Meeting focuses on Kenaitze Constitution

More work and elections ahead

Members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe offered their input and feedback on proposed revisions to the tribe’s constitution during a quarterly meeting held on March 14 in the Dena’ina Wellness Center. About 30 tribal members attended.

The proposed revisions—which were drafted by the Constitution Review Committee and reviewed and edited by the Tribal Council in February—address areas of the current constitution that do not align with current government-to-government processes and clarify roles and responsibilities for tribal operations.

In 21 pages, the proposed revisions reference many areas, including the tribe’s name, its geographic territory, how meetings and elections are administered, the rights of tribal members, and more. A proposal to change the tribe’s official name drew significant attention.

Tyotka’s comes down to go up

Progress continues on the project to bring a new Tyotka’s Elders Center to Old Town Kenai. Demolition of the original structure is underway along Mission Avenue and the site will be cleared and back-filled by April 28. A construction contractor is expected to be hired in mid-May.

Construction will begin immediately after the contractor is selected, and the project timeline calls for occupancy by the end of the year.

Renderings of the 6,500-square-foot building show a covered entryway surrounded by wood beams, an open deck on the backside and front windows facing south toward Cook Inlet.

Drawings of the interior include a large community gathering space, lounge with a stone fireplace, crafts area and kitchen. The inside also

Vigil honors sexual assault victims

A toothpick alone is easy to snap. A bundle of toothpicks is not. That’s how Sasha Lindgren compared the strength of a lone victim of domestic violence to a group of victims who come together and receive support from people willing to help.

“There is a place within this bundle for every person, an opportunity to assist as you are able,” said Lindgren, Director of Tribal Government and Affairs. “We share the responsibility.”

About 25 people turned out to honor victims of sexual assault at a candlelight vigil April 9 at the Tyotka’s Elders Center. The event was hosted by the tribe’s Social Services Department—Na’ini—meaning “strength, courage, sobriety and humility.”

Lindgren emphasized the need for community strength in addressing domestic violence and sexual assault, saying it’s important to offer education and resources. The proposed revision calls for the tribe’s name to be switched from “Kenaitze Indian Tribe” to

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### NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yaghalii du? I hope this finds you happy, healthy and looking forward to the summer months. It’s an exciting time for the tribe! At the May 1 opening of the Net, we will have a chance to enjoy food, stories, song and dance while honoring the culture and traditions of our people across Vaghanen, the good land. It is always a great year when the more who join our celebration, the better.

This is also a very busy time for the tribe’s program and service efforts.

This month, I met with each of our divisions to answer questions and update employees on our strategic plan, which guides us in addressing the needs of the tribe, and prioritizes the work for staff to complete during the year.

We had great discussion, and I walked away knowing our tribal members’ “henu” — willingness to work, cooperation, helpfulness — is alive and well, with many staff members interested in participating in the work it will take to accomplish our goals for the year.

The strategic plan is divided into six areas. In addition to addressing tribal and community needs, it supports and reflects our vision, values and mission: to assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

Here is a summary of the projects we will be working on as we move forward this year.

#### Drug and Alcohol Program

This three-year project led by Dr. John Molina, Director of Health Systems, addresses the growing epidemic of substance abuse in our community, which is tragic.

This year, we will evaluate our current program needs and gather community data to help us better understand the issue, and we will look toward a culturally based best practices initiative later in the year.

#### Elders Facility

Housing and Facilities Director Rusty Swan is leading this project, which includes design input from tribal and community members. We will work to ensure our Elders will be comfortable and occupied by the end of the year. The initiative ensures our Elders Commission.

#### integration of services

This initiative maps out a facilities plan to address future expansion of existing programs, the rollout of new programs and anticipated growth in tribal membership, all based on our community needs assessment. Rusty Swan is leading this effort.

#### facilities master plan

We have added many new staff members with the opening of the Dena’ina Wellness Center and continue to expand in other areas. Using this as a continued growth.

While we recognize growth brings extraordinary opportunities, we also recognize it brings extraordinary responsibility.

We must plan ahead and be intentional and diligent with our resources to ensure our tribal members, families and staff members are comfortable and well, now and into the future.

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#### integration of services

This initiative, led by Human Services Director Analisa Selden, will help integrate our tribal operations to better serve you.

The Dena’ina Wellness Center utilizes this concept under its wellness-based model of care, and we want to expand it into other areas.

By integrating all our services, we can improve customer service, make it easier for you to utilize services and more effectively meet your needs.

We can be confident our strategic plan will benefit the tribe as we move forward.

#### Core Concepts

Near and dear to my heart, this project adapts a program called “Core Concepts” into the tribe’s employee-training model, utilizing language and culture.

This project takes a relationship-based approach to how we work with each other and the people we serve. It uses skills-based training in understanding, trust and support to strengthen relationships. As we move through this year, we have acknowledged we need to take the time to maintain and sustain what we have accomplished, and work to ensure we are in good relationship with each other to better prepare for the future.

Human Resources Director Lori Cheezen is leading this multiyear effort in partnership with Sasha Lindgren, Director of Tribal and Government Affairs.
In the shadow of monkey bars, something furry snuck onto the playground at Mountain View Elementary School. Although it vanished before any children emerged – hopping deep into the woods, perhaps – the mysterious visitor dropped clues about its identity: heaps of plastic eggs.

"Whooaaa!"
"Look at them all!"
"Awesome!"

More than 120 children enjoyed lunch, prizes and – thanks to a visit from the Easter Bunny – a hunt for candy-filled eggs at the tribe’s Easter celebration on a sunny afternoon April 4 in Kenai.

The event, which the tribe has hosted for more than 10 years, included everything you’d expect from a good Easter party – food, goodie bags (plastic buckets, actually), door prizes, the egg hunt and camaraderie between family members.

Numerous departments across the tribe helped put on the celebration, as did a host of community partners.

“We want it to have a family feel,” said Maggie Jones, a tribal employee who works in the Elders department and helped plan the event. “It’s kind of like going to a birthday party, where friends and family get together, with party-favors and fun activities.”

The afternoon began with children, pre-kindergarten up to fifth grade, receiving goodie buckets filled with bubble bottles and chalk as they entered the school gymnasium, where shiny bicycles and other prizes lined the wall.

Returning participants and newcomers alike filled the room.

One first-timer, tribal Elder Bernadine Atchison, brought four grandchildren – all between the ages of 3 and 5 – and said it was a nice way to start the weekend.

“The kids have been sick all week, so this is a good break from the house,” Atchison said.

After a hot-dog lunch, winning tickets for the bikes and other toys – including firetrucks, remote-control cars and more – were randomly drawn from buckets.

One by one, winners marched to the front to collect their prizes.

The bikes and matching helmets were donated by the Salamatof Native Association and Coca Cola. Kaarlo Wik, Chairman of the Board for Salamatof and a longtime contributor to the event, said it’s rewarding to participate in a celebration that embraces children and takes on a family feel.

He described fond memories of attending “Kid- dy Day” at Bishop Creek in Nikiski, a festivity he always looked forward to as a youngster.

“This reminds me of that,” Wik said. “It’s pretty cool to see the kids’ faces light up when they see these bikes.”

After lunch and the giveaways, the children took to the playground and surrounding fields full of eggs.

Three groups dashed to designated areas based on age, scooping up as many oval treats as their little hands would allow.

The goodies were strewn in all directions – atop play equipment, below play equipment, even inside play equipment. All the eggs quickly landed in baskets, and when the dash ended, participants examined – and tasted – their hauls.

William Vaudren, 10, a fourth-grader at Kaleidoscope School of Arts and Sciences, described the hunt between bites of chocolate.

“Exhausting and exciting,” he said.

And Kaleidoscope fifth-grader Denali Bernard, 11, didn’t hesitate when asked about her favorite part of the experience.

“Having fun and getting to do this with friends,” she said.

Nile Nash, meanwhile, had a different perspective.

Nash, 11, took in the scene as an onlooker because he is in sixth grade – one grade beyond the limit to participate in the prize drawings and egg hunt.

He turned out to support his younger cousins.

“My favorite part of coming out today was just seeing all the younger kids happy,” said Nash, who attends Kenai Middle School.

At left, youngsters scramble for eggs on the playground at Mountain View Elementary School during the annual Easter party. Below, Alexander Vaudren dodges a bubble from one of the bubble kits that were given to children.
**The Counting Cordon**

March–April 2015

**Off the wall**

When tribal Elder Rita Smagge was asked what the Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s education system should be based on, she didn’t hesitate to answer: “It’s time to take our traditional values off the wall and start living them,” she said.

Smagge’s reference to the traditional values posters hanging on the walls across tribal operations is in the spirit for this space, “Off the Wall.”

Off the Wall will celebrate people putting the tribe’s traditional values into use, taking them “off the wall” and using them in their daily lives.

As told by Alisa Garrigue:

I learned of the passing of Charlotte Korpinen in the CIRI newsletter. My heart and thoughts are with her family in their time of loss.

Charlotte and her mom, Pauline, were the first persons I met when I arrived in Kenai in 1974. (I had come to Alaska to learn of my family’s roots.)

I took my first hangy at their house. Charlotte was the one who taught my dad how to smoke fish. Twenty years later, my dad taught me.

Remembering Charlotte reminded me of how important it is to share what we know. Charlotte practiced “Daggya” (hard work with others and cooperation) and “Hene” (willwork to- work and cooperation). We should never do anything alone, rather, have a young person along to watch, learn, practice, try and talk to.

Charlotte’s knowledge and kindness will live on in the lives of those she touched. Let’s follow her example.

**An outstanding duo**

Most fifth-graders don’t write essays during vacation – much less during vacation to Hawaii.

Most recent high-school graduates don’t complete a thesis – much less in Australia.

Then again, Taylor Huett and Raven Willoya-Williams aren’t like most students.

Huett, a participant in the tribe’s Yaghanen program, formed a friendship with Willoya-Williams, a tribal member and employee, recently earned Outstanding Student of the Year awards given out by Kenai Peninsula Masonic Lodges. They both officially accept their awards at an upcoming banquet.

“It feels good,” Huett said.

“Added Willoya-Williams: “I am really happy about it.”

Huett attends Mountain View Elementary School, is a member of Yaghanen’s Jabila’ina Dance Group and three-year competitor in the Native Youth Olympics.

Huett, a 10-year-old was awarded thanks in part to an essay she penned on a family getaway to the island of Kauai, Hawaii.

Her essay focused on being responsible and kind, faith and community involvement.

“Those many ideas for community service I might do when I grow up. Some things I might do for my community are donating money, cooking foods, and toys,” Huett wrote. “I may also volunteer at my church, different events and at the food bank. Those are some community service ideas I have.”

Willoya-Williams learned in March she had won — something she said came as a surprise.

An administrative assistant at the tribe’s administration building, Willoya-Williams recently finished her credits at Kenai Alternative High School and will complete her archeology internship in Australia in October.

The internship will include photo-journaling, removing graffiti and researching marine animals.

Willoya-Williams also plans to participate in an archeology camp offered by the tribe this summer, and will attend a sea-kayaking camp hosted by the National Outdoor Leadership School.

“Annually, that’s what I want,” Huett said.

“Stay focused,” she said. “Have a good year.”

**Bequsilna ‘those who are gone’**

The following tribal members have passed away since the Annual General Membership meeting last fall.

This space will be dedicated to remembering our bequsilna, those who are gone.

Please submit death notices to Elise Mailliet at emailliet@kenaitze.org or by phone at 907-335-7202.

**Gerry Allan Lindgren**
1948 – 10/5/2014

**Victoria Ann Miller Cameron**
2/14/1951 – 11/24/2014

**Cody Mack Jr.**
7/21/1971 – 11/24/2014

**Antoniet Mata Johnson Bryan**

**Larry Sanders**
12/23/1939 – 2/26/2015

**Engene Julissenn Sore**
6/20/1944 – 5/20/2015

**The Counting Cordon**

March–April 2015

**Meetings**

From p. 1

Manoeuvres for people to come and ask for help,” said Lindsey Anasogak, Social Services Specialist.

“We want them to come in and look for help if they need it.”

**Vigil**

From p. 1

encouragement not only to possible victims, but also to possible perpetrators.

After Lindgren’s remarks, attendees lit candles outside and held a moment of silence for those affected.

Made available by Na’ini were materials offering information and support about sexual assault and domestic violence.

“Those memories for people to come and ask for help,” said Lindsey Anasogak, Social Services Specialist.

“We want them to come in and look for help if they need it.”

**Off the wall**

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“Huett says that the Secretary of the Interior is required to conduct elections to the constitution. It also says that the Secretary of the Interior must approve amendments before they can be effective.

In January, the Tribal Council submitted a request to the Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell, to remove that section of the tribe’s constitution.

The Secretary has yet to respond, but if the request is granted, the tribe will call an election for tribal members to vote on that amendment.

If tribal members approve the amendment, it will allow another election to be held to vote on proposed revisions discussed with tribal members on March 14.

Updates on the constitution revision process will be provided on the tribe’s website – www.kenaitze.org – as well as through the mail and in future newsletters.

For additional information, contact Brenda Trefoil at 907-335-7259 or sha@kgan.org.

**The Counting Cordon**

March–April 2015
The Big Picture

Our Mission
To assure Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina thrive forever.

Our Values
These are the beliefs and principles that define our people and will assure our future as a tribe:
- **Family:** Honoring and sustaining health and happiness of family as a first responsibility
- **Stewardship:** Respectful use of land, resources and all creations
- **Spiritual Beliefs:** Acknowledging the existence of a higher power and respecting spiritual beliefs
- **Education:** Passing down cultural knowledge and traditions and supporting formal education

Our Vision
By 2025, the Kahtnuht’ana Dena’ina have enhanced and strengthened the prosperity, health and culture of their people and tribe by:
- working toward united effort with Native organizations and other governments that impact our people.
- developing and implementing a tribal education system.
- living our traditional values and practices.
- empowering our sovereignty.
- continuing to demonstrate resiliency.
- striving for excellence in all of our programs.
- elevating the wellness of our people.
- using our talents and resources to ensure we are able to take care of ourselves and share with others.

Addresses and phone numbers

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<td>Administration Building</td>
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<td>907-335-7200</td>
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<td>Tyotkas Elders Center</td>
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