my email signature to ensure I keep access to the space necessary for my work. Is that the right approach?

Vaid-Menon: It's important to have a north star, and sometimes staying oriented requires strategy and compromise. What matters is that the compromise does not become automatic or invisible. Stay in dialogue with the trans and nonbinary people in your life. Keep reassessing your approach, why you're compromising, and whether the compromise is still necessary. And remember to ask: If I make this compromise to gain access, what can I do with that access once I have it?

AP: I'm nonbinary, assigned female at birth, and I've heard my butch elders talk about how the fight for liberation argued for elimination of "masculine" and "feminine" roles. Now, they're worried that the embrace of gender fluidity solidifies the entrenchment of those roles. How can I help them understand that it's not a setback for women and queer rights?

> "Gender is not what people look like to other people; it is what we know ourselves to be," Alok writes in their book, *Beyond the Gender Binary*.

Vaid-Menon: I can empathize with that concern. Feminist and lesbian liberation movements fought enormously important battles against the idea that women had to look, behave, desire, work, or live in prescribed ways. But I do not think being nonbinary contradicts this project. I think it continues it.

Gender expression should not determine gender identity from the outside. Sometimes, we get so caught up in the semantics of identity that we lose sight of the political principle underneath: self-determination.

In resisting one hierarchy, we should be careful not to build another. There is no single correct or most subversive way to do gender. What we are fighting for is a world in which gender does not prescribe the life you are allowed to have.

AP: If I'm a straight person in a relationship, is it allyship to call my significant other my "partner"?

Vaid-Menon: Yes. It can be a small way to interrupt the assumption that everyone is straight.

Using "partner" can make relationship language a little less gendered and a little less revealing by default, which can create more room for everyone.

I would just be careful not to treat the word itself as allyship. Allyship is what you do with the room that language helps create.

AP: When meeting someone new, should I always use they/them until corrected?

Vaid-Menon: That's what I do!

AP: If my friend says they use she/they pronouns, should I mix it up and use each one from time to time? Or should I commit to mostly using they?

Vaid-Menon: Mix it up!

AP: Without the performance of gender, would gender exist?

Vaid-Menon: I think there's an inward-facing dimension of gender that is not reducible to visibility, expression, or other peoples' projections. Sometimes I find that the language of the soul, or of the spiritual, actually gets us closer to describing it—this interior sense of being.

We often conflate gender with its external performance and reception, and absolutely, that can be a part of it. But that's not exhaustive. Gender can also be an intimate sense of self, something we experience even when no one else is watching.

ALOK

October 3, Anchorage
Sydney Laurence Theatre

October 4, Fairbanks
Alaska Centennial Center for the Arts

October 5, Juneau
Crystal Saloon

The Don Juan of Juneau

Life-long Alaskan, first time caller. I'm 27, work for the state, and travel a lot for my job. I've gotten to see more of the state than I ever imagined I would, but it also keeps me on the go. I'm based in Anchorage, but spend just as much time in Juneau, Sitka, Fairbanks, Nome (you get it) throughout the year. For company, I'll go to a bar, or occasionally, I admit, peruse an app or two. And here's where the problem is.

I've met a lot of great people. When I'm in town, we'll go on dates, catch a movie, watch the midnight sun or go sledding. Some of my favorite memories of home have happened in the last year or two.

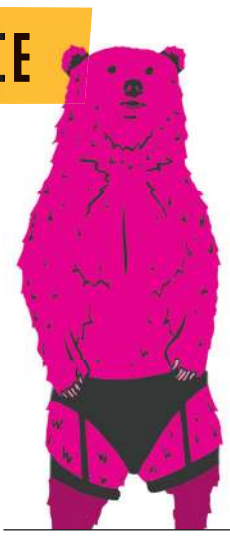
But it's not one person. It's six. Six women in six different towns. I don't really even know how it happened. It just did.

A casual thing in Anchorage, then a couple nights in Nome, then Juneau for two weeks, then back to Nome. Since I'm not in any town that often, all of the relationships are undefined, which feels like a weird grey-zone to be in. It feels like a cop-out to say that they're all non-exclusive… but they are. And it's all just gotten out of hand.

I've landed ass-backward into becoming the Don Juan of Juneau.

I don't know what to do next. Should I come clean to them about each other? Or will that just hurt them more?

Six women in six different towns. I don't really even know how it happened.



Submit a question for the experts at anchoragepress.com.

A seat on the milk run

Amber Batts:

First, congratulations on creating the Alaska Airlines milk run of romantic entanglements, and for assuming the women you're sporadically dating are necessarily reading more into this than they are.

Anchorage. Juneau. Sitka. Fairbanks. Nome. At this point, I'm hoping you're practicing safe sex as needed while you crisscross the state.

As a woman in Alaska, I can tell you this setup is probably less unusual than you think. I'm from a place (Juneau) where the joke is: You don't lose your partner, you lose your turn.

Still, it sounds like you've reached the point where boundaries and expectations need to be discussed out loud.

I have learned that people handle a lot more than we give them credit for when they know what they are agreeing to. What creates the mess is usually not the sex, or even the other people. It's assumptions.

So yes, I think it is time to have a conversation. You don't need to land in Nome and announce, "Greetings I have five other girlfriends."

Just be clear. You travel a lot, you've been dating casually in different places, and you're not currently exclusive with anyone.

You may be surprised to learn they already assumed that.

Casual dating is ethical. Having sweethearts from Ketchikan to Kotzebue can be ethical too. But only when people have enough information to make their own choices.

The bigger question is what you want. Do you enjoy having relationships scattered across Alaska? Or have you been letting geography make the decisions for you because defining anything feels hard and you are at a point where you want something defined?

Honest communication is the part that matters here. Give them enough information to understand what this is, and let each of them decide what they want from it.

Then everybody can decide whether they still want a seat on the milk run.

Infection, reflection

M.K. Thekkumkattil:

Short answer: Yes, you have to tell them. Let's get into it.

First, you did not mention whether you're having sex with these women, let alone the kind of sex that can transmit STIs. If you're having sex that involves genitals, you need to be getting tested, and you need to be talking about testing with the people you're sleeping with.

For me, a typical STI check in goes something like, "The last time I got tested was _____ and my results were _____. When's the last time you got tested? When do you plan to get tested again? Have you been sleeping with any new people? If so, what kinds of risks are you taking with them?"

From there, the conversation turns to negotiating what kinds of risks we want to take with each other, and what barriers we may or may not use. If you're having sex, you need to talk to your sex partners about risk.

Infections aside, it's not clear to me if you know what you want. What are your intentions, needs, and desires? Do you want a partner, multiple partners, or to keep dating around? Do you have the capacity and/or skills to date around or have multiple partners? Reflecting on this before having any big conversations will be a service to yourself and the women you're seeing.

If what you want is to keep casually dating everyone, there's nothing wrong with that. You don't have to give everyone all the details about everyone else you're seeing, but you do have to make it clear that you are seeing other people, and that you want to keep things casual. And yes, some people may get hurt. You may get hurt, too! That's what we risk, every time.

Multiple families

Max Graham:

Hmm. Maybe you should not tell any of them about the others, buy a house in each town, propose to all six of them, start multiple families, have so many kids you forget their names, see how long you can keep it up until you realize you can't—and then watch your life combust while the Anchorage Press films a reality TV show about it and exploits the deep, tragic crisis you've wrought for drama and money. We need it!

Kidding. Except for the part about money. (Speaking of which, if you're reading this: Consider donating to our noble public service endeavor at anchoragepress.com.)

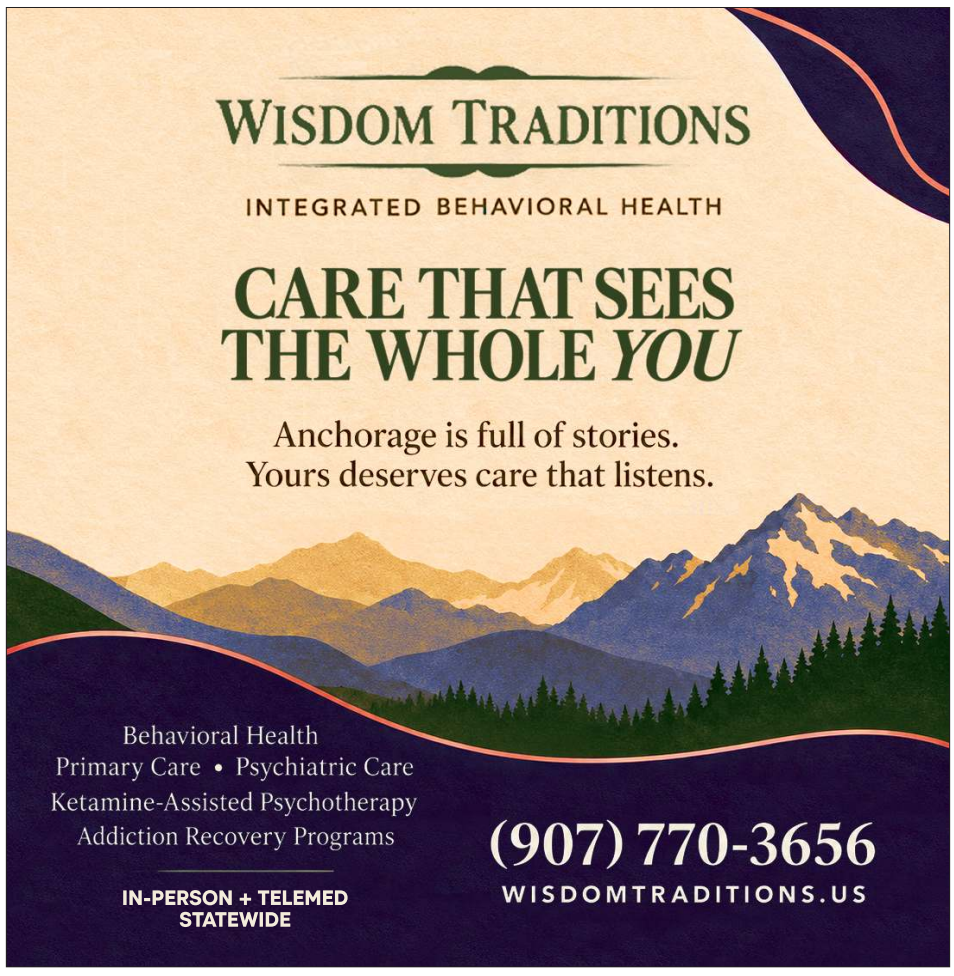
Anyway. Yeah, dude! Come clean!

If you truly are non-exclusive with everyone and have been clear that you're only looking to hang out casually, I don't think you've necessarily done anything unethical. But this sorta thing can get messy quickly, and the sooner you clarify expectations the better.

The fact that you view talking about the situation as 'coming clean' is revealing. It sounds like you have a sense that you're doing something potentially hurtful or that you have some discomfort with having six partners. And that signals to me that you're entering the territory where you need to have honest conversations not only with your partners but also with yourself. Is this what they want? Is it what you want?

But now I'm starting to sound like my colleagues, and you've probably gotten the point.

Good luck, Don Juan. Hope you find whatever it is you're looking for. And maybe a new fictional character to emulate. I'd recommend Odysseus.





Love Letter to Fall

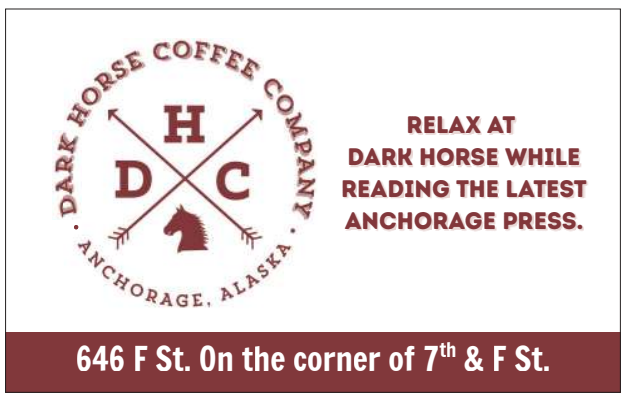
"Fall is a Deep Breath"

When the mosquitos are gone, but the leaves are still on the birch trees, you give yourself permission to start to slow down. Recover from the manic episode that is summer, the desperate urgency to squeeze every minute of the neverending day.

The wheel of the year turns and even the mountains change their colors. You drive to the west side of town, hoping to savor the first sunset you've seen in months and—oh shit that moose is enormous.

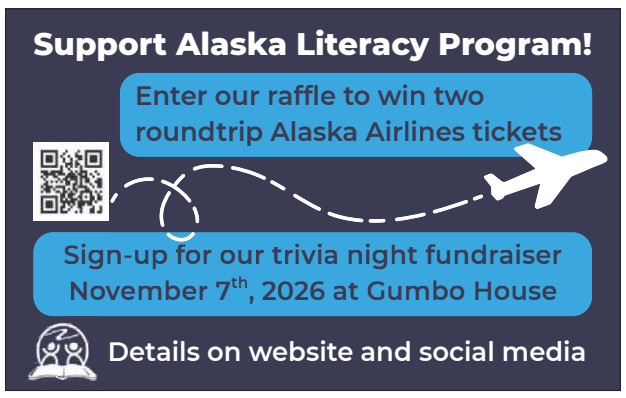
—Krista Bienia

















PRESSING EVENTS

Check out more events at
ANCHORAGEPRESS.COM

October

Want to have your community events listed in next month's issue? Email us at events@anchoragepress.com with all the details!

Thu. 10/1

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Singletrack Advocates: Freehub PRESENTS Mountain Bike Film Festival
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 6–7:30 pm

PFD Party w/Free Food & Music
CATALYST CANNABIS COMPANY, 3–9 pm

Live Music w/Baker
JACK SPRAT (GIRDWOOD), 6–9 pm

Open Decks w/Zayka
KOOT'S, 8 pm–2 am

Free Vaccine AHD Clinic
MULDOON LIBRARY, 10 am–2 pm

Live & Local Music with Pam Santoro
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

Anchorage Press Party: October Issue Release
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 7–10 pm

Peter Pan Goes Wrong (One-Act Play)
WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL, 7–8 pm

Fri. 10/2

Jerry Wessling
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7–9 pm

First Friday Feria Artesanal (Latin Craft Fair)
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6–9 pm, **Free**

Broken Blender Takeover
BROKEN BLENDER, 9 pm–2 am

Hopetober Kick Off w Blackwater Railroad!
CREEKBEND CO. (HOPE), 7–10 pm

First Friday Cajun Tunes
GUMBO HOUSE, 6–8 pm

Live Music w/Alaska Blaskapelle: Oktoberfest Party
HUMPY'S, 6–10 pm

BRAS OFF! The Alaska Boob Show: A Burlesque Salute to Breast Cancer
KOOT'S, 7–9 pm

After Hours with Johnny Prizm
MOMENTUM STUDIOS, 7–9 pm

Spaffdaddy
O'MALLEY'S ON THE GREEN, 6:30–9:30 pm

First Friday with New Works from Drew Michael
THE WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 5–8 pm

Book Talk & Signing with Local Author: Jamez Terry
TITLE WAVE BOOKS, 5:30 pm

First Friday w/Scott Clendaniel
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 5–9 pm

Dawson Gentlemen & Matt Faubian
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Peter Pan Goes Wrong (One-Act Play)
WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL, 7–8 pm

Sat. 10/3

Alok: Eat Pray Leave Tour
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7–8:15 pm & 9:30–10:45 pm

Jake Shimabukuro
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Trunk or Treat with the Trades
ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS, 11 am–2 pm

Labyrinth 40th Anniversary
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 3–4:30 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Vaudeville Vibes "It's Halloween Witches!"
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

45+ Speed Dating
CASTLE ON O'MALLEY, 7–10 pm

Anchorage Festival of Music: Daring Dilettantes
CENTRAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, 4–5:30 pm

6th Annual Hopetober with BWRR
CREEKBEND CO. (HOPE), 1–8 pm

Anchorage Rides Against Breast Cancer 5K Walk & Run
DELANEY PARK STRIP, 10 am–1 pm

ARMageddon in Anchorage: Arm Wrestling Tournament
GUIDO'S PIZZA, 5:30 pm

Live Music w/I Like Robots
HUMPY'S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Stand Up Comedy w/Daniel Eachus
KOOT'S, 8–10 pm

Pucks & Pints: Oktoberfest Fundraiser for Mustang Hockey
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 6–9 pm

Galway Days Irish Festival
THE NAVE, 12–8 pm

Anything But Net
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Peter Pan Goes Wrong (One-Act Play)
WEST ANCHORAGE HIGH SCHOOL, 2–3 pm & 7–8 pm

Sun. 10/4

Fall Wedding Show
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 12–4 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 3 pm

Le Grand Méchant Renard (The Big Bad Fox and Other Tales)
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 1–2:30 pm

Perreo en el Cadillac w/DJ Seb
PINK CADILLAC, 11 pm–3 am

Anchorage Festival of Music Fall Fundraiser: Telemann in Paris
PRIVATE RESIDENCE, 4–5:30 pm

Galway Days Irish Festival
THE NAVE, 12–8 pm

Mon. 10/5

Anchorage Firefighter Storytime
LOUSSAC LIBRARY, 11–11:30 am

Wed. 10/7

Storytime in the Garden
ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN, 11 am–12 pm

The Art of Leadership: Lessons from the American Presidency
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7–8 pm

Wednesday Music with Vinter Baer
GIRDWOOD BREWING COMPANY, 6:30 pm

Community Café
THE NAVE SPENARD, 6–7:30 pm

UAA Early Music Ensemble Concert
UAA RECITAL HALL, 7:30–8:30 pm

Thu. 10/8

Tommy Emmanuel, CGP
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

The Customer is Wrong: Service Industry Storytelling
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 7–9 pm

Comedy with Joey Medina
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Live Music w/Tyler
JACK SPRAT (GIRDWOOD), 6–9 pm

Kage Free's Velvet Hours w/Casey Smith Project
PENNY ROYALTY, 7–9 pm

Live & Local Music with Will H Johnson
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

UAA Wind Ensemble Concert: Joyful Celebrations
UAA RECITAL HALL, 7:30–8:30 pm

Fri. 10/9

Scared Scriptless Improv
49TH STATE BREWING, 7 pm

Schaefer Mueller & The Neon Highway
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7–9 pm

The Therapy Gecko (Lyle Forever)
THE AURORA ROOM, 7:30–9:30 pm

Riff Riot: A Fundraiser for Music Access for All Ages w/Evil Wizard, Shady Pines Retirement Home, & Hope Social Club
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 7–9 pm

Harvest Festival
BLUE MARKET, 2–7 pm

Live Music Night w/Constant Structure Band
CASTLE ON O'MALLEY, 7–9 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Mobile Library Visit & Storytime
FAIRVIEW RECREATION CENTER, 2–4 pm

Viva Spenard x Terrorwave: Slashers
KOOT'S, 10 pm–2:30 am

Spenard Song Circle w/Emma Hill, Jamie Drake, & Josh LaBuda
MOMENTUM STUDIOS, 6–9 pm

FK Breast Cancer: Fundraiser for Crystal Moore w/DJ Juba**
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 6 pm

Live Music at the Brewery
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 6:40–8:30 pm

Aspenyarrow Album Release Party w/The Robotz & Matt Faubian
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Sat. 10/10

Nervis Rex
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Alaska Sound Celebration: Celebrate the Music 2026
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:30 pm

DC Young Fly and Friends
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 8–10:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

The Therapy Gecko (Lyle Forever)
THE AURORA ROOM, 7:30–9:30 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Vaudeville Vibes "Spooks and Spankings!"
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Alaska Gamedev Expo 2026
EGAN CENTER, 1–5 pm

Booklovers Burlesque: ALASKA EDITION!
ER BROWN AUDITORIUM, 7–10 pm

Live Music w/Santoro
HUMPY'S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Huycke Entertainment: 2026 Fam Jam
KOOT'S, 9 pm–2:30 am

The Vintage Retro
KOOT'S, 10:30 pm–2:30 am

Shine: Disco
MOMENTUM STUDIOS, 7–11 pm

OMR's 11 Year Anniversary Party w/I Like Robots
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 7 pm

Alaska Chamber Singers: Mozart Masterpieces
ST. PATRICK'S PARISH, 7:30–9:30 pm

Art Fair 2026
THE NAVE SPENARD, 11 am–4:30 pm

Jay Stray 40th Birthday: The Jay Show
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Sun. 10/11

Frostease Burlesque
AMERICAN LEGION SPENARD POST 28, 10:30 pm

1776 The Musical
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 3 pm

John Damberg Latin Jazz Quintet
ANCHORAGE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 4:30 pm

Ghostbusters
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 4–6 pm

October Fall Harvest Market
CASTLE ON O'MALLEY, 11 am–5 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 3–5 pm

Viva Spenard: Slashers Afternoon Brunch
PALMERIA TROPICAL FUSION, 3–6 pm

Alaska Chamber Singers: Mozart Masterpieces
ST. ANDREWS CATHOLIC CHURCH, 3–5 pm

Art Fair 2026
THE NAVE SPENARD, 11 am–4:30 pm

Irish Session Open Mic
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 3–5 pm

Mon. 10/12

Tram Closing Day & Canned Food Drive
ALYESKA RESORT, 10 am–5 pm

Tue. 10/13

Scared Scriptless Improv Open Rehearsals
THE NAVE SPENARD, 6:30–8 pm

Community Conversation: Navigating the Healthcare System with Dr. Jill Woodruff
THE NAVE SPENARD, 5:30–7:30 pm

Wed. 10/14

AIGA Alaska: After Hours By Design
ALOFT ALASKA, 5:30–7 pm

Wednesday Music with The Forest That Never Sleeps
GIRDWOOD BREWING COMPANY (GIRDWOOD), 6:30–8:30 pm

Be Ready! Earthquake Safety Lessons
LOUSSAC LIBRARY, 3:30–4:30 pm

Thu. 10/15

UAA Seawolves Volleyball vs Northwest Nazarene Nighthawks
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 7 pm

2026 Legends of Iditarod Gala
ALASKA AVIATION MUSEUM, 6 pm

WEEKLY EVENTS

Mondays

907 Alehouse (Tikahtnu)
Nerdvana Trivia, 6:30–8:30 pm

Alaska Dance Promotions
Bachata Dance Patterns, 8:30–9:30 pm

Anchorage Social Dance Club
Learn To Square Dance, 7–9 pm

Fire Island Bakery @ K Street Market
Weekly Jazz Jam, 6:30–9:30 pm

Odd Man Rush (Eagle River)
Karaoke Mondays, 6–9 pm

Tuesdays

Bear Paw Bar & Grill
Nerdvana Trivia, 7–9 pm

Carousel Lounge
Ak Rockstar Karaoke, 8–2 am

Humpy's
Nerdvana Trivia, 7–9 pm

Mountain View Public Library
Family Storytime, 6–6:30 pm

Oriental Healing Arts Center
Rope Dart Lessons W/Jerrill, 8:30–10 pm

Organic Oasis
Irish Music & Dancing, 6–8 pm

Pink Cadillac
College Night 18+, 7–10 pm

Wednesdays

907 Alehouse
Tyrone & Friends, 7–10 pm

907 Alehouse (Tikahtnu)
Nerdvana Trivia, 7–9 pm

Alaska Zoo
Free Community Storytime, 10:30–11 am

Anchorage Social Dance Club International Folk Dancing, 6:30–8 pm

Blarney Stone
Pub Trivia W/It's Just Dez, 6 pm

Broken Blender
Nerdvana Trivia, 6:30 pm

Carousel Lounge
Ak Rockstar Karaoke 8 pm–2 am

Eddies Sports Bar
Nerdvana Trivia, 7 pm

Homestead Lounge (Eagle River)
Karaoke Night W/Kj Smoke, 8–12 am

Koot's Comedy Open Mic, 7–10 pm

Koot's Karaoke, 10–2 am

Mad Myrna's Karaoke, 9 pm–12 am

Pioneer Bar
The Eternal Cowboys, 10 pm–1 am

Thursdays

Blarney Stone
Open Mic w/It's Just Dez, 6:45–11 pm

Broken Blender
Karaoke, 7–11 pm

Carousel Lounge
Ak Rockstar Karaoke, 8 pm–2 am

Flattop Pizza & Pool
Karaoke Night 8 pm–12 am

Girdwood Brewing Company
Ride Bikes, Drink Beer, 6:30 pm

Homestead Lounge (Eagle River)
Dance Lessons w/Shufflin Country Style, 8 pm

Homestead Lounge (Eagle River)
Country Night w/DJ Aumanjoy, 9 pm–2 am

Oriental Garden Karaoke, 9 pm–1:30 am

Pink Cadillac
Ladies Night w/DJ Rico, 7 pm–12 am

Pioneer Bar
DJ Cross, 10 pm–1 am

Time Out Lounge
Open Mic Loathing In Las Vegas, 8–11 pm

Fridays

Broken Blender
Karaoke w/DJ Kelly, 8 pm–12 am

Flattop Pizza & Pool
DJ 3rd George, 9:30 pm–12 am

The Fraternal Order Of Eagles Aerie 4207
Karaoke Friday!, 7 pm–12 am

Gumbo House
Pop Piano Bar w/Mj Riemann, 6–9 pm

Homestead Lounge (Eagle River)
DJ Aumanjoy, 9 pm–2 am

Mad Myrna's
Diva Variety Show, 9–11:30 pm

Oriental Garden
Karaoke, 9 pm–1:30 am

Pink Cadillac
Boots, Beer, & Ballads Country Night w/DJ Rico, 7–11 pm

Pioneer Bar
DJ Cross, 10 pm–1 am

Whale's Tail
Nerdvana Trivia, 7–9 pm

Subzero Microlounge
Karaoke Night At Subzero, 8–11 pm

Time Out Lounge
Blast From The Past, 9 pm–2:30 am

Saturdays

Anchorage Social Dance Club
Dance Social 7–11 pm

Broken Blender
Karaoke w/DJ Kelly, 8 pm–12 am

Flattop Pizza & Pool
DJ Jrock, 9:30 pm–12 am

Gumbo House
Pop Piano Bar w/Mj Riemann, 6–9 pm

Homestead Lounge (Eagle River)
DJ Aumanjoy 9 pm–2 am

Mad Myrna's Diva Variety Show, 9–11:30 pm

Oriental Garden
Weekly Karaoke Contest, 9 pm–1:30 am

Time Out Lounge
Blast From The Past, 9 pm–2:30 am

Sundays

Anchorage Social Dance Club
Country Dance Nights: Line Dancing & Swing, 6:30 –9:30 pm

Billiard Palace
Sunday Blues Jam W/Rebel Blues Band, 6–10 pm

Carousel Lounge
Sunday Karaoke, 8 pm–2 am

Koot's Comedy Open Mic, 8:30–10 pm

Koot's Karaoke, 10 pm–2 am

Mad Myrna's
Karaoke, 9 pm–12 am

Oriental Garden
Karaoke 9 pm–1:30 am

Pink Cadillac
All Ages Buckarooos Night, 6–10 pm

Pioneer Bar
Industry Night w/Joe Brady, 10 pm–2 am

Time Out Lounge
Open Jam w/Blast From The Past, 8:30 pm

Van's Dive Bar Open Mic Night, 8–11 pm

VFW Post 1685 Open Mic & Jam, 4:30 pm

Parlor in the Round w/Matt Hopper, Jamie Drake, and Taylor Dallas Vidic
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 6–9 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Live & Local Music with Steve Waldron
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

Fri. 10/16

Natural High
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

The Harlem Globetrotters 100 Years Tour
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 7–8:30 pm

Chris Funk: Magic & Music
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:30 pm

The Killer Dueling Pianos
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: A Night to Dismember
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Live Jazz Night w/Phil Knowlton Band
CASTLE ON O'MALLEY, 7–10 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Haunted Trails
GOOSE LAKE PARK, 7:30–9:30 pm

A Conversation with New York Times Best Selling Author, Julia Quinn
LOUSSAC LIBRARY, 5:30–7:30 pm

907 Pro Wrestling
SHIP CREEK BREWING COMPANY, 6:30–8:30 pm

Magic & Myth Fantasy Ball for Young Adults
THE NAVE SPENARD, 6–8:30 pm

Live Music with Gail and Bill
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 6:30–8:30 pm

T.S.Scream, Liquid Courage & More
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Sat. 10/17

Woodrow
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

The Harlem Globetrotters 100 Years Tour
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 2–3:30 pm

UAA Seawolves Volleyball vs Central Washington Wildcats
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 7 pm

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra: How To Train Your Dragon In Concert
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:15 pm

Chris Funk: Magic & Music
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 2–4 pm

907 Pro Wrestling
ARCTIC REC CENTER, 6:30–8:30 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: A Night to Dismember
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Crimson Seance
BROKEN BLENDER, 10:30 pm–12 am

T.S. Scream, Liquid Courage & More
THE CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Enchanted Trails
GOOSE LAKE PARK, 3–5 pm

Live Music w/Casey Smith & Johnny Prizm
HUMPY'S, 9–11 pm

Comedy Up North with Laurie Kilmartin
MAIN EVENT, 7–9 pm

Hip Hop Performances & Rap Battles
THE PARADISE CLUB, 7 pm–2 am

Author Talk: The Sexuality of Care with M.K. Thekkumkattil & Tessa Hulls
RUCKUS ROOM, 6–9 pm

Eerie Flats
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Sun. 10/18

A Truly Unusual Dragon: A Marionette Puppet Show
ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN, 2 pm & 4 pm

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra: How To Train Your Dragon In Concert
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 3–4:45 pm

One Voice, Many Lifetimes: Intergenerational Benefit Concert
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 4–6 pm

Howl-o-ween
ALASKA WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CENTER (GIRDWOOD), 11 am–3 pm

Jams For Fams: Halloween Costume Party
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 10 am–12 pm & 1–3 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 3–5 pm

Open Decks w/Believe
KOOT'S, 8 pm–2 am

Wed. 10/21

AKPIRG's Movie Night Fundraiser: Sharknado
AKELA SPACE, 5:30–8:30 pm

Storytime in the Garden
ALASKA BOTANICAL GARDEN, 11 am–12 pm

Thu. 10/22

Museum After Dark: Goth Edition
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6:30–9:30 pm

Friends of the Chugach Avalanche Center: Snow Stories 8.0
BEAR TOOTH THEATREPUB, 7–9:30 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm



PRESS PICK

The Harlem Globetrotters 100 Years Tour

The world-famous Harlem Globetrotters are making a stop in Anchorage as part of their epic 100-Year Anniversary Tour! Renowned for their signature mix of trick shots, gravity-defying dunks, and family-friendly hilarity, the Globetrotters offer a high-energy experience for fans of all ages. You won't want to miss this classic sports tradition!

ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER – 10/16 7-8:30 PM & 10/17 2-3:30 PM







PRESS PICK

Parlor in the Round

Parlor in the Round shows are an absolute blast and this is one you won't want to miss! Three remarkable songwriters sit together onstage to trade tunes, tell the origin stories behind their lyrics, and collaborate on the fly. Expect raw performances, spontaneous collaboration, and plenty of lighthearted banter. **Bear Tooth Theatrepub – 10/15, 6–9 pm**

Live & Local Music with Steve Norwood
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

UAA Music: Voices of Jazz
UAA MAINSTAGE THEATRE, 7:30–9 pm

Fri. 10/23

Yachtly Crew
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Anchorage Fall Fest
ALASKA YOUTH AND FAMILY NETWORK, 5–6:45 pm

Challenge Alaska Drive-In Movie Night: Teton Gravity Research & Northern Aspects Film Festival
ALYESKA RESORT (GIRDWOOD), 7–11 pm

Vitamin Come(d)y with Beth Stelling
BEAR TOOTH THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: A Night to Dismember
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Frostease Burlesque: Tasselvania
KOOT'S, 8–11 pm

N/A Soirée: A Non-Alcoholic Tasting Event
LA BODEGA (K ST. MARKET), 6:30–8 pm

Serial Bowl: One Act Play Festival
MIDNIGHT SUN THEATRE, 7:30 pm

Williwaw Blue
O'MALLEY'S ON THE GREEN, 6:30–9:30 pm

Open Mic Night
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 6–8:30 pm

SixStar
VAN'S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

The Vintage Retro
VFW POST 9785 (EAGLE RIVER), 7:30 pm

Sat. 10/24

2026 Pumpkin Patch Party
49TH STATE BREWING, 12–4 pm

H3 Hawaii Reggae
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Liam Purcell & Cane Mill Road
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:20 pm

Anchorage Concert Chorus: Beyond the Stars
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:30 pm

YMCA Annual Fall Gala: The Magic of Giving
ALYESKA RESORT, 5:30–9 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: A Night to Dismember
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Reed Awakening
THE CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

The Witches' Coven Halloween Party
CASTLE ON O'MALLEY, 7–10 pm

Urinetown: The Musical
CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH, 7–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Graveyard Glam Soiree
EGAN CONVENTION & CIVIC CENTER, 6:30–10 pm

Hilltop Holiday Market
HILLTOP SKI AREA, 10 am–4 pm

NSAA Ski Swap
KINCAID PARK, 1–4 pm

Frostease Burlesque: Tasselvania
KOOT'S, 8–11 pm



PRESS PICK

Bandits on the Run

Bandits on the Run is a Brooklyn-based trio known for turning unexpected moments into music, blending indie folk, pop, and Americana into a sound that is as playful as it is tightly crafted. With three lead singers swapping vocals and instruments, the group creates a dynamic, ever-shifting performance built on harmony, rhythm, and a sense of theatrical surprise. **Discovery Theater, Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – 10/30, 7:30 pm**

Alaska PAWS' Boo Bash: Witches, Wizards, & Whiskers
THE LAKEFRONT, 4–8 pm

Serial Bowl: One Act Play Festival
MIDNIGHT SUN THEATRE, 7:30 pm

Carter Winter Live w/Opener
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 8 pm

A Night in Prythian
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6–11 pm

Sun. 10/25

Choice Bit of Calico
ANCHORAGE LUTHERAN CHURCH, 4:30 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: The Monster Mash Burlesque Brunch
BROKEN BLENDER, 12:30–2 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 3–5 pm

Irish Session Open Mic
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 3–5 pm

UAA Music Faculty Chamber Recital
UAA RECITAL HALL, 4–5:30 pm

Tue. 10/27

Mother Earth Justice Film Series: Earth's Greatest Enemy
LOUSSAC PUBLIC LIBRARY, 4–9 pm

Wed. 10/28

Wednesday Music w/Will Balcoa
GIRDWOOD BREWING COMPANY, 6:30 pm

Children's Author & Illustrator Michaela Goade
LOUSSAC LIBRARY, 2–3 pm

Thu. 10/29

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Monthly Mixer for Scuba Divers & Dive Enthusiasts
DIVE ALASKA, 6–8 pm

Live Music with Pierre Bidondo
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

A Very Friendly Halloween: Indoor Trick-or-Treating
THE WORKSHOP, 4–7 pm

Fri. 10/30

I Like Robots
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

UAA Seawolves Volleyball vs UAF Nanooks
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 7 pm

Bandits on the Run
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 7:30–9:20 pm

Halloween at the Museum
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 3–6 pm

The Vintage Retro
THE AURORA ROOM, 9 pm–1 am

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: A Night to Dismember
BROKEN BLENDER, 7:30–9:30 pm

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

2026 Trick Or Treat Street
COLONY WAY (PALMER), 4–7 pm

Haunted Mini Golf for Children
LOUSSAC LIBRARY, Noon–4 pm

Jerry Wessling Band
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 8 pm

Open Mic
ORGANIC OASIS, 6–8 pm

The Young Dubliners (Halloween Edition)
SITZMARK BAR & GRILL (GIRDWOOD), 9–11:59 pm

Steve Norwood
TURNAGAIN BREWING, 6:30–8:30 pm

Sasha Bitzer: Displaced Threshold Opening Reception
UAA FINE ARTS BUILDING, 5 pm

Sat. 10/31

Trick or Treat Street
4TH AVENUE DOWNTOWN, 12–4 pm

ABBAlaska
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Zoo Boo: Trick-or-Treating, Spooky Trails, & More
ALASKA ZOO, 10 am–7 pm

Electric AK: The Other Side
CLUB NYT LYT, 9 pm–5 am

Misery
CYRANO'S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

2026 Frightening 4K
HOTEL CAPTAIN COOK, 11 am

The Vintage Retro
THE MOOSE LODGE, 8–11:59 pm

Scared Scriptless Improv ft. Comedy Sportz
THE NAVE SPENARD, 6–9:30 pm

Halloween Party w/Wiley Post & Good Company
ODD MAN RUSH (EAGLE RIVER), 7 pm

Concerts & Costume Contests w/Matt Hopper & the Roman Candles, The Ouija BeeGee's, Rut, Saint Mood, & Same Mood
THE PARADISE CLUB, 9 pm–2 am



PRESS PICK

Anchorage Parks Enchanted Trails & Haunted Trails

As darkness falls, kick off the weekend on Friday night with Haunted Trails, a spooky adventure where older kids, teens, and adults can brave the dimly lit woods to encounter eerie soundscapes, costumed characters, and jump scares around every shadowy bend. Then on Saturday, the light brings a magical shift to the park, filling the path with festive decorations, whimsical creatures, sweet treats, and interactive stops that let little ones enjoy the Halloween spirit without any of the scares. Enchanted Trails is a cheerful, family-friendly walk tailored specifically for younger children. **Goose Lake Park – 10/16, 7:30–9:30 pm (Haunted Trails) & 10/17, 3–5 pm (Enchanted Trails)**

LIVE ON STAGE AT THE PAC!



THE FUTURE OF BLUEGRASS
OCTOBER 24, 2026 DISCOVERY THEATRE



THREE VOICES, ONE SOUND
OCTOBER 30, 2026 DISCOVERY THEATRE

PRESENTED BY ANCHORAGE CONCERT ASSOCIATION

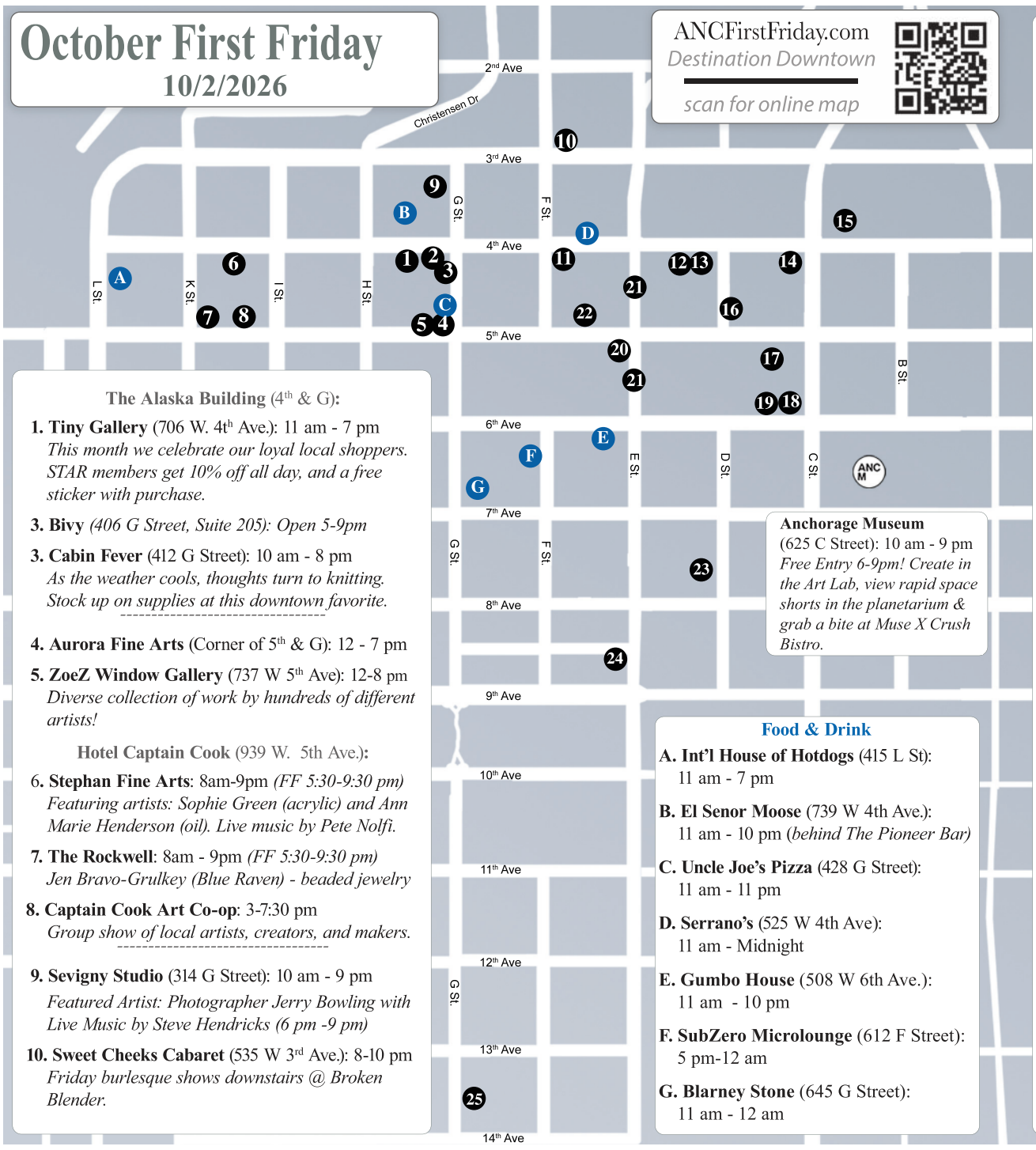
With a mission to inspire and enhance community through the performing arts, Anchorage Concert Association presents a broad spectrum of local and internationally-acclaimed artists from around the world. Learn more at anchorageconcerts.org

ANCHORAGE CONCERT ASSOCIATION

GET TICKETS! ANCHORAGECONCERTS.ORG 907.263.ARTS CENTERTIX.COM

October First Friday
10/2/2026

ANCFirstFriday.com
Destination Downtown
scan for online map



The Alaska Building (4th & G):

1. **Tiny Gallery** (706 W. 4th Ave.): 11 am - 7 pm
   This month we celebrate our loyal local shoppers. STAR members get 10% off all day, and a free sticker with purchase.
3. **Bivy** *(406 G Street, Suite 205): Open 5-9pm*
3. **Cabin Fever** (412 G Street): 10 am - 8 pm
   As the weather cools, thoughts turn to knitting. Stock up on supplies at this downtown favorite.

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4. **Aurora Fine Arts** (Corner of 5th & G): 12 - 7 pm
5. **ZoeZ Window Gallery** (737 W 5th Ave): 12-8 pm
   Diverse collection of work by hundreds of different artists!

Hotel Captain Cook (939 W. 5th Ave.):

6. **Stephan Fine Arts**: 8am-9pm *(FF 5:30-9:30 pm)*
   Featuring artists: Sophie Green (acrylic) and Ann Marie Henderson (oil). Live music by Pete Nolfi.
7. **The Rockwell**: 8am - 9pm *(FF 5:30-9:30 pm)*
   Jen Bravo-Grulkey (Blue Raven) - beaded jewelry
8. **Captain Cook Art Co-op**: 3-7:30 pm
   Group show of local artists, creators, and makers.

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9. **Sevigny Studio** (314 G Street): 10 am - 9 pm
   Featured Artist: Photographer Jerry Bowling with Live Music by Steve Hendricks (6 pm -9 pm)
10. **Sweet Cheeks Cabaret** (535 W 3rd Ave.): 8-10 pm
    Friday burlesque shows downstairs @ Broken Blender.

Anchorage Museum
(625 C Street): 10 am - 9 pm
Free Entry 6-9pm! Create in the Art Lab, view rapid space shorts in the planetarium & grab a bite at Muse X Crush Bistro.

Food & Drink

A. Int'l House of Hotdogs (415 L St):
11 am - 7 pm

B. El Senor Moose (739 W 4th Ave.):
11 am - 10 pm (*behind The Pioneer Bar)*

C. Uncle Joe's Pizza (428 G Street):
11 am - 11 pm

D. Serrano's (525 W 4th Ave):
11 am - Midnight

E. Gumbo House (508 W 6th Ave.):
11 am - 10 pm

F. SubZero Microlounge (612 F Street):
5 pm-12 am

G. Blarney Stone (645 G Street):
11 am - 12 am

11. **Visit Anchorage** (524 W 4th Ave): 9 am - 5 pm
    We are thrilled to have artist Dylan Paisaq Itchuaqiyaq at the Log Cabin on 4th & F. 4pm - 7pm.
12. **Sara's Gift Cache** (408 W 4th Ave): 12 - 8 pm
    Come in to see items by over 100 artists! (5-8 pm)
13. **KAR Photography** (400 W 4th Ave): 11 am - 6 pm
14. **Top of the World Graphics:** (310 W 4th Ave): 10 am - 8 pm
    Custom Hoodies, $10 Off Build your Own Design on First Friday.
15. **Wildbirch / Crimson** (239 W 4th Ave.): 6am - 11pm
    Crimson & Wildbirch Hotel present Alaska artist and mask-maker Drew Michael for First Friday (5-8 pm)
16. **IGCA** (427 D Street): 5 - 8:30 pm

5th Avenue Mall (320 W 5th Ave):

17. **Excalibur Sports** (2nd Floor): 10 am - 7 pm
    20% off entire store - mention First Friday!
18. **Bottoms Up Boutique** (1st Floor @ 6th & C):
    11 am - 6:30 pm
19. **Akela Space** (1st Floor near 6th & C): 5-9 pm
    "To Have a Heart," an exhibition of paintings by Alyssa Quintyne

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20. **The Kobuk** (504 W 5th Ave.): 9 am - 8 pm
    Stop in this long-time downtown gem to check out all of their treasures.
21. **Romney Designs** (E St., Between 4th & 6th Aves.)
    E Street Spinning Salmon Public Art, open 24/7, Romney's colorful metal salmon sculptures are now suspended from light poles on E Street. This project was supported through EasyPark's Park It Forward.
22. **Make it Alaskan Market @ Egan Center**
    (555 W 5th Ave.): 5-9 pm - Sip & Shop (21+) beer & wine available for purchase. Featuring Alaskan Makers! Market continues on Saturday (10am - 6pm) & Sunday (12-5pm).
23. **Blush Boutique** (720 D Street, Suite D): 11 am - 7 pm
    Join us Friday, October 2nd from 11am–7pm for a day of Hammitt, sips & sweets, plus a special gift with purchase while supplies last.
24. **Adrienne Stohr Art - Otter Woman Studio** (828 E St):
    Featuring original artwork by Adrienne Stohr. (6 - 8 pm)
25. **Turnagain Ceramics** (1343 G St.): 10 am - 6 pm
    Featuring pottery by Emily Johnson & Katherine Ossenkop. Free community throw! (6 - 8 pm)

OCTOBER AT THE KOBUK



OCTOBER'S FEATURED ARTIST
BARB STIGEN
The Leaf and Blossoms
BOTANICAL TEXTILE ART • WASILLA, ALASKA
One-of-a-kind textiles & wearable art, created with flowers and foliage.
FIRST FRIDAY TRUNK SHOW
OCTOBER 2 | 5–7 PM
Stop in, meet Barb & shop her creations. On display and for sale all October.
The LEAF and BLOSSOMS
BOTANICAL ART FROM ALASKA
ECO-PRINTING
MADE IN ALASKA
The KOBUK
Downtown Anchorage on Town Square Park
504 W 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

WINGS N THINGS
LOCALLY OWNED AND OPERATED
907-277-9464
We are the one and only Wings N' Things opened in downtown Anchorage.
We still boast the same original recipe, old fashioned customer service and in-house delivery option!
Open for Delivery until 2:00am Thurs-Sat
601 36th Ave #7 · wingnthingsalaska.com

OCTOBER FIRST FRIDAY ARTIST
Cade Bennett
plein air painter
FIRST FRIDAY RECEPTION
OCTOBER 2ND 5-7PM
2 Friends
A MOST UNUSUAL GALLERY
907.277.0404 | 341 E. Benson Blvd.





HOW TO VOTE
NEWS FLASH!
Want to VOTE BY MAIL in November,
like you did for the Anchorage election?
You MUST sign up to get your ballot in the mail for the statewide election.
IT TAKES LESS THAN A MINUTE!
HURRY! SIGN UP TODAY
BEFORE OCTOBER 24!
SCAN TO SIGN UP
Thanks for making a difference!
Many races are decided by one vote!
Paid for by Alaskans for Alyse

La Michoacana's mangonada is the perfect respite from Anchorage winter.

By Adelyn Baxter for the Anchorage Press



Maybe more of a favorite slurp, but this salty-sweet slushy takes the edge off, no alcohol needed.

La Michoacana
The Last Frontier
2808 E Tudor Rd, Unit 1

The mangonada, writes Anchorage Press contributor Adelyn Baxter, is "all about contrast."

As the leaves fall and nights creep up on us here in Anchorage, we all look for ways of coping with the coming winter.

Some are healthier than others.

At La Michoacana The Last Frontier, a Mexican joint on the east side, the menu offers many ways of forgetting about the cold for a little while. But while creamy, homemade paletas and tasty tortas are tempting, only one item can pull me out of a winter slump: the mangonada.

For the uninitiated, a mangonada is comprised of mango ice cream—more like sorbet, really—layered with a heap of mango chunks and swirled with the bright red sour/spicy/sweet Mexican sauce known as chamoy. Fruity gummy candy, citrusy Tajin salt and a tangy tamarind candy straw top it off; the word "decadent" does come to mind.

This treat is all about contrast: sweet and spicy-sour, smooth and chunky, sunny yellow alternating with fiery red. Each first sip instantly transports me to a palm-shaded spot on a Mexican beach. Hot sand under my toes, cool breeze overhead.

The mangonada originated on those very beaches. You can find variations on the theme across Mexico, some featuring the addition of tequila. The first version I ever tasted was a mango ice slathered in chamoy in the heart of Mexico City.

Accounts diverge on where the first mangonada was born, but staff at La Michoacana told me it happened in their namesake region, Michoacán, on the Pacific coast.

Most pregnant women dream of sushi, a big deli sandwich or a cocktail. Before giving birth to my son this spring, I joked that the only "push present" I wanted was a mangonada. But I wasn't really joking.

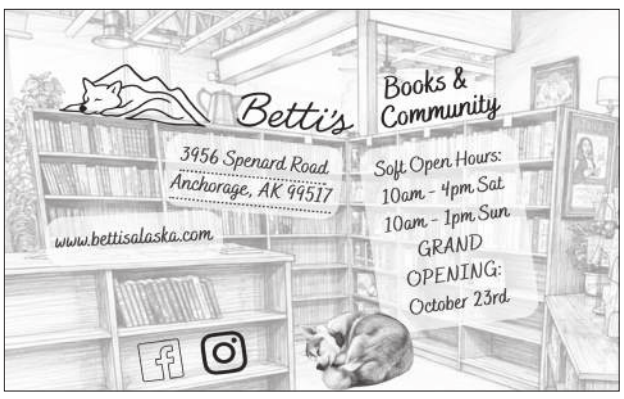
A day after I got home from the hospital, I received my reward. After nine months of a strained relationship with some of the foods I love most—first because of nausea, then acid reflux, then a complete lack of appetite due to shrinking real estate—I reveled in the indulgent mixture that I had missed so much.

And it certainly is an indulgence. The mangonada may be healthier than some vices, but it's not cheap: a 16-ounce will set you back $13 and a 24-ounce, $15. Even the smaller option is practically a full meal if you're not concerned about high blood sugar.

Now that I've got my stomach back—and trust me, nothing gives you an appetite like breastfeeding—mangonadas have become a special treat for warm days by the lake with my baby. When the snow falls, it will be a pick-me-up to remind us of sunnier times.

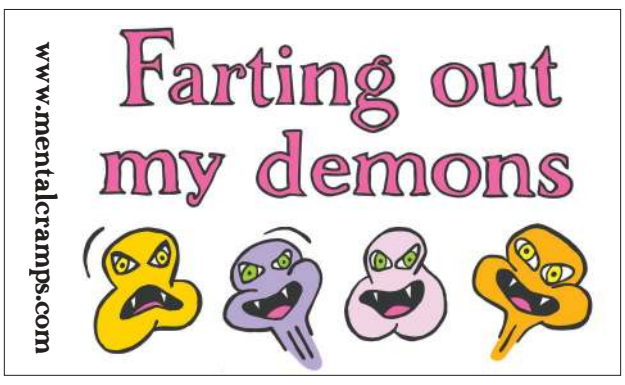
And when he starts to develop his own taste buds in a few months, I'd like to think my son will have the same fondness for sweet and spicy combinations as his mom.

Adelyn Baxter is a public radio editor and writer in Anchorage.















Love Letter to Fall

Untitled
By Grace Jensen

Stains of red and gold smear the ground
Berry bright and September's brown
Dancing in the purple and the rain
Summer has begun to wane
Twigs snap and boughs break

Mist adorns Kenai Lake
Wild geese know the way
Winter's coming they cannot stay
Changing seasons changes all
These are reasons I love the Fall

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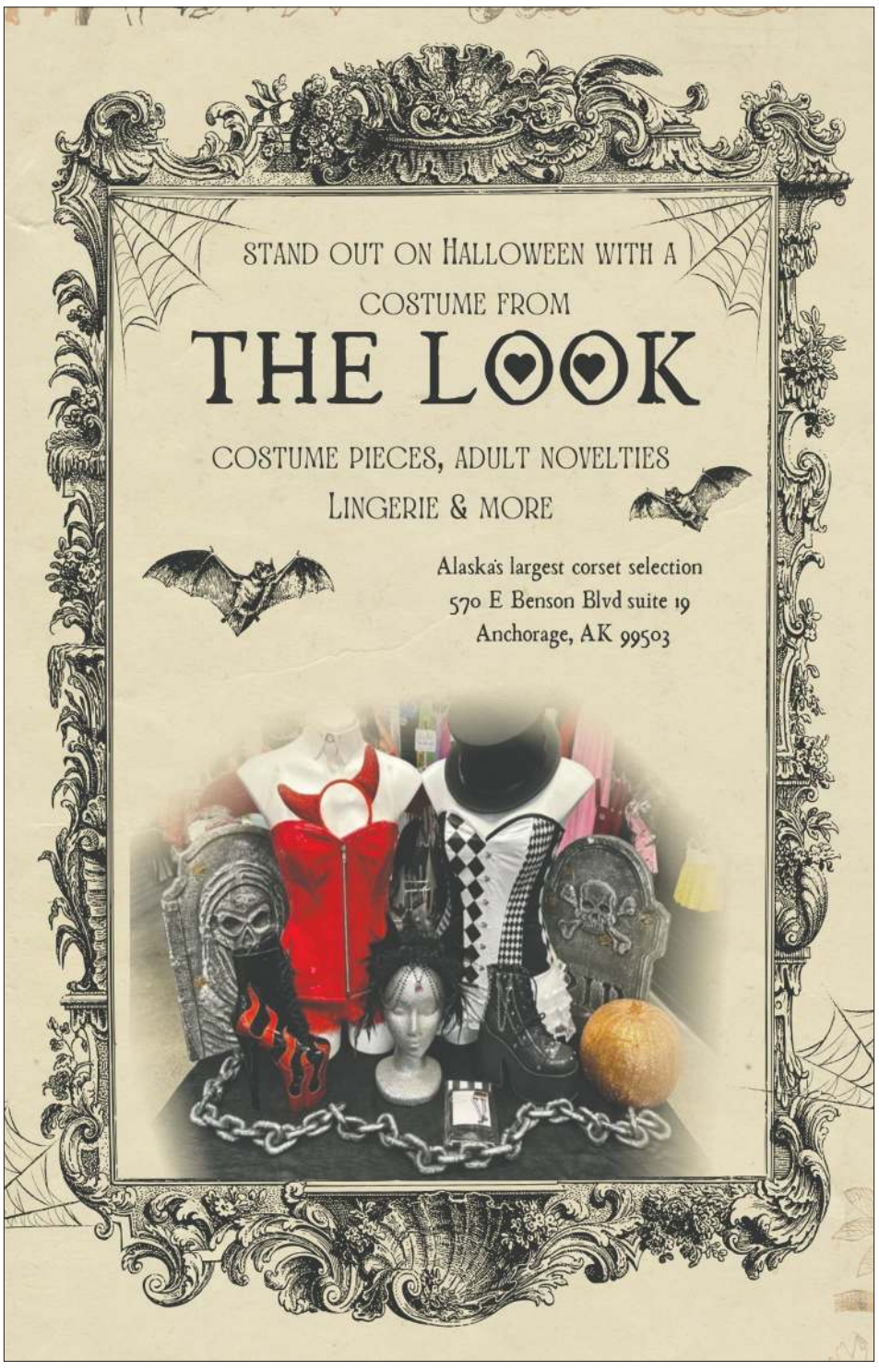
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Actors Dakota Fanning, left, and Cory Michael Smith play characters who visit several iconic Anchorage locations, including the Carousel Lounge. (Courtesy of Independent Film Company)

Hollywood likes to make Alaska about megafauna and murder. This new movie stops by a ramen joint and Spenard dive bar instead.

The characters' decisions in* The Sun Never Sets *drove our reviewer "crazy." But, she writes, it's nice to watch a movie that eschews tired Alaska tropes.

By Emily Fehrenbacher for the Anchorage Press

I HAVE SPENT A SIGNIFICANT PART OF MY LIFE consuming Alaska related films and TV, and never in all my years did I think I'd see a Hollywood rom-com set in Anchorage.

A serial killer movie? Sure. A Disney version of Drew Barrymore saving some whales? Absolutely.

But now, there's The Sun Never Sets, which premiered in September—and in your neighborhood multiplex, such quotidian Anchorage sights as the Kincaid Park disc golf course and the Jewel Lake Kaladi Bros. serve as the backdrop for a mediocre love story.

The first thing to know about *The Sun Never Sets:* It was directed by Joe Swanberg, known for nailing the vibes of aging millennial angst in a unique genre of film called "mumblecore." I have enjoyed many of his movies and series that capture being a youngish adult, typically with few attachments and a slightly defective personality. *Drinking Buddies,* for example, highlighted the complicated friendships and relationships of Chicago brewery employees who were confused, drunk and immature. It resonated.

Alaska, it turns out, is the perfect landscape for this genre. Though I'd argue the mood of this film was more Reilly's Irish Pub in October than the first Anchorage scene we see, at the 49th State beer garden in May.

The plot

Before we get into the Anchorage easter eggs, a quick summary of the plot, which is all it deserves: Dakota Fanning (a former child actor) and Jake Johnson (the most memorable of the boyfriends from "New Girl") are dating, but at a relationship impasse. He is a recently divorced dad with Grown-Up vibes; she is a free spirit construction worker with few commitments. (Of course.) He wants to drink wine and watch TV (relatable); she still wants to go camping and do Alaska shit (also relatable).

Is there a more realistic Alaska reason to break up with your significant other than their annoying wanderlust and desire to sleep outside, while you just want to be cozy in a bed with electricity?

Johnson proposes they take a summer break so Fanning can figure out if she's ready for his version of a domestic life. Fanning goes on dates with a string of tall, thin men and the inevitable scenario eventually arrives: One night, she runs into an ex-boyfriend at the Carousel Lounge, the iconic, carpeted bar in Spenard.

The ex-boyfriend, played by Cory Michael Smith, is, obviously, a sexy bush pilot. And, to Fanning's good fortune, he has seemingly become more emotionally available since they last dated.

The pair sleeps together, flies around together, then sleeps together some more and hikes in the Chugach. But, uh-oh: The bush pilot doesn't want to hang out with her friends at cool Anchorage art shows—he'd rather be flying his float plane and not leasing a Spenard apartment where they ask for a rental application and credit check. (Dakota, girl, run.)

Jake Johnson's character, meanwhile, doesn't like this. So, he tries to win Fanning back with his grown-up-ness at the Akela Space gallery and the extremely adult restaurant Whiskey and Ramen. It works, and they bang.

Fanning's choice boils down to, effectively, Whiskey and Ramen or the Carousel Lounge.

Both have their places, and what really matters is whether you're at a cheap beer and bar pool point in your life, or going for a hushed date over pickled Japanese radish and smoke bubble cocktails vibe.

Conveniently, the Fanning-Johnson-Smith love triangle becomes a square when Johnson meets a new woman at yet another Anchorage happy hour institution: Ginger. I hope they got the pork sliders.

The whole thing comes to a head over pub trivia at the dive bar where relationships go to die: Koots. A battle over trivia decides the war over relationships; I won't spoil the ending.

"A lot of great bars"

I don't think Joe Swanberg has dated in Anchorage—and if he had, we'd probably know about it—but it certainly felt like he's spent time in the scene. One of Johnson's lines is that there isn't much competition for women because Alaska is just "goofy guys who smell like salmon." (Touché.)

As I left the Bear Tooth advance screening, I ran into old Anchorage friends who also thought the film nailed certain aspects of romantic life in the city. The pilot ex-boyfriend, particularly, really felt like an Anchorage bro you'd meet on Tinder, then hit up for an IPA at the Carousel.

I assumed he was a local actor plucked from obscurity. Then I remembered seeing him, Cory Michael Smith, as Chevy Chase in the 2024 feature film *Saturday Night.*

Smith grew up in Ohio and had never been to Alaska before filming. In a Zoom interview with the Anchorage Press from his New York City apartment, He said he got into character by hanging out with a couple of young bush pilots at a local hangar.

Their unassuming vibe, plus their deep connection to the outdoors, helped inspire his character, Smith said, which he described as "a dude who's comfortable being in the wilderness for days on end because he likes the quiet."

Playing the pilot gave Smith the chance to see Alaska from the air, and it is now his second-favorite place to film a movie—trailing, predictably, Marseille, France.

"Because it was a Joe Swanberg film and this man loves a dive bar, the hangs were at dive bars in Anchorage. Anchorage has a lot of great bars—like, a *lot* of great bars," Smith said.

More broadly, he added: "I can't express enough how much we all loved working there."

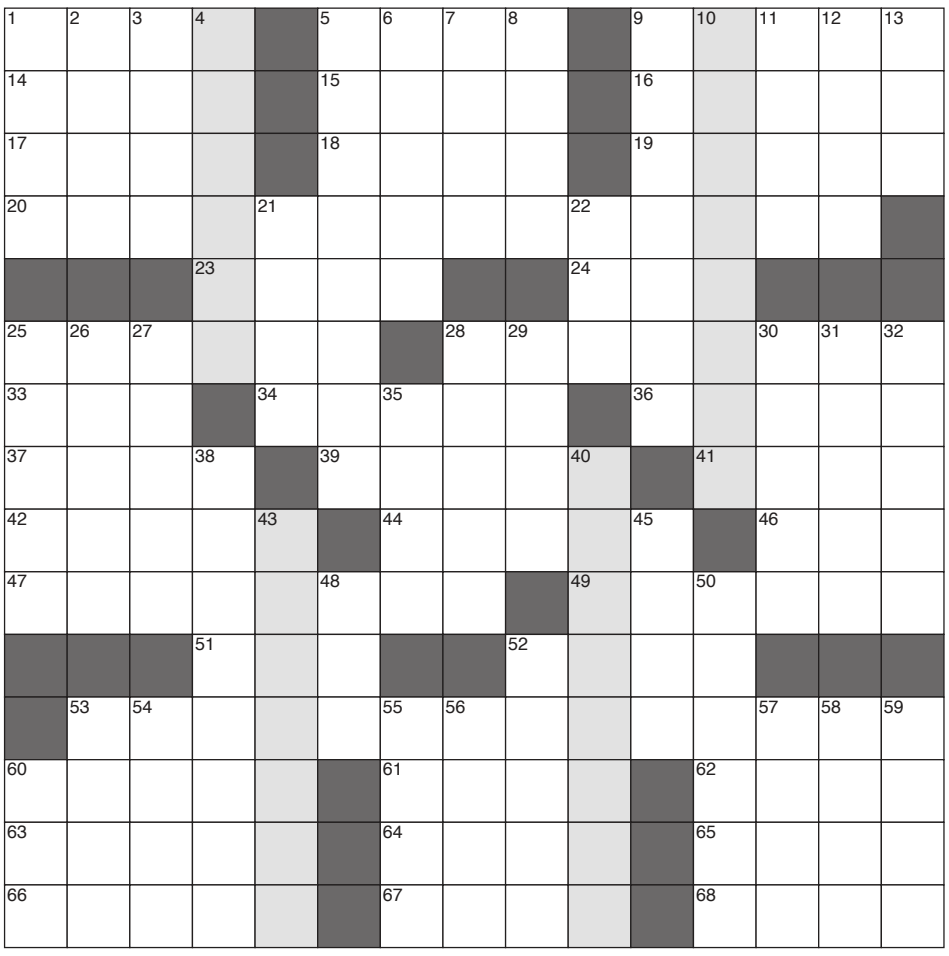
The Sun Never Sets isn't an incredible work of art, and the decisions the characters make drive you crazy.

But it's refreshing to see a version of the 49th State that isn't about survival, or overhyped dramatic wildlife encounters, or dark murders, or any number of Alaska tropes.

It's a story about people trying to figure their shit out while living at the edge of America. And, for those of us who love Anchorage for all its quirks, it's fun to see it as the backdrop for a "love" story.







Love in the Last Frontier

By Castilleja Kuzis

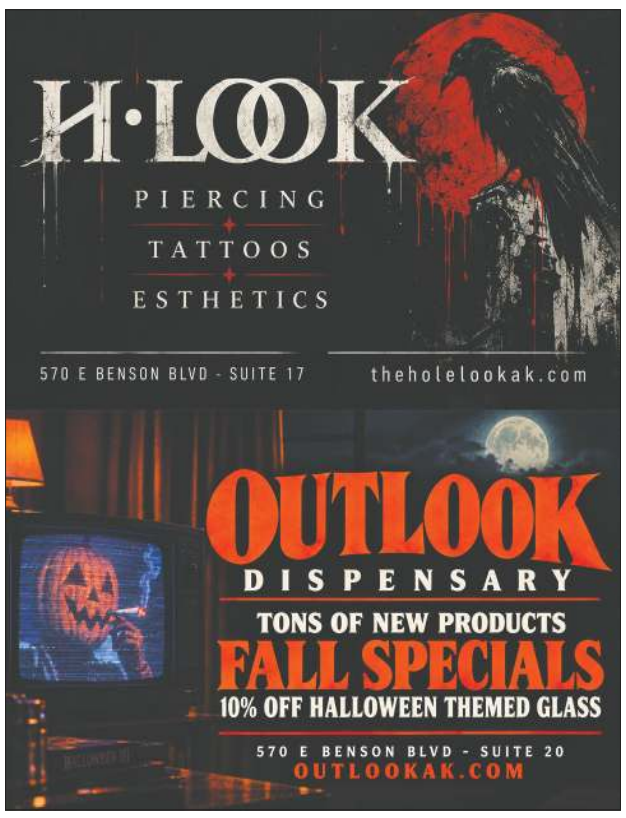
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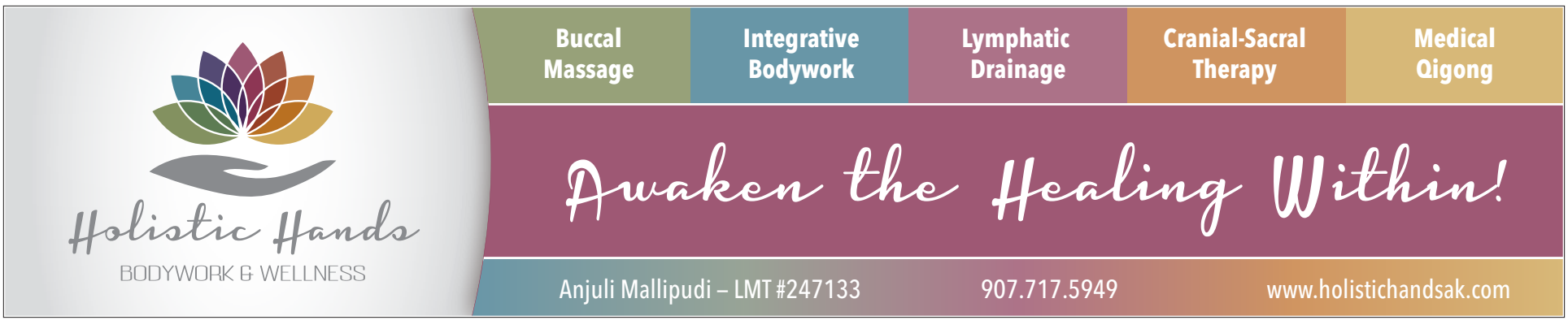












HOROSCOPE

When Venus retrogrades, the social fabric temporarily frays.

*Your October Horoscopes, from **Ambre Johnson McCormick** and **Leah Hart** from the School of Woo Woo.*

When conflict hits, are you fight, flight, or freeze? Duck and cover, or dig in your heels?

October's astrology pulls enough punches for you to get intimate with whatever instincts kick in. In a month rife with power struggles from start to end, our ingrained patterning is up for examination. This October, remember that between the two peaks of what you feel and how you choose to act, there's a vast valley where you have the agency.

If blow-ups and crash-outs feel imminent, it's because October brings multiple confrontations with Pluto—the planet of power plays and exposés. Sociologist Avery Gordon notes that "power can be invisible, it can be fantastic, it can be dull and routine." In Aquarius, Pluto's movements have tracked with media crises, AI apocalypse scares, and stories about state surveillance. In the personal realm, Pluto drags up inconvenient truths—feelings we've attempted to repress and facts we wish we could unsee, if only.

In matters of intimacy and accountability, the cost of exposure is transformation. Whether our struggles this month face outwards or inwards, the feelings we find ourselves churning over are bound to change us.

And churn we will—especially when Venus goes retrograde on Oct. 3rd.

If Mercury retrograde (which graces us Oct. 23rd) sends communication awry, Venus' retrograde does the same for relationships. When Venus retrogrades, the social fabric temporarily frays. She'll spend most of her retrograde in the sign of Scorpio—where she lacks dignity, and therefore, brings undignified feelings to bear.

Scorpio may be the most armored animal of the zodiac, but that armor hides something exceedingly tender. While they'd never let on, Scorpio is arguably the deepest feeling of all the water signs. Venus spends most of the month in the first part of Scorpio, a place that Austin Coppock says "exposes a hard truth." Scorpio doesn't flinch at the truth, but it will certainly brood about it. And so October brings up the need to examine and share what you're feeling—even if it's on a piece of paper you plan to burn.

Retrogrades also bring repetition. If you've been litigating past hurts, unspoken slights, or sparring with authority since mid-September, expect those themes to return full force as you hit the middle of the month. Venus retrogrades can realign our social circles, so look out for unexpected allies. Just know that the final word on whatever conflicts arise this month may not come until Venus goes direct on Nov. 13th.

Astrology reminds us that time is not linear. It's full of spirals and uncanny repetitions. While you're excavating feelings and tapping into deeper wells of personal power, stroll down memory lane to October and November of 2010 and 2018. This month, a forgotten ghost from those periods may come knocking. If you're tasked with greeting a specter, take a cue from Gordon. She argues that ghosts have their own agenda, bring needed reckonings, and most of all, that "understanding (haunting) is essential to grasping the nature of our society and changing it."

Celestially yours,
Kaitlin Jade Armstrong

Aries (March 20–April 19)

Fellow Aries and local author Lena Morgan mapped out different conflict styles in her book The Fight Languages. Whether you use her methods or not this month, you would benefit from reflecting on your anger and the ways you can use it for good, instead of hurting your own feelings and everyone's around you.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)

It's the early 2000s, the 5th Avenue Mall food court, you're with your besties. You're feasting on fried cheese from Hot Dog on a Stick, ice-cold lemonade, and the latest gossip. Unfortunately, all of that will remain in your past–unlike your toxic ex or business partner. You've been busy healing though, and are about to have a breakthrough in your identity, values, and inner truth. Get prepared to play Whac-a-Mole with anything that dares to resurface and slow your progress.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)

The only hummingbird found in Alaska visits up to 5,000 flowers a day and logs around 4,000 miles in a summer. This may sound completely doable to a busy little Gemini. Right now, though, you are overworked and overthinking. October is the perfect time to adapt. Start by pausing, listening to your body's cues, and creating new nourishing routines.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)

Imagine it's a perfect July day. You're headed south on the Seward Highway. Cars are piling up behind an RV that WON'T. PULL. OVER. Now imagine you are the driver of the RV. This month, pull over, cry, dance it off, hydrate, and eat a snack. Then clear the traffic jam out of your life.

Leo (July 23–August 22)

We all saw the termination dust–it's time to admit that summer is over. Tackling your chore list earlier this month allows you to prioritize fun later in October. Think dinner with the besties, Practical Magic vibes, and high-key flirting. Use this time to recharge, because by the end of the month you need to be ready to pounce!

Virgo (August 23–September 22)

No matter how much you've pumped the brakes lately, it was no match for a slick road. But now you have on your all-season tires, and you're prepared, no matter the conditions. You will be most rewarded if you focus on organizing your finances. To avoid any storms this month, don't start drama with your friends, co-workers, or siblings. But if those same people ask your opinion, use tact and honesty. Now is not the time for half-truths.

Libra (September 23–October 22)

Fur Rondy snow sculptors begin with an 8-foot block of snow and a vision. Using skill and hand tools, they carve out masterpieces. Libras, October is the perfect time to become the sculptor in your own life. Unnecessary obligations? Outdated agreements? Relationships you've outgrown? Reevaluate. Does what you're holding onto match your values and the vision you have for your life? Spoiler alert: It doesn't.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)

Wolverines are aggressive, possessive, and fearless. They are indomitable. They are a lot like you, Scorpio. This month, some of that might need to change. Is all this fighting getting you what you actually want? Fiercely protect what's actually important to you and let the rest go. When given the option between fighting or fucking this month, choose fucking.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)

Have you been living like it's winter solstice? Have you been exhausted, overwhelmed, or feeling defeated? This month, all that changes! October is inviting you to party like it's the summer solstice. Your enthusiasm, wonder, and adventurous spirit are all making a comeback, baby!

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)

Capricorn Susan Butcher is an Alaskan icon. She didn't become a four-time Iditarod winner without a lot of grueling work behind the scenes. We see you, Capricorn. You may not get a day named after you like Susan, but all of your hard work is finally paying off this month.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)

Aquarius, do you feel like you're trapped on the mudflats? One wrong move and you'll sink deeper? This is not the time for action, but it is definitely time to plan your escape! You're in the middle of an inner transformation. We can promise you that with a little self-reflection and your impressive brain, you'll unstick yourself and freedom will be yours again.

Pisces (February 19–March 19)

Pisces are underwater. Sorry, just a little fish joke for you. But seriously, you are probably feeling like you're in over your head in concrete and being asked to swim. You aren't. You're in water, and you are built for water! Do you feel tangled up in nets over your finances? This month, swim directly into the whirlpool of money woes and scale up with a plan.

Ambre and Leah are lifelong Alaskans and best friends. They love all things woo woo, and they never stop talking about astrology–just ask their haters! To join the conversation, head over to their website: schoolofwoowoo.com.

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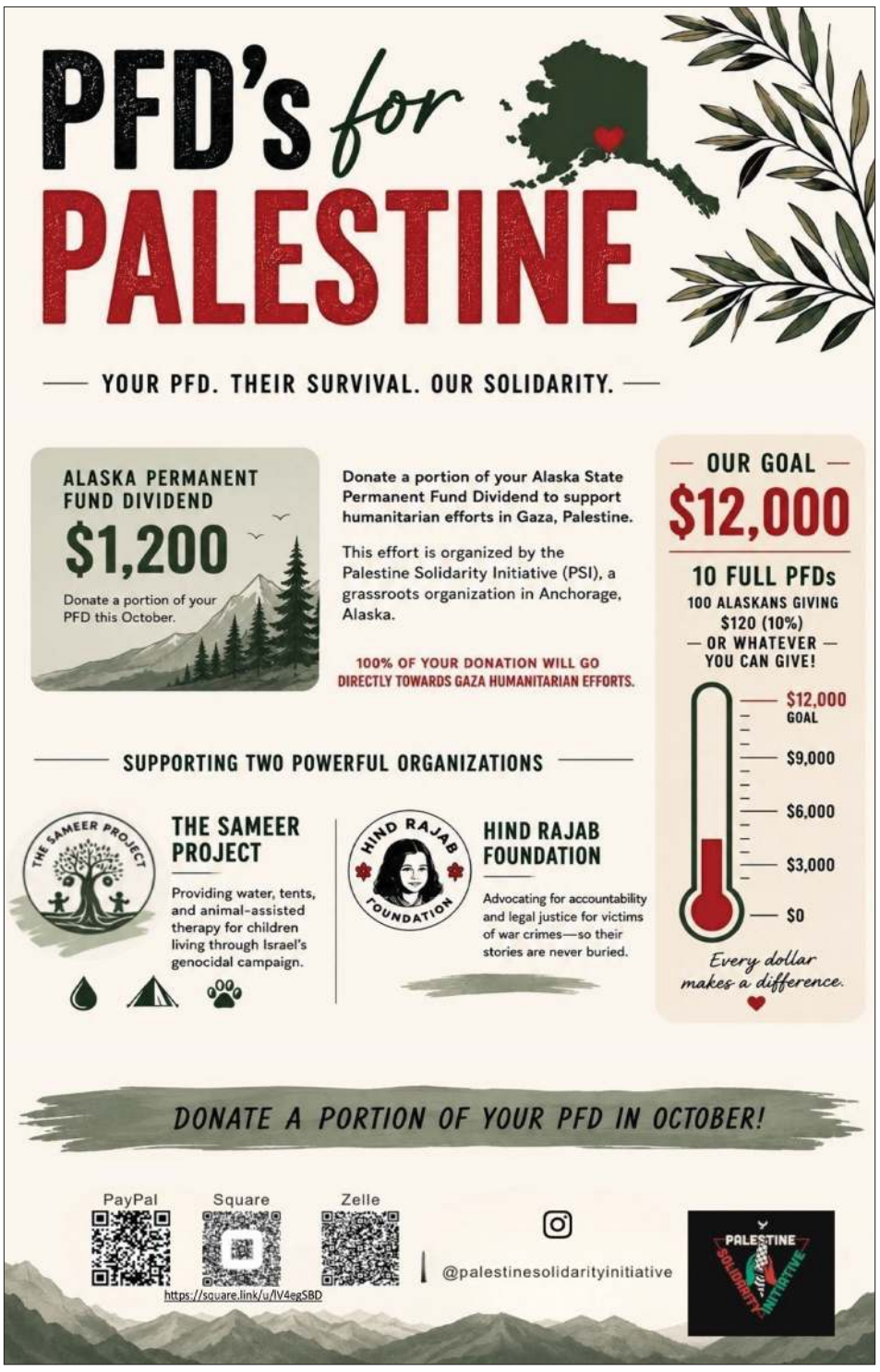



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Special section: AFN and Elders & Youth





A new exhibition debuting this month, RESISTANCE, highlights Indigenous artists' resistance to erasure—celebrating what the curators describe as "our inherent right to share who we are as Indigenous people."

This piece, from Greenlandic graphic designer Ivínguak' Stork Høegh, is titled "Greenland Belongs to the People of Greenland."

The exhibition debuts as a pop-up event Oct. 21 from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. at the Wild Birch Hotel, with a second iteration at University of Alaska Anchorage's McPeck Gallery beginning Nov. 13, and a subsequent showing at the Alaska Native Heritage Center starting in February.

Meet our guest editors

LATER THIS MONTH, Alaska Native leaders and thousands of people from around the state will converge in Anchorage for back-to-back, once-a-year gatherings: First Alaskans Institute's Elders & Youth conference and the Alaska Federation of Natives convention.

From the arts floor at the Dena'ina Center (get there at 8 a.m. Thursday if you're serious!) to state-defining political upheavals to after-parties and visits with friends and relatives, the week makes Anchorage so much richer. This year, it kicks off Oct. 18 and runs through Oct. 24.

To help us make meaning around this week, we commissioned two guest editors—Melissa Nenantaxnen Shaginoff and Dewey Kk'ołeyo Putyuk Hoffman—to solicit a range of pieces, which we've curated in a special section spread across the next few pages.

These stories are not meant to provide comprehensive coverage of the week, Alaska Native communities, or the organizations involved, but we hope they evoke a range of thoughts and emotions, provide basic info about the week, and touch on some key topics. We'll feature additional work on these subjects on our website and social media. Without further ado, meet our guest editors:



Melissa Nenantaxnen Shaginoff is an Ahtna and Paiute multidisciplinary artist based in Dgheyaytnu (Anchorage). Her work includes hide tanning, poetry, film, beadwork, and painting, grounded in Indigenous knowledge and relationships to community and place. She also serves as the Alaska Specialist for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.



Dewey Kk'ołeyo Putyuk Hoffman is originally from Ruby, Alaska and resides on Dena'ina lands. Dewey was given the Koyukon Athabascan name Kk'ołeyo by his late grandmother Lillian Olin, after her grandfather Big Jim; it means "walking." He was also given the Iñupiaq name Putyuk, which means "pinch," by Agnik Polly Schaeffer of Kotzebue, after her own late brother Ron Sheldon.

Thank you to section sponsor First Alaskans Institute.



Ben Baldwin, Sarah Jane Owens and Ben Jacuk work with a gut parka that's now on display at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. (Angie Demma)

Seeing Dena'ina clearly

A new exhibition at the Alaska Native Heritage Center features Dena'ina belongings that had been taken outside the state.

By Melissa Nenantaxnen Shaginoff
for the Anchorage Press

A NEW EXHIBITION highlights local Indigenous belongings once held in outside collections—now returned to the Alaska Native Heritage Center, where visitors are viewing them and Dena'ina community members can learn from them, care for them and honor their journeys.

As an Ahtna woman, I have been taught that wherever I go in Alaska, my ancestors, and the ancestors of all Alaska Native people, have already been.

Anchorage, Dghayitnu, Dgheyaytnu is Dena'ina homeland. We know this by measuring everything we love about Dgheyaytnu against the evidence of Indigenous existence here—the health of the land and animals, the expansiveness of their language, the thousands of place names shared from the memories of Dena'ina Elders.

But is this something that all of us who call Dgheyaytnu home know? Do settlers, visitors, and other Alaska Native peoples recognize Dena'ina culture when they see it?

In recent years, place-naming movements, public art installations, and language revitalization efforts have increasingly put Dena'ina culture in front of people in Dgheyaytnu. Yet visibility and common understanding remains uneven, and far from complete.

"Local Dena'ina"

An effort by the Alaska Native Heritage Center to strengthen Dena'ina visibility is its new exhibition Dena'ina Quht'ana, or "local Dena'ina."

It is a permanent exhibition that features rotating Dena'ina cultural belongings on loan from art collections around the world—some of which have not been viewed by Dena'ina people in nearly a century.

"We wanted to address that a lot of the time, Dena'ina culture can feel somewhat ambiguous," Ben Jacuk, the heritage center's Indigenous research and healing director, shared. "This exhibition gives us an opportunity to celebrate the people from this area. Through belongings like the kayak bow, the quivers, and the gut parkas, we see these things that are undoubtedly Dena'ina…particularly, the experience of being the only Dene people who live on the saltwater."

The new exhibition represents an incremental step toward repairing the erasure and destruction of Dena'ina presence that accompanied the rapid colonization of Dgheyaytnu. One notable and painful story was the burning of the Dena'ina fish camps in Dgheyay kaq', the mouth of Ship Creek, which became the original townsite of Anchorage.

Some of the cultural belongings on display at the heritage center capture the connectedness, uniqueness and ingenuity of Dena'ina people that were common before the era of assimilation.

A kayak bow—a family heirloom on loan from Dena'ina Elder Marilyn Balluta, who also translated the exhibition title—reflects the knowledge-sharing the Dena'ina people practiced with their cultural neighbors, a point many academic interpretations of Dena'ina collections tend to miss.

Its design, a double bow, appears in kayaks of other seafaring Alaska Native people throughout Tikahtnu, or Cook Inlet. It was created to break through rough waters when hunting sea mammals and represents the shared technologies between cultures—whether through intermarriage, trade, or simply sharing kayak-building tips. The kayak bow shows that the Dena'ina have a long shared knowledge across great distances, even across the sea, and this exhibition continues that tradition.

Quillwork and ochre

Two caribou-hide quivers, on loan from the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, are also shown.

These quivers, which held arrows used for hunting, were returned to the tribe from the Ralph T. Coe Center in New Mexico, which is where I first saw them, as a college student.

When the Coe Center announced its closure, I knew the Kenaitze Tribe needed to request their return.

These quivers are especially characteristic of Dena'ina people. One of them has an ochre-painted scene of caribou hunting and three large mountains. Elders on the Kenai Peninsula, where I grew up, believe they represent the three volcanoes surrounding the Kenai: Mount Redoubt, Mount Iliamna, and Mount Spurr.

The quivers serve another purpose in the exhibition: As the heritage center rotates the belongings on display, it is also hosting art-making workshops, where cultural knowledge holders teach students how to recreate the fundamental aspects of Dena'ina aesthetics found in their ancestral material culture.

The ochre painting and porcupine quill weaving on the quivers also challenge longstanding assumptions about local Indigenous aesthetics—that they're "just floral beadwork," said Aaron Leggett, president of the Native Village of Eklutna.

"For me, that thought is challenging because it isn't exactly who we were, not fully. We were much more abstract," said Leggett, who's also a senior curator of Alaska history and Indigenous culture at the Anchorage Museum.

Over Leggett's career, he said, he's located a number of Dena'ina quivers—but they've been found mostly in Europe, far from where they were created.

"I am just blown away that two are now at the heritage center, and that they have the quillwork and ochre," he said.

The most recent loan on display is from Yale University's Peabody Museum: a kayak skirt and two gut parkas—waterproof jackets made from sea mammal intestine.

Anthropologist Cornelius Osgood collected these in the Tikahtnu area and brought them to Yale in the 1930s, and the gut parkas are among the oldest positively identified Dena'ina collections in the United States.



Dena'ina Quht'ana, or "local Dena'ina," is a new exhibition at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. (Chris Arend)



This Dena'ina arrow quiver, on display at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, includes ochre painting of caribou hunting and the three volcanoes surrounding the Kenai Peninsula. (Nathaniel Herz/ Anchorage Press)

The belongings will be with the heritage center for three years thanks to an agreement between the two museums, giving Alaska Native museum professionals in Dgheyaytnu a chance to develop their skills with help from a local conservator, Sarah Jane Owens.

"An important aspect of bringing these parkas here is so that Native people, from here, could do the work of conservation and care," said Angie Demma, the heritage center's collection director.

This partnership represents the future of museum work and a shift from the past—when Indigenous people weren't always trusted in their intentions and given the opportunity to learn from, care for, and decide the future of their own cultural belongings.

Dena'ina Quht'ana is challenging our collective idea of what a museum exhibition is. This exhibition is purposeful and activating. It invites visitors, students, and new museum professionals to learn the fundamental elements of Dena'ina aesthetics. It includes heirloom belongings that hold our families' stories; it offers our community the opportunity to learn art-making techniques not currently practiced; and it honors us with the chance to care for belongings that have been away from their homeland for far too long.

Aaron recalled reading an interview with the late Elder Clare Swan. "When asked what it means to be Dena'ina, she said: It feels like we are the invisible people. We are invisible to outsiders; we'll become invisible to ourselves."

This exhibition works against that invisibility. It brings Dena'ina presence forward, making it visible, tangible, and undeniable in the place where Dena'ina people have always lived, and will always live.

"When we're divided, we get ignored": AFN's president seeks unity amid a generational shift



Ben Mallott, the first new president of the Alaska Federation of Natives in three decades, looks back and forward in a conversation with Anchorage Press contributor Cordelia Kellie.

Alaska Federation of Natives President Ben Mallott represents a changing of the guard at the advocacy organization.

Until 2024, the federation had the same president for more than three decades: Julie Kitka, who started her career at AFN in 1984.

Mallott, who previously served as AFN's vice president for external affairs, also worked as an aide to U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski. He is now at the vanguard of a major change in leadership across many of the state's Alaska Native institutions, as a new, younger generation steps into executive roles.

In advance of this year's AFN convention in late October, the Anchorage Press wanted to check in with Mallott, whose father, the late Byron Mallott, once held the same job.

Cordelia Kellie, a young Alaska Native leader and doctoral student in anthropology at University of Alaska Fairbanks, conducted the interview, which covers policy, politics and some of the details of the convention itself—a huge yearly get-together that some people call Native New Year.

The conversation spanned a full hour, so this transcript has been edited for length and clarity; a fuller version will be published online at anchoragepress.com.

Cordelia Kellie: Who does AFN specifically represent, and how does decisionmaking work?

Ben Mallott: AFN represents the unified political interest of the Alaska Native community.

Our membership encompasses the majority of our regional corporations, regional nonprofits, our tribes, and also our village corporations. This year that's 11 regional corporations, 11 regional tribal nonprofits, 196 tribes, 156 village corporations. Through that membership, if you add in all the shareholders and tribal citizens, it's about 160,000. We are governed by a 38-member board, with about nine full-time staff.

Our convention is actually our annual meeting of our membership, and the most important day of our convention is resolutions, which set our priorities. When I was a staffer for Murkowski, I could go through resolutions and see where the Native community stood on different priorities going back decades.

CK: Your time at AFN spans more than 13 years. What is it about the mission that brought you to the organization? And what is it that brought you back after time away?

BM: I didn't really want to get into politics. I actually got my degree in environmental science, got my commercial pilot's license, ran out of money, and Julie Kitka hired me part time, and that was the end of that.

It was the people that pulled me in. Just hearing all the different perspectives on all the regions, and then how (former AFN senior vice president) Nelson Angapak composed himself and put everything together. It opened my eyes to what AFN does, right?

CK: What are some areas of AFN's work that might be lesser-known?

BM: Our Get Out the Native Vote initiative—working with other voting organizations so that we're not stepping on toes, and not duplicating efforts, on how we can work better and smarter together. When Alaska Native people don't vote, it gives the government reason to ignore us. It all goes back to how our communities are represented. If you want to change government, if you're unhappy with who's on the board of fish, Board of Game, the governor selects those names, right?

There's also the partnerships that AFN builds. I was in D.C. with the Cherokee Nation, our nation's largest tribe. We've supported Lumbee, our nation's newest tribe. Having that network—when times get tough, you need friends.

CK: This year's convention theme is 'Rooted in Land and Tradition.' Can you tell us about that?

BM: It goes back to subsistence, right? It's our highest priority.

"I didn't really want to get into politics... It was the people that pulled me in."

Right now, we're stuck between federal and state management, and that is not fair for us, right? We are criminalized just for trying to live our ways of life, that Native people have lived for 10,000-plus years. When one user group—commercial, sport—feel like they're not getting their way, they're making us yield in our ways of life. That's not fair for us.

CK: This year is AFN's 60th convention. Over time, we've seen groups depart, but also rejoin in recent years. Why is it important to have a body that specifically represents all Alaska Natives?

BM: Our history, in terms of how Alaska has incorporated public policy, federal statutes, is different. We are so far removed from D.C., and so I think it's one of the great powers of AFN to maintain that history, that relationship with Congress and the administration.

CK: Are there lessons learned or ways that AFN is ensuring that groups feel heard, given that those were some of the issues cited by those that have left and rejoined?

BM: Process.

We've worked hard to incorporate processes into our bylaws. We have a divisive resolution policy now. If two regions find a resolution divisive, they can withhold it. We have, now, a pretty strict policy for how the board can endorse statewide candidates. Two-thirds vote, 14 days notice of all membership.

We've built some pretty strong processes to ensure that things can still go forward, but we're doing our due-diligence in making sure everybody's brought along in those.

CK: Is there anything that is lost if Alaska Native people don't have a body that's representative of all groups? Are there specific vulnerabilities?

BM: When we look like we're divided, we get ignored, right? The ability to divide and conquer our communities is part of how (those opposed to Native sovereignty) win. So, for AFN to be the convener on common issues of unified political interest is one of our biggest ways to ensure that we don't get divided and conquered.

CK: Will we ever see a convention in Fairbanks again, or outside of Anchorage?

BM: I don't know. We've talked to Fairbanks about that. Our convention has become huge. We sold out our arts tables in less than two hours. We don't have enough rooms for a lot of our workshops and caucuses. So, it'll be hard for another community to match what Anchorage has, in terms of infrastructure. One thing we're talking about is having a smaller, midyear conference, and moving that to Juneau, Fairbanks, maybe Ketchikan.

CK: Are there conversations about other ways that AFN might evolve itself to the future?

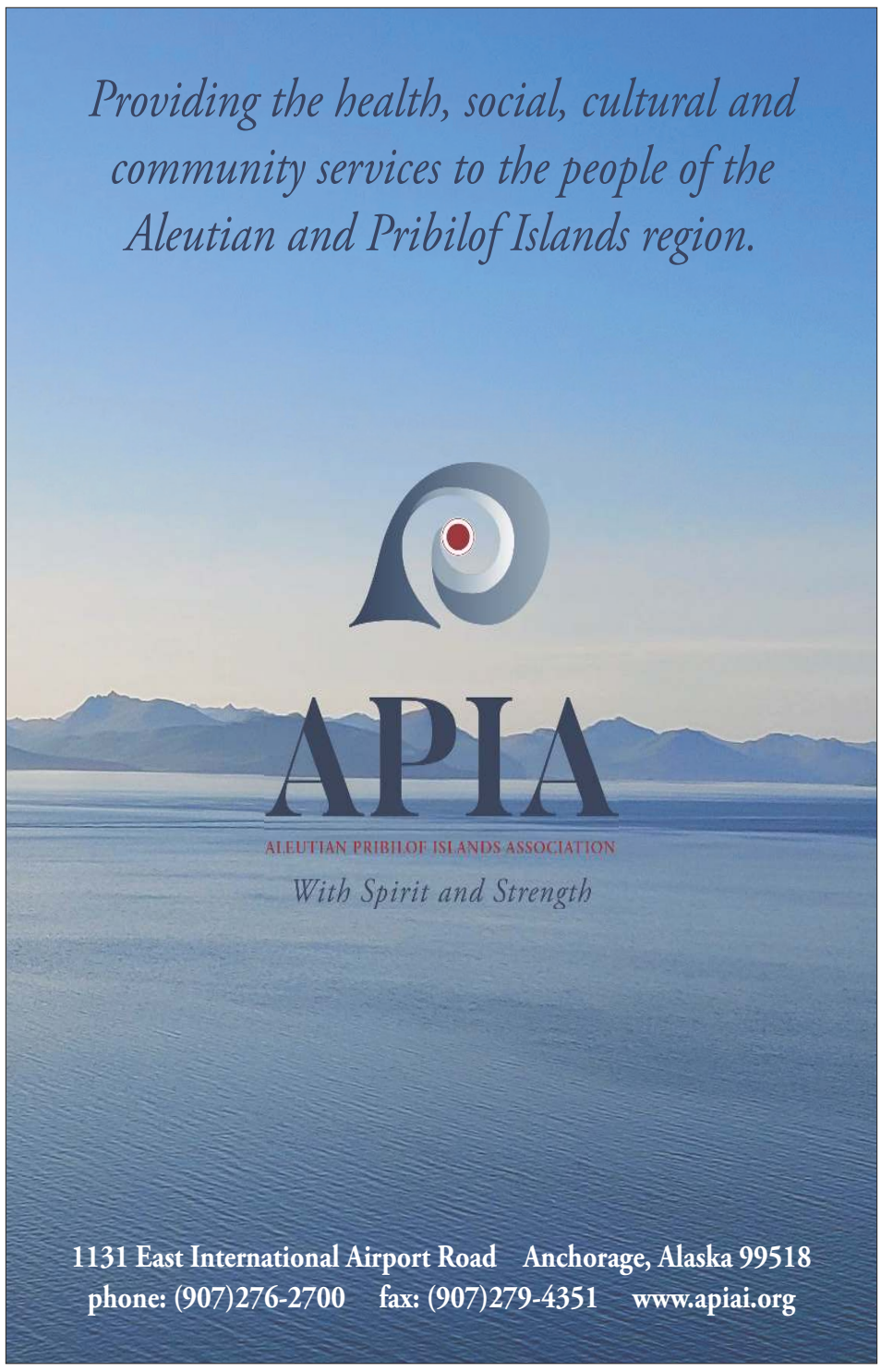
BM: One of my wishes for AFN is to create, like, a Leadership Alaska program.

Back in the day, Native leaders like my dad and Willie Hensley, they all grew up together. There was real statewide camaraderie. As our organization has gotten so big, which is incredible, I think some of that camaraderie and statewide connection has kind of waned a little bit.

So, how can we create support for mid-career, mid-level Alaska Native executives to create these types of networks from different regions working together?

CK: What do you hope readers are left with, in reading this interview? If you could underscore something.

BM: Come to our convention. It's open. We make it free for a reason: because we want others to also learn our ways of life. AFN's about partnerships, building connections, and part of how we grow our communities and our state is by doing it all together. AFN's never charged a cover for our main sessions. That's because we want not only our community to meet the way we do. But also, we want our whole state to be at the table with us.



Her first deneege

*"SHOOT THAT M*****F*****!"*

By Brittany Woods-Orrison
for the Anchorage Press



(Courtesy of Brittany Woods-Orrison)

I MET UNCLE G AT A HIDE CAMP a year ago. His rugged exterior proved he was a man from the land: clothes dirty from manual labor, missing teeth, hair unkept, tough skin and work boots that couldn't keep up with him. I later learned that his daughter, Star, and I have something in common: We're both young Native women who tan hides year-round. We grew closer, and decided to go out on the land together.

After months of planning, I found myself sitting on a gravel bank along the river waiting for Uncle G. He rolled up standing in an open skiff that's been rocking since the '80s. We loaded my gear, then went to his vehicle to get some final things. He drove around a beater with a heater: a rough little war pony spray painted with rust. The interior was piled high with random essentials: tools, canned foods, gas containers and clothes.

It was a beautiful two-hour drive upriver, with the 50-horsepower Suzuki Spirit motor running on frequent maintenance and prayers. Halfway through the trip, we stopped for Uncle to work on it. He jumped in the water with his not-waterproof winter boots. He did not flinch, though he was wearing only a sweater and jeans. No gloves or nothing. I was bundled in layers, gloves and a hat, and I was still cold.

When we made it to camp, I asked to use the bathroom and pointed at the outhouse. Uncle laughed. "Better not, you might fall in," he said.

That was genuinely true. The family had not been home in 15 years, and the outhouse needed some…repairs. Uncle later laid a plank across the dilapidated floors and jumped on it to ensure we could use the outhouse safely. The plank also made things more entertaining. You had to balance every time.

The house was like a fever dream—and, quite literally, an '80s time capsule that a bear had broken into. The windows were covered with temporary plastic. The floors were uneven. The bottom shelves had remnants of a mouse nest. Squirrels that had been evicted from the roof constantly chattered at us. Shelves leaned over like some sort of Dr. Seuss illustration.

The kitchen was a mess, albeit a coordinated one, where Uncle thrived. He cooked us delicious, spirit-lifting meals—fresh caught grayling that he fried up with potatoes, and the gold standard spam breakfast.

And then there was Grandma's room, full of trinkets, fabrics, shelving, art and romance novels (that we would use for firewood—hopefully grandma could enjoy one more read!).

We got into our routine quickly; in the morning, we sipped coffee before going out to look for moose for a few hours. We'd come home and eat breakfast. Then we'd deep clean, nap, eat again, head back out for a few more hours. In the evening, we listened to trapline chatter on the radio. No one ever left us a message, but Leon—whoever he is—got one almost every night, and five on his birthday.

An auntie obviously had to let him know, "I dyed my hair and it looks so good. Hope you're having fun at camp, and it's not raining too much."

While Uncle G tended to be introverted, he acted just like a kid around his daughter. They would spend all day bickering, teasing and trying to outwit one another—Uncle in a goofy manner, and Star with her cool attitude.

The time on the land was rejuvenating, but by Day 11 we were all starting to lose morale. We hadn't seen any bulls. White hunters threatened to trespass on Uncle's Native allotment. We had run out of fresh food. And we had cleaned nearly the entire house, all 15 years of dust included. There were only a few days left in the season, and no luck yet. The sole moose we'd come across was a carcass that had been left to rot beside the river with only the antlers harvested.

Three days before the season ended, Uncle woke up at the usual 6 a.m. and said, "Whoever doesn't get the f*** up is getting left behind"—as if we hadn't been waking up on time! We drank coffee until the light allowed us to see across the river. We took the usual route, going into all the sloughs near camp. But it had been raining all week, and the river had risen. So we jumped a shallow beaver dam and ventured farther back into a slough than we had gone before.

As I was looking to my left along the bank, Uncle shouted: "SHOOT THAT M*****F*****!" I turned my head, as if in slow motion. In two seconds, Star wiped her glasses from the rain and took aim. BOOM! The huge bull knocked over, but was still fighting to run. Uncle said, "You need to shoot again. Hurry up. You need to shoot again." Star struggled: "The chamber is jammed!"

Then: BOOM.

The deneege went down into the water. "F***IN A, MY DAUGHTER GOT HER FIRST MOOSE!!!" Uncle yelled.

"It's going to suck getting this thing out of the water," he continued. "BUT I DON'T CARE MY DAUGHTER GOT HER FIRST MOOSE!"

Brittany Woods-Orrison is Koyukon Denè from Dleł Hutaaneets. She is a filmmaker, traditional tanner, Native games athlete, public speaker, and writer.



NATIVE VOICES MATTER, VOTE!

GENERAL ELECTION

VOTING ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3

Take a look at our Regional Voter Toolkits

Each toolkit includes resources to help individuals, families, and communities understand the voting process and participate confidently within their region.

SCAN HERE

Anchorage Early Voting Begins October 19!

Location	Dates/Hours	Ballots Available
Anchorage City Hall 632 W 6th Ave, Room 105	**Monday - Friday** Oct 19th - Nov 2nd 8:00 am - 5:00 pm **(Not open on weekends)**	House Districts 1-40
Midtown Mall 600 E Northern Lights Blvd	**Monday - Friday** Oct 19th - Nov 2nd 8:00 am - 5:00 pm **(Open on weekends)**	House Districts 1-40
Southcentral Foundation: Shesh T'qelani 4175 Tudor Centre Drive	**October 27 – November 2nd** 9 am-4 pm, excluding weekends.	House Districts 1-40



Learn more about voting by visiting AFN's Voting Resource page: https://nativefederation.org/voting-resources/

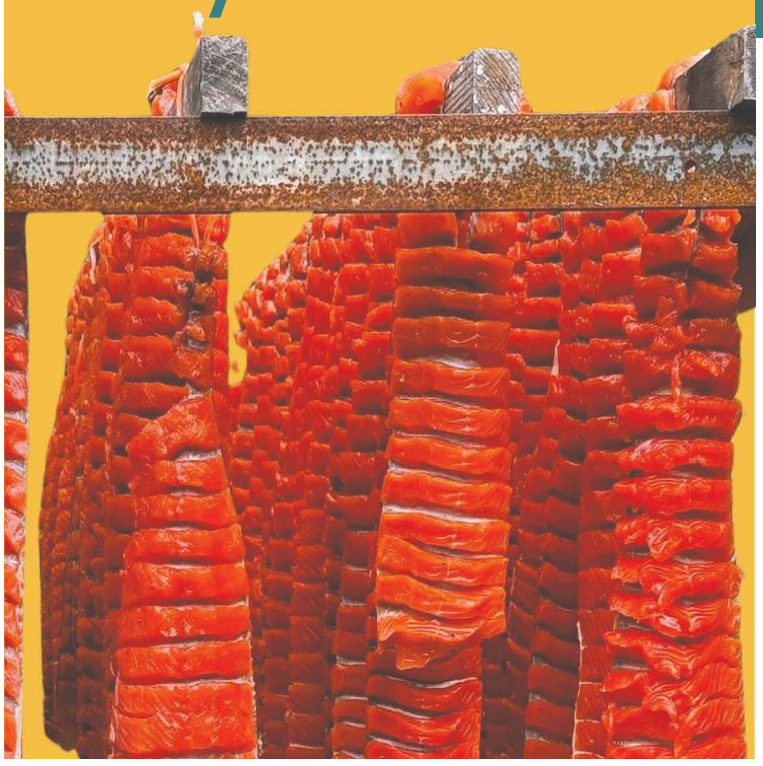
Every vote is a stand for our people, our rights, and our future. It is a promise to defend our community and protect what our ancestors fought to preserve, so that our Indigenous ways of life remain strong and continue to thrive for generations to come.

-Benjamin Mallott,
President of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN)

HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT

Take your time. Follow the instructions.

Make your vote count.



BEFORE YOU SEND IT

SCAN HERE

Learn more about absentee voting here:

- ✓ Ballot completed
- ✓ Ballot inside gray secrecy sleeve
- ✓ Sleeve inside return envelope
- ✓ **Signature completed**
- ✓ **At least ONE identifier provided**
- ✓ **Witness signed**
- ✓ Envelope sealed
- ✓ Correct postage applied

Igyamcuk and bricks of gold

A conversation with Yup'ik artist and advocate Nikki Quluqaaq Corbett

By Dewey Kk'ołeyo Putyuk Hoffman for the Anchorage Press



Courtesy of Nikki Corbett/Sew Yup'ik

Nikki Corbett is a Yup'ik artist from Bethel who has lived on the Kenai Peninsula since 2015. While I've been following her work online for a while, we've gotten to know each other in recent years through our efforts promoting opportunities for Alaska Native artists and language healers.

This summer, when the salmon run was good on the Kasilof River, we briefly traded notes on cutting and half-drying fish to make a dish we both love. Her family calls it "Egamaarrluk" in Yugtun. Mine calls it "k'eyoge laaghe" in Denaakk'e.

We spoke over Zoom in September, while she was prepping to sell her artwork at the upcoming Alaska Federation of Natives convention in Anchorage. Between sewing machine passes, her skillful hands, which transformed multiple fabric pieces into colorful creations, would occasionally whip toward the camera (in a seemingly Chun Kuk Do style, for all you Chuck Norris fans out there), as she emphasized an important point in her story.

Dewey: Can you tell me about yourself?

Nikki: Waqaa, wiinga Quluqaugua. Mamterrilleriunga. I'm Nikki Corbett. My Yup'ik name is Quluqaaq. Everyone back home knows me as Nikki Nick. I'm from Bethel, on the Kuskokwim River. I also spent time at my grandma's village in Nunapitchuk. I grew up going to fish camp with my aunt, picking berries. I have owned and operated a small business since the summer of 2015 called Sew Yup'ik. I'm also going to school to become a psychiatric mental health practitioner, and hope to complete my studies and sit for boards next May. This year, I was lucky enough to snag an artist booth at AFN, so I'm just getting ready for that.

Dewey: What is a favorite memory of yours going to AFN?

Nikki: I love seeing everyone, especially my Elders, in between the madness of selling stuff. I have all my Elders who I run around and try to see. Usually they're from back home on the (Yukon-Kuskokwim) Delta. It's also so nice just being around those who want to share their traditional foods, like muktuk. Sometimes we even get a chance to barter. I'm good on seal oil for now. I'm still bartering for cloudberries, which we call salmonberries.

Dewey: I love seeing my Elders and loved ones from all over. I have a buddy who's a Bethel Hoffman, and since my dad came up from Washington state and married into my late mom's family here, I sometimes joke with him, "I'm an ila from another vill-ah." How is it important to protect our ways of life as Alaska Native peoples?

Nikki: As Yuks, as Yup'ik, as real genuine human beings, it's ingrained in us. We're taught that if you take care of the land, the land takes care of you. It's so important seeing where food comes from, hunting and fishing.

A huge part of that is making sure that we're not developing for greed or money, corporate gain. If you think of mining, mining is not gonna take care of the land. If I think about the proposed Donlin Gold mine, which would store millions of tons of waste in a massive tailings pond: Is that taking care of the land? Is that following Qanruyuutet (words of wisdom), the rules that we are meant to follow? What about the Alerquutet (instructions), the teachings that are passed down from generation to generation?

I recognize that we are living in the Western world, and there needs to be economic development in order to pay bills. But I think the risks are too great to take.

If there's one major spill, you can't eat a brick of gold. That's not gonna feed you. Everything has a spirit, including the land, the animals. If you're not being protective of those things, then they won't present themselves to you.

Dewey: Baasee' for sharing that. I was also taught you have to take care and be mindful if you want to have a successful harvest. Do you have any thoughts about ways your communities have adapted to fishing closures on the Kuskokwim River?

Nikki: Our people are resilient and have been able to create ways to harvest. Maybe they wouldn't always get the species of fish that they would like, but still can harvest pike, whitefish, sheefish, lush. There are ways to make up for not being able to get salmon, to get other food sources.

Dewey: In my family, we started fishing together on the Kasilof River. We feel fortunate to be able to harvest and put up red salmon there. This is after grieving for many years of not being able to harvest together with our extended family on the Yukon River — although this summer we had some amazing experiences back on the Yukon at Ruby culture camp, drifting for salmon with a special permit. Our family had to adapt by traveling to fish at another river. Still, we try to be good relatives.

Nikki: I know, it's so different than what we're used to, growing up using a fish wheel. It's strange to fish that way at first, where you pick them out of a dipnet and bonk them on the head one by one.

We find ways to adapt. Like up north in Nome, when people were unable to fish, I would barter red salmon for berries. I feel lucky that we are able to find ways to get fish today that our grandparents might not have had.

Something I remember is roasting fish hearts on the campfire. My cousins and I would fight over who could get the biggest heart. We would make jerky out of the fish esophagus, igyamcuk. So, there are things you do that are so normal growing up, and then you think later on, "How did our grandparents know all these things?"

"There are things you do that are so normal growing up, and then you think later on, 'How did our grandparents know all these things?'"

Dewey: Is there anything you wanted to share that you didn't have a chance to yet?

Nikki: I always encourage people to know where you come, to know your family, your background, if you can find that information — so that you can carry that history with you.

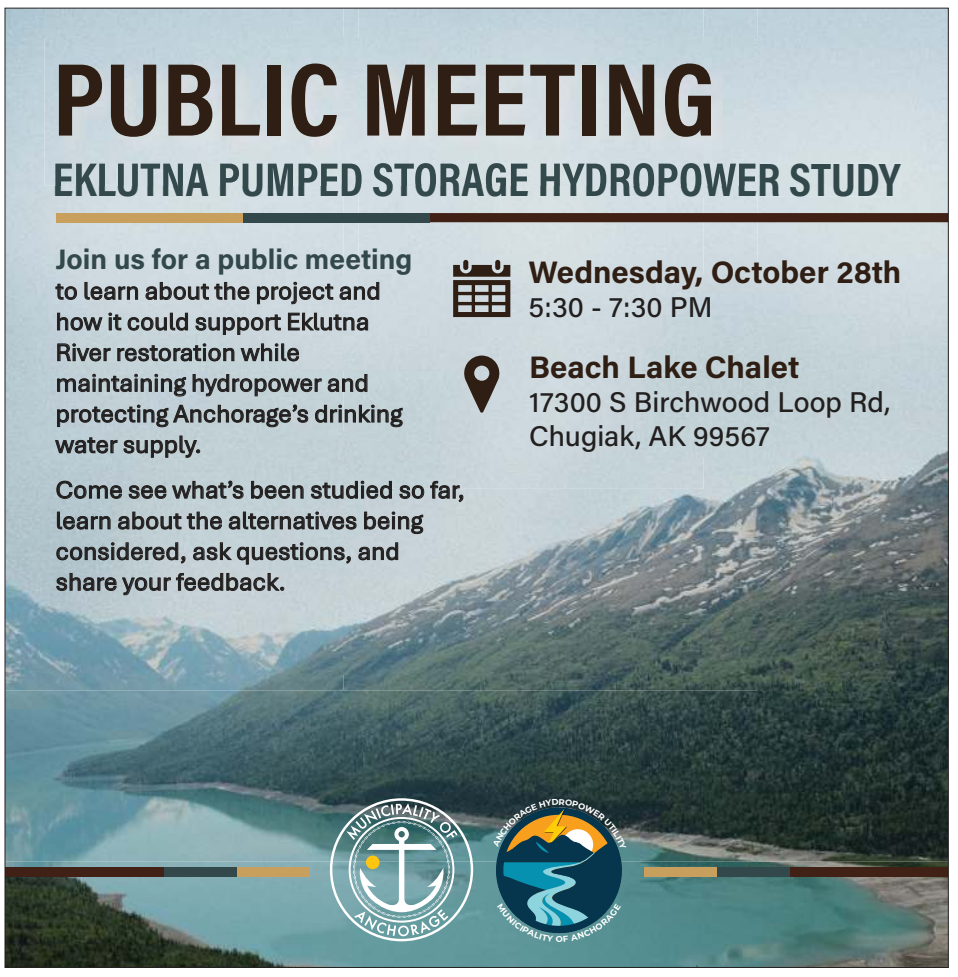
Also learn your [Alaska Native] language. Start small. I didn't grow up speaking Yugtun. I learned it in elementary through high school, and eventually college. It's so important that you don't wait for someone to take your hand and show you how to do something. You have to create those movements forward to be able to continue learning where you come from and who your family is.

Dewey: All right, we'll probably see you at AFN, Nikki. Quyana cakneq for sharing with us today!

Nikki: Quyana Chuck Norris!







First Alaskans Institute

43rd Annual Statewide Elders & Youth Conference

K'ets'e k'ʉdaa neehʉghleł (Denaakk'e, Koyukon Athabascan) — "We are approaching change"

October 18-21, 2026 | Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center, Anchorage, AK

Did you know the annual Statewide Elders & Youth Conference has grown from just 54 high school students and Elders at its beginning to more than 3,000 in person and virtual Elders, youth, and supporting community members in recent years? First Alaskans Institute (FAI) has served as the host organization since 2003, following AFN first hosting youth at its convention in 1984. This event continues to be a space "where the energy and excitement of the youth [is] guided by the wisdom of their Elders."

In 2018, nearly a generation since it started, organizers took steps to invest significant time and heart work to center Alaska Native languages by establishing annual conference themes in our own mother tongues. Each year at the conference, FAI holds a public drawing to select an Alaska Native language to be highlighted as the following year's Language of the Year. The Elders & Youth Council then connect with language healers from across Alaska Native communities and learning spaces to craft a distinct theme together for the upcoming conference.

Indigenous language conference themes so far have proudly stated:

- **Na Ganiyaatgm, Na Lagm** - **Our Ancestors, Our Fire** (Sm'algyax-Tsimshian) in 2018
- **Qaneryararput Yugtun Riniqerput (Yugtun-Yup'ik) / Qaneryararput Cugtun Kayuqerput (Cugtun-Cup'ik)** - both meaning **Language is Our Superpower** in 2019
- **Asirqamek Apruciluta (Sugt'stun, Chugach Sugpiaq) / Asisqamek Apruť'liluta (Alutiiq)** - both meaning **We Are Making A Good Path** in 2020
- **Ahnuu dAXunhyuu AXAkihyaˊ iLkaˊ GAdAqeeLinuu** - **Side By Side In The Same Direction The People Go By Canoe** (dAXunhyuuga'-Eyak) in 2021
- **Xuuťsˊudeelken iin** - **Relatives of Ours** (Nee'andĕg'-Tanacross) in 2022
- **Woosht Guganéix** - **Let It Be That We Help Each Other** (Lingít Yoo X'atángi-Tlingit) in 2023
- **Dinjii Zhuh K'yàa Zhit Gwarandaii** - **Our Land Our Food - We Are Living Our Indigenous Ways of Life** (Dinjii Zhuh K'yàa-Gwich'in) in 2024
- **Qapiŋaiññiġlu Siqsuniġlu Kiŋuvaaksraptignun** - **Perseverance and Fortitude for the Future Generations** (Iñupiatun-Inupiaq) in 2025
- **K'etsˊe Kkˊʉdaa Neehʉghleł** - **We Are Approaching Change** (Denaakk'e-Koyukon) in 2026

The journey is often just as important as the outcome when it comes to deeply personal and relational language healing work. First-language speakers plus next-generation learners and speakers come together for this special opportunity to mostly celebrate and sometimes grieve our languages, and bring them with us into the future.

In addition to helping create the theme, Language of the Year organizers work to support interactive and safe spaces to learn and practice our languages on site during the conference, and connect interested community members with ongoing efforts that take place all over the world. They also incorporate other gathered words and phrases in the language of the year to use on written workshop materials and online.

Overall, pride in cultural knowledge is a protective factor for Alaska Native families, especially our youth. This is an opportunity to build on that pride and cultural ownership. Anyone can learn and anyone can teach our languages. It would be good to remember to be kind to ourselves and each other along the way. The story of Indigenous language revitalization and strengthening is unfolding right here today, and we invite you to be directly involved. After this year's featured Language of the Year, Denaakk'e, or Koyukon Athabascan, about 14 more will follow.

There is a directory of all 23 of Alaska's distinct and officially recognized Native languages, and various up to date resources, through the office of Tribal Affairs at the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

The Statewide Elders & Youth Conference returns in-person from October 18–21, 2026 at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center in Dgheyey Kaq'; Dena'inaq ełnen'aq' qilan (Anchorage, Alaska; lands of the Dena'ina).

Denaakk'e Hesohaak - We Will Talk in Denaakk'e

9:15-10:15am on Monday, Oct. 19:
Denaakk'e Language Panel discussing the Language of the Year at the main stage

1:30-3pm on Monday, Oct. 19:
Denaakk'e language workshop in Kahtnu 1, Floor 2

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