

THE SKAGWAY NEWS.

September 11, 2020

Skagway, Alaska

\$1.50

Recreation Center

Center plans to open with new guidelines **PAGE 3**

COVID testing

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Fish This!

The places we know and the road ahead **PAGE 8**

Assembly to consider year-round grant

By Melinda Munson

The Finance Committee is working on a draft plan that would award funds to year-round food establishments and businesses with storefronts who commit to stay open four to five days per week this winter.

“The purpose of the grant is to maintain the year-round business community for Skagway, providing services to residents in hopes of keeping them both mentally and physically healthy during the long winter months in Skagway, Alaska,” the draft states.

Tier one businesses, which include restaurants and grocery stores, could each receive \$25,000 if they remain open five days per week. Tier two businesses, which include retail, fuel, salons and bars, could be eligible for \$6,500 per business if they remain open four days per week.

The money to fund the Year-Round Business Grant Program would come from sales tax revenue, not from CARES funding.

“This is real money that we’re spending out of our bank,” said Assemblymember Jay Burnham.

The Skagway News testified during citizens present at the Sept. 9 special finance meeting that they should be included in tier two as they are an essential business and consider their office a storefront. In response, the Finance Committee later clarified that a storefront must be on street level. The Skagway News subleases the second floor of the Skagway News
see page three



Photos provided by parents.

Top left: Scarlett and Brixton O'Boyle, age 5. Lower left: Isabella Wagner, age 4. Right: new teacher Catera Gilmore, age undisclosed.

Grizzly killed off-season in Dyea, ADF&G investigates

By Melinda Munson

Skagway Police Department (SPD) responded to calls that a brown bear had been shot and killed on the Dyea Flats on Aug. 2. After assessing the situation, the department referred the incident to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

The Skagway News is not releasing the name of the Dyea resident who shot the bear as he has not been charged and did not wish to comment. According to SPD Chief Ray Leggett, the resident reported the bear death as “defense of life or property.”

In an atypical summer with few tourists, Skagway’s bears have been abnormally active. Residents who have more

free time than usual have been watching the Dyea bears closely. There was an outcry on the Facebook group, Skagway Naturally, when news of the brown bear’s demise was posted.

A screenshot from the Facebook account of an out-of-town relative of the man who killed the bear proclaimed: “Day two of hunting season. We got a grizzly.” The post was taken down and the owner of the account did not respond to messages.

Leggett urged calm and patience while the situation is being investigated.

“Just stand down and let the trooper do his job,” Leggett advised.

Black bear season started on Sept. 1. Brown bear season does not begin until Sept. 15.

In Haines, 16 aggressive bears have been killed this year. This is an unusually high number, according to KHNS.

Leggett said so far this season, SPD has received two or three reports of problems

with bears.

According to Leggett, an ADF&G representative recently came to town to investigate. The Skagway News was unable to reach ADF&G before deadline.

Skagway School starts classes

By Melinda Munson

Skagway City School was in an enviable position when it started in-person school on Aug. 27 with no confirmed cases of COVID-19.

According to Dr. Josh Coughran superintendent, so far, things have gone well.

“I’m not certain why I was so nervous about how our students would respond to all of the changes to the environment, they have responded

beautifully,” he said.

Due to COVID-19, parents had the option of in-person school, Alaska Statewide Virtual School, which uses Skagway School teachers to support students while they learn from home, or leaving the district altogether and homeschooling.

“One of the most deleterious impacts of the pandemic on school districts is the po-
see page two

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The Myers family with Millie in fifth grade, Ava in ninth grade, Silas, a senior, and Eiza in the first year of college.

Photos provided by parents.

Students "responded beautifully" to school starting up

from front page
potential for decreased enrollment ... nearly every school district in Alaska is reporting a decline in enrollment which will lead to an inevitable decline in state funding. I am happy to report that is not the case in Skagway..." Coughran said.

The school's 2021 fiscal year budget was based on a student enrollment of 130.

Skagway School started the 2020 year with 132 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Fourteen of those students are home-based. Nine students withdrew and transitioned to home schooling programs not affiliated with the district.

Juneau School District started classes on Aug. 24 with distance learning for

all students at all schools. As of publication, the city has recorded 294 cases of COVID-19.

With just two documented cases of COVID-19, Haines Borough School District began in-person school on Aug. 18, requiring masks and social distancing.

Skagway School started the 2020 academic year

in the green zone, meaning there are no known cases of COVID-19 in the community.

"I'm certain we will have challenges and obstacles along the way, but if the attitudes I've seen persist, we will meet them with resiliency and creativity," Coughran said.



Isabella Wagner



Scarlett and Brixton O'Boyle



Alexander, 12, Ashton, 9, and Ayden Flores-Leipold, 12

Photos provided by parents.

The Skagway News welcomes opinions pieces and letters to the editor. Opinion pieces should be no longer than 600 words and will be published based on availability and relevance to current and local events. Letters to the editor should not exceed 250 words.

Submit letters and opinions to editor@skagwaynews.com. Letters may be edited for grammar and length.

Send us your name and email to receive a PDF version. (sales@skagwaynews.com)

Rec center to reopen with strict guidelines

By Melinda Munson

After the emergency closure in March, the Skagway Recreation Center (SRC) is scheduled to open on Sept. 20, as long as there continues to be no community spread of COVID-19. Use will be by appointment only and new mitigation rules have been established.

“The rec-center director, Katherine (Nelson), has been working hard to develop phase one of a plan to reopen the rec-center safely with winter weather coming. The plan is to limit access so that social distancing and proper cleaning can take place to keep transmission of COVID-19 from happening at the rec-center,” said Borough Manager Brad Ryan.

Patrons must make an appointment to use the SRC by visiting <https://signupschedule.com/src>.

Spin equipment and some cardio machines have been moved to the gym floor for greater distancing. Yoga classes will also take place in the gym with participants asked to bring their own mats.

A maximum of four people at a time are allowed in the weight room. Masks are mandatory. The same rules apply to the cardio floor.

Clients must sanitize their hands and wipe down equipment before and after use and bring their own workout towels. Towels are required for the spinning and cardio room.

Cloth or surgical masks must be worn while inside the SRC. Patrons should maintain a six-foot distance while moving around equipment and keep a minimum distance of 12 feet while exercising.

Individuals should be no earlier than 10 minutes before

group fitness classes and no earlier than five minutes before cardio and weight room use.

Users must “appear healthy, have signed up online and have a temperature below 100 degrees.” They must also attest they have not travelled outside of Skagway in the last 14 days.

Showers, the rock wall, the afterschool program, toddler time, playgroup and open gym will remain closed. No children under 13 are allowed in the center and those under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and have management approval to utilize the cardio and weight rooms or fitness classes.

Patrons will be charged \$2 per day. Long term memberships are not currently available. Users will be contacted every two weeks for payment



Photo by Melinda Munson

The Skagway Recreation Center prepares to open Sept. 20 after several months of construction and COVID-19 preparations.

with reservation records as the basis of charges.

Viola Gazzeara, normally a 5:30 a.m. regular at the SRC, is excited for the center to open.

“Let’s just get it on,” she said. She is, however, concerned about the \$2 per reservation use fee. It adds up, she told the assembly, at a time when paying bills is difficult.

Skagway Recreation Center New Hours of Operation:

Monday through Friday: 5:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Monday through Thursday: 4-8 p.m.
Sunday: 1-5 p.m.

Preparation for year-round business grants

from front page

Depot & Books.

Borough Manager Brad Ryan said he expects the term “storefront” will be clearly defined in the next draft.

To qualify for either tier one or tier two, businesses must have “maintained an open storefront” from November 2019 through March 2020, paid municipality sales tax during that time and commit to staying open from October 2020 through March 31, 2021. Restaurants are allowed a one month closure as long as another restaurant is open during that same timeframe.

Tier one businesses will

not qualify for the year-round grant if they accept money from the earlier Small Business Grant Program, which will soon award between \$1,000-\$6,000 per qualified Skagway business, depending on the number of applicants. Tier two businesses are eligible for both municipality grants.

Steve Burnham, finance chair, suggested the possibility of creating a tier three later on, should there be any funds leftover.

The Finance Committee will meet again on Sept. 16 at 7 p.m. to further discuss the grant and plan to present the program at the next assembly meeting on Sept. 17 at 7 p.m.

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Coffee, flowers, birthdays and anniversaries



By Gretchen Wehmhoff

Early one Friday morning, I sat in front of my computer, to upload content for Alaska Family Fun. As my faithful, dinosaur iMac (2007 version - since upgraded) warmed up,

I saw the date on the calendar icon.

"Joe? Do you know what today is?"

"Friday, right? I have to go to work."

"It's our anniversary. Happy anniversary."

"Hm. Happy anniversary."

I went back to work uploading the weekly.

After a few hours I took a break to run an errand, stopping by McDonalds to get a \$1 coffee for Joe. Later that night, when Joe returned from work, he placed a few

branches of flowers and greens in the McDonalds cup. Someone was tossing out a bouquet and offered him the entire package, but he told them I liked purple and only took what he needed.

For the next few days a strand of borrowed flowers balanced in a repurposed McDonalds coffee cup decorated the table and we were content.

In our younger days, Joe purchased or picked flowers and his mother would make a perfect arrangement for him to deliver to me at work. Now I work at home.

During the years we had money and time, we splurged on anniversary dates at Simon and Seafort's, but most often we worked opposite hours, making celebrations on the exact day improbable.

Our marriage doesn't seem to be bothered by not stopping everything for our anniversary. We both work on our birthdays, work on our anniversary and don't seem put out. I've spoken with people who can't participate in

a regular event, attend class or schedule anything on their anniversary day. Some folks even take the day off work.

Maybe we should do all of that. But that isn't who we are. For now.

We are a typical American couple with bills, normal family dysfunction, jobs and dreams. We love small things like hanging out with our dogs, working on projects and drinking coffee together. We definitely like coffee.

Sometimes we aren't even in the same state or town on our anniversary. Life is in perpetual change.

I spent three political campaigns prioritizing my state and community ahead of my family. The average citizen candidate has to practically quit work to give 100 percent of their time and energy to the job of running for office, or they must spend portions of their savings on the campaign. I chose the former, mostly because I didn't have the latter.

Now I am enjoying time with my husband.

Out of the election cycle, I choose to give energy and time to my marriage. I adore the man who gave up time to build, place and remove campaign signs for three different elections; the man who did laundry and fed the dogs while I knocked on doors and attended forums; the man who washes my car by hand, carries the laundry upstairs, cleans up the dog poop and goes to work every day; the man who took up slack while I cared for my mother during her 14-year journey through Alzheimer's and now cares for his mother on a similar journey.

Last month was our 25th anniversary, but we couldn't hold a party during a pandemic. Today is his birthday and we are in the same home until I drive to Skagway next weekend. We are good. It's who we are.

I'll get another cup of coffee, Joe. You pick the flowers.

Let's do this for eternity.

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Parents may qualify for pandemic food payments for children, free school meals

By Melinda Munson

The state extended its deadline for a new federal program, Pandemic-EBT for Children, which gives up to \$458 in food assistance to each qualifying child.

Food Bank of Alaska (FBA) is administering the program, meant to ease the burden of lost school meals due to COVID-19 school closures. Students who were eligible for free or reduced meals in April, May or June, or who attended schools which offered free meals, are eligible.

Families already enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will automatically receive the new benefits on their Electronic Benefits Transfer card. Those who don't currently utilize SNAP must opt-in by calling the FBA or filling out an electronic application at

<https://www.foodbankofalaska.org/pandemic-ebt-opt-in-by-august-31st-to-receive-this-new-relief-program/>.

Due to postal delays and technology glitches, the original Aug. 31 deadline was extended to Sept. 30. However, Alaska's Division of Public Assistance (DPA) urges clients to turn in applications by Sept. 15 to allow time for processing.

"DPA will not be able to issue P-EBT benefits after Sept. 30, 2020, due to federal regulatory guidelines," they stated.

Skagway City School opted out of the National School Lunch Program in 2013.

"While low participation was a factor in the decision, it was really more about poor food quality and the enormous amount of paperwork

associated with coordinating the program," said Superintendent Josh Coughran. "At the time (and still now) we felt that we could provide a much higher quality nutritional experience for kids while still serving families who rely on free and reduced price meals."

Currently, parents who need help with school meals must first apply to SNAP. Once approved, they should contact Coughran.

Skagway School charges \$5 for full-price lunch.

Interested parties can find SNAP applications at the following link.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/SNAP/default.aspx>



MUNICIPALITY OF SKAGWAY PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, there will be held in the Municipality of Skagway, Alaska, a REGULAR MUNICIPAL ELECTION.

The following offices are on the ballot:

- Two (2) Assembly seats - for three (3) year terms each;
- Two (2) School Board seats - for three (3) year terms each.

ELECTION HOURS

The polls will be open at 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, and will close at 8:00 p.m. on the same day.

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

- A person may vote in a municipal election only if the person:
- is qualified to vote in state elections under AS 15.05.010;
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EARLY / ABSENTEE VOTING

Voters are able to vote early / absentee as follows:

- **Early in-person** in the Assembly chambers from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, between **Monday, September 21, 2020** and **Monday, October 5, 2020**.
- **Absentee by-mail.** Please submit an absentee ballot application to the borough clerk **EARLY** to allow for mailing time. The deadline to request absentee ballots by mail is 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, September 25, 2020**. Absentee ballot application forms are online at www.skagway.org/clerksoffice/page/election-information or by request.

For more information visit www.skagway.org or contact the Borough Clerk at e.deach@skagway.org or 907-983-9706.

STC class airs dirty laundry, teaches how to keep water cleaner

By Melinda Munson

Every time Skagway residents wash laundry, plastic microfibers from synthetic clothes get washed down the drain. These microfibers are eventually absorbed by sea life, working their way into the human food chain.

According to Reuben Cash, environmental coordinator for Skagway Traditional Council (STC), one piece of synthetic clothing will shed 700,000 fibers in one wash cycle.

“That’s a problem you can’t throw a single solution at,” he said.

Reuben, along with Sarah Cash, STC program assistant, hosted two Zoom classes in August to show Skagwegians how to wash laundry more sustainably.

The pair retaped the class

sans participants for privacy reasons. The course is now available on Youtube.

Sarah demonstrated how to make laundry detergent with three ingredients: borax, washing soda and hand soap, all of which come in paper or cardboard boxes. According to Sarah, homemade detergent takes less water to manufacture, doesn’t come in a plastic container and avoids ingredients which lead to “chronic aquatic toxicity.”

“Any substance you put in an environmental system is going to take its toll,” Sarah warned, reminding class members to use the smallest amount of homemade detergent possible.

Reuben outlined three additional steps environmentally conscious consumers can use to minimize their impact on

the watershed.

Go big. Large loads of laundry produce less microfibers as the clothes have a smaller space to agitate.

Keep cool. Hotter temperatures create more microfibers. Wash loads on cold water, which will also save energy.

Quality over quantity. Newer clothes release more microfibers than older ones. Buy high quality clothes and keep them as long as possible.

Sarah also recommended replacing single use dryer sheets (made out of polyester, a type of plastic) with wool laundry balls.

The STC gifted laundry kits to everyone who participated in the online class. The kits included wool dryer balls, a batch of homemade soap and a Cora Microfiber Laundry



Ball, a simple device made from recycled plastic which filters and traps microfibers in the washing machine.

View the class at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAFhQmKPblc&feature=youtu.be>

STC, SEARHC provide free COVID tests for asymptomatic individuals

By Melinda Munson

The Skagway Traditional Council, in partnership with Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) and Skagway EMTs, are offering free COVID-19 tests “to help maintain zero cases and help with the early detection of COVID among symptomatic people,” said Sara Kinjo-Hischer, tribal administrator.

The testing is available on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and is conducted at the STC Tribal Apartment at 11th Avenue and Broadway. Appointments are not needed. Participants should remain in their vehicles and follow the technician’s instructions.

The program utilizes a RT-PCR self-swabbing nasal test, meaning patients take their own sample with the supervision of a technician. Those tested can expect results in about seven days.

The testing is strictly for those without COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone with symptoms should call Dahl Memorial Clinic (DMC) at



Photo by Melinda Munson

Skagway Tribal Council will host weekend COVID testing in cooperation with SEARHC.

907-983-2255 to schedule an appointment.

“From the clinic’s perspective, any testing in addition to what the clinic is offering is valuable for the community. I fully support their initiative,” said Estelita Fielding, DMC executive director.

SEARHC is providing similar testing in Juneau, Klukwan, Kake, Pelican, Sitka and Wrangell.

For questions contact Kinjo Hischer at 907-983-4068 or SEARHC at 907-463-4000.

Homemade Laundry Soap

(From Skagway Traditional Council’s Green Laundry Class, Sarah Cash)

Ingredients

- ½ bar Dr. Bronner’s hand soap (available at You Say Tomato)
- 1 ½ cup borax
- 1 ½ cup washing soda

Directions

Grate one cup of hand soap, using the smallest grate size possible. When measuring, shake but don’t press down.



Combine all three ingredients. (Pour slowly.)

Use one to three tablespoons of product for each load of laundry.

*According to Cash, at one load of laundry per day, this DIY detergent will cost \$5 a month.

COVID - 19 testing is available on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the STC Tribal Apartment at 11th Avenue and Broadway. Appointments are not needed. Call STC about testing at the ferry terminal and airport.

SKAGWAY HARDWARE

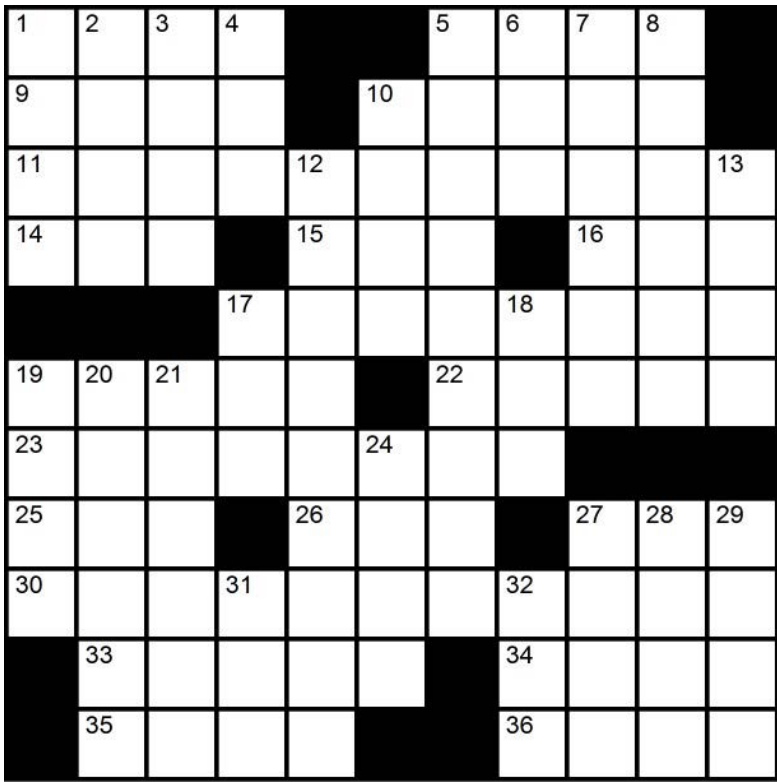
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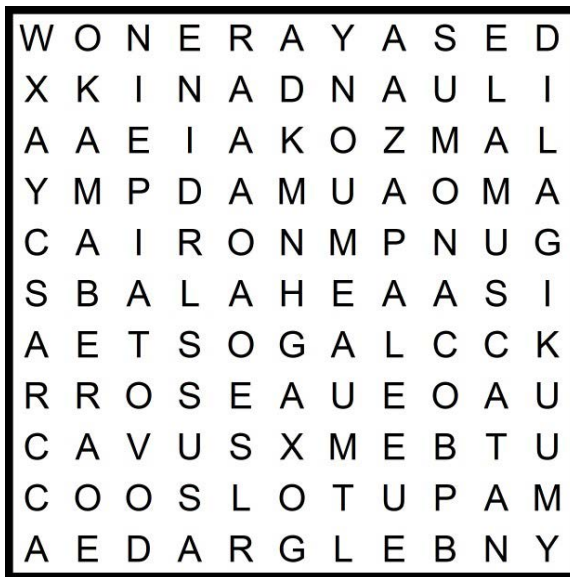
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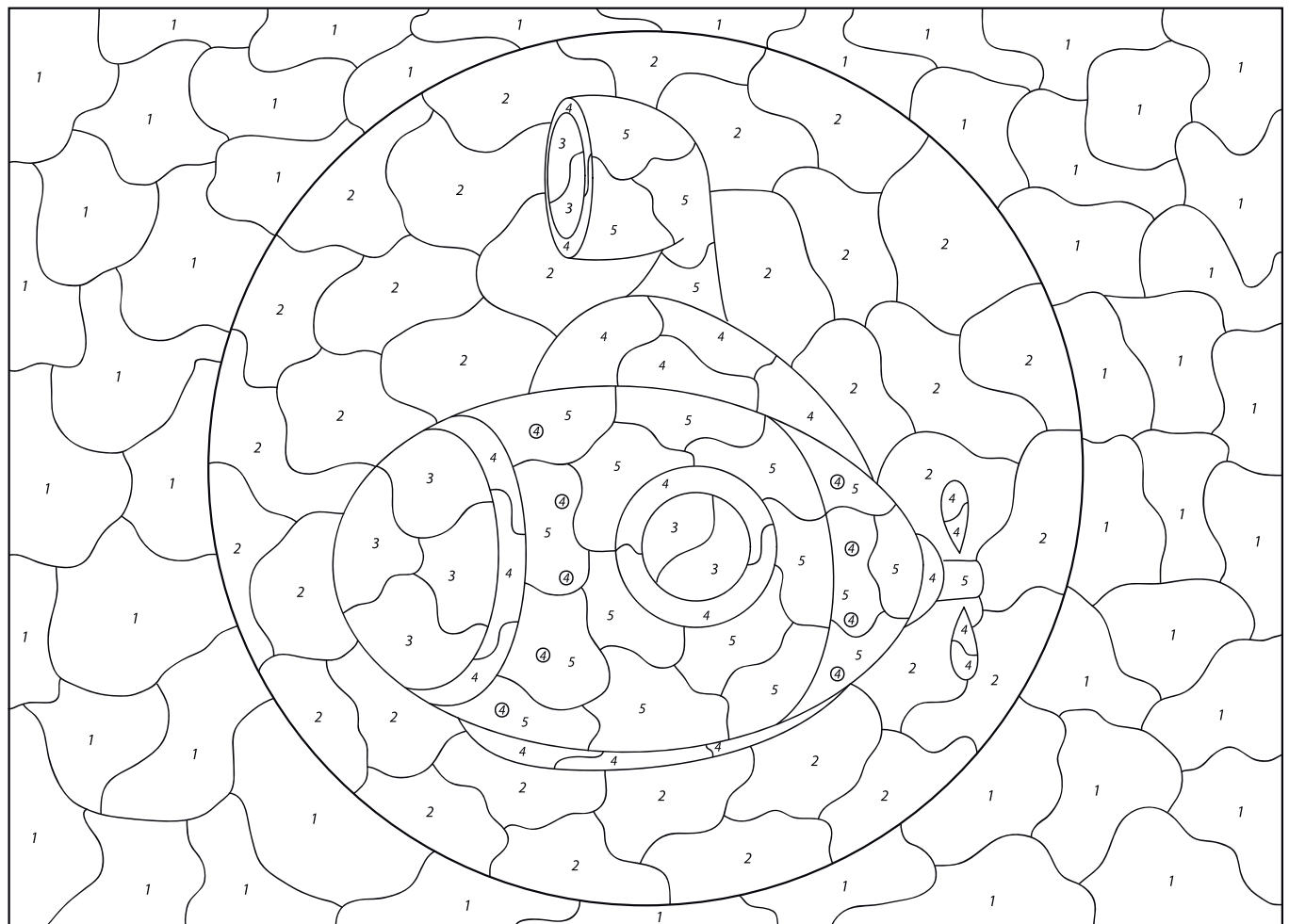
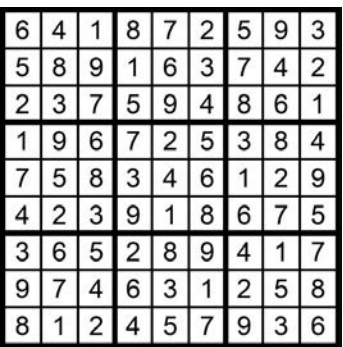
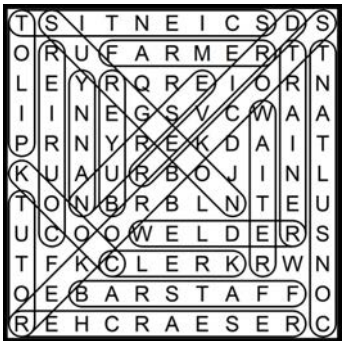
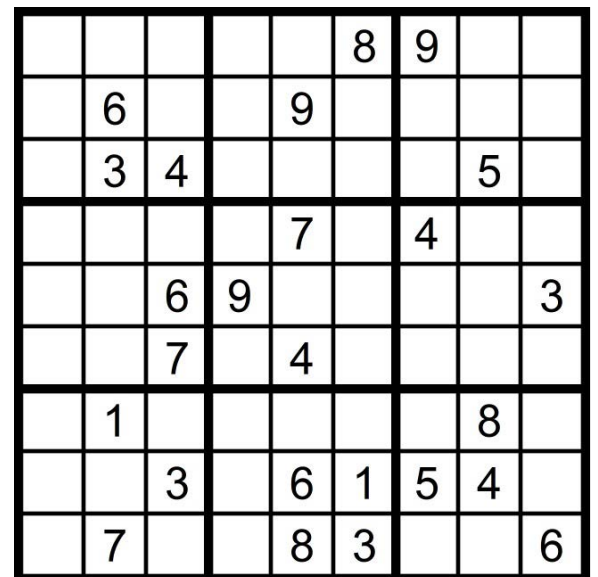
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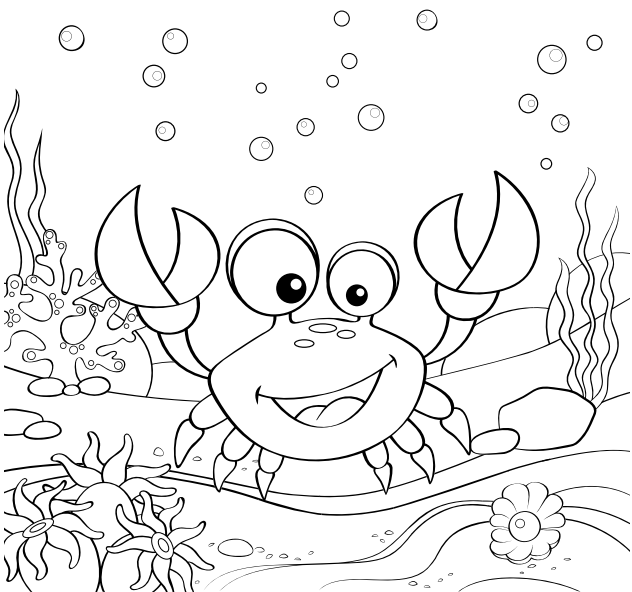


Sudoku



- 7 - 6 = Blue
- 4 - 2 = Light blue
- 2 + 1 = Sky blue
- 1 + 3 = Red
- 3 + 2 = Yellow

Color by number



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HOUSING-PROPERTY

HOME FOR SALE: 470 1st Ave 3BD/2BA home 1701 sq ft, with nice fenced yard, well maintained with many updates! Call Mandy Reigle, Latitude 58 Real Estate Group, 907-465-7555

For Sale: 2001 Main St, 2 Bdrm, 1 Ba, Pan Abode cedar house, w/800 SF detached, heated garage on a fenced corner lot. Priced to sell at \$235,000. Contact, ARA, David Brena, (M) 425-306-2020, dbrena5@gmail.com.

FOR SALE: Three parcels of land. First time on the market. One 40 ac. parcel on AB Mountain (the Skyline Trail goes through the NW corner), One 83.4 ac. parcel in Dyea along the Chilkoot Trail in the vicinity of the old Hosford sawmill, and one 2.18 ac. parcel below the incinerator near the Skagway River. Call for further details, ARA, David Brena, 907-983-2700. (11cb)

Year Round Apartment For Rent: 2 bed/2 bath, newer construction, fully furnished, deck, heated garage, energy efficient. No pets, no smoking. \$1,900/month + electric. Contact info@skagwaybrewing.com

FOR SALE: Duplex, three bedrooms and two baths on each side. Constructed 2019. Fridge, range, washer/dryer included, partially furnished. Call 907-723-2931.

COMMERCIAL-PROPERTY

BUSINESS FOR SALE: Gold Digger Mine and Dine For more information see https://www.skagway.forsale/

DOWNTOWN SKAGWAY SPACE available for lease: 1200SF retail space next to Eagles Hall. Great location in the heart of Skagway's Historic District between 5th and 6th Ave. on Broadway. This is for the south retail in the Kelly Block

Building. Contact jimpjewell@gmail.com or text Jim at 907-612-0114.(1cb)

RETAIL SPACE ON BROADWAY for lease. See info at: www.skagwayrealestate.net. (1cb)

MARKETPLACE

CHILKAT VALLEY NEWS & WHITEHORSE STAR available at Skagway News Depot & Books. (1cp)

PERSONALS-MISC. SERVICES

FOOD BANK DONATIONS WELCOME. Donations may be sent to the Food Bank, PO Box 200, Skagway, AK 99840. The local Food Bank helps those in need with groceries. If you need assistance, or know anyone who needs assistance, at any time of year, call any pastor or 907-612-0313. (1cp)

LEGAL AD



~ All units fully furnished
~ NO PETS, No Smoking
~ Lease now through March 31, 2021

Studio Apt: \$500/Month + Electric
2 Bedroom/2 Bath: \$1000/Month + Electric
4 Bedroom/4 Bath: \$1200/Month + Electric
*these units not available until Sept. 1

Contact info@skagwaybrewing.com



Stay vigilant.
Wash your hands.
Wear a mask.
Keep six feet apart.

BROADWAY BULLETIN BOARD

Police & Fire Blotter
Submitted by Skagway Police Department

Aug. 26 - Police responded to a burglar alarm on Broadway Street.

Aug. 27 - Police responded to a bear on Dyea Road.

Aug. 31 - The fire department responded to several fire alarms triggered by a power outage.

Sept. 2 - The police department received calls regarding a brown bear shot and killed on the Dyea Flats. Police investigated and referred the incident to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Sept. 4 - EMS responded to a rescue call for a stranded vessel four miles south of Skagway.

EMS assisted the Coast Guard with a medevac from the clinic.

SKAGWAY WORSHIP DIRECTORY
Please contact each worship location for their updated COVID-19 schedule

Assembly of God Church
8th & State • 907-983-2350
Sun. Worship.....11 a.m.
Thu. Intercessory Prayer.6:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
5th & Main • 983-2260
Sun. Morning Worship10 a.m.
Sun. Sunday School.....4 p.m.
Wed. Women's Prayer7 a.m.
Thur. Celebrate Recovery.....6 p.m.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
11th & State • 983-2518
Sun. Sacrament Meeting...10 a.m.
Sun. School/Primary ...11:10 a.m.
Relief Society/Priesthood...12 p.m.

St. Therese Catholic Church
9th & State • 983-2271
Sun. Mass.....5 p.m.
Mass Mon. & Tues.....12:10 p.m.
(when a priest is available)

Life Link Fellowship Bible Church
11th and Main • 907-612-0121
Sat. Night Worship7 p.m.
Sunday Service.....11 a.m.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Library Hours:
by Appointment
W, Th, F 12 - 6 p.m.
Sat. 1 - 5 p.m.
Call 983-2665 or email library@skagway.org

Dahl Clinic Winter Hours:
Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Closed Sat. and Sun. For after-hours emergencies, please dial 911.

Incinerator Hours
T, Th, Sa. 1 - 3 p.m.

Skagway Museum
Closed for the season

Border stations:
7 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Call each station for specifics.

Ferry Terminal Hours
M-F 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

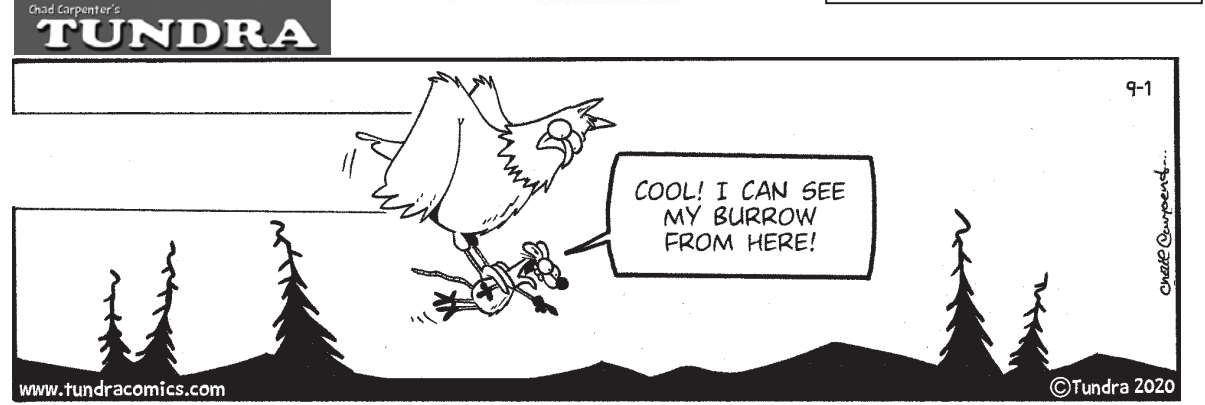
See www.skagway.org for borough meeting updates.

Email Updates & New Events: editor@skagwaynews.com

SKAGWAY WEATHER

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE OBSERVATIONS FOR PREVIOUS 24-HOUR PERIOD BEFORE 7 A.M.

DATE	MAX	MIN	PREC
Weather Watch 8/15 -8/9			
8/15	59	49	.09 in
8/16	57	47	.27 in
8/17	58	47	.10 in
8/18	65	51	.13 in
8/19	62	47	.02 in
8/20	65	48	-
8/21	69	48	.25 in
8/22	63	53	.50 in
8/23	65	53	.05 in
8/24	57	53	.36 in
8/25	60	53	.01 in
8/26	60	52	.02 in
8/27	63	51	trace
8/28	59	50	.11 in
8/29	60	49	.07 in
8/30	61	51	.20 in
8/31	58	51	.22 in
9/1	62	54	trace
9/2	58	52	trace
9/3	57	50	.13 in
9/4	60	47	.02 in
9/5	59	37	trace
9/6	63	38	-
9/7	65	39	-
9/8	60	50	trace
9/9	62	56	.06 in



PETRO MARINE

PHONE: 907-983-2259



The Road Ahead

By Andrew Cremata

There are 50 miles between Skagway and sublime fall lake trout fishing. I can visualize every twist and turn along the highway from high atop the White Pass Summit to the deep blue depths of Tagish Lake.

My car hurtles along the roadway, yellow center lines nothing more than a blur. Along the way, grizzlies grazing on grass and mountain goats climbing high toward unreachable heights. The radio plays well-known songs as my dog Rufus eagerly stares at the forward landscape toward familiar horizons.

The autumn leaves are in full splendor as we turn off the highway onto uneven gravel roads. I know the trout are hungry because this place has been a part of me for more than two decades.

Tagish Lake is deep and calm. The golden-colored mountains on the opposite shore are mirrored on its surface, but this is mere illusion. The truth hidden deep within the lake are trout that thrive beneath the veil of reflected light.

All of these memories are themselves nothing more than illusion. The highway is closed past the Canadian border and probably won't open for some time. Day-

dreaming about fall lake trout is an exercise in futility but also a welcome respite from COVID related topics.

Nearer to Skagway is a shallow creek where trout gather to spawn in the fall. The water swiftly flows downhill, creating random currents that reflect light in chaotic patterns. Small backwaters form near the creek's edge where the water is still enough to see beneath the surface.

At first, the space seems devoid of activity but if the eyes remain focused, trout begin to appear. A few minutes later and fish are suddenly everywhere. It almost seems like the act of looking causes the trout to manifest within the ether of water and light in motion.

Of course, the trout were always in the creek, just as they are in Tagish Lake. The ability to catch any fish requires seeing past the illusion of watery reflection. This is true whether fishing in six inches or 600 feet of water.

Countless misguided anglers will say, "To catch fish, one must think like a fish."

It's far more accurate to say, "To catch fish, one must think like someone really good at killing fish."

Targeting local trout in a shallow creek only requires average eyesight but how

does an angler peer into the depths to reveal that which is hidden?

There are many schools of thought relative to this subject but all can be consolidated into two distinct arenas - objective method and subjective method.

An objective approach to fishing strange waters utilizes proven angling methods gathered from reliable sources. The internet and old fishing books offer an unlimited supply of fishing techniques that can be employed in any given circumstance to create positive results.

If you were to travel to any pier, bridge, catwalk, or shoreline next to waters where fish are running, you will find that virtually every angler is fishing in the exact same way. This is proof that the objective approach to fishing is by far the more popular. "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" is the mantra of the objective angler.

Another mantra of the objective angler is, "I don't care if I catch any fish. I'm just out here to have a good time." These are the words of fishermen that's grown accustomed to failure and a testament to the fact that the objective angling method has an inherent flaw - when it fails, there is nothing to fall back on.

This underscores the fact

that the objective fishing method is based on knowledge. In contrast, the subjective fishing method is centered on wisdom.

The subjective angler is a loner, content to fortify their knowledge through a wider understanding of nature itself. This trait allows them to see past the illusion of reflection and peer into the depths without prejudice, beyond the limitations and unreliability of eyesight.

In other words, the subjective angler understands that inspiration comes from within. This is why anglers that employ the objective fishing method often believe that subjective anglers possess some mystical attribute relative to their overwhelmingly consistent success.

In their search for this illusive fishing "secret," objective anglers begin to believe in concepts like luck and karma. If you've reached a point where you believe that a kind act toward a fellow human somehow increases your chances of filling a cooler with dead fish, it may be time to consider a new hobby. I hear model railroading is fun.

In truth, the most successful subjective anglers are nothing more than keen observers. The only way to see through the illusion of reflection is to use all of the senses

to quietly and patiently interpret any given environment. This means that perfect 20/20 vision may often be more of a liability than an asset.

Speaking of 2020.... What a strange year it's been. For me, there will be no fall lake trout fishing in the Yukon. No fall colors painting steep slopes. No earthy smells of decaying foliage. No final taste of the sun's warmth as it rises above the mountain peaks and sets the lake on fire. No bend in the rod, singing drag or fresh grilled lake trout over a warm evening campfire.

All of which are nothing but memories of the past. Reflections all. Illusions of unfulfilled expectations.

What happens next?

The road ahead is no different than a deep Yukon lake. Untrained eyes will see nothing but a reflection of the present, an illusion that will quickly vanish when fall winds turn the water's mirrored surface into chaos.

Keener eyes possess a clearer vision of the future. Unknown, yes. Uncertain, without a doubt. But within those murky depths is boundless inspiration and infinite possibility.

What a ride!