With three positions to fill on the seven-member Executive Council, tribal members voted in two new representatives and re-elected one at the Annual General Membership Meeting on Oct. 1 at the Dena’ina Wellness Center.

Diana Zirul and James Segura Sr. were elected to the Council as new members, while Jennifer Showalter Yeoman was re-elected. With 137 tribal members voting – 126 at the meeting and 11 through absentee ballots – Zirul received 50 votes, Segura Sr. 43 and Showalter Yeoman 40. All three will serve two-year terms.

Zirul and Segura Sr. replace Rosalie A Tepp and Andre Gifford, who served as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively. The four other council members, who are in the middle of their terms and were not up for re-election, are Bernadine Atchison, Liisia Blizzard, Clinton Lageson and Wayne Wilson.

Joint-jurisdiction court agreement signed

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe has entered a historic government-to-government partnership with the Alaska Court System, signing an agreement in October to create a joint-jurisdiction state-tribal therapeutic court that will serve people across the central Kenai Peninsula later this year.

Representatives of the tribe, state court and the Attorney General Office signed the agreement during a ceremony in Courtroom 203 of the Rabinowitz Courthouse in downtown Fairbanks.

The Henu’ Community Wellness Court will serve adults who face legal trouble stemming from substance use. The court will target drug and alcohol offenders – including those in families with Children in Need of Aid (CINA) cases – living in the tribe’s service area, which spans from Cooper Joint-jurisdiction court agreement signed

Henu’ Community Wellness Court to serve drug and alcohol offenders

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Representatives of the tribe, state court and the Attorney General Office signed the agreement during a ceremony in Courtroom 203 of the Rabinowitz Courthouse in downtown Fairbanks. Alaska Superior Court Judge Anna Moran, Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth and Alaska Court System Deputy Director Doug Wooliver are also pictured.

Total membership grows to 1,637

2 new representatives elected, 1 re-elected to Council

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Paul Lorenzo (36 votes), Sharon Isaak (34), George Wright (31), Tepp (31), Gifford (28) and Ben Baldwin (24) also were on the ballot.

The new Council elected its officers as follows:

- Jennifer Showalter Yeoman, Chairperson
- Wayne Wilson, Vice-Chairperson
- Clinton Lageson, Treasurer
- Liisia Blizzard, Secretary
- Bernadine Atchison, Council member
- James Segura Sr., Council member
- Diana Zirul, Council member

Before ballots were cast, portions of the meeting were contentious. Some tribal members questioned why six of the seven Executive Council members took a trip to New Zealand in June that cost the tribe more than $130,000. Also attending the trip, which spanned more than two weeks, were some consultants and family members. Of the trip’s total cost, more than $50,000 was spent on consulting fees.

According to a letter sent from Council to tribal members in April, the purpose of the trip was to learn about the education system and other programs developed by the Maori people, an indigenous group. The letter stated that the trip supported one of the tribe’s eight vision statements: “By 2025,
Care. In this time of thanks, I pray for your own well

tual, educational, social and judicial wellness.

ment of our Dene’ Philosophy of Care. The Dene’
will find it easier to return to meaningful work and

in life and will be less likely to re-offend. They

program, with benefits from their participation,

ing community.

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Superior Court Judge Anna Moran on a frequent

tribe. They will go before Judge Sweet and Alaska

Dena’ina Wellness Center and will be monitored

access to behavioral health professionals at our

participate in a program that will help them put

sentence, however, offenders will instead agree to

responsibility for the crime they have commit

in crimes as a result of substance abuse.

worked tirelessly with a diverse team of people

establishes our Henu’

tive Director, said the new service aligns with

benefits determination, among others.

abuse and neglect, money management, and

employment, housing, domestic violence, Elder

abuse and neglect, money management, and

benefits determination, among others. Jaylene Peterson-Nyen, the tribe’s Execu

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman

Executive Council Chairperson

Volunteers sought for committee positions

The tribe maintains commissions and com- 
mittees to help inform and guide decisions 
made by the Executive Council. Commissions 
and committees are led by a chairperson and 
made up of members of Council and interest-
ated tribal members. Committees and commissions include:

• Enrollment Committee

• Court Code Committee

• Constitution Review Committee

• Early Childhood Center Policy Commit- 
tee

• Education Committee

• Elders Committee

• Election Board

Youth Council annual meeting, election announced

The Kenaitze Indian Tribe’s Giganicht

(“Stand Up”) Denä’ina Youth Council is as-

sembling Nov. 30 at 3 p.m. in the administra-
tive building conference room for a business 
meeting. Their annual meeting will follow to elect 
new youth council members, discuss upcom-
ing projects and to hear reports. Anyone ages 
14 to 24 are welcome to attend. 

Giganicht Denä’ina’s Mission is, “to en-

hance leadership skills in our community and to provide a collective voice and repre-
sentation of tribal youth in all matters that

• Health Committee

• Land Committee

• Traditional Healing Planning Team

• Kenaitze/Salamatof Housing Entity

• Enrollment Committee

• Housing, Fishing and Gathering Com-

• Health Committee

• Land Committee

• Traditional Healing Planning Team

• Kenaitze/Salamatof Housing Entity

• Some committees have open seats available. Members interested in sitting on a committee must submit a letter of interest to Sasha Jackson by December 10.

Letters can be mail or can be emailed to sjackson@kenaitze.org.

Call Sasha at 907-335-7202 for more information.

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hance leadership skills in our community and to provide a collective voice and repre-
sentation of tribal youth in all matters that

Association currently has three young medical doctors who are

all Inupiaq and from their area. That is amazing and I would like to

see that here.

We were busy in October at the National Conference of American

Indians and at the Alaska Feder-

ation of Native Affairs meet-

ings, we saw youth involved. The

tribe’s Youth Council is one place

younger people can be active in

the tribe. Stay up to date about their

next meeting on this page.

We also want to hear from you

and we want to see you involved. Please go to the calendar

Phylon our website for dates and times for

Council and committee meetings. We want to see you attend. Please consider

volunteering to sit on a committee. Infor-
mation on committees is on our website and

information on how join a committee is in another article on this page.

I encourage you to contact me or any oth-

er Council member with new ideas that will help us continue moving forward.

Chiqzinik again for your encouragement

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman

Executive Council Chairperson

Tribe announces new medical-legal partnership

Those who receive care at the Denä’ina Wellness Center will soon have access to a new service – legal assistance – thanks to a partnership between the tribe and Alaska Legal Services Corporation.

The Medical-Legal Partnership will make an attorney available to ust’in – “those who come to us” who face legal issues affecting their health. Those issues will include employment, housing, domestic violence, Elder abuse and neglect, money management, and benefits determination, among others. Jaylene Peterson-Nyen, the tribe’s Executive Director, said the new service aligns with the tribe’s holistic Dené’ Philosophy of Care. “At Kena’nä Indian Tribe, we believe that a person’s physical, behavioral, spiritual, educational, social and judicial wellness are all connected,” Peterson-Nyen said. “This partnership will help us strengthen those connections.”

The attorney position will be funded by the tribe and an AmeriCorps grant. A launch date has not been announced, nor has the attorney’s expected caseload.

Instead, the tribe says the new service is part of the tribe’s efforts to help address problems that impede people’s ability to return to meaningful work. “These are problems that attorneys are uniquely qualified to help address, and by embedding them directly into the health care team, we can ensure that these needs are met sooner and in coordination with medical treatment.”

A reminder that earlier this fall, tribal members and some customers received a survey in the mail from the McDowell Group, an Alaska research firm.

The purpose of the survey is to gather opinions about the need for tribal programs and services. The survey can be submitted in the envelope included with the survey or it may be filled out online.

Households that complete the survey will be entered into a drawing for a generous prize.

For additional information, please contact Bob Koenitzer at 866-586-6133.

From the editor’s desk

The Counting Cord is a publication for members of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and the tribe’s customers. Find more information on the tribe’s website at kenaitze.org and like us on Facebook at facebook.com/kenaitze. For story suggestions or questions about this issue, contact editor M. Scott Moon at 907-335-7237 or by email at smoon@kenaitze.org.

Note from the council chairperson

Hello, Chiqzinik – thank you – for your encouragement as our current Council gets on its feet and working toward new goals that we have on our horizon.

I would like first to give a big chiqzinik to Rose Tepp, who has been the chair for the majority of the past 18 years. Our tribe has come far in that time.

Our first exciting addition is to launch the Denä’ina Language and Cultural Revitalization Project. Soon, we will have the ability for people to learn our Denä’ina language together, from each other, at the tribe, from a tribal run program!

I am also excited to let you know of additional ways to interact with your Council. We will host open house forums with different programs to hear from you about our Council. The first forum will be for Elders on Nov. 23, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The forum will be at Tyotkas Elder Center. The second forum will be at the Denä’ina Wellness Center on Dec. 29. The time will be published in the calendar on our website once it has been set.

My ultimate goal is to have our youth educated so they can not only be our future doctors, teachers, nurses and social workers, but also our leaders. Kotzebue’s Manilak

I would like to thank my staff, board members, and the tribe’s customers.

I encourage you to contact me or any other Council member with new ideas that will help us continue moving forward.

Chiqzinik again for your encouragement

— Jennifer Showalter Yeoman

Executive Council Chairperson

Note from the executive director

Idahli, Hello friend!

Yahgah di? How is it with you?

This issue of the Counting Cord goes to press as many of you are starting your preparations for the Thanksgiving season. I hope you find many opportunities to give thanks this month.

Within these pages, you will see some of what I am giving thanks for this year. I am grateful that we have the committed, dedicated staff we need to serve our people.

I am thankful that a moose gave herself to our youth participating in this year’s Dzagi Campbell so that they could learn lifelong lessons that they will carry with them for a lifetime.

I am grateful for the work that my board members do to govern our tribe.

I am especially thank-

ful this month for an agreement we signed in Fairbanks last month that establishes our Henu’

Community Wellness Court. Kenaitze Chief Judge Kim Sweet has worked tirelessly with a diverse team of people from across the peninsula for three years to bring this court into existence. The court is unlike any at the state of Alaska. It seats a state court judge at the same table as our own judge, in our own Kenaitze courtroom, to help bring restoration to people who have been involved in crimes as a result of substance abuse.

Defenders chosen for the program will accept responsibility for the crime they have commit-
ted. Instead of proceeding to a guilty plea or a sentence, however, offenders will instead agree to participate in a program that will help them put their lives back on a good path. They will have access to behavioral health professionals at our Denä’ina Wellness Center and will be monitored and supported by a parole officer employed by the tribe. They will go before Judge Sweet and Alaska Superior Court Judge Anna Moran on a frequent basis to report their progress and get help with challenges. They will have the support of family, friends, the tribe, other offenders and the surrounding community.

We believe that when graduates continue from the program, with benefits from their participation, they will find it easier to continue on a good path in life and will be less likely to re-offend. They will find it easier to return to meaningful work and continue on their path to total wellness.

The Henu’

Community Wellness Court is the latest but not last step we are taking in the develop-
ment of our Dené’ Philosophy of Care. The Dené’ philosophy features a holistic approach to serving our families. It supports physical, behavioral, spiri-
tual, educational, social and judicial wellness.

In this time of Thanksgiving, I pray for your own well-being, with the fullness of the Dené’ Philosophy of Care.

Chiqzinik,

Jaylene Peterson-Nyen

Executive Director

Moving soon?

Please keep in touch

Please keep your contact information current so you don’t miss important mailings from the tribe.

Send updates to:

Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Attn: Karissa Oder
P.O. Box 988
Kenai, AK 99611

koder@kenaitze.org

907-335-7204

Tribal Council

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TRIBAL COUNCIL

The COUNTING CORD

November–December 2016

November–December 2016
Na’ini

A woman’s plight with domestic violence, and her courageous turnaround

In Alaska, 47 percent of adult women experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime, according to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Additionally, the council reports, more than one in three Alaska Native or American Indian women will be raped in their lifetime. What follows is the story of one survivor, whose identity has been modified to protect her privacy and safety.

For years and years I was too ashamed that we were in a domestic violence family situation,” Martha said. “I hid it for a long time and would pretend and act as if we were a good family and that nothing went wrong.”

As the abuse escalated, Martha and her children struggled in school. At times, she said, the children blamed themselves for the situation. It was all Martha could do to avoid confrontations with the abuser. The way she walked, the way she talked, where she went, it was all scrutinized.

But behind closed doors, she suffered.

In the community, Martha feels alive again.

For Martha to seek help, it requires courage and a brave heart.

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When the animal emerged from a clearing in the brush, Gideon Collover wasn’t sure what it was. He spotted it a couple hundred feet off the road, framed by a tangle of spruce and birch trees, a few minutes after 9:30 a.m. At 10:01 a.m., a gunshot rang out.

The moose had given itself to the group.

“Seeing it was interesting,” Collover said. “I didn’t really think it was a moose, but it looked different than the rest of the trees.”

Collover, 16, was among seven youth who attended the Yaghanen Youth Program’s annual Dnigi Moose Camp in October. The camp takes participants on a moose hunt, teaching firearms safety and education, ethical and respectful hunting practices, survival skills, Dena’ina values and traditions, and more. Camp was held at Spirit Lake in Kenai.

The hunt began on the second day of the two-day excursion after campers enjoyed a night of rest in heated cabins followed by an early breakfast. With temperatures hovering around freezing, and snow on the ground, the group set out down a gravel road in a caravan of vehicles.

It took less than an hour to see a moose, but the team decided it was not the right one to take. Soon, though, Collover—who was traveling with a group of children, walking in the rear vehicle of the caravan—spotted something to the side of the road. Three moose—two cows and a bull—stood under a canopy of trees.

Kaleb Franke, the tribe’s safety and security supervising officer, who had been selected as the shooter, got out of the lead vehicle and crept into the trees. After stalking the animals for about 15 minutes, Franke shot from less than 100 yards out. The smaller of the two cows dropped to the ground. Franke shot the smaller one because he said it was less likely than the other to reproduce.

“It was about figuring out which animal was the most responsible to take,” Franke said.

With the moose down, the group worked together to butcher it. They peeled away the hide, saving much of it, and cut away its front and hind quarters. Working efficiently, they removed the gut sack and rib cage. The group also harvested the tongue and many organs.

Throughout the process, Franke and other staff and participants emphasized respect for the animal. When they were finished in the field, campers took the meat to a nearby building and hung it to dry, a process that helps drain blood, tenderize the meat and enhance flavor.

Four days later, they reconvened to deliver the organs and tendons to Elders at the Tyotkas Elder Center.

For camper Joshua Grosvald, who donated meat to Elders after hunting trips as a young boy in Unalakleet, it was gratifying.

“I really like it. They are really happy,” he said of the Elders. “If they’re happy, I’m happy. That’s the way it’s always been and should be.”

Elder Marian Van Horn, who received part of the moose’s tongue, planned on making soup with it. She said she would cut the tongue into pieces and boil it with bones, similar to the way she makes beef soup, and invite a friend over to share the meal.

“It’s been a long time,” she said of eating moose tongue. “They are hard to get.”

Meanwhile, Collver, the tribe’s safety and security supervising officer, delivered a presentation on firearm safety and responsible practices. He emphasized the importance of respect—not just for firearms but for the animals and environment.

After the presentation, the group took to the woods. Camp leaders demonstrated how to build an emergency shelter using tree branches. The group built a “lean-to,” propping up sturdy branches against a tree trunk and covering them with smaller, bushy branches. Inside the shelter, the group spread branches over the ground for a makeshift bed. The approach is intended to keep a person dry enough and warm enough should they get stranded in the woods.

Campers built snare cages designed to capture small animals like rabbits. Running out into the trees, they looked for animal prints and learned how to set the traps. They also learned how to call moose, taking turns practicing.

As night fell, the youth received general information about moose and how the animal is important to Dena’ina people. Youth advocate Doug Gates showed the group a traditional Dena’ina moose-hunting tactic, passed around bones and explained how they could be used, and shared stories about moose.

There’s more to Moose Camp than moose

In addition to having a moose come to them on the second day of camp, campers enjoyed a range of activities on Day 1 of Moose Camp.

Kaleb Franke, the tribe’s safety and security supervising officer, delivered a presentation on firearm safety and responsible practices. He emphasized the importance of respect—not just for firearms but for the animals and environment.

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Reduced recidivism, increased public safety and improved relationships across communities.

Alaska Governor Bill Walker, who attended the signing ceremony at Lt. Governor Byron Mallott’s office, said Alaska has one of the highest recidivism rates in the United States. He expressed support for the project, saying it’s time to take a different approach when handling substance use cases.

“This is the direction we need to go,” Walker said. “It’s very, very pleased with the work that’s taken place this year for this purpose.”

“Because we’re a people, pre-sentencing court, meaning that we’re taking into account their charges and sentencing is delayed until the participant graduates, opt out or is discharged from the program. There is a more favorable outcome for those who graduate and a less favorable outcome for those who don’t. Participation is voluntary, requiring the consent of the defendant, judge and District Attorney’s Office. Sweet said there are many benefits to participating in the program. The court will help offenders get reestablished in the community. It will hold them accountable. It also will be designed to provide peer-to-peer support for those involved. And the program will encourage and help participants to pursue employment and education.

“Instead of punitive, it’s restorative,” Sweet said. “In addition to the substance use connection, there will be specific eligibility requirements. An individual charged with an unclassified or class A felony will not be eligible, nor will anyone with an outstanding felony warrant from another state. Participants must be at least 18 years old and cannot be on parole, among other stipulations. The court will be open to all community members.

The program will consist of four phases – orientation and assessment, education and planning, skill development and feedback, and maintenance and transition. The phases will last a total of at least 18 months. Those who enter the program will develop an individualized “Life Change Plan.” The plan addresses everything from a participant’s criminal influences, to their values and beliefs, to their temperament and personality, to family factors, and more.

Participants also are assigned a tribal probation officer and receive a comprehensive and integrated program of drug and alcohol treatment. It’s all about helping broken people and broken families,” Moran said. The project aligns with the tribe’s Dene Philosophy of Care. The philosophy takes a whole-person approach toward health, focusing on not just one but all areas of a person’s well-being, including physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness.

As part of the program, participants will receive behavioral health treatment at the Denina Wellness Center, which is across the street from the tribe’s courthouse. “It’s a major component of this,” Sweet said. Sweet also thanked members of Project TEAM and the many community partners that helped make the project possible.

“Georgia lived an unselfish life and was an example to us all,” Wilson said. “She was a leader, a mentor and a role model for many people. She will be greatly missed.”

“Georgia’s spirit will live on through the program she so passionately worked on,” Wilson added.

_Images: A helping hand_
Tribe recognizes National Diabetes Month

To Pat Cue, a person’s health is a like a path – smooth for some, rocky for others, different for everyone. “How we manage that path is going to be very important to how we live our lives,” said Cue, registered dietitian at the Dena’ina Wellness Center. “Are we going to have some little curves and pretty much stay on the path? Or are we going to have hills and valleys and a lot of disease during that process?”

In recognition of National Diabetes Month in November, the tribe displayed information on diabetes prevention, detection and management in the gathering area of the Dena’ina Wellness Center. Diabetes is a leading cause of death among Alaska Native and American Indian people, who are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic white people to suffer from the disease, according to the American Diabetes Association.

Un’ina – “those who come to Cue” – were encouraged to complete questionnaires gauging their risk of developing diabetes. Family history, weight, diet and physical activity are among the contributing factors. Symptoms may include excessive thirst, hunger and urination, among other things.

A healthy eating plan is one of the most important risk factors that can help prevent diabetes. It’s important to have good dental health and avoid tobacco. “It’s all a formula for good health,” Cue said. “Once we’ve lost our health, we’ve lost it. So it’s really important to prevent that loss from occurring.”

When un’ina come to Cue, she offers tools to help them get on a good path. They discuss items such as grocery lists and what’s in the cupboards and refrigerator at home. They tour the center’s gym. They discuss tobacco cessation tools. Cue also hosts “Pathways to Wellness” workshops designed to encourage healthy habits. “It really is an integrated approach to getting people on the right path,” Cue said.

To learn more, please contact the center at 907-335-7500.

A guide to making oil-based salves and lotions

**Making the salve**

Ingredients:
- 2 tablespoons beeswax
- ½ cup infused oil
- 2/3 cup coconut oil
- 1 teaspoon special oil (such as jojoba or castor)
- 1/4 teaspoon vitamin E (if desired)
- Essential oil of your choice (if desired)
- 2 cups Aloe Vera juice

Directions: Combine the beeswax, infused oil, carrier oil, coconut oil and essential oil. Once mixed, add special oil, vitamin E and essential oil. Let cool for five minutes. Pour mixture into covered blender. Turn on blender and mix in Aloe Vera juice. Lotion will become white and thick. Pour lotion into a zip-close bag and leave open until it cools. Cut hole in corner of bag and squeeze lotion into containers.

A few little curves and pretty much stay on the path! Or are we going to have hills and valleys and a lot of disease during that process?”

Eat well, live well

Food is an important part of life and plays a large role in a person’s health. Here are a few things you can do to maintain healthy eating habits:

**Breakfast tips**
- Wipe a little oil on the frying pan before scrambling eggs
- Replace a medium-sized orange with half a cup of orange juice
- Add a glass of low-fat, nonfat, lactose-free or soy milk

**Lunch tips**
- Use ketchup and mustard on your hamburger
- Avoid mayonnaise
- Skip French Fries
- Add one slice of cheese to add calcium and vitamins

**Dinner tips**
- Top berries with low-fat yogurt to add calcium and vitamins
- Skip butter or margarine, or use one pat

**General tips**
- Use a 9-inch plate or 9-inch area of a larger plate.
- Divide the plate into quarters – having equal rations of fruits, vegetables, grains or starches, and meat, fish or poultry.
- Stack food no higher than 1 to 1-and-one-half inches.

**For more information, please contact Tia Holley at the Dena’ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500.**
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

Administration Building
150 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7200
888-335-8865 fax

Early Childhood Center
130 N. Willow St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7260

Tyotkas Elders Center
1000 Mission Ave., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7280

Yaghanen Youth Program
35105 K-B Dr., Soldotna, AK 99669
907-335-7290

Environmental Program
509 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7287

Dena’ina Wellness Center
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7500

Na’ini Family and Social Services, Education and Career Development
510 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7600

Tribal Court
508 Upland St., Kenai, AK 99611
907-335-7217

On the Web: kenaitze.org
On Facebook: facebook.com/kenaitze

Northern Lights rise above a figure from Kenaitze artist Joel Isaak’s hammered bronze sculpture installation titled, “Łuq’a Nagh Ghilghuzht (Fish Camp)” at the Dena’ina Wellness Center early Oct. 25.