

ANCHORAGE PRESS

WHO SAYS
PRINT IS
DEAD?!

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TUESDAY TERROR WAVE



A celebration of Gothic and Alternative culture
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Sept 8, Sept 22, Oct 6, Oct 20



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RIP Anchorage Press

By O'Hara Shipe
For The Anchorage Press

It was business as usual at the Anchorage Press on the morning of Dec. 16, 2022.

But by lunch, a three-minute phone call from an Outsider threw our lives into chaos.

I was the editor of the

Press at the time. I sat on a rickety chair across from my publisher, Tawni Davis, as she placed her cell phone in front of me and closed her office door at 731 I Street downtown. The voice on the line told us that the Press had printed its final edition.

It was one day after the delivery of the annual Press Picks issue — a yearly edition

celebrating the absolute best of Anchorage, from restaurants and bars to music venues and artists.

At the top of the print edition, we had given the Press a cheeky nickname: "Anchorage's #Winning Paper."

Ouch. That one still stings.

RIP | Continued on Page 10

The Press lives!

Hi.

We're Veri di Suvero and Nat Herz, the new owners of the Anchorage Press — and the publisher and editor of the paper, respectively. We started talking about restarting the Press more than a year ago, and we made the leap in June. Starting a business together to buy the assets of the Press has already been a jam-packed education, even without printing anything. But we've raced to get here, and we're so grateful and excited.

Because this is an actual print newspaper, we have a limited amount of space. So we'll keep the stuff about us short: We're both really excited to help bring the Press back to life and each have a modicum of useful experience — Nat as a reporter and editor, and Veri as a nonprofit leader.

You'll notice "media mogul" wasn't part of either of our bios. A hundred years ago, owning a newspaper was a path to huge profits. You may have heard of William Randolph Hearst, the media baron who was the basis for the megalomaniacal main character in the iconic Citizen Kane movie; he owned Arabian stallions, medieval Italian armor, and more than one castle.

Suffice to say: That is not us. Print and digital media profits

have tanked in the past three decades thanks to social media and Craigslist, and the business is tough. Four years after an Outside media company closed the Press down, we bought the assets of the Press earlier this year — for a sum that Hearst, even a century ago, would have sniffed at.

We are not here to make big bucks. We are here to give our best shot at creating a sustainable business and durable institution that will bring some new life, inspiration and enthusiasm to life in our home city and state. Now, let's talk about how we plan to make that happen.

Right now, the Press is a lot like a wall of spaghetti. We're trying a lot of things to see what sticks.

Some of that spaghetti is cool shit that we know will work because the Anchorage Press has always been full of creative, smart people and there's a reason people miss it. Some of it is new ideas, with many coming from friends and volunteers and freelancers.

That's a little vague. So let's get specific. When we bring up the paper, people tend to ask us four questions: Will it be in print? Will the events calendar

be back? What is our vision for the Press? Will we bring back stuff like horoscopes, News of the Weird, crosswords, music, art reviews and Dr. Fermento, the beer reviewer?

If you're reading this, you're likely wondering the same things. Let's assess:

- No, it will not be in print ;)
- Events calendar: Hell yes!

Anchorage needs it. We'll put it on dead trees and on the interwebs; we'll lob it through the windows of your bedroom so you don't have to desperately scroll Facebook to find something fun to do. Check out [A15].

• What is our vision for the Press? Eminently modest: We want to be the coolest paper in the most vibrant city in the most inspiring state. Since that'll take us at least 30 days, in the mean time: We want to bring back the good stuff, the humor, the grit, the realness. And we want to do our own shit — the Press will never have seen so much investigative reporting about public utility regulation and open pit mining. We want it all — even if 'all,' on Day 1, is less than it's going to be on Day 366 and Year 5.

• Those features from the Old Press? Yes, we absolutely want

UNDEAD | Continued on Page 27



Veri di Suvero, left, is the new publisher and chief executive of the Anchorage Press. Nathaniel Herz, right, is the new executive editor. Jeff Chen for the Anchorage Press



Ch'atanaltsegh:

Weird, wonderful parade marks return of Dena'ina place name

Participants in salmon and sandhill crane costumes gathered before a parade from Lyn Ary Park in West Anchorage to welcome back an Indigenous Dena'ina place name to the mouth of Fish Creek.

Photos: Nathaniel Herz/Anchorage Press

By Nathaniel Herz
nat@anchoragepress.com

On a recent week night, a school of salmon gathered at West Anchorage's Lyn Ary Park.

They were guzzling cans of Mountain Dew. Or, at least, the teenage boys wearing the costumes were.

The strange salmonid assemblage was part of a motley crew of more than 200 people who attended the latest in a series of events to celebrate original place names created by the Anchorage area's Indigenous Dena'ina people.

More than two dozen monuments already decorate other cherished sites around the city.

But Thursday's party to commemorate the latest addition — a new plaza and sign at the mouth of Fish Creek, just west of downtown — was unlike any other, featuring a parade of larger-than-life animals, Indigenous and western dance groups, food trucks, moose-shaped cookies and a concert by the Inuit-soul band Pamyua.

When the plaza and sign are finished in 2028, residents and tourists alike will know the deep mud and thick grass of Fish Creek by a different name: Ch'atanaltsegh, or "yellow water comes out" in the Dena'ina language. It's part of a larger effort

to increase Dena'ina visibility within the city — which hasn't always been robust.

"I used to say there were more totem poles in Anchorage than meaningful representations of Dena'ina people," said Aaron Leggett, president of the local Eklutna tribal government, referring to the wooden monuments carved by Indigenous people in Southeast Alaska — hundreds of miles away. He added: "Clearly, that's not the case any more."

The Ch'atanaltsegh monument will be one of 32 markers in a grant-funded initiative that's

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Jamie Hirano, who designed the salmon garb, said it was made with recycled material from an Anchorage workwear company and inspired by the costumes worn by runners at the festive Bay to Breakers footrace in San Francisco.



Jessie K'Deli'en Coleman leads the Friendship Dancers.



The sandhill crane costume was the brainchild of artist Rachelle Dowdy.

My love-at-first-bite affair with Ginger's General Tso's Fried Chicken

The Anchorage Press' 'Favorite Plate' feature debuts with a fried chicken dish from Ginger.

By Lily Miller
For The Anchorage Press

From the editor: This column, by Anchorage Press contributor Lily Miller, marks the first in a monthly feature we're calling, for now, Favorite Plate. The concept: readers write in with their favorite single dish that they order at an Anchorage area establishment. Have your own idea? Send a two-sentence pitch to Press editor Nathaniel Herz at nat@anchoragepress.com. We'll pay for successful pitches, plus buy you an order of the dish to refresh your memory.

I moved to Alaska for a man. I know what you're thinking. "Another transplant who will leave the second they break up." You would be

right, if I hadn't met General Tso'ander. The man I moved here for couldn't keep me, but Ginger's General Tso'anders Fried Chicken could. My longest relationship to date, four years. I have never strayed. My eyes have never wandered. I've never accidentally glanced at the drunken noodles or panang beef curry. I know what I want. We met on an icy night, the first winter I was here. I was craving something warm and filling that felt like a home-cooked meal. Ginger's sleek exterior juxtaposed with its cozy, inviting dining room practically

dared me to come in, promising a dining experience that I didn't expect to find in downtown Anchorage. I browsed the menu and my eyes immediately found General Tso'ander. The description was exactly what I was looking for. Marinated chicken crusted in chickpea flour, tossed in a blend of Nashville and general tso's sauces served over jasmine rice and finished with pickled ginger-habanero cucumbers. Warm. Hearty. A little spicy. Comfort food with a twist. The bowl came out, piled high with crispy chicken. I dug in and realized this must be what people mean by "love at first bite." The chicken was irresistibly juicy, yet somehow still

crispy despite being drenched in sauce. The Nashville heat hit my tastebuds first, but before it overwhelmed me, the sweetness of the General Tso's sauce snuck in. The flavors didn't compete with each other, and even if they had, I couldn't pick a winner. While the fried chicken is clearly the star of the dish, I quickly learned that the best bites included all three components: the chicken, the fluffy jasmine rice, and crunchy cucumbers that are the perfect mix of spicy and sour. The ingredients on their own are incredible, but when all three combine, they create a mix of flavors and textures that is impossible to stop eating. The rice soaks up the

sauce without getting soggy, the chicken's flavor explodes in your mouth, and the cucumbers add a crisp cut of freshness to even it all out. Ginger quickly became one of my favorite restaurants in Anchorage, all because of this one dish. I know that every honeymoon phase comes to an end. Mine never did. General Tso'ander isn't a cheap date, but four years later, he's still my go-to for celebrations, birthdays, and treating myself after a hard day at work. My devotion to the General was rewarded on my 24th birthday, the best day of my life. I went to Ginger, like I always do for special occasions. I ordered General Tso'anders

Fried Chicken so quickly the server probably assumed I didn't know how to read the menu. Halfway through enjoying my birthday dinner, my server came out carrying a second dish of General Tso'anders. I looked up at him, baffled, thinking he must've made a mistake. "I'm so sorry," he said. "We kind of skimped out on the portions of your first dish. The chef made you another one to make up for it." I couldn't believe it. It was the best birthday gift I could ask for. Not only was I at my favorite restaurant, surrounded by the people who've made Anchorage feel like home, but now I got to take back leftovers of the world's tastiest fried chicken. I will never claim to be a particularly adventurous diner, but I know what it means to settle. I didn't settle for the man that brought me to Alaska, but I will happily commit to General Tso'ander for the rest of my life. I still haven't tried another entrée at Ginger, and I don't feel like I'm missing out. Some people chase variety. I've found the one.

Lily Miller lives, writes and eats in Anchorage.
Ginger, 425 W. 5th Ave., Anchorage. A General Tso'anders entree is \$33.



Ginger's General Tso'anders chicken is crusted in chickpea flour and served with pickled ginger-habanero cucumbers.
Nathaniel Herz/Anchorage Press



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Opinion: How an Alaska governor candidate's campaign beard evokes Outside hunter-hero tropes

The 'Real Alaskan' is cheap repackaging – and it shows up every campaign season, Kaitlin Jade Armstrong writes in an opinion piece.

By Kaitlin Jade Armstrong
For The Anchorage Press

I was aimlessly scrolling through Instagram when I learned that Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, or JKT, had entered the governor's race. My interest was piqued — not so much by the announcement as the photo attached to it. Framed by a majestic Sitka mountainscape, JKT sports a blue flannel button up — classic Alaska campaign-wear. I took a screenshot, zoomed in, and squinted. Did he always have that beard?

I'd be hard pressed to believe JKT didn't grow it for the campaign. The timing is at least suspicious. Since entering the race, the long clean-shaven policy nerd has transformed into a robustly-bearded powerlifter. In a campaign video, he's seen deadlifting a huge rack of weights to "save schools" and "protect our fisheries."

It's not enough that JKT was born and raised in



Chuck Legge

Sitka and has spent much of his adult life serving in the state Legislature. In order to be truly worthy of a shot at governor, he must now audition for the title of "Real Alaskan."

He's far from the only one. Every campaign season, like clockwork, candidates across the political spectrum jockey to position

themselves as "Real Alaskans." (Or, in the case of U.S. House hopeful Bill Hill, "the Real Alaska.")

Over a banjo-string track, a man's warm, bassy voice booms through my Instagram feed, declaring that incumbent U.S. Sen.

TROPES | Continued on Page 20

After historic crash, Yukon River king run shows early rebound signs

But higher salmon numbers also inflamed a debate about fishing bans amid reports of illegal harvests.

By Max Graham
max@anchoragepress.com

For the past few years, smokehouses in the Yukon River village of Anvik have sat empty.

After salmon populations crashed, dozens of Alaska Native communities along the river faced a stark new reality, one without the fish that fed families and sustained Yup'ik and Athabascan traditions for generations.

This summer, though, smoke once again wafted through Anvik, on the middle Yukon some 350 miles west of Anchorage.

The river's two main species, chinook and chum, have recorded a surprising uptick in numbers. And in spite of state regulations that bar fishing for chinook, Anvik's

fishermen have caught dozens of the fish this year, plus even more salmon of other species — meaning that there are enough to share with elders, hang in smokehouses and store in freezers.

"It's the first time I've seen the smokehouses smoking in five years," said Robert Walker, former chief of the Anvik Tribal Council. "I was just amazed. People are so happy."

The returning fish could represent a remarkable rebound for one of Alaska's most iconic and culturally important salmon runs, though scientists caution that numbers are still relatively low and that more data are needed before they can be confident

KINGS | Continued on Page 25

EVERY VOTE MATTERS!

GENERAL ELECTION

VOTING ON

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3

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

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- October 19, 2026**
 - Early Voting Begins, absentee in-person voting, electronic transmission voting, and special needs voting begin statewide.
- October 24, 2026**
 - Recommended Last Day to Request an Absentee Ballot by Mail
- October 27, 2026**
 - Rural areas are recommended to mail in their Absentee Ballots ASAP
- November 2, 2026**
 - Last Day to Apply for an Absentee Ballot Online, by Fax, Email, or In Person
- November 3, 2026 — General Election Day**
 - Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

“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)

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



Plot twist or red flag?

Our column about love, sex and relationships in Alaska debuts

You wouldn't know it from reading the paper or listening to the radio, but there's a lot of sex in Anchorage.

We're here to talk about it. Welcome to Alaska's newest (and only?) love, sex and dating advice column. Our very first installment is below.

But first: Secretly have a crush on your ski buddy? Worried about bumping into an ex at Myrna's? Curious about opening your relationship, exploring a kink or finally telling your partner what you actually want in bed?

Ask us for help! In each issue, three experts — or, rather, two experts and one normie — will respond to a reader-submitted question.

You can submit questions at anchoragepress.com. Nothing is too juicy. We'll keep you anonymous. Just, for God's sake, tell the truth. No more mystery troll notes from "(a) gape," please.

Also: We need a name for this column! Current candidates include Dating & Mating, Odd/goods, and Wild Life — but we think we can do better. Email max@anchoragepress.com with your ideas.

Our expert panelists are M. K. Thekkumkattil and Amber Batts.



M.K. Thekkumkattil

M.K. is a trans, disabled, kinky writer and nurse whose work can be found in The Sexuality of Care: On Nursing, Kink, and a Future Without Hospitals, among other publications.

Amber is an Alaska writer, rebel journalist, sex worker and advocate who has spent years writing about the things polite company tends to avoid — sex, violence, power, criminal justice.

Max Graham, a journalist who



Amber Batts

covers environmental issues, will offer a third perspective as a token straight white guy. He's totally unqualified for this gig, but excited to keep an open mind...and to learn some new terms from Urban Dictionary.

Now, some drama!

Hi Anchorage Press,

This summer I've found myself on the precipice of romantic change. My previous boyfriend ended our nearly three-year relationship, and I was devastated (at first). However, a week later, I found myself exploring a new connection with a close mutual friend who had been offering solid emotional support and friendship. We have been friends for five years! I didn't see this one coming.

Is this allowed? It feels like this should not be allowed within a week or two of my breakup. I also feel it's worth adding that I initiated this new dynamic, and it was well received.

I'm worried that the timeline will be leaked and my previous boyfriend will find out. And also: What would our mutual friends say or think?

Things are further complicated because I'm leaving for a seasonal job to a very far away place, with little to no reliable communication for the next six months, and I'm not sure there's enough time to explore this new connection further.

Do you see my dilemmas?

— Plot Twist or Red Flag?

M. K. Thekkumkattil:

Yes, this is allowed! All kinds of chaotic and delightful and absurd human behavior is allowed! Congrats on your new connection!

First of all, have fun while you can. Exploring romantic and sexual connection in the safe container of long-term friendship can be an incredible way to expand what relationships feel like. Relationships do not have to follow a linear structure, or what poly people often refer to as the "relationship escalator." They can transform during periods of increased availability — like, say, after ending a long-term relationship — and they can de-escalate when life circumstances don't allow the kinds of communication and commitment that ongoing intimacy requires.

That said, it sounds like there's a



Max Graham

potent combo of breakup energy and new relationship energy (NRE) at play. Breakups are vulnerable! Our whole lives can get shaken up, and it's common to put extra emotional weight on things that would be better if we simply didn't take them so seriously. The attention, excitement, and — I hope — hot new sex (however you define sex) of NRE can be addictive and short-lived. We can confuse dopamine hits for compatibility.

I always advocate for slowing things down during the early phase of relationships. Don't make promises you can't keep! Trust people's actions more than their words. You'll find out over time whether you both have capacity, interest and compatibility with each other. Stay present and enjoy the time you have. You don't need to know yet whether you'll still be interested down the line.

Finally, I hope you've told at least one person about this. As a scorpio, I love protecting my most intimate connections from outside judgment and interference. But, secrets can be a breeding ground for shitty relationship dynamics. Who do you trust enough to share all your mess with? You need at least one person.

Amber Batts:

Dear Plot Twist, There is no Alaska Department of Breakups requiring a 30-day waiting period before you're given a permit to develop feelings for somebody else. Your relationship ended. You are single.

Sure, your ex may find out. And yeah, they may be hurt. Your mutual friends may have opinions. That is Anchorage being Anchorage. Let's operate under the assumption that everyone in your circle will eventually know. But someone else's feelings about your choices aren't evidence that you've made a bad choice. You cannot control what they're going to think.

Now, let's move on to something more interesting: what's happening between you and this friend.

You've known each other for five years, and they supported you through this breakup. Now, there's chemistry. That's not automatically



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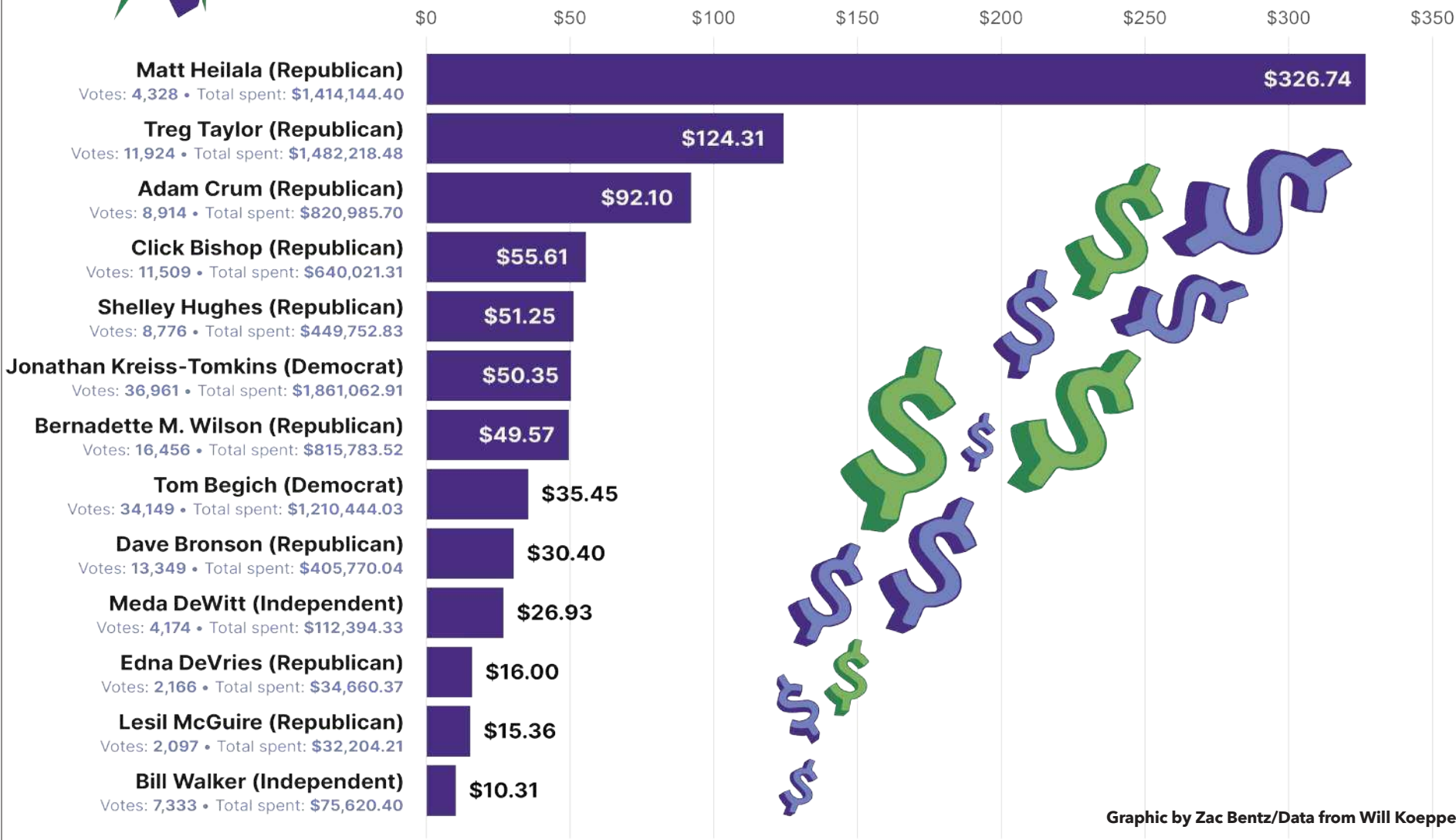
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Alaska’s governor candidates spent millions in the primary. Here’s who got the most - and least - bang for their buck.

The Press analyzed how much each candidate spent per vote they received. Matt Heilala, an Anchorage podiatrist, led the way at \$327.



This podiatrist spent \$325 per vote in his bid to be Alaska governor. Here's how the other candidates did.

By Nathaniel Herz
nat@anchoragepress.com

Independent Bill Walker, meanwhile, spent a mere \$10 to win each of his 7,333 votes.

Matt Heilala spared little expense on his gubernatorial campaign. The Anchorage podiatrist, a Republican first-time candidate, largely self-funded his bid for governor, putting up more than \$1 million in his own money. Heilala’s campaign paid for ferry tickets in Ketchikan. Internet. Car washes. A helicopter tour of a port outside of Anchorage. AI software. Local honey and custom cookies. Business cards. Campaign apparel. A \$2,800 table at a Jewish gala. A \$2,300 stay at the Ritz Carlton in Washington, D.C. And tens of thousands more on consultants.

Once the votes were counted, however, Heilala claimed just 4,328 of them, or 2.6% of the electorate — earning him 10th place and the dubious distinction of the least-effective spender in the 17-person gubernatorial primary. Heilala spent some \$325 for each vote that he earned, according to an Anchorage Press analysis of the most recent campaign finance reports and vote totals. That’s six-and-a-half times more than the primary election’s top finisher, Democrat Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, whose nearly \$1.9 million in spending helped generate some 37,000 votes — a relative

bargain of \$50 for each one. Reached by phone, Heilala said he had no regrets, and that his campaign spending spree would not affect his quality of life. “It was a little painful for us to do that. But we did have that money, and money is not meant to be stacked up and laid on. You need to live life and do things — and for me to pinch pennies in a campaign, in my position, would have been like, ‘Well, why am I even doing this?’” he said. “There’s no shame, and we’re happy with what we contributed.” At the other end of the spectrum was Bill Walker, the independent

former governor who mounted a late bid to return to the office he held from 2014 to 2018. (The Press limited its analysis to candidates who received at least 1,000 votes.) Walker spent some \$75,000 and won 7,333 votes, meaning that each one equated to about \$10 in campaign spending. He used Alaska Airlines miles for some of his travel, recorded videos with a wireless microphone donated by one of his daughters and bought some of his radio ads himself, rather than through a marketing agency. “We didn’t do the TV stuff and plaster the state with signs and all that. We just focused on getting our

message out,” Walker, who finished in ninth place, said in a phone interview. “We’re fiscal conservatives.” Walker acknowledged that he likely also benefited from some name recognition from his four years as governor. But, he added, “that cuts both ways, too — you bring the good

and the bad.” Chart by Zac Bentz. Data for this piece was collected by Will Koeppen, a data scientist and graphics developer with deep Alaska ties. See more of his work at willkoeppen.com, and view an interactive graphic on gubernatorial race campaign fundraising that he made for the Anchorage Press at anchoragepress.com.

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Spenard

The lounge, the bull and the \$10,000 ‘rider’

Anchorage’s most famous mechanical bull disappeared. We went looking for it.

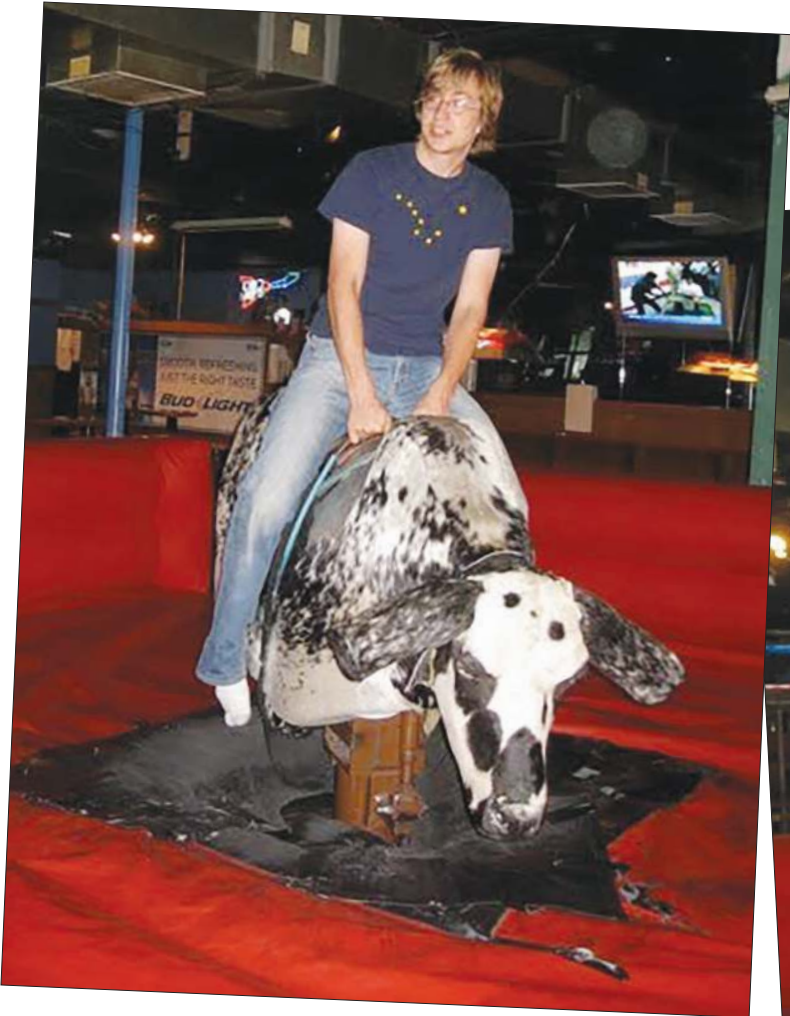
By Nathaniel Herz
nat@anchoragepress.com

The story pitch came in as a text message: What became of the mechanical bull at the Gaslight, the longtime Anchorage nightclub and bar that last month remodeled and reopened under a new name, Club Seven 21?

For the uninitiated: The bull was a staple at the Gaslight Lounge, which itself was a staple, albeit a seedy one, of downtown nightlife for decades. Suffice to say the Gaslight was not a place for the faint of heart — one concise TripAdvisor review notes “strong drinks” and a “rowdy crowd” — and a high-profile fatal shooting outside the bar last year prompted a military commander to ban personnel from the premises.

Nonetheless, the place had its charms, not least of which was its famous, headless mechanical bovine perched on a kind of hydraulic pedestal in the middle of the club. I only visited a few times, but I have an indelible memory of the unambiguously sexual sway of one rider’s hips as she tried to stay on — which I suspect was the point.

An Anchorage Daily



News story on the rebrand offered only a hint as to the fate of the contraption: “The mechanical bull has also been removed, leaving more room for dancing.”

It was time to investigate. So I called John Pattee, the club’s longtime

operator, and told him inquiring minds wanted to know what had happened to it.

“The bull was part of the

Ernie Piper celebrated his 21st birthday in 2008 with a ride on the Gaslight’s mechanical bull. He says he was “flung off pretty much immediately, but there was no line because the bar was empty because it was like 5 p.m., so I just did it again. I probably rode the bull a dozen times that night.” **Photos courtesy Fiona Worcester**



BULL | Continued on Page 23



General Election
11.3.26

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An oral history of the Crossroads Hot Dogs (and the Crossroads hot dogs)

By Alex Troutman and Nathaniel Herz
nat@anchoragepress.com

Crossroads Lounge is no more. The longtime bar was an Anchorage institution, smack dab in the middle of the gritty Fairview neighborhood at the intersection of Gambell Street and 15th Avenue.

It closed earlier this year around the same time as another club, Williwaw Social, and provoked some big questions among Anchorage residents about the future of their community spaces and businesses. The reaction was particularly acute in Fairview, where a longtime grocery store also recently shut down.

Regulars loved Crossroads because its slogan, “where friends meet,” was actually true. We could go on about it. But instead, we’re giving it to you straight from



Crossroads Lounge was known for its hot dogs. **Nathaniel Herz/Anchorage Press**

some of those friends: Crossroads’ sponsored beer league softball team, the Hot Dogs.

Disclosure: The Press’ publisher, Veri di Suvero, is a utility player for the Hot Dogs and helped coordinate this piece. Veri, editor Nat Herz and independent videographer Alex Troutman, another Hot Dog, interviewed players about the team and the bar, and assembled this oral history.

Answers have been edited and condensed.

...

How did the Hot Dogs come about?

Dave Rittenberg:

The original group of us, there’s like three or four of us left that are still on the team. We were Serrano’s, and then we were the German Shepherds for a couple of years, and then we needed a new team name. So, I just walked in, and I talked to (owners) Jen and Dottie and asked if they wanted to sponsor the team, and they were like, ‘Hell yeah!’ And they’ve been sponsoring us ever since.

That was probably 2017. The Hot Dogs were great, because it was just, every Thursday in the



The lounge was also known for its Hot Dogs, Crossroads’ sponsored beer league softball team. **Courtesy Alex Troutman**

summer, you were gonna see your friends. And we’d always swing into the ‘Roads after. We’d mark the real score up on the drink cooler. But when we were walking in, I would always say we won, and everyone would cheer because, you know, people just want something to cheer for.

What are your first memories of going to Crossroads, and how did it end up being a place that you like to go?

Andy Jensen: When I moved to Alaska in 2010, I knew literally zero people. I spent the

first few months in my room, watching Celtics games on my computer and playing online poker with my buddies from Arkansas until the FBI shut that shit down. I tried a few sports bars, but usually found that either it took forever to get a game on or they didn’t have

the NBA package. Somehow, I found Crossroads, and when I asked for my game, they’d smile and put it on. I ended up watching so many games there I basically had my own TV, and they

HOT DOGS |

Continued on Page 22

Dating apps suck.
So do invasive species.
Dump both and have some fun.

Invasive plant pull for singles. Group facilitation, tools, and snacks provided. Adults of all ages, genders, and sexualities welcome.
Mon. Sept 14, 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Fri. Oct. 2, 5:30 - 7:00 pm
Tikishla Park in Airport Heights

More info

ANCHORAGE
Soil & Water
Conservation District

YAY! WE'RE SO EXCITED THAT THE PRESS IS BACK!

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The closing of the Press came swiftly at the hands of Kim Benedict, an executive at Wick Communications. An Arizona-based media company, Wick had purchased and operated the Press and the Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman after original owners Bill Boulay, Barry Bialik and Nick Coltman sold it in 2006.

Typically, when a newspaper with nearly 30 years of history meets its end, there is a final edition to say goodbye to the community. We weren't

given that opportunity. Instead, we were put on a 20-minute countdown before our computers would be locked and the front doors of the office shuttered.

So, in my final act as the final editor of the Press, I wrote two emails.

In the first, I doubled the print budget and paid all of my freelancers as much as I could legally get away with.

In the second, I wrote to every writer in my email list to thank them for telling the stories no one else could, and for exulting the city that united us.

What followed was a slew of phone calls and text messages as word

spread through social media, and eventually through our sister publications like the Anchorage Daily News and Alaska Public Media. The calls didn't stop for almost a year, even as I packed my bags to relocate to Arizona to join the staff of the Phoenix New Times.

For almost four years, the death of the Press has been one of my life's biggest regrets. Of course, there was nothing more that I or Tawni could have done. For Wick, the Press was just a paper and at the end, a financial burden.

But for those of us who knew the Press, it was so much more. It was a

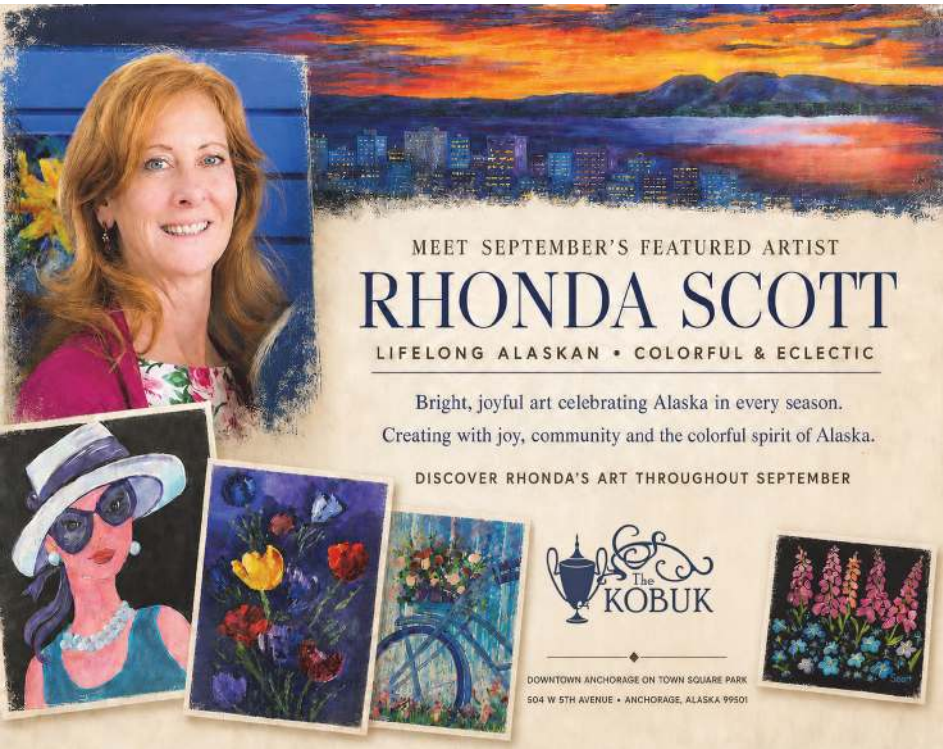
megaphoned voice for those who needed it most.

Under the late RJ Johnson, the Press became a safe space for the queer community. Under Robin Thompson, it became a platform for Alaska Native writers and artists. Under Susy Buchanan, it was a ferocious advocate for equality and the arts. Under Matt Hickman, the Press was a fearless mirror held up to Alaska's political machine. The list goes on and on.

As I write this reflection, I am confronted with the legacy that I left at the Press as the final editor. I hope that people will remember my unwavering commitment to shining

a vibrant spotlight on the music and arts community. More than that, I hope that people will remember me as someone who loved the Press deeply and believed in the power of storytelling as a means for forging bonds of acceptance and love.

To the new generation of the Press writers, photographers, designers and editors: I know you will take the responsibility of being Alaska's only alt-weekly seriously and will endeavor to succeed where others couldn't. So, cheers to the death and miraculous rebirth of the Anchorage Press, Anchorage's #Winning Paper.



When asked for comment about the return of the Anchorage Press, the Alaska Oil & Gas Association said

Welcome Back!



September First Friday
9/4/2026

ANCFirstFriday.com
Destination Downtown
scan for online map



The Alaska Building (4th & G):

- 1. Tiny Gallery** (706 W. 4th Ave.): 10 am - 8 pm
First Friday sticker sale all day - buy 1, get next one 50% off. Visit 2 of our great artists next door.
- 2. Teeny Tiny** (704 W. 4th Ave.): 5-8 pm
Lyndsi Harris of Evolutionary Thread will be here with beautiful artwork created on birch bark, and Terri Atwell of Beadwitched will be here with her exquisite beaded jewelry.
- 3. Bivy** (406 G Street, Suite 205): Open 5-9pm
- 4. Cabin Fever** (412 G Street): 10 am - 8 pm
Meet Dom Boyer a prolific painter whose works celebrate Alaska's iconic places. Dom will have prints, handpainted glassware, and more. (4-8pm)
- 5. Aurora Fine Arts** (Corner of 5th & G): 12 - 7 pm
- 6. ZoeZ Window Gallery** (737 W 5th Ave): 12-8 pm
Diverse collection of work by hundreds of different artists!
- 7. Anchorage Youth Court** (838 W 4th Ave):
First Friday Bake Sale - proceeds go to the Youth Scholarship fund for our student volunteers. 3-7pm

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

- 8. Stephan Fine Arts:** 8am-9pm (FF 5:30-9:30 pm)
Original watercolors by Renate Martin & oil paintings by Kacy Pellerin. Live music
- 9. The Rockwell:** 8am - 9pm (FF 5:30-9:30 pm)
Morgan Balovich, fur & metal jewelry
- 10. Captain Cook Art Co-op:** 3-7:30 pm
Group show of local artists, creators, and makers.

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. Seigny Studio (314 G Street): 9 am - 9 pm
Local fused glass artist, Cassandra Shea, with live music by Jessie Meybin. (6 pm -9 pm)

12. Sweet Cheeks Cabaret (535 W 3rd Ave.): 8 - 10 pm
Friday burlesque shows downstairs @ Broken Blender.

13. Visit Anchorage (524 W 4th Ave): 8 am - 6pm
We are excited to welcome Sue's Sewing Creations to the Log Cabin on 4th & F. 4pm - 7pm.

14. Sara's Gift Cache (408 W 4th Ave): 12 - 8 pm
Come in to see items by over 100 artists! (5-8 pm)

15. KAR Photography (400 W 4th Ave): 11 am - 6 pm

16. IGCA (427 D Street): 5 - 8:30 pm

17. Wildbirch / Crimson (239 W 4th Ave.): 6am - 11pm
Crimson & Wildbirch Hotel present artist Cheryl Lyon for September First Friday (6-8 pm)

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

- 18. Excalibur Sports** (2nd Floor): 10 am - 7 pm
20% off entire store - mention First Friday!
- 19. Bottoms Up Boutique** (1st Floor @ 6th & C):
11 am - 6:30 pm
- 20. Akela Space** (1st Floor near 6th & C): 6-9 pm
"Occupied" an exhibit by Bryce Nicolasa Foks

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. The Kobuk (504 W 5th Ave.): 9 am - 8 pm
Stop in this long-time downtown gem to check out all of their treasures.

23. Turnagain Ceramics (1343 G St.): 10 am - 6 pm
Free community throw! (6 - 8 pm)

Anchorage Museum (625 C Street): 10 am - 9 pm
Climate Cafe: Elders of Time — A Film & Conversation with Jonathon Keats (Noon, September 4)
Join us for a special screening of Elders of Time, an award winning short documentary by Justin Oliphant and Shannon Breen following artist Jonathon Keats's decade-long quest to develop clocks and calendars calibrated by the growth of bristlecone pine trees. A conversation with Keats and Museum staff about the project follows the screening. Free.

Clock Out & Meet Downtown

Find food and drink specials and easy places to gather in the heart of Anchorage, all in one downtown guide.

Meet Me Downtown brings it all together in one place, highlighting the best places to eat, shop, and play while making it easy to discover what's happening downtown every day.

From local events and live entertainment to restaurant specials, shopping promotions, and visitor information, Meet Me Downtown helps people experience downtown in a new way and supports the businesses that make it unique.



SCAN TO VIEW MORE EVENT
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ANCHORAGE EVENTS IN 2026!



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ANCHORAGE

PRESSING EVENTS

September

Wed. 9/2

Live Music with Aspenyarrow
HUMPY’S, 8–11:30 pm

Slow Craft Sessions: Weaving On Rigid Heddle Looms
SEED LAB, 6–8 pm, FREE, Registration is recommended

Hope Cassity at Crimson
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6:30–9:30 pm

Thurs. 9/3

Max McNow
ALASKA STATE FAIR, Palmer, 7 pm

Anchorage Press Launch Party
VENUE TBD, 6–10 pm

Craft Movie Night: Mean Girls
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 6–8 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Live Music w/Bandandy
HUMPY’S, 8–11:30 pm

Live & Local Music with Witty Youngman
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

Pub Run 5k
SKINNY RAVEN SPORTS, 5–8 pm

Fri. 9/4

The Seth Freeman Band
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Twisted Sister ft. Sabastian Bach
ALASKA STATE FAIR, Palmer, 7 pm

Climate Cafe: Elders of Time — A Film and Conversation with Jonathon Keats
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, Noon

A Field Guide to More-Than-Human Governance: A Reading and Conversation with Jonathon Keats
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6:30 pm

David Ion w/Sterling Silver Band
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Diggin Dirt
CREEKBEND CO., Hope, 7–11 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Power Play on the Patio
HILLTOP SKI AREA, 6–7:30 pm

Live Music w/Red Flags
HUMPY’S, 8–11:30 pm

Santoro
O’MALLEY’S ON THE GREEN, 7–10 pm

Live at Five Summer Concerts: Rose’s Pawn Shop
VILLAGE PARK, TALKEETNA, 5–7 pm

Sat. 9/5

Candlelight Concert: Tribute to Fleetwood Mac
49TH STATE BREWERY, 5:30–6:30 pm

Candlelight Concert: Coldplay & Imagine Dragons
49TH STATE BREWERY, 7:45–8:45 pm

The Rebel Blues Band
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

deadmau5
ALASKA STATE FAIR, Palmer, 7 pm

One-Day Bead Weaving Earring Workshop
SEED LAB, 10 am–3 pm

Spaffdaddy
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Diggin Dirt
CREEKBEND CO., Hope, 7–11 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Comedy Night with Tumua: Das’ How Tour
EGAN CENTER, 7 pm

Comedy Night with Josh Blue
THE AURORA ROOM, 6 & 8:30 pm

Live Music w/Yachtly Crew
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Studio 54 Strip Show hosted by Darcy Kniefel
MAD MYRNA’S, 9:30 pm

The River Livers
VAN’S DIVE BAR, 9 pm

Sun. 9/6

Jesse McCartney
ALASKA STATE FAIR, Palmer, 7 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 3–5 pm

Mon. 9/7

Lyle Lovett
ALASKA STATE FAIR, Palmer, 6 pm

Rising Through The Fray
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 6 pm

Tues. 9/8

PAWSitive Reading with Therapy Dogs
CHUGIAK-EAGLE RIVER LIBRARY, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Wed. 9/9

AIGA Alaska: After Hours by Design
ALOFT ANCHORAGE, 5:30–7 pm

Live Music w/Rick Brooks
HUMPY’S, 8–11 pm

The Whisper Campaign at Crimson
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6:30–9:30 pm

Thurs. 9/10

Sniffari: Bring Your Dog to the Zoo!
ALASKA ZOO, 5:30–8 pm

Mountainfilm on Tour 2026
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 6–8 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 7–9 pm

Stop Light Nights (Monthly Dating Mingle)
MAGNETIC NORTH, 6–8 pm

Live & Local Music with Jesse James
THE PEANUT FARM, 6:30–10:30 pm

Pub Run 5k
SKINNY RAVEN SPORTS, 5–8 pm

Be the Change with Kahlil Greene
WENDY WILLIAMSON AUDITORIUM, 7–8 pm

Booch for Books
ZIP KOMBUCHA, 5:30–7:30 pm

Fri. 9/11

Nothin’ But Trouble Live
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

9/11 Day of Remembrance
ALASKA VETERAN’S MUSEUM, Free admission, 10 am–5 pm

The Nutcracker Auditions
ANCHORAGE CLASSICAL BALLET ACADEMY, 5 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

Leo Ash Duo
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Mo Lowda & The Humble and Bright Light Social Hour
CREEKBEND CO., Hope, 7–11 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE BUILDING, 7–9 pm

Live Music w/Fleetwood AK
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Sacred Acre Music Festival
KENAI PENINSULA FAIRGROUND, Ninilchik, 1 pm–5 am

Decepticide with NoiseGate
ODD MAN RUSH BREWING, Eagle River, 7 pm

Hwy 9
O’MALLEY’S ON THE GREEN, 7–10 pm

907 Pro Wrestling
SHIP CREEK BREWING, 6:30–9 pm

Anchorage Wolverines vs. U.S. National Under 17 Team
SULLIVAN ARENA, 7 pm

Sat. 9/12

Matt Hopper & The Roman Candles
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Anchorage Symphony Orchestra: Champagne Pops
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 6 pm

Drag Me to the Movies: Dreamgirls
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 1 pm

Hippy Olympics w/Games, Music, & More
BIG T LODGE, Kasilof, 4:20 pm

Matt & Co.
BLARNEY STONE, 9 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

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

Mo Lowda & The Humble and Bright Light Social Hour
CREEKBEND CO., Hope, 7–11 pm

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 7–9 pm

2026 Anchorage Pirate Fest
DOWNTOWN ANCHORAGE, 10–12 am

Live Music w/Good Company
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Sacred Acre Music Festival
KENAI PENINSULA FAIRGROUND, NINILCHIK, 10 am–5 am

Auditions for PDC’s Disco Nutcracker
PULSE DANCE COMPANY, 1:30–3:15 pm

Anchorage Wolverines vs. U.S. National Under 17 Team
SULLIVAN ARENA, 7 pm

2026 Diaper Dash 5K Fun Run
TUDOR ELEMENTARY, 10 am

2026 Clay Fest
TURNAGAIN CERAMICS, 11 am–5 pm

Sun. 9/13

Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike
CYRANO’S THEATRE, 3–5 pm

Sacred Acre Music Festival
KENAI PENINSULA FAIRGROUND, Ninilchik, 10 am–11 pm

Women of Rock
MAD MYRNA’S, 7 pm

Mon. 9/14

Join or Die (American Democracy & Community Councils Documentary)
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 6 pm

Tues. 9/15

Witch Perfect
ALASKA CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, 8–9:30 pm

Pitch A Friend
BLARNEY STONE, 6:30 pm

Wed. 9/16

Live Music w/Will Balcao
HUMPY’S, 8–11:30 pm

Jared Woods & Wade Collins at Crimson
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6:30–9:30 pm

Thurs. 9/17

Paint and Whimsy Charcuterie Board Workshop
THE ART LOUNGE, 6–9 pm

Pub Run 5k
SKINNY RAVEN SPORTS, 5–8 pm

Fri. 9/18

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

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

Portrait Session with artist Kip Fulbeck
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 2–4 pm

Artist Talk: Kip Fulbeck & The Hapa Project
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

David Ion w/Sterling Silver Band
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Live Music w/Woodrow
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Check out more events at
ANCHORAGEPRESS.COM



Williwaw Blue
O’MALLEY’S ON THE GREEN, 7–10 pm

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

Sat. 9/19

Oktoberfest 2026
49TH STATE BREWING @ THE RAIL, 4–9:30 pm

2026 Alaska Heart Run & Walk
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 7 am

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

Glacier Blues Band
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

2026 Talkeetna Brewfest
DENALI BREWING COMPANY, Talkeetna, 2 pm

Live Music w/Natural High AK
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Virgo Vortex
KOOTS, 9 pm–2:30 am

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

A Concert of Vocal Jazz
UAA MAINSTAGE THEATRE, 7:30–9 pm

Sun. 9/20

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 3 pm

Hook (Fundraiser for Scenic Park Elementary)
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 4 pm

Women of Rock
MAD MYRNA’S, 7 pm

Wed. 9/23

Live Music w/Jared Woods
HUMPY’S, 8–11:30 pm

The Whisper Campaign at Crimson
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6:30–9:30 pm

Thurs. 9/24

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

Blink: Storytime in the Dome
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 10:30 am

Monthly Mixer: Diving, Drinks, and Dialogue
DIVE ALASKA, 6-8 pm

Pub Run 5k
SKINNY RAVEN SPORTS, 5–8 pm

AIGA Alaska Open Board Meeting
ZIP KOMBUCHA, 6-7 pm

Fri. 9/25

UAA Spirit Run: Run Against Hunger
ALASKA AIRLINES CENTER, 6 pm

Oktoberfest 2026
ALYESKA RESORT, 4–10 pm

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

Leo Ash Duo
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Live Music w/Turning Away: A Pink Floyd Experience
HUMPY’S, 9:30 pm–1 am

Sergio Adam
O’MALLEY’S ON THE GREEN, 7–10 pm

Pamyua
THE PORCUPINE THEATER, Homer, 7 pm

Women in Travel Meetup
ZIP KOMBUCHA, 5–7 pm

Sat. 9/26

H3 Live
907 ALEHOUSE, 7–10:30 pm

Oktoberfest 2026
ALYESKA RESORT, 4–10 pm

Oktoberfest
ANCHOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL, 10 am–7 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 a.m

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 with Shufflin Country Style, 8–9 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 at Pink Cadillac 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
Mad Myrna's Diva Variety Show, 9–11:30 pm

Muldoon Chanshtnu Park
Muldoon Community Market, 9:30am–3 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

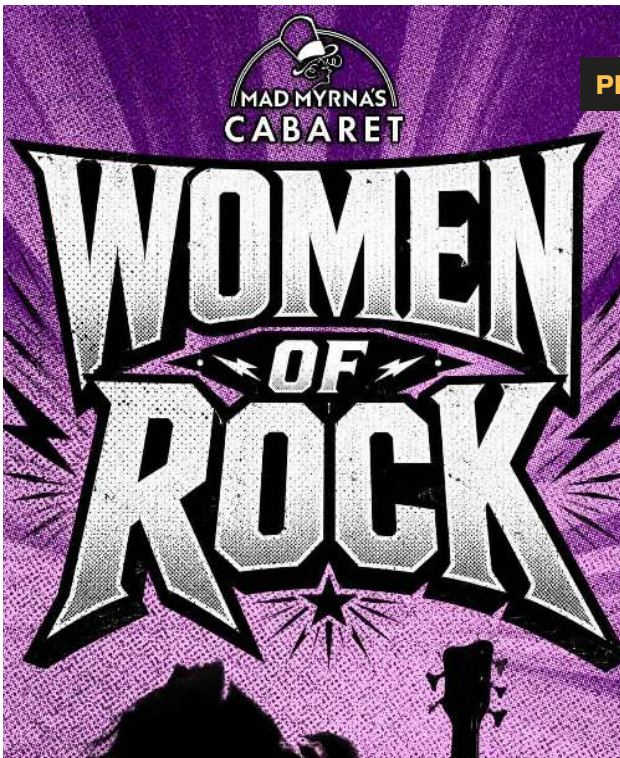
Pink Cadillac
All Ages Buckarooos Night, 6–10 pm

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

Time Out Lounge
Open Jam with Blast From The Past, 8:30 pm–1 am

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

VFW Post 1685 Open Mic & Jam, 4:30–8:30 pm



PRESS PICK

Mad Myrna's Women of Rock brings together a powerhouse supergroup of Anchorage's top female vocalists to take over the Mad Myrna's stage! Prepare for a high-octane night of heavy-hitting alt-rock classics, ripping through iconic hits from legends like Linkin Park, System of a Down, and beyond. Experience the raw energy, massive vocals, and unmissable performance from a local dream team of performers. Mad Myrna's, Sept. 13 & 20 madmyrnas.com



PRESS PICK

Lose yourself in three days of world-class electronic music, cutting-edge visual art, and wilderness at Sacred Acre. Featuring three stages, 72 hours of sound, and the largest laser display in the state, 3-day festival combines world-class EDM (electronic dance music) with wellness workshops, environmental activism, and epic outdoor adventures like glacier helicopter tours and boat cruises. On-site camping, gear rentals, and shuttle packages make it an unmissable late-summer getaway. Ninilchik, Sept. 11–13 sacredacreak.com

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 7 pm

Porcupine Workshop with Emma Hildebrand
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, noon–4 pm, Sept. 26 & 27, \$30 class fee, scholarships available

Kikkan (Film & Storytelling about Kikkan Randall)
BEARTOOTH THEATREPUB, 7 pm

Sweet Cheeks Cabaret: Men at Twerk
BROKEN BLENDER, 8–10 pm

First Performance of Midnight Rose
CAROUSEL LOUNGE, 9 pm–1 am

Trail Improvements for National Public Lands Day
FLATTOP SUNNYSIDE TRAIL, 8 am–2 pm

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

2026 PFD Dance Party w/Pyke
KOOTS, 9 pm–2:30 am

Taste the World International Potluck
SPENARD RECREATION CENTER, 4–6 pm

Sun. 9/27

1776
ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THEATRE, 3 pm

2026 Nordic Skiing Association of Anchorage Annual Meeting: Business and Brats
KINCAID CHALET, 4–7 pm

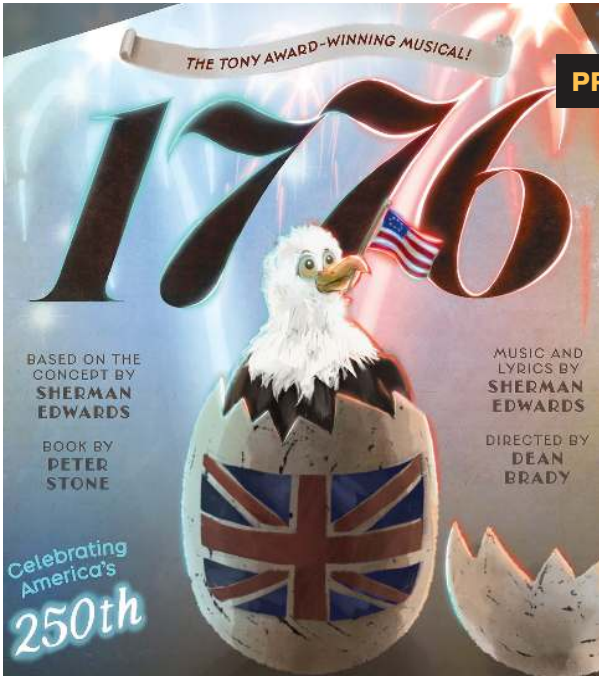
Wed. 9/29

The Brooks Range: Journey, Life & Art in the Gwazhal
ANCHORAGE MUSEUM, 6 pm

Thurs. 9/30

Live Music w/Shawn Paccaro
HUMPY'S, 8–11:30 pm

Live Music at Crimson
WILDBIRCH HOTEL, 6:30–9:30 pm



PRESS PICK

The seminal event in American history blazes to vivid life in this most unconventional of Broadway hits. 1776 puts a human face on the pages of history as we see the men behind the national icons: proud, frightened, uncertain, irritable, charming, often petty and ultimately noble figures, determined to do the right thing for a fledgling nation. Anchorage Community Theatre, Sept. 18–Oct. 11 actalaska.org

Horoscope

If you ask people what they miss most about the old Anchorage Press, a surprising number of them wax nostalgic about the astrology column. So, in the quest to revive the paper, horoscopes were non-negotiable.

But when the Press put out the call for an astrology columnist, nobody could have predicted the response. More than 30 astrologers (along with a few witches, tarot readers, and other esotericists) submitted bids to write the column. We were floored. When exactly did Anchorage get so swept up by the stars?

Over the past decade, interest in the ancient art of astrology has surged. Is it the tantalizing pleasure of understanding ourselves (and our partners, bosses, and potential flings)? The upswell of misinformation that has crashed over our algorithms? The tech dystopia that keeps us in a constant state of existential crisis?

At the Anchorage Press, we don't strive to have all the answers. But we do strive to give the people what they want — which apparently includes astrology! As someone who journalistically fact-finds by day and reads the stars by night, I can say with some authority that both disciplines rely on the power of narrative. In a confusing world, what's more comforting than having someone tell you what it all means — whether they're a reporter or an astrologer?

So in true Gemini fashion (yes, the Anchorage Press is a Gemini) — we'll be dishing up our hard-hitting reporting with a side of cosmic chaos from a rotating cast of contributors every month. In addition to horoscopes, we want to publish your best astrological deep dives and esoteric hot-takes.

Do you have thoughts about Venus retrograde and local politics? Want to get your readings in front of an audience of Anchorage astrology enthusiasts? Have strong words about why all of this is bunk? Write us:

astrology@anchoragepress.com.
Celestially yours,
Kaitlin Jade Armstrong
Astrology Editor

And now, for your September horoscopes, from guest astrologer **Jessica Faust:**

Aries (March 20 - April 19)

Aries, you're scaring me. You're trying to outrun (...and probably outbike) the fall by taking it all on yourself. But Saturn in your sign asks you to slow down and breathe. My advice? Ask for help. Toward the end of the month, be open to a bigger (and brighter) vision.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)

Taurus, I'm guessing you live for soup season and sweater weather. Your time has arrived. Prepare to eat and drink your way into the new season. If you're looking for inspiration, I think you'd be into the Alyeska Oktoberfest (Sept. 25-26).

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)

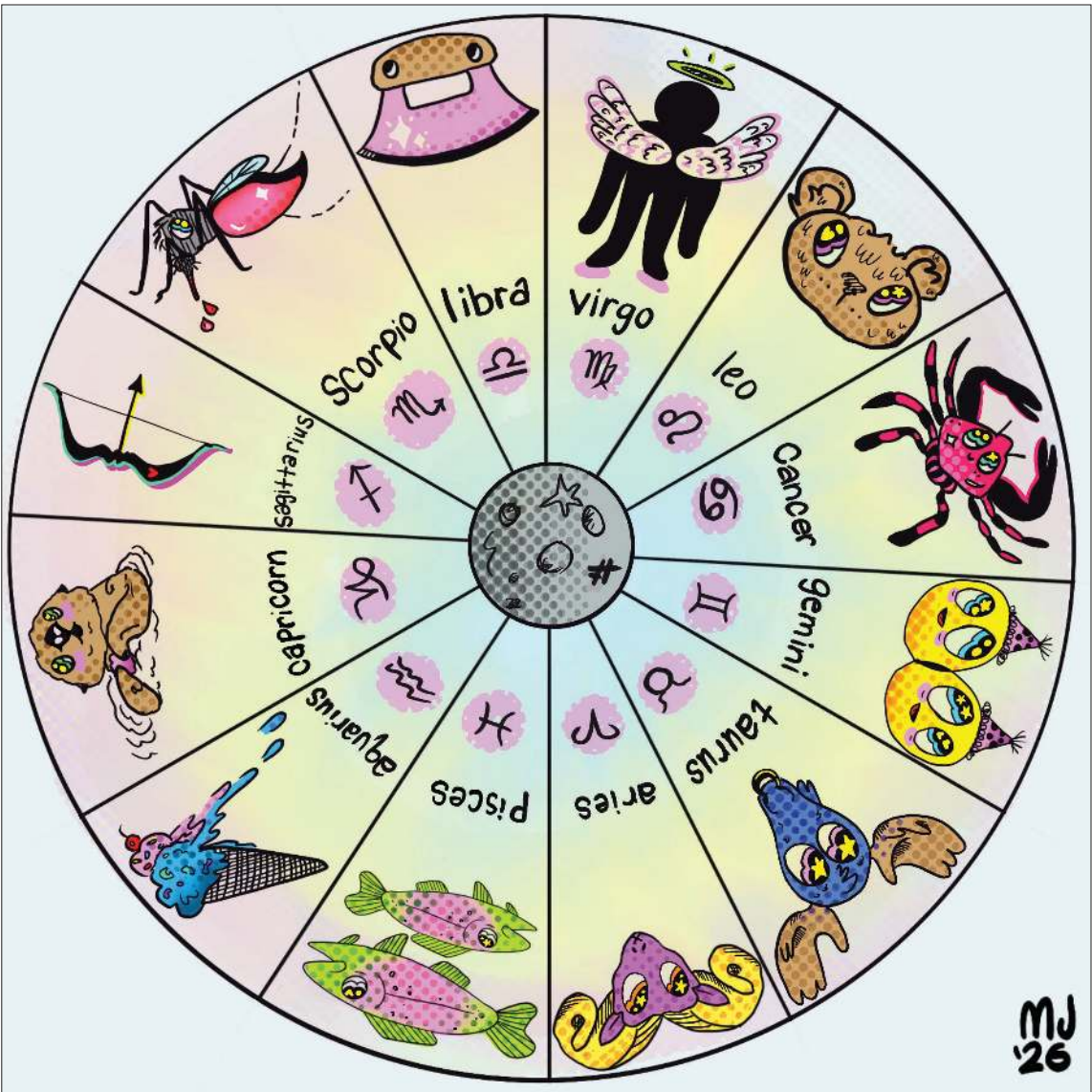
Gemini, you probably have like 47 tabs open right now. Find ways to unplug, literally if you can. Get out in the mountains, or go to Seward to look at boats. If you need somewhere to direct your curiosity, try Beer in the Garden (Sept. 17).

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)

Sweet baby Cancer: As temperatures drop, do what Cancers do best — tend to your home and relationships. Make your space warm, turn up the cozy vibes, and nurture the connections you'll want beside you when Venus stations retrograde next month. Look for a homey handmade trinket at Clayfest (Sept 12).

Leo (July 23 - Aug. 22)

Leo, your summer spotlight is dimming...try not to take it personally. As the days get shorter, you might find yourself working behind the scenes — or behind the lens. Practice



Madelyn Joan

nature photography at Westchester Lagoon. And if you need to feel like the main character, find a dance floor downtown.

Virgo (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)

Hey Virgo, overwhelmed? Did you Virgo season too close to the sun? Your birthday month has you itching to organize and optimize. Resist! Let your ideas wander somewhere unproductive, as a treat. Goof off at the Alaska State Fair (through Sept. 7) or Talkeetna Brewfest (Sept. 19).

Libra (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)

Libra, now is a good time to get honest about what you actually want. It's okay to do something a little selfish — it's almost your birthday. Take yourself on a solo date. Try exploring First Friday on your own (Sept. 4).

Scorpio (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)

Scorpio, I know you'd rather be plotting your

mysterious reinvention than doing your laundry. September asks you to tend to your chores and routines. Then I'm seeing a change around your home mid-month. Are you changing addresses, rearranging your space, or just camping out under the stars in Hope?

Sagittarius (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)

Sagittarius, I'm sure you're feeling the FOMO even more than usual, desperate to squeeze out every last drop of summer. Embrace the spontaneous drive, last-minute hike, or quiet afternoon fishing for rainbows. Around Sept. 15, follow the side-quest. Let your curiosity lead the way.

Capricorn (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)

Uhhh Capricorn, put down the clipboard. You don't have to be the manager of September! This month asks you to release control and let others surprise you. Say yes to plans with someone

new. Let someone teach you an outdoorsy skill. Connections deepen when you let someone else steer.

Aquarius (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)

Aquarius, you've got systems on systems, but September tests if they're working. As summer winds down, obligations pile up. Build some structure to tackle the chaos, but leave room for the weird and spontaneous. Check out Girdwood Fungus Fair (Sept. 12-13), or chase fall colors in Talkeetna on a whim.

Pisces (Feb. 19 - March 20)

Pisces, I support your delusions...but have you checked your bank account? Early September asks you to resist the impulse-buys, but you can still romanticize your life. Write poetry on a rainy afternoon or drive to Beluga Point for no reason. Pay attention to the delulu idea that keeps coming back.

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- BREABACH **SCOTTISH FOLK AT ITS FINEST** —————> JAN. 30, 2027
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A backyard music festival in Spenard crowns a beet-eating king

A contestant shows grit during the Midsummer Melodies beet-eating contest in July. **Photos courtesy Valerie Lake**

“Oh, gosh. Pee was purple. Poop was purple, for a solid couple days.”

By Max Graham
max@anchoragepress.com

When I heard about a beet-eating contest at Oleksandr Lushchik’s place in Spenard this summer, I immediately had some questions.

Are the beets cooked? How many beets are eaten? How quickly? And: Why would anyone do this?

I must confess: I did not attend the contest. I heard about it, tragically, after the fact.

But I made some calls. Watched some videos. And quickly decided that Alaska’s only (as far as we know?) beet-eating contest is something the general Anchorage public had to know about.

The competition — held in July at the Midsummer Melodies music festival in Lushchik’s big leafy backyard — is pretty frickin’ iconic. Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” blares in the background as contestants chew ferociously, their hands and beards turning a vampiric purple in front of a rowdy crowd of festival-goers. There are no cash prizes, just garlands of turnips and crowns of carrots made by Lushchik’s mother.

The beets are boiled and skinned. They are whole. Each contestant eats two. This may sound easy. Pleasant, even.

It’s not. The beets are the size of softballs, and participants say they’re very hard to chew.

“It was way harder than

I expected,” said Markian Babij, a local naturopathic doctor. “I was like, ‘Gosh, this is a lot to swallow.’ The last thing you want to do is choke in front of these people who are having a nice afternoon.” Babij, making his first-ever appearance in the

BEET IT | Continued on Page 26



Courtesy Oleksandr Lushchik



Above, contestants show off their beets before the Midsummer Melodies beet-eating contest in July. Left, the contest’s host, Oleksandr Lushchik, loves beets so much that he has a tattoo of one on his arm, alongside a horseradish.

Below, boiled beets are, apparently, very hard to chew.



a rebound; sometimes the plot twists because the characters finally notice each other. Who are we to question the timing of things?

But I do have a question I think is worth asking yourself: Are you genuinely excited about this person, or are you afraid of suddenly being alone?

Those two things can be true at the same time. After more than two years with someone, being suddenly single can leave a big hole in your life. Just make sure you're exploring this new connection because you want to know what's there, not because you're in a hurry to fill the space.

Which brings us to the six-month absence.

You don't have to decide whether this is your next great love before you leave. In fact, please don't. Talk to each other. Be clear about expectations.

Are you exploring something without promises?

Do you want to reconnect when you return?

Those questions matter a hell of a lot more than whether you're moving too fast.

Maybe this is a rebound. Maybe it's the beginning of something wonderful. Maybe you make out for a while and six months from now you're friends again. None of those outcomes makes this a mistake.

My vote: Plot twist. Proceed with curiosity, leave the guilt behind and let everyone else worry about their own love lives.

Max Graham:

Oof, sorry about the breakup — but yay for new feelings!

I'd try to focus less on whether the vibe with your friend is "allowed" or whether the timeline will be "leaked," and more on what you think you need to thrive.

Forget about your ex for a second. He's not in charge of your love life. Neither are your mutual friends. It's up to you, not them, to decide whether your new connection is the right thing for you.

How does the vibe with your friend feel? Are you really into him? Or does some part of you sense that this is about filling a post-breakup void?

Be brutally honest with yourself. A week is barely any time. Processing the end of a long-term relationship can take a while. And, in the meantime, if what you're really looking for is a low-stakes rebound, you run the risk of leading your friend on if he's looking for something more.

That said, if the new dynamic feels healthy and good — and not just a potentially messy attempt to replace your ex — there's nothing wrong with it! In that case, lean in. Talk to each other about how you're feeling. See where it goes.

And yes, being away for six months might

complicate things. But could the time apart actually be a good thing? Could it give you more time to process your breakup and focus on your new single self? And could that time maybe even help you develop a stronger connection with your friend when you're back, if that's what you want?

You don't need all the answers right now. Just be ruthlessly honest — both with yourself and with your friend — and the answers will come soon enough.

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TROPES |

Continued from Page 5

Dan Sullivan will “fight for Alaskans.”

Meanwhile, the senator’s detractors take shots at his Alaskan bona fides with the derisive nickname “Ohio Dan.”

My mailbox is stuffed with images of congressional hopefuls in Copper River Fleece vests and frontier-esque flannel.

Every candidate wants to prove they’re the most “Real Alaskan,” and therefore most fit for your vote.

But what does it mean to be a “Real Alaskan?” While that’s a hot topic of debate, a 2008 journal article argues that the term is “deeply coded” as white, rural and masculine.

In this paradigm — the one that often dominates public discourse — Real Alaskans hunt, fish and work blue collar jobs. They fight, shoot and defend us from Washington, D.C. lobbyists. They forgo suits for Grundens, bolo ties and of course, flannel. They’re tough, hardy, no-nonsense and raring to stand up to the Washington bureaucrats who

think they’re better than us.

Here’s where it gets absurd: The tropes that make up the Real Alaskan ethos didn’t originate here at all. Their forerunner is a much older archetype that dates back over 200 years, to when Kentucky was America’s far-West frontier.

In my podcast The Alaska Myth, I argue that the Real Alaskan is cheap repackaging of what historian Richard Slotkin refers to as hunter-heroes — think Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone. As the frontier moved west, so did the stereotype, eventually donning Carhartts and Xtratuffs to birth the modern image of the “Real Alaskan.”

What’s interesting about those memorable images of Western “heroes”, with their guns and coonskin caps, is that they were always political in nature. Boone and Crockett weren’t just frontier icons. They were also politicians who sought to woo rural constituents with their sharpshooting frontier cred.

This 19th Century political innovation remains deeply embedded here in Alaska, in the politics of the “Last Frontier.” Regardless of your

party affiliation or identity, performing Real Alaskan-ness has become a prerequisite for entering any high profile race in this state. This is how our feeds become clogged with videos using folksy language about “Alaskans being whipsawed from one generation to the next” or how “in Alaska, we’ve always done things our own way.”

Real talk: I want to know what runs through the mind of a campaign communications staffer when their candidate’s lead in the polls starts to narrow. And whether it’s some version of “Well, we can always make a video about that time the senator took out a Kodiak bear.”

Regardless of political affiliation or personal background, no candidate is immune to this posturing.

Solely by virtue of their identity, any Alaska Native candidate is arguably far more of a “Real Alaskan” than their self-styled settler competitors. And yet they too tend to earnestly perform the tropes associated with the white, rural and masculine-coded “Real Alaskan.”

Bill Hill’s website reminds voters he’s

not just Dena’ina Athabaskan but also a lifelong Alaskan, with a resume that includes commercial fishing and chopping wood. Whether these credentials — the basis of an aligned super PAC’s claim that Hill is the “real Alaska” — will translate into votes is more dubious.

On her campaign website, Mary Peltola’s “my story” page puzzlingly makes no mention of her Yup’ik identity — though it does feature images of her in a smokehouse and wearing a traditional kuspuk. It is, however, permeated with colorful, frontier-coded language, from quoting Ted Stevens’ “to hell with politics” to expressing her vision of a congressional delegation that’s “strong and tough.”

It’s not just this year’s campaigns, either. The impulse to prove that one is indeed a “Real Alaskan” has produced some of the cringiest campaigning in recent memory.

If you want to make any Alaskan shudder with secondhand embarrassment, you need only utter two words: Bear Doctor. Despite the backlash the now-infamous video received,

former U.S. Senate hopeful Dr. Al Gross was simply drawing from the same toolkit candidates use every campaign season.

To be fair, these representations are often true to the lifestyles that many of these candidates lead. This year’s field is full of contenders who represent various shades of the distinct lifestyles that make up this state: fisherman, mushers and pilots, to name a few.

But I can’t help but be cynical about the requirement to campaign as a Real Alaskan, knowing that it’s rooted in the idea of the frontier.

At the end of the 19th Century, the concept was thought so close to death that historians were eulogizing it. And it’s very much a product of its time. Frontier logic posits that there are endless resources to be exploited, and a glittering economic future awaits those who exploit the right ones. When frontier imagery and frontier logic alike have a chokehold on our politics, they endlessly offer the same tired 19th Century solutions — like developing any resource we can think of — to our 21st Century ills. Just ask

the state legislators who are currently debating the gas pipeline that elected leaders have been propping up for the better part of the last 50 years.

I know my view is a minority one. I was reminded of that when I casually ribbed JKT’s frontier glow up at a recent dinner party. A friend of mine — an outdoorsy transplant who leans progressive — said he’d noticed, and he was a fan. “I’m more likely to vote for a man who’s put some work into himself,” he said approvingly.

Ultimately, candidates lean on this tried and true formula because when candidates can pull it off, it works. Don Young, the longtime bolo-tie wearing Alaska Congressman originally from California, so successfully channeled the frontier spirit that candidates across the political spectrum tout him as an aspirational figure.

As to which candidates’ Real Alaskan antics will win over the electorate this time?

Only the primaries will tell.

Kaitlin Jade Armstrong is a writer and sound artist in Anchorage.



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DENA'INA |

Continued from Page 3

been running for several years and is coordinated by the Anchorage Park Foundation, a local nonprofit.

The unifying theme of the markers is a decorative metal firebag — a traditional Dena'ina object used to carry the materials needed to start a fire — designed by local Indigenous artist Melissa Shaginoff.

“We are subtly changing the look of Anchorage to have a more Indigenous sense of place,” said Beth Nordlund, the park foundation’s executive director.

As she walked along Anchorage’s Coastal Trail during Thursday’s celebration — flanked by the parade of human-sized salmon and a man operating an even larger sandhill crane costume — Nordlund said the event was intended to create “joyful noise.”

“We wanted it to be a big deal,” she said.

The animal costumes came through a partnership with the Anchorage Museum, funded with \$6,000 from the park foundation.

Artist Jamie Hirano designed the salmon suits, then held community workshops where residents were invited to help make them — no experience required.

“I think I counted 25 people that came, ages 2 to over 50,” Hirano said.

Thursday’s ceremony drew an array of dignitaries. City Assembly members and Mayor Suzanne LaFrance attended, as did board members of Anchorage’s electric utility, state representatives and Indigenous leaders.

At the head of the parade were the Friendship Dancers, a local Indigenous collective whose members have ties to Eklutna, the village of Tyonek across Cook Inlet and the village of Nondalton, which sits 200 miles west over the mountains from Anchorage.

The dance group



The crowd listens to Inuit-soul band Pamyua. **Nathaniel Herz/Anchorage Press**

performed some songs that leader Jessie K'Deli'en Coleman described as wordless “tonations,” which allowed others in the parade to join in even without knowledge of the Dena'ina language.

“It was good to see so many people try,” Coleman said.

Another reason for those wordless songs is that “so much of the language is gone,” Coleman said — one of several references made Thursday to the loss and struggle that the Dena'ina people have experienced since colonization.

In another reference, Leggett, Eklutna’s president, took a light jab at Nordlund as she thanked the local electric utility, Chugach Electric Association, for providing power for the event. Stepping to the microphone, Leggett quickly reminded the crowd that some of the utility’s power comes from his community’s ancestral lands — from a hydroelectric project the Tribe has criticized for diverting water away from the salmon-bearing Eklutna River.

But there has also been progress.

In 2021, the city Assembly approved the establishment



Aaron Leggett is president of the Anchorage-area Eklutna tribal government. At right is Anchorage Park Foundation Executive Director Beth Nordlund, while Anchorage Mayor Suzanne LaFrance is at left. **Nathaniel Herz/Anchorage Press**

of government-to-government relations with Eklutna’s tribal government, and they have since held regular meetings.

Shaginoff has been coordinating community classes on the Dena'ina and Ahtna languages.

Then there are also the monuments and dedicated place names. While Anchorage’s recognition of

its own Indigenous history long lagged behind other communities in Alaska, Leggett said, it’s now catching up.

Markers have been placed in the Eklutna village, plus at high-traffic Anchorage sites like Westchester Lagoon, Glen Alps and Potter Marsh. The naming effort also plans to install another plaza at Ship Creek, just

north of downtown.

Gaps still remain in restoring names, especially on Anchorage’s big military base, Leggett said, but “we’re pretty well along” now.

“I’d say over 80% of the known Dena'ina names are captured on some sort of signage,” Leggett said. He added: “I think it really puts Anchorage on the map.”



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HOT DOGS |

Continued from Page 9

eventually let me hang a Celtics banner next to it. I knew I was a regular when I walked in for a preseason game and they already had it on. Turns out they have their sports TV schedule printed every day. They know their regulars and what TVs they like to watch, and they made note of it every day. So, when those folks walked in, their game was already on and their drink was usually poured before they even sat down.

Crossroads is basically a real life Cheers. Everybody does know your name, but they took it a step further with the motto. Anyone who's ever spent time there will tell you they've met lifelong friends there from a starting point of complete strangers. It was some of the best networking in town. Every profession, from the sweatiest blue collar to the freshest pressed white collar, hung out there, elbow to elbow. All ages. All backgrounds. All political beliefs. Business owners, nurses, lawyers,

plumbers, shop managers, train kids, fishermen, Slopers and politicians. Didn't matter. If you were a Crossroads regular or just passed through every now and then, you were in the club, and you knew it was something special.

Rittenberg: I used to ride the No. 13 bus home, and it would go past the Carr's there and would drop me off. I lived on the east side, and I didn't have a car. I was 23, and I was in AmeriCorps. I was poor — AmeriPoor as they call it.

The bus would drop me off there, and for three bucks, I could get a PBR, and as many hot dogs and as much soup as I could eat. That was my dinner, like, two or three nights a week. That's how I met most of the people at Crossroads, and then I ended up moving to Fairview and lived there for 10, 12 years or so before I sold out and bought a house.

What's the ideal scene at Crossroads?

Tom Marriage: It's snowed three feet, and the roads are all desolate. And you pull up to Crossroads, and

there's only three cars there, and it's all the diehards who didn't want to be cooped up in their place. It's all the regulars. And we sit there and we play TouchTunes, and we literally have the greatest day of our life, laughing and sharing stories, just completely uninhibited, just pure, honest connection.

Favorite memories?

Cail Hubert: Good old Dave, our captain of our softball team. His post-wedding party was a pretty fun experience. We all went there afterward and stormed the bar. He rang the bell. That was a good night.

Rittenberg: After my wedding, we're driving back from the wildlife center and we just asked the bus driver to drop us all off at Crossroads. I mean, we called the bar ahead of time — we're not assholes — and since I was a regular, they scheduled an extra person. It was one of the only times I rang the bell. And that was expensive.

Joshua McKennett: I mean, they're all pretty vague and gray, you

know. But there were some good foosball tournaments there. I snuck into the girls' bathroom with my girlfriend, and got caught making out. I gave a guy a hot dog because I lost a bet.

Marriage: I remember one time, I'd just had surgery, like, six days before, and I thought I'd stopped taking the pain pills like three days before. My friend picked me up, and we went, and I had a couple of drinks, and I ended up taking out the foosball table — because I guess the medicine was still a little bit in my system. Luckily I didn't tear the major stomach surgery I just had.

One Sunday, I brought in a cinnamon roll, and cut it up and was offering it to everybody, was talking about my job, and all of a sudden this girl crossed the bar and was just like, 'I'm sorry, I have so many questions. What do you do?' And we have now been dating for nine months.

Bartender Aislinn Martinson: Oh, my gosh. I can't even tell you. How about the time I threw a trash can at somebody for harassing my regulars at the bar? And my patrons chased them outside

where the cops arrested them.

Tell us about the hot dogs.

Hubert: Back in my younger years, I used to live off of those things before I got a real job. There's nothing quite like a 12-hour marinated dog after a 9 p.m. Crossroads softball game. It makes you feel a lot better the next day.

Haley Rentz: Most of my life, I was strictly vegetarian, vegan, so I didn't consume as many dogs as others may have. Sometimes they were fresh. Other times there was some funky beer water going on. But I've seen them consumed at all hours of the day and night, so they're a true staple.

What about the bartenders?

Jensen: They really are the best. You have to be, if you're going to greet people with, 'Hey, fuckface,' and they laugh.

One thing that always stuck out to me was that it was a women-owned, women-run business, and I watched them ride through so much stuff over the years. All the permitting crap to keep Sunday football

breakfast going, the fire, COVID closures and lockdowns, inflation and all that bullshit, to kicking out the occasional derelict. The women of Crossroads did it all with nothing but strength and smiles. They made a place that everyone already loved even better, and we're all going to miss that.

How do you see your life changing now that Crossroads is gone?

Jensen: It's different. It's weird when you go somewhere else and see a fellow Crossroads refugee trying to get a drink. But it's summer and there's plenty to do. Probably won't really hit until football season when we're all wondering where to go.

Rentz: As we're dispersing and kind of finding our ways around town, we all have something in common, in losing our go-to place.

Hubert: It's greatly missed. Because we don't have that spot any more. Crossroads, you'll always be in our hearts — but also in our livers probably, too.

Martinson: I love all these people. We're always going to keep being in contact, and we are always going to be friends, and they're always going to be my neighbors. I'm just going to miss Crossroads so hard. It was my favorite bar to work in, and I'm never going to give up on these people. These are my favorite people.

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Gaslight, and that’s not who we are,” he said. “It’s a new club, and it’s a new atmosphere, and poor old Oscar didn’t fit in.”

Oscar, huh.

Disappointingly quickly, Pattee solved the mystery: “I still have it. It’s in the back. Maybe you get a thousand readers to say, ‘Hey, we want the bull back,’ I could bring it back if I wanted to. But they need to come in-person, buy a drink or two, fill out a form — that the Press provides.”

I could tell Pattee wanted to end the conversation there.

I wanted more detail.

So I said that some people (me) were wondering if the bull was for sale, and maybe the Press could put it in our new office.

“It’s not a toy! It’s a real mechanical bull — it’s got a double horsepower engine. It’s supposed to be a five-horsepower; I added it up to 10,” Pattee said. “It’s out to pasture. But if someone wants to make me an offer, I would look at it.”

Other things I learned from Pattee: He bought his bull in 2008 from a “serious cowboy,” whom he called up after reading about the devices in a news story. Oscar’s creamy white and brown hide is real leather. It was always free to ride, with controls operated by one of his staff.

The settings could go up to 10. “Most people can’t

take a two,” Pattee said, but “some of these cowboys, you couldn’t buck ‘em...they could have gone to a 15.”

“And then, of course, there’s all the debauchery over the years that’s happened on the thing,” Pattee added. “Nothing X-rated, but probably — certainly — R stuff on there.”

Liability insurance for Oscar cost \$10,000 a year, Pattee said. (He chuckled only a little bit when I said he could have called that part of his policy a “rider.”) There was only ever one lawsuit, according to Pattee — the result of a 2017 spinal injury to an Alaska Airlines flight attendant-in-training whose depressing prognosis I ultimately absorbed from a thick case file in the Anchorage courthouse next door.

The dispute was settled out of court, though not before citations of mechanical bull case law and the pre-ride waiver the woman signed — which said the risk of physical and emotional injury “simply cannot be eliminated without jeopardizing the essential qualities to the activity.”

With that, I left the courthouse. Later, I called Cal Perkins — the “serious cowboy” who made Oscar two decades ago, and whose number was miraculously still in Pattee’s phone.

Perkins, who lives in Idaho and is a former professional bull rider, has been making the devices for 35 years, but his enthusiasm for the gig does not seem



Oscar's temporary resting place. **Courtesy John Pattee**

to have diminished over the decades. More details I learned from him: He sells his top-end mechanical bull for some \$33,500. They’ve gone to Italy, Australia and New Zealand, Hawai’i. And: “I sent a bull on a barge to Turkmenistan. The foreign oil guys were in there, building up their oil fields or something.”

The Gaslight bull, Perkins continued, had earned some real renown over the years — including with one of his neighbors in Idaho, a journeyman carpenter who’d seen it on a trip to Anchorage. “The city’s well-known, and it’s a great tourism city,” Perkins said.

“I would hope that someone would revive it and keep it there.”

Perkins’ neighbor isn’t the only one with fond memories of Oscar. We canvassed Press readers on social media, and several wrote in, including lifelong Anchorage resident Natasha Price.

“In my 20s, I was often witness to the Gaslight’s mechanical bull rides; I didn’t have the fortitude to try it until one night when I had just the right amount of liquid courage,” Price said. “I climbed astride the beast and held on tight. The operator did his best to toss me off, and I probably

only lasted less than half a minute. But I dismounted the bull by rolling off it backwards so perfectly that I landed on my feet.

“It was a perfect dismount,” Price added. “Even in my inebriated state, I knew this would be the one and only time I would ever ride a mechanical bull. I could never improve upon that landing!”

Oscar is now in “deep storage,” Pattee said; he sent me a photo of it crammed into a corner, tucked under a pile of mats, to prove it. If you want to bring it back, make him an offer. The Press can’t afford the insurance policy.

Some Big Spills

By Julia Bedell for The Anchorage Press - Edited by Nat Herz

Across

- 1 Basic dog command
- 4 “Darn it!”
- 10 Common sight at an airport drop-off, in brief
- 13 “From now ___ won’t be hanging around” (bluegrass lyric)
- 14 :(
- 16 ___ league
- 17 What spilled from a truck onto the Seward Highway, shortly after being caught? (July 3, 2026)
- 19 Inits. on a food assistance card
- 20 Welling up
- 21 P.D. alert
- 22 3, for most disc golf holes
- 23 Grub
- 24 :)
- 28 ___-fi
- 29 ___ B
- 30 Aromatherapy liquids
- 31 Rig that took a spill on the North Slope (Jan. 23, 2026)
- 33 Gives the slip
- 35 Elton John’s highest hit?
- 37 What one may say about themselves after hours of processing fish?
- 40 An epic name for one of 28,800 bath toys

- that spilled into the sea? (Jan. 10, 1992)
- 44 Nifty or tidy
- 45 V.I.P. above veep
- 46 Print source
- 47 Offerings from a truck or cart, like downtown Anchorage’s hot dog stands
- 51 Pop music’s Lady ___
- 52 ___ on the back
- 53 Mauna ___
- 54 Togo’s neighbor
- 55 One ___ time
- 56 Spill that began on Prince William Sound’s Bligh Reef (Mar. 24, 1989)
- 60 With, in Spanish
- 61 Cute name for common lunch orders?
- 62 Participant in a recent Middle East conflict, in brief
- 63 Mini albums
- 64 Waste that’s been flushed
- 65 School bake sale org.

Down

- 1 Like the best towels
- 2 Garmin device often brought to remote places
- 3 What many suit wearers must learn, with “how to”
- 4 Like a fire pit at the end of the weekend

- 5 Used to be
- 6 Food label inits.
- 7 ___-C.I.O.
- 8 Singular word for a popular dish made with masa, in Spanish
- 9 Check (out), like competition
- 10 Like many phone cards
- 11 Fiasco
- 12 51-Across, e.g.
- 15 Informal synonym for nonbinary
- 18 Soon-to-be grads: Abbr.
- 24 Not taut
- 25 Halloween cover-up
- 26 At the designated rhythm
- 27 Lost’s opposite
- 29 Underappreciated worker, say
- 32 Scotch-___
- 33 Insert, as a video in a post
- 34 Big name in chip production
- 36 Fatty tuna, at a sushi bar
- 37 Where no one can hear you scream, per “Alien”
- 38 Place above
- 39 Highland wear
- 41 On the _____ (respectable)
- 42 Least likely to be pinned down

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- 43 Celebration created in 1966 that honors African heritage and culture
- 48 Scrapes (out), as a living
- 49 State that’s two and a half times smaller than Alaska

- 50 Request to be sent a document via obsolete means?
- 51 Long-lasting manicure
- 54 Corner of a diamond
- 57 What your friend who’s always late will

- text, whether or not it’s true?
- 58 Vardalos of “My Big Fat Greek Wedding”
- 59 Chillax

when you find out he didn't vote



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about a meaningful turnaround.

The harvest in Anvik, announced by Walker on a public teleconference with fishery managers and local leaders in July, also has inflamed a long-running political debate over fishery closures and government policies aimed at rebuilding the runs.

In 2024, Alaska state officials agreed with the Canadian government to a seven-year ban on harvesting chinook along the Yukon, which flows from northwest Canada more than 2,000 miles through Alaska to the Bering Sea.

Even though many Alaska Native leaders generally agreed about the need to limit fishing, they also criticized Alaska's government for not formally including tribal governments in the decision-making process.

The recent chinook harvest in Anvik came in spite of the official moratorium.

Walker, in a recent phone interview, described the state's implementation of the ban without input from tribal leaders as a form of "dictatorship."

Alaska's fish and game commissioner, Doug Vincent-Lang, said state officials wouldn't have been able to reach a timely agreement with Canada if they had formally consulted with every tribe along the river.

But he pushed back against the idea that they didn't get input from local leaders before agreeing to the ban.

"We talked to a lot of people downriver," Vincent-Lang said in a brief phone interview.

"I think it's working," he added, referring to the agreement. He also noted that the



Salmon strips hang to dry in Anvik in 2023. Max Graham

ban includes certain exceptions, such as allowing fishing on tributaries when local spawning goals are met.

During the July teleconference, Walker described a scene of joy in Anvik. People in the village are "eating fish like they never ate fish before," he said.

Some salmon advocates and fisheries biologist say the chinook run isn't yet strong enough to warrant fishing. The numbers are still well below targets set by fisheries managers.

Roughly 32,000 chinook have been counted so far this season at a sonar station in Eagle, Alaska, near the Canadian border. That's more than the state had tallied by now in recent years. But it's still below average, and the final count is expected to be substantially lower than the goal of 71,000 set by Alaska and Canadian fisheries managers two years ago.

"While it is a little bit more encouraging, the runs are still well below average," said Deena Jallen, a Yukon area fisheries biologist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. "We're still not meeting any goals in Alaska and Canada."

In a statement posted on social media last week, a leading Alaska Native advocate described the painful decision not to fish during

closures that she and many others along the Yukon have made, and she called on fishermen to continue cooperating with government agencies with the shared goal of restoring the salmon runs.

"I understand the importance of passing on our way of life, our traditional knowledge and our culture to our children and grandchildren," said Serena Alstrom, the longtime executive director of Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association, a conservation-focused advocacy group with board members from communities along the river.

"Because of that, I have made the difficult decision not to fish when regulations require it. I don't do it because it is easy or because I always agree with management. I do it because I believe those sacrifices give our salmon the best chance to recover for future generations."

In a phone interview, Alstrom said she has heard about more instances of illegal fishing this summer than usual — not only in Anvik but on other stretches of river, too.

"It's upsetting," she said.

Later, Alstrom released another statement, saying the boost in salmon numbers this year reflects the "diligence of those who have chosen to allow these salmon to continue their journey to the

spawning grounds."

Most families along the river are continuing to make that sacrifice, she said in the interview. They're doing that not merely for the sake of following rules but because they "understand that we need to have salmon at the spawning grounds," Alstrom said.

In Anvik, the fishermen used a traditional fishwheel to catch chinook and chum, according to Walker.

They released most of the fish, but kept a few dozen chinook and more than 100 salmon of other species, he said.

The fishermen took only what the village needed, he added. The fish "went in people's freezers, and people are jarring them, too," Walker said.

The Alaska State Troopers, which enforces state fisheries closures, have not observed an increase in illegal salmon harvests this season, according to spokesperson Austin McDaniel.

The agency issued five citations for illegal fishing along the lower Yukon during a salmon closure, including one for unlawfully possessing chinook, McDaniel said.

State wildlife

troopers "are aware of reports of potential improper fishing practices near Anvik," he said. "However, we have been unable to substantiate those claims at this time."

But, McDaniel added, "our patrols indicate that compliance with Yukon River subsistence fishing restrictions remains high and has improved in many areas."

On another river in Western Alaska, the Kuskokwim, fishing during state-imposed closures more than a decade ago led to prosecutions of Yup'ik fishermen, who unsuccessfully argued that harvesting was an expression of their constitutionally protected religious beliefs.

Chinook numbers in the Yukon initially plummeted more than two decades ago, and harvests have largely been limited since then. The run dropped to a record low of about 50,000 fish in 2022, down from

closer to 300,000 decades ago.

This year's run is now estimated at 103,000 fish, far exceeding pre-season forecasts.

Managers also counted nearly 1 million summer chum, which was more than forecasted and enough for limited fishing opportunities in Western Alaska communities, like Anvik, along the lower and middle river.

In a recent interview with KYUK, the regional public broadcaster, a Yup'ik elder in Russian Mission, 70 miles downstream of Anvik, described a sense of elation around the summer chum harvest.

"When I ate my fish," said the elder, Alexandra Quak-aq Kozevnikoff, "I could feel that tingling from my stomach come out like [a] little quiver all the way around my body, even to the top of my head, and a big sigh of relief."

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BEET IT | Continued from Page 18

yearly contest's third edition, handily beat (sorry) five other participants. Lushchyk was impressed.

"He's like, 'Oh, they're boiled? Ah, no problem' — and just crushed it," Lushchyk said.

As a naturopath, Babij promotes eating vegetables, and the contest appealed to him as a celebration of a particularly tasty and nutritious one. He also said he had an advantage: He grew up on a farm eating a lot of beets.



There were reports of pooping and peeing purple for days after this. **Photos courtesy Valerie Lake**

Babij finished his two beets in five or six minutes, he said.

(The organizers don't keep official statistics.) While

he described the experience as "really fun," Babij also acknowledged some rather unpleasant side effects, including burping and hiccups.

"Oh, gosh," he added. "Pee was purple. Poop was purple, for a solid couple days."

Lushchyk got the idea for the contest after hearing a few years ago about an onion-eating competition at a Shrek-themed party at Williwaw Social, the now-closed downtown bar and event space. They had already been organizing Midsummer Melodies — a daylong music and arts festival, where bands play on a



Markian Babij, the champion of this year's contest, wears his prize: vegetable ornaments crafted by Alla Lushchyk.

stage Lushchyk built in their yard — and beet-eating felt like a good addition.

"Beets hold a very special place in my heart and in my culture because I'm Ukrainian," Lushchyk said. "We use beets in a lot of our cuisine. I even have a beet and horseradish tattoo on my forearm, because I've grown both of those, and you put them together into this condiment called hren, which is delicious on any kind of game meat — or any food really."

Babij said he wants to defend his title next year, if he gets the chance. Lushchyk said this may have been the last contest for a "little while."

They are not planning to hold Midsummer Melodies next summer because they'll be busy with a new gig running a popular bluegrass festival in Trapper Creek, 100 miles north of Anchorage.

But, Lushchyk added: "If there's popular demand, maybe we do the beet-eating contest there."

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September 2026

UNDEAD |

Continued from Page 2

to have the stuff people like. And we swear to God we will always have a crossword [P. 23]! But we also swear to the pagan idols that we will have a horoscope, too [P. 14] — and that this stuff will be written by Alaskans, and Alaskan-ized. We'll have food content, too, and everything else we can afford. We also promise high-quality, fearless journalism.

Speaking of which — the fifth question people ask, if we're all still on speaking terms: How are you gonna pay for it?

Hopes and prayers, man. This paper is free in any coffee store near you.

But! We also already have fabulous advertisers, who make up the fabric of our city and have already shown with their dollars that they believe in what we're creating together. We have nearly 1,000 committed, paying subscribers, many of whom have carried over from Nat's old business, Northern Journal. We also have an amazing nonprofit partner, Out North, who's taking in tax-deductible donations that can be used by the Press for specific, eligible activities like investigative reporting. That means we're solvent for now, but we need a lot more support to make sure the Press can continue long-term.

To put a finer point on it, if you read the next 26 pages of this paper, and you like what you see, great: Our team spent a ton of time hustling to raise enough money from early believers to print our first edition.

But we want to print 11 more issues this year, and to stick around well past 2027. We don't have enough money to do that, yet. So, please, if you want more, and more better, vote with your feet.

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Whatever it is, you'll help us do the best we can to reflect the city we think is so special and cool — and also, sometimes, deeply uncool.

What's in the DNA of a city?

In some ways, an alternative newspaper reflects the nature of a place back to a place. Anchorage makes us and, hopefully, we make Anchorage see itself — ourselves — a little bit better, and differently. And not just the hard stuff. One thing we've felt deeply since announcing the relaunch of the Press is how much Anchorage needs a vessel for its hopes and dreams, and how deeply residents want to feel proud to live here. We hope to carry some of those dreams, and that pride, for you and with you.

We're not doing this alone. The people you see named around us — on the masthead, the thank yous, the stories and art and ads and structure in this paper — have been the t-shirt cannon blasting us forward to where we land today: this paper, a real, physical thing, in your hands.

We're also building on the bones left from the first three decades of the Press, by the capable, curious, hilarious and ridiculous hands who built the paper into a brand that still has currency even after four years of dormancy.

We have no idea where this thing is going to go. Which is scary, because the possibility of failure is real, and our efforts are on public display. We really, desperately, want to get this right — but we know that we're not always going to.

We hope you'll forgive us and still come play with us. We promise not to back down from the hard stuff, to be honest and curious, to bring you joy and pain and wonder and all the feelings in between.

We are only here because of the

support and encouragement we've gotten from you — our friends and neighbors and colleagues around the city and state. We feel the weight of stewarding a beloved thing and, like any grizzled spaghetti, we're hoping to be here for a long time — and to keep

ourselves stuck to that wall.

See you next month.

We want to hear from you! Let us know what you like, what you hate, and what suggestions you have. Veri is at veri@anchoragepress.com; Nat is at nat@anchoragepress.com.

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