

The Counting Cord



Annual Meeting

Tribal Council Focuses
on Support During
Pandemic

Digital Dena'ina

A Modern Way to
Share Traditional
Knowledge

Fall 2021

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Nudnelyahi ch'u qeneshi | Re

Since time immemorial, the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina people have thrived in Yaghanen, the Good Land. However, ancient Dena'ina believed that the resources which sustained them needed to be treated with respect. Animals might let themselves be taken to provide food and clothing, but only if people were respectful and disposed of the bones in the right way. Likewise, gathering plants with gratitude and showing respect by, for example, not taking every berry from a plant, was valued.

Today, we continue to treat our resources with respect. The value of nudnelyahi ch'u qeneshi helps to keep us connected with the land we call home.

respect for plants and animals



Yaghalí du?

I want to congratulate Wayne D. Wilson Jr., Liisia Blizzard and Ronette Stanton, who along with myself were elected to seats on the Tribal Council. I also want to offer a heartfelt thank you to Sharon Isaak, Brenda Blankenship, Gabe Juliussen, Audré Gifford-Hickey, George Wright, and Darrell Tepp for their willingness to run for a Council seat. It takes commitment to do so, and your hard work is appreciated.

Following the Annual Meeting, the Council voted for officers. I was elected to continue as Chair, Mary Ann Mills as Vice Chair, and Diana L. Zirul as Treasurer. Ronette Stanton was elected to serve as Secretary.

I also would like to thank everyone who took the time to vote in the election. Our hope is that next year, we will be able to gather as a Tribe and cast our ballots in person. The success of our Tribe's government depends on participation from Tribal Members. By casting your ballot for your chosen candidates, you help to steer the direction of the Tribe.

In the coming months, the Tribal Council will continue to focus on how best to serve Tribal Members and support the health and well-being of our community. Tribal Members recently received a flag bearing the Tribe's seal. While it has been updated over the years, the seal still reflects our culture: Yaghanen, the Good Land; Kahtnu, the Kenai River; the importance of salmon to our culture; Nanutset, our history; and who we as Kahtnuht'ana De-na'ina are today. The seal is a reminder to the Tribal Council as we make decisions to use our history, culture and traditional values as a guide.

One more thank you, to all who shared photos for the Summer 2021 Counting Cord magazine, which commemorates the 50th anniversary of our Tribe's Constitution. We received more than 300 photos, and many of the images brought back fond memories from many other Tribal Members. A digital version of the Counting Cord has been posted to the Tribe's website, <https://www.kenaitze.org/publications/newsletters/>. I hope it continues to serve as a reminder of how much our Tribe has accomplished.

If you have news to share, you can submit it to news@kenaitze.org. Email addresses for your Tribal Council Members also are included on this page. We're looking forward to hearing from you.

Duk'idli, respectfully,
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Annual Meeting: Council Focuses on Support During Pandemic



Tribal Council Member Liisia Blizzard introduces a video update during the meeting.

▼ **The Tribal Council**
is continuously
looking for different
ways we can help
our Tribal citizens,
especially through
another year
of the pandemic ▼

While the Annual General Membership Meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tribal Council Chair Bernadine Atchison noted one silver lining: an election participation increase of almost 100 Tribal Members.

In her report to Tribal Members, Atchison said the Tribal Council has focused on how best to serve Tribal Members during the pandemic. Among the assistance provided has been three rounds of financial support for the health and well-being of Tribal Members. Atchison announced that the Council had recently approved another round of financial support that was dispersed to Tribal Members 18 and older in October.

“The Tribal Council is continuously looking for different ways we can help our Tribal citizens, especially through another year of the pandemic,” Atchison said.

The Council also increased the amount of Tribal Member Enrichment Funds available, to \$1,500 for an adult during a one-year period, and \$1,000 for a youth during a one-year period. Enrichment Funds are available to promote the education, health, general welfare, and best interests of Kenaitze Tribal Members.



Election Board Chair Logan Wik, at right, swears in Wayne D. Wilson Jr., Liisia Blizzard, Ronette Stanton and Bernadine Atchison after announcing the election results.

"As we know, challenges happen whether there's a pandemic or not," Atchison said. "This will benefit you when you need it, not when we think you need it."

Atchison said that from Oct. 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2021, \$219,685.62 in Enrichment Funds had been distributed to 173 adults and 34 youth.

Celebrating the Constitution's anniversary

Atchison also highlighted the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Tribe's Constitution, and the federal recognition that came with it. The Council determined that a large in-person celebration would not be possible, but looked for other ways to mark the occasion. The Tribal Council instituted the first Monday in August as a Tribal holiday, calling it Kahtnuht'ana Jan'a, the Kenai

River People's Day. Tribal Members received a metal wall plaque with a logo depicting the three volcanoes across Cook Inlet, a design that has been used by Dena'ina for hundreds of years. Tribal Members contributed photos to a commemorative edition of the Counting Cord newsletter, and also received a flag with the Tribe's seal on it.

"Being recognized as a sovereign government has opened many doors for us. We are at the table in areas such as funding, protecting our culture and language, cultural sites, health care, education, housing and Tribal Court," Atchison said.

Recognition as a sovereign government puts the Tribe on an equal footing with the state of Alaska, Atchison said.

"The flag is a reminder to those who sit on the Council of our duty to protect our nation as a

sovereign government," Atchison said.

Atchison said she hopes the gifts are something that can be shared now and in the future.

Tribal services and facilities update

During the Annual Meeting, Tribal Council Members and staff shared updates on the Tribe's facilities and services.

Tribal Council Treasurer and Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Health Board Chair Diana L. Zirul said that the Tribe received \$18 million in federal COVID-19 relief funding to renovate facilities and provide a safe environment for those who come to the Tribe for services.

A large portion of that was used for improvements at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, including new lab equipment and six negative pressure primary care rooms. The Dental suite

was expanded; a Physical Therapy treatment area was opened within Primary Care; Optometry moved into an expanded suite with space to add a second optometrist; new equipment and Fitness On Demand services were added to the gym; and a complementary medicine area, for services such as massage therapy, was added.

Work also was completed at Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House, for the Tribe's Behavioral Health services, and at Tytokas Elder Center. Elders staff reported an average of 265 meals being delivered to Elders on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

A video recording of the meeting is available on the Tribe's website at <https://www.kenaitze.org/annual2021/>.



Surrounded by paintings of Tribal Elders, members of the Election Board and the Coghill Group count ballots Saturday morning at Tyotkas Elder Center. Pictured are Bernice Crandall, Katheryn Rodgers, Coghill's Ramona Trujillo, Bill Coghill and Logan Wik, Election Board Chair.

In results announced during the Oct. 2 Annual General Membership meeting, Tribal Members elected three incumbents and one newcomer to four seats on the Tribal Council.

The General Meeting was held virtually, and Tribal Members submitted ballots by mail, to protect the health and safety of Tribal Members.

On behalf of the Tribe, Coghill Group PC, mailed 713 absentee ballots on Aug. 9 to Tribal Members who were qualified to vote in the election. The Tribe's Constitution defines a qualified voter as "(a)ny duly enrolled member of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, eighteen (18) years of age or older who resides in Alaska." Tribal Members returned 264 absentee ballots to the Coghill Group by the Sept. 27 deadline. Some voters chose to vote for fewer than four candidates.

From the field of 10 candidates, Ronette Stanton received the most votes, 140, to win a

Council seat. Tribal Members also re-elected Bernadine Atchison with 130 votes, Wayne D. Wilson Jr. with 106 votes, and Liisia K. Blizzard with 97 votes.

Other candidates on the ballot were Sharon Isaak, who received 89 votes; Brenda M. Blankenship, 84 votes; Gabe Juliussen, 79 votes; Audré Gifford-Hickey, 76 votes; George C. Wright, 52 votes; and Darrell Tepp, 39 votes.

Six people received write-in votes: Sagen Juliussen with seven; Jimmy Coveyou with six; Susan Wells and Jennifer Showalter Yeoman each with two; and Rose Tepp and Majorie Weeks each with one.

Following the Annual Meeting, the Tribal Council met to determine officers for the coming year. Atchison will continue as Chair, with Mary Ann Mills as Vice Chair, Diana L. Zirul as Treasurer, and Stanton as Secretary. Wilson, Blizzard and Virginia Wolf round out the Council.



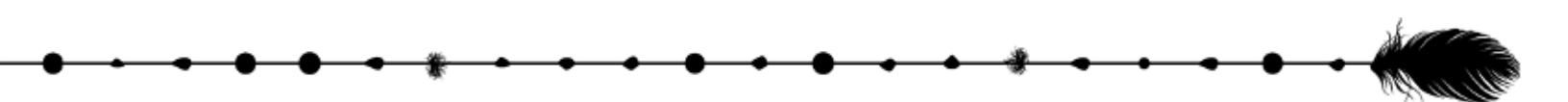
'Making it better for the future'

**\For me, there are so many facets to
the work, so many avenues of training,
the profession is so fluid and dynamic,
it's really hard to get bored with it //**



As the new Deputy Chief of Operations for the Anchorage Police Department, Gerard Asselin, a Kenaitze Tribal Member, oversees about 425 law enforcement personnel.

After 24 years with the department, Asselin says he continues to be excited about his work, and feels he has plenty to contribute. In fact, he is one class away from completing his master's degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership, and he is grateful for the support provided by the Tribe's education programs as he pursues his goals.



I've matured, and the Tribe has matured, and I've stayed more connected //

Asselin was in Kenai recently to take part in another Tribal service – using the net at the educational fishery with members of his extended family. He said it was a good tide, with 58 salmon coming to the net.

Asselin said his family has been coming to use the net for five or six years. Prior to that, they would camp on the Kasilof beach for a week each summer to take part in the personal-use dipnet fishery. He said he feels fortunate to have access to the Tribe's processing facilities at the beach site – a step up from trying to do everything on the beach without getting sand in it, as his family had in the past.

Asselin was born and raised in Alaska. He said he grew up knowing his extended family here on the Kenai Peninsula – he even remembers visiting his aunt, Sasha Lindgren, at work when the Tribe's offices were housed in an Atco trailer. However, growing up in Anchorage didn't afford him the opportunity to interact with Tribal programs on a day-to-day basis. He says that has changed over the past 10 years as he's watched the Tribe grow.

"I've matured, and the Tribe has matured, and I've stayed more connected," Asselin said.

Asselin said he started his working career at an early age. He had an under-the-table job at age 12, and started working at a Carrs grocery store when he was 14. By the time he was 18, he was managing a department.

He said he liked the work, but he wanted a bigger challenge. So, at 21, he applied to the Anchorage Police Department. While he didn't have a military background or college degree, he figured the recruiter must have been impressed with his work ethic, and he was hired the first time he applied.

With law enforcement, there has always been a bigger challenge. He has served as an officer and a sergeant with the Patrol Division, and a detective with the Crimes Against Children Unit. He has also served with the department's Warrant Unit, Special Assignment Unit-Drug Enforcement, Crisis Intervention Team, Crisis Negotiation Team, and Crime Scene Team. Asselin has been a field training officer and domestic violence instructor. He was a lieutenant with the Special Operations Unit before becoming captain.

"For me, there are so many facets to the work, so many avenues of training, the profession is so fluid and dynamic, it's really hard to get bored with it," Asselin said.

Over the past year, policing has made headlines across the country. In his new role, Asselin said he expects to continue to inform politicians and the public of the work done by police, and to engage with the community he serves.

"There is a constant conversation about the future of policing. I'm going to lean into it, and help where I can," Asselin said.

Continuing his education has also been part of his personal and professional growth. When he began looking into a master's degree, he was glad to find resources available from the Tribe. He said he was glad to see that support is available not just for degree programs, but also for certifications.

"Every Tribal Member can take advantage of opportunities to learn, grow and try new things," Asselin said.

In fact, Asselin said his sister received support from the Tribe while pursuing her degree in community planning, and her children received support for their studies, too.

"It's great to see the next generation using the benefits," Asselin said.

Asselin said he also trying to set a good example for his own three kids, who will be thinking about college soon.

Scholarships and opportunities provided through the Tribe's Education division have the potential for generational impact, Asselin said.

"When I think about the vision, it's not just doing something for today, but making it better for the future," Asselin said.

For more information about the Tribe's scholarships, internships and career training and placement, visit www.kenaitze.org/education/college-and-career-training/, or call 907-335-7606.



DRUMMAKING

Make a drum, then make it your own



Jeff Swan helps as Cecil Anowlic laces an animal skin drum head during a drum making workshop at the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

**It gets me in touch with the things my
ancestors were into. Being so far
from home, we can still connect
with our culture //**

The first step in drum making is to make a drum. The next step – and one that can take as long as the drum maker would like – is to make the drum unique.

The Wellness department at the Dena'ina Wellness Center hosted a drum making workshop over the summer. The event, which was open to all those eligible for services at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, drew about 15 participants.

Cecil Anowlic said it was his first time participating in a workshop at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, but it was his second time making a drum. He said the first one he made, in May of 2000, is still in good shape. Over the years, he



My kids took
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in drumming.
It calms your body,
and helps you
realign yourself



Michelle Falkowski said she was inspired to make her own drum after her children learned about the healing power of drumming in music class.

redesigned it, using acrylic paint on the drum skin. He painted different colors for the four directions, and placed a polar bear in the middle.

Anowlic, who is Inupiat and originally from King Island, said he might paint a mammal of some sort on his new drum when it dries. He said he came to the workshop to learn about a different way of making a drum.

"I wanted to learn something different. Everyone's hand drums are different, from different tribes," Anowlic said.

Michelle Falkowski said she came to the workshop after learning about the health benefits of drumming.

"My kids took music classes last year, and learned that there is healing in drumming," she said. "It calms your body, and helps you realign yourself."

Falkowski, who is Ojibwe and originally from Wisconsin, said she will use her drum with her kids.

"I have a drum at home, but I had never made one. I am excited to show them that you can make these," Falkowski said.

Falkowski said she appreciated the drum making workshop, as well as the arts and craft sessions at the Dena'ina Wellness Center. She has been able to do some beading with her 11-year-old daughter.

"It gets me in touch with the things my ancestors were into," Falkowski said. "Being so far from home, we can still connect with our culture."

Falkowski said she also appreciates the opportunity to gather in-person. Workshop participants were spread out and masked, but still able to be in the same room.

"It's refreshing to be able to gather," Falkowski said. "Self-care is so important. My way of taking care of myself is coming to events to socialize, and connecting with my culture is very satisfying."

To learn more about Wellness activities, visit www.kenaitze.org/denaina-wellness-center/wellness/, or call 907-335-7500.



Harvest program: **Busy on the beach** Fishery sees productive summer

It has been a busy year for the Tribal Harvest Program.

"This summer has been extremely productive," said Jake Kooly, the Tribal Harvest Program Manager. "It's been the best summer I've seen in the last five years."

As of Sept. 6, 11,033 fish had come to the Tribe's nets at the educational fishery. That total includes 10,758 sockeye salmon, and 275 silver salmon. No king salmon came to the Tribe's net this summer.

Families also were able to return to the beach to fish the nets, resuming traditions and helping to ease the workload on fishery staff. While social distancing measures were in place, families were still able to work together.

"That's the biggest key – everyone working together to get fish," Kooly said.

Not only have "tons and tons" of fish been coming to the net, Kooly said the timing of the run was extended as well.

"We had a second July with the number of fish we saw in August," Kooly said.

Last fall, the Tribe purchased a 32-foot fishing boat, which is named the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina. The boat was used over the winter to fish for king salmon out of Homer. This summer, it has been used for halibut fishing.

The fish that come to the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina are shared



Jake Kooly, Tribal Harvest Program Manager, and Tribal Member Kimberly Ivarie pose with silver salmon that came to the Tribe's net in early September. "I like the bellies," Ivarie said. "I smoke and can them and then make smoked salmon artichoke dip, one of my favorite treats."

with Elders. King salmon are harvested under state sport fishing and proxy fishing regulations. Halibut are harvested under federal subsistence fishing regulations.

The fresh king salmon and halibut supplement the sockeye salmon that come to the Tribe's nets at the educational fishery.

Plans are in the works for a Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina Gathering Hall and Harvest Pavilion at the Tribe's Waterfront. The new Harvest Pavilion replaces an older, smaller structure. The new pavilion will have space for large

gatherings and events. The pavilion's design includes a raised hearth in the center of the building, reminiscent of a traditional Dena'ina dwelling, and large doors that can be opened to the breeze off the inlet.

Kooly said he looks forward to seeing Tribal Members at the Waterfront not just to fish the net, but to use all the available facilities.

For example, "if you go halibut fishing, you can come down and clean your fish. That's what our facility is for," Kooly said.



Education: Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus makes a big impression



Nathan Stromdahl and Matt Hanley unwrap track in November to support siding they were installing to the front of the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus, under construction in Kenai. The panels are meant to evoke the patterns seen in salmon scales.

**It's going to be a
phenomenal resource,
empowering for kids
to be rooted and
grounded in their
Indigenous culture**

The new Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus is making an impression on visitors.

The first thing many notice is the size of the building. At 67,259 square feet, the education campus is even bigger than the Dena'ina Wellness Center.

The other impression left on visitors is that, when completed, the building will be a beautiful place for learning.

Members of the Tribal Council, Education Committee, and Education division staff recently had an opportunity to walk through the building, which is under construction at the corner of the Kenai Spur Highway and South Forest Drive in Kenai. For many, it was their first peek since construction started in the summer of 2020.



Lucas Von Heeder works on siding along the back side of the Kahtnuht'ana Duheldiht Campus. Pieces of the playground, constructed from cedar with Dena'ina themes, fill the foreground.

"I think it is going to be pretty awesome," said Bernadine Atchison, Tribal Council Chair and Education Committee Chair.

The building will have space for all of the Tribe's education programs – with extra room to grow.

"I think it's really going to capture all the education programs we want to do," Atchison said.

While construction started last year, the project has been part of the Tribe's vision for many years.

"It's something I've dreamed of actually coming to life," said Diane Bernard, Early Learning Administrator for the Tribe's Education division. "... I'm excited for our teachers to have a beautiful classroom to work in."

Bernard said the location provides opportunities to expand the classroom outside the building. The Kenai Municipal Park, the Kenai beach and the mouth of the Kenai River, as well as the Kahtnuht'ana Qayah in Old Town

Kenai are all within walking distance.

"It's going to be a phenomenal resource," said Sara Battiest, the Yaghanen K-12 Administrator, adding that it is "empowering for kids to be rooted and grounded in their Indigenous culture."

Battiest and Bernard said it will be beneficial for all of the Education division's programs to be together under the same roof. Currently, the Early Learning Center is located on North Willow Street in Kenai, while Yaghanen and Community Education staff are working out of offices on South Willow Street until they can move into the new building.

"I think it will bring us closer together," Bernard said.

Battiest said one of her favorite features of the building is the number of windows letting in natural light.

"I really love the huge window at the front of the building, and all the light coming in. Even in the basement, there are window wells to let natural light in," Battiest said.

Battiest said she is also looking forward to putting the large multi-purpose space to use for Native Youth Olympics, dance, and other cultural activities.

"To have a space for these activities that is appropriate, well lit, and not cold – I'm excited about that," Battiest said.

Linda Ross, a member of the Education Committee, said she loved the building and is looking forward to seeing kids in it. She is also excited to see the Dena'ina language incorporated with the learning that will take place.



Blazy Construction workers are seen working atop the multi-purpose wing through windows on the second floor of the classroom wing.

**▼ For them to know
about their heritage
and what it's like to be
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meaningful to me ▼**

"I think the building is really well thought out," Ross said, adding that she hopes Elders will be involved in sharing their experiences with young learners.

"For them to know about their heritage and what it's like to be a Tribal Member, those are things that are meaningful to me," Ross said.

Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart, also a member of the Education Committee, said it is exciting to see the progress on the building.

"It's much bigger than I thought it would be. It's really exciting to see how many classrooms there are going to be," Shaginoff-Stuart said.

Shaginoff-Stuart said she was impressed as she walked across the skybridge that connects the top floor of the education wing with the walking track on the second floor of the multi-purpose wing.

Shaginoff-Stuart also likes the instructional space for cultural activities such as processing game. The room has a large observation window as well as technology to share video of the activities taking place.

Bernard said she is already imagining young learners walking down the hall and going out to the unique playground. She said one of her favorite things is walking into the main entrance and looking up at the wood ceiling.

Construction on the Kaht-nuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus is scheduled to be complete in the spring of 2022. The education wing includes classrooms on the main floor and administrative offices and conference rooms on the top floor. The basement will be available for future growth.

The multi-purpose wing features an open area for activities. The space can accommodate a gathering of up to 300 people. A walking track circles the second story.

The space connecting the two wings includes the main entrance, a commercial kitchen and cafeteria.

"It's an entire campus dedicated to learning, from infant to Elder," said Education Director Rachel Gilbert in a video presentation during the Annual General Membership Meeting. "... It really, truly is a cultural gathering place. It's a place meant to bring everyone together."

Tribal Member recognized for public service

Kimberley Sweet, a Magistrate Judge in Kenai and a former Kenaitze Tribal Court Chief Judge, was recently honored for her public service.

Sweet, a Tribal Member, received the 2021 Jay Rabinowitz Public Service Award, presented by the Alaska Bar Foundation. The award was presented during the Alaska Bar Association's virtual annual meeting in September.

The award honors an individual whose life work demonstrates a commitment to public service in Alaska.

In her remarks accepting the award, Sweet said that a piece of advice from a Tribal Elder has guided her work.

"My great uncle always used to say that everything that you put your hand to do, remember, it will affect generations to come. It's not just you, it's everybody in your future. And I've always taken that to heart," Sweet said.

Nikole Nelson, Executive Director of the Alaska Legal Services Corporation, presented the award.

"She is incredibly smart, dedicated to improving the lives of those around her, and unafraid to speak the truth – even when it is inconvenient," Nelson said.

Nelson noted Sweet's service with the Kenaitze Tribal Court, her extensive work with the foster care system, and her service on numerous advisory committees. As the Kenaitze Tribal Court's Chief Judge, Sweet was instrumental in the formation of the joint-jurisdiction Henu Com-

munity Wellness Court. Sweet also served as co-lead negotiator for the state's Indian Child Welfare Compact, which seeks to address the over-representation of Alaska Native children in the state foster system due to systemic inequalities.

"She has consistently dedicated hours to showing up to help educate our state and national leaders about the need to listen to and include Alaska Native voices, and how by doing so, we would all be better off," Nelson said.

Nelson noted Sweet's commitment to serving the needs of vulnerable children during her time as a Kenaitze Tribal Court Judge. Sweet has also served as a foster parent herself, opening her home to seven foster children over the past decade.

"She now serves our community as a magistrate judge, and I can say that Kim has given her heart and soul to bettering the lives of those around her," Nelson said.



Kimberley Sweet

Sweet said she was honored and humbled by the recognition, and credited others for the support and mentorship she's had over the years.

"It's just part of being who we are as a people and as a community," Sweet said. "It's not anything that I do that is particularly better than anyone else, it's the support of all of our community members. All of those (accomplishments), I can't take ownership of them all on my own. I've had great teams everywhere I've gone."

Sweet credited "lots of dedicated people who made all of those things happen."

Sweet said she's also been inspired by her mother, Alexandra "Sasha" Lindgren, who recently passed away.

"I didn't realize how much of my mother came forward in me, as far as being dedicated to our community, until she passed, and I've been receiving so many things from Elders and youth on how much she did for them," Sweet said. "I want to continue to walk that walk that she taught me, and thanks to all of the people who have listened and moved forward with me in a good way."

In 2019, Sweet was honored by the Alaska Bar Association with the Judge Nora Guinn award, which recognizes an individual Alaskan who has made an extraordinary or sustained effort to assist Alaska's rural residents, especially its Alaska Native population, overcome language and cultural barriers to obtaining justice through the legal system.



K'beq'
Cultural
Heritage Site

Footprints

Cha'duch' tget'an
What's Happening

Kenai RIVER PEOPLE

Kahtnuht'ana

Shanteh t'uh
Ames Road Property

Kahtnuht'ana Qayah

Dena'ina Wellness Center Campus

Kahtnuht'ana Jan'a
The Kenai River People's Day

Duhdeldiht Campus

Chuq'eya Qeng'a
Birch Tree House

Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh
We Grow Things Inside

Qiz'unch' Tribal Court
The Right Way, the Truth



Traditional Names for Tribal Places

A double rainbow forms last year above Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House, the location for the Tribe's Behavioral Health division.

Last summer, the Behavioral Health building was named Chuq'eya Qenq'a, or Birch Tree House. The committee that proposed the name was inspired by the traditional use of the birch tree by the Dena'ina people. Birch bark is valued for being flexible, waterproof and rot-resistant. It is used to make bowls, baskets, cups and ladles, among many other things.

Chuq'eya Qenq'a also references Birch Island, a traditional site just upstream from the Warren Ames Bridge on the Kenai River where the Tribe, in times of abundance, operates an educational fishery.

Two other place names incorporate "Kahtnuht'ana," the Dena'ina word for the Kenai River People. The literal translation is "river mouth river people."

Kahtnuht'ana Qayeh is the name approved by the Tribal Council for the Tribe's Old Town Kenai campus. Qayeh is the Dena'ina word for "village," and that area was the site of a Kahtnuht'ana village.

The Tribal Council also has approved Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus as the name for the new education campus. Duhdeldiht, the Dena'ina word for "school," translates as "learning place."

The Tribal Council approved the name Qiz'unch' Tribal Court. Qiz'unch' is one the Tribe's 16 traditional values. Qiz'unch' means "the right way" or "the truth," and as a value, includes forgiveness, openness, honesty and trust. Through the Tribal Court process, participants work together toward the best possible outcome. Honest, open conver-

sations are an important part of that process.

The Tribal Council also approved the name Shanteh t'uh for the Tribe's property on Ames Road, off of Beaver Loop in Kenai. Shanteh t'uh means "which is summertime place." The Tribe previously operated greenhouses on the property, and plans are in the works for greenhouses to return to Shanteh t'uh in the near future. The greenhouse by the Dena'ina Wellness Center has been relocated to make room for the Qiz'unch' Tribal Court expansion, and an additional greenhouse is planned as well.

The Council approved the continued use of the name Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh for the greenhouses. Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh is Dena'ina for "we grow things inside."

'Honoring our Past'

Tribe contributes to Russian Orthodox cemetery cleanup



Tribal Member Trevor Smagge stands at his great-grandmother's grave in the Russian Orthodox Cemetery in November. Trevor and other employees in the Tribe's Facilities and Maintenance department cleared the site of overgrowth last summer.

\\ Our Tribal values

include honoring our
past, and our past Tribal

Members //

Over the summer, members of the Tribe's Facilities and Maintenance crew put in some extra work to help clean up the Holy Assumption of the Virgin Mary Russian Orthodox Cemetery in Old Town Kenai.

The cemetery is a significant place for the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. The Russian Orthodox Church in Kenai was founded in 1846, and over the years, many Tribal Members have been interred in the cemetery.

Mary Ann Mills, Tribal Council Vice Chair and Chair of the Tribe's Elders Committee, said a number of people had noticed that the cemetery had gotten to be overgrown.

▼ Almost all – if not all – of the people in the cemetery are our people, it was really important.

To honor our relatives, we wanted to get it cleaned up. ▮

Trevor Smagge, a Tribal Member and Maintenance Technician, said that after his grandmother, Rita Smagge, passed away over the summer, he wanted to visit the cemetery to see other relatives who have been interred there. He found waist-high grass and brush obscuring much of the site, and was moved to do something about it.

"Our Tribal values include honoring our past, and our past Tribal Members," Smagge said, adding that the work to clean up the cemetery is about "honoring our Tribe's past and present."

Smagge said the Tribe was an important part of his upbringing, and he has attended burials at the cemetery for family members who belonged to the church.

The Elders Committee asked Elders staff to reach out to the church to see if assistance was needed. Maintenance staff were asked to help out, and Smagge



Members of the Tribe's Facilities and Maintenance crew guide a tour for Tribal leaders through the Russian Orthodox Cemetery in September. From left, Trevor Smagge, Maintenance Technician; Chelsea Hendriks, interim Executive Director of Tribal Administration; Dale Segura, TDHE Housing and Facilities Director, Quintin Kimball, Summer Laborer; and James Gray, Maintenance Technician.

took the lead on the project.

Brandi Bell, Elders and Transportation Manager, said the Tribe's maintenance crew has a well-earned reputation for getting things done – and doing them well.

When they had down time from their other job duties, maintenance staff stopped by the cemetery to clear brush and do some landscaping work.

The crew hauled away six truckloads of brush. Uneven ground made the work a challenge and required the use of a brush hog to do the work, rather than a regular lawnmower.

The intent is that all the work will make the cemetery easier to maintain going forward.

"Almost all – if not all – of the people in the cemetery are our people," Mills said. "It was really important. To honor our relatives, we wanted to get it cleaned up."

Mills said she is grateful to all of those who helped with the work. Those pitching in included Andy Ellestad, George LaRoque, Quintin Kimball and Victor Evan Jr.

"It really is an honorable thing," Mills said.

Father Peter, who is Rector at the church, said the church appreciates the help.

"We're really grateful for the incredible job the work crew did," Father Peter said.

Father Peter said the church has a long-term beautification plan for the cemetery that includes walking paths and seating.

"We're grateful to God for the partnership we have with the Kənaitze Tribe," Father Peter said.

Smagge said he is happy to have been able to help.

"It's very important to remember where we came from," Smagge said. "I'm glad we got to do that."

A modern way to share traditional knowledge

Tribe launches Dena'ina language website



Joel Isaak coaches a student through a Dena'ina language presentation in 2020 as Helen Dick, second from left, observes. Jennifer Williams, the Tribe's new Dena'ina Language Institute Director, and Tribal Member Ben Baldwin work on a project at right.

In Dena'ina culture, knowledge is traditionally shared using spoken words. With the launch of a new Dena'ina language website, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe is using modern technology to provide access to those words.

"This definitely falls in line with the tradition of using what's available to learn new skills," said Joel Isaak, a Tribal Member who has been a part of the Tribe's Dena'ina Language and Culture

Revitalization Project since it was launched in 2016.

The new website can be accessed from the Tribe's homepage, www.kenaitze.org. At the top of the page, hover over "Education" to see the dropdown menu, and select "Dena'ina Language Institute."

What makes this website different from previous Dena'ina language websites, most of which were launched about 15

▼ I am hoping that they

are hoping to learn

the language and gain

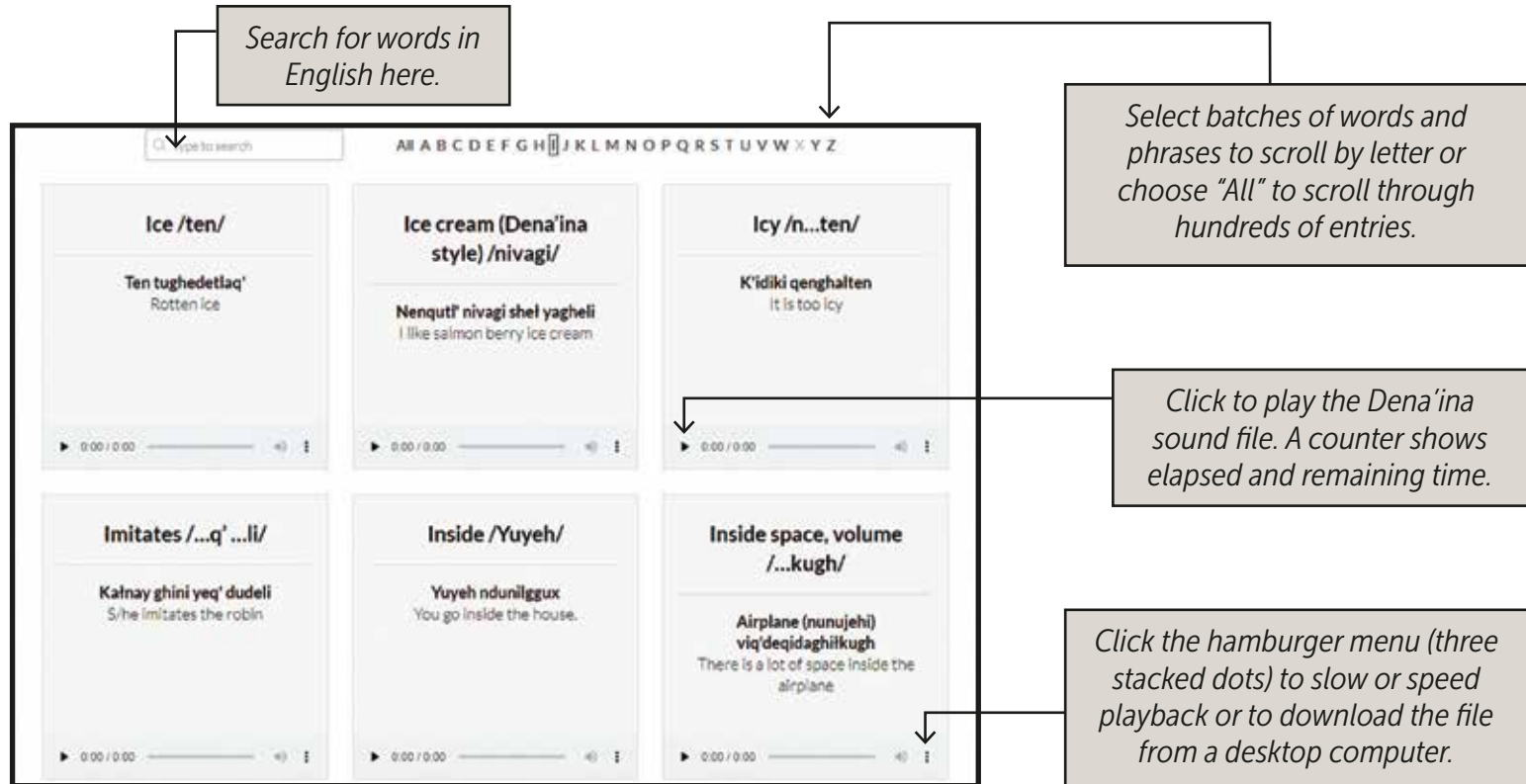
some understanding

of how to use it ▮

years ago, are the interactive sound files in an English-to-Dena'ina audio dictionary.

Visitors to the website will find additional resources, and more content will be added as it is developed.

The sound for the audio dictionary was provided by Dena'ina Elder and first language speaker Helen Dick. The audio dictionary contains frequently used phrases, and learners are able to hear the



Six entries from the Dena'ina audio dictionary, published on the Tribe's website, are pictured in this screen grab.

pronunciation, adjust the playback speed, and download content for use when they don't have internet access.

Jennifer Williams, the Tribe's new Dena'ina Language Institute Director, said that being able to hear a first language speaker is an important part of learning Dena'ina. There are believed to be between five and seven living Dena'ina first language speakers.

Williams said she hopes that visitors to the website are inspired to learn more about the language.

"I am hoping that they are hoping to learn the language and gain some understanding of how to use it," Williams said.

The Dena'ina Language Institute has evolved out of the Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project. Isaak said when the revitalization project

was launched, the first goal was to take an inventory of the available resources and gather a list of needs and requests. Through that process, it was determined that a website would be the best way to fill those needs.

The launch of the website and the transition to the Dena'ina Language Institute marks the next phase of the effort: training instructors who can teach Dena'ina. The website provides access to Dena'ina language learning, but is just one part of an instructional system.

"This will bring Dena'ina to anybody in the world. It will give access to anybody who wants it," said Education Director Rachel Gilbert.

Isaak said he thinks of the Dena'ina Language Institute not as a location where knowledge has been locked up and stored, but

**▼ This will bring
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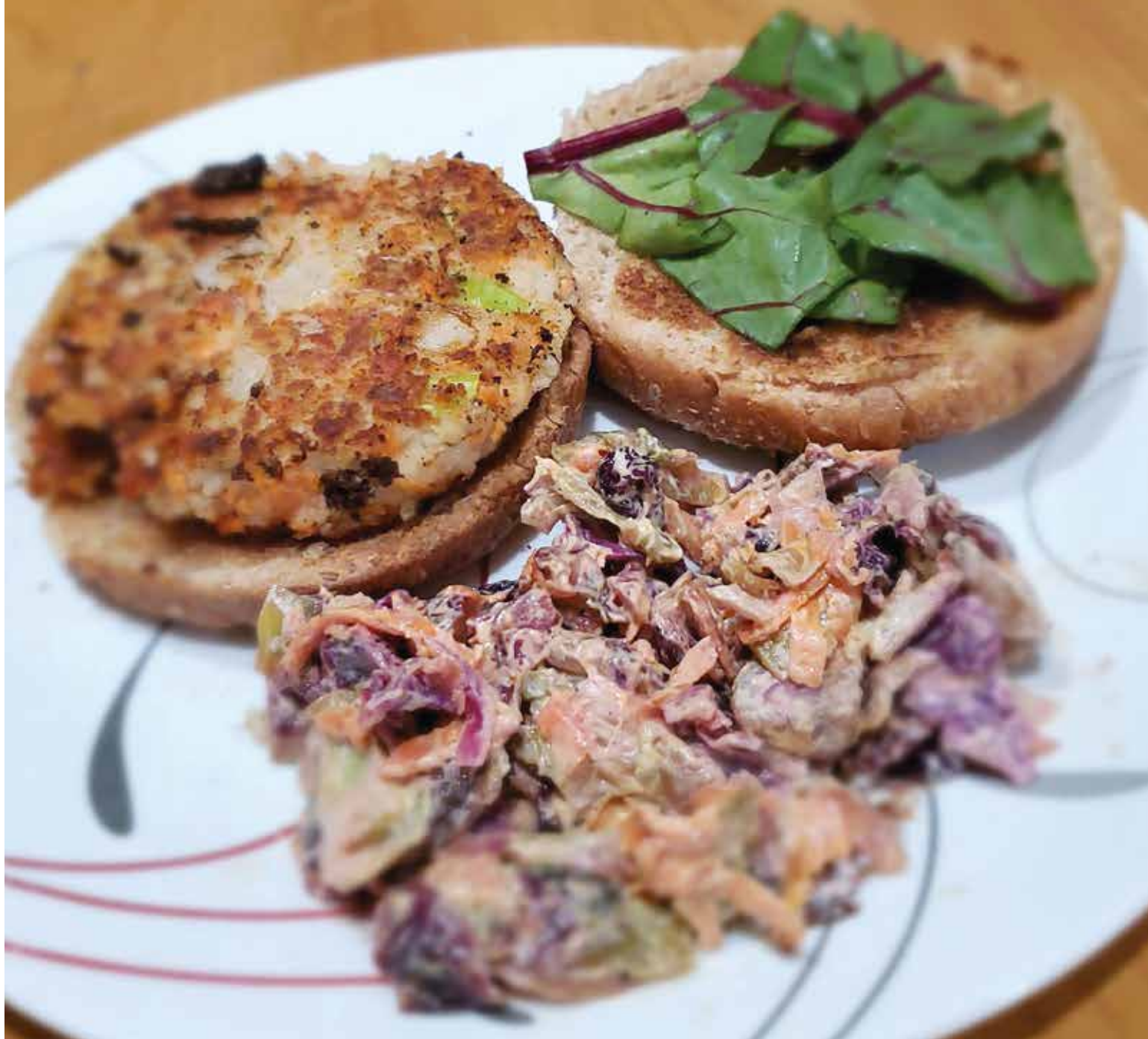
as a way to share knowledge that resides within the people.

For those who visit the website and would like to learn more, Isaak said there are a number of Dena'ina language classes available at Kenai Peninsula College.



Cooking with Kenaitze

This month, we're enjoying the bounty of Yaghanen, the Good Land, with Salmon Cakes and Alaska Autumn Coleslaw. These recipes have been adapted by Dena'ina Wellness Center Dietician Stephen Kronlage to take advantage of food available locally, and the fresh vegetables currently in season at local grocery stores. They are easy to prepare, full of flavor and sure to please!





Salmon Cakes

Yields: 6-8 servings
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Ready in: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 pound of salmon (about two fillets), deboned
1/4 cup leeks, cleaned and diced
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1 teaspoon dried dill
1/2 cup. panko breadcrumbs
2 medium potatoes, diced into quarters
1 tablespoon. lemon juice
1 tablespoon. Dijon mustard
2 large eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoon olive oil, plus more as needed

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Spray baking sheet with cooking spray, then place the salmon skin-side down on the baking sheet. Place salmon in oven and bake for 15-20 minutes.
3. While the salmon is baking, boil potatoes until they are fork tender (10-15 minutes). Drain potatoes and mash.
4. Remove the salmon from the oven, then remove the skin off the salmon. Break apart the fillets with a fork until the salmon is flaky.
5. Add the salmon, leeks, onion, dill, breadcrumbs, lemon juice, Dijon mustard, eggs, salt, and pepper to the mashed potatoes and mix thoroughly.
6. Form into 6-8, evenly-sized patties. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Cook patties in batches until golden and crispy, 3-4 minutes per side. Drain on paper towels.
7. Top salmon cakes with the Alaska Autumn Coleslaw and serve over leafy greens or on a whole wheat hamburger bun.

Tip: For a quicker cooked dinner use 1 (14.75 ounces) can of salmon in place of the salmon fillets and skip steps 1, 2, and 4 of the recipe directions. When using canned salmon, make sure to drain it first before mixing it with the other ingredients.

Alaska Autumn Coleslaw

Yields: 6 servings
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Ready in: 30 minutes

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 clove crushed and chopped garlic
1 cup Brussels sprouts shredded
1 cup purple cabbage, shredded
1 cup carrots, shredded
1 cup radicchio (optional)
1 cup leeks, cleaned and chopped into half moons
1 cup cranberries, dried or fresh

Coleslaw Dressing:

1/2 cup sour cream (or non-fat Greek yogurt)
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

Directions:

1. Place a large frying pan on stove top over high heat. Once the pan is hot, add the olive oil and chopped garlic and stir fry for 30 seconds. Be careful not to burn the garlic.
2. Add the cabbage, leeks, and Brussels sprouts to the pan and stir fry for 5 minutes. If vegetables start to catch on the bottom of the pan, add a splash of water.
3. Take the pan off heat. In a separate bowl add the sour cream (or Greek yogurt), apple cider vinegar, salt, pepper, and mustard and mix together until smooth. Pour dressing over the fried vegetables and mix thoroughly.
4. Add the radicchio, carrots and cranberries to the rest of the ingredients and toss until well combined.
5. Enjoy!

Tip: For a crunchier coleslaw, skip the frying part of the recipe and leave out the garlic and olive oil. To do this just add the coleslaw dressing to the raw vegetables and enjoy.

Registered Dietician Stephen Kronlage assists un'ina at the Dena'ina Wellness Center with medical nutrition therapy, which includes managing weight loss, diabetes, IBS, weight gain, Celiac disease, and other conditions through an individualized nutrition plan.

Bequsilna - 'those who are gone'

Alida Carol Bayes



Lifelong
Kenai
Peninsula
resident
Alida Carol
(Petters-
en) Bayes,
89, passed
away
peacefully

at home, Thursday, Oct. 7, 2021.

Alida was born in Kenai on Sept. 25, 1932 to parents, Urban and Louise (Wilson) Pettersen.

She loved and lived the pioneer/homestead life. Activities included harvesting, processing and sharing the fruit of her labor from fish and berries to crocheting and knitting.

As a Kenaitze Tribal Member, Alida dedicated years of her life working for the Tribe. She was a signer of the original Constitution of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and helped youth from the Kenaitze Educational Fishery Fish Camp.

Alida was preceded in death by her sons, Dana, Robert and Richard; her parents, Louise Wilson Pettersen and Urban Rufus Pettersen; sisters, Beatrice Stanford and Sigrid Juliussen; and brothers, Urban, Carl, and Vernon Pettersen and Nels, Melvin, Eugene and Norman Juliussen.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 69 years, Joe Bayes; sister Dorothy Hermansen of Coho and brother Michael Juliussen and wife Marie of Kenai; grandchildren, great-grandchil-

dren and numerous nieces and nephews

Funeral services were held Oct. 13, 2021 at Immanuel Baptist Church.

Read her full obituary at <https://bit.ly/AlidaBayes>.

Lisa Kristina Darien Hileman



Lisa Kristina Darien Hileman died on Sunday, Sept. 26, 2021 in Anchorage. Her death was sudden and unexpected. She was seven months pregnant. She was 25.

Her life was brief and, too often, hard. She never shrank from her challenges and embraced life with indomitable courage and unquenchable optimism.

She is the mother of a three-year-old daughter, Grier Taylor. Lisa is the daughter of Florence Elizabeth Darien and Joseph Grier as well as her adoptive parents, Stephen L. and Diane H. Hileman. She is the youngest of 10 siblings: Stephen M. Hileman, Adam Schwalbe, Chris Hileman, Ethan Schwalbe, Mary Ann Shivone, Ben Hastings, Sophie Fitzpatrick, Edward Darien

and Chantilly Bayes. She was engaged to Alec Smith.

A funeral mass was held at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church in Kenai on Tuesday, Oct. 26.

Read her full obituary at <https://bit.ly/Hileman>.

Alexandra Marie 'Sasha' Lindgren



With
loving
family
at her
side and
cherished
friends
drum-
ming
nearby,
Alexan-

dra Marie "Sasha" Lindgren died peacefully and with grace Saturday, Sept. 4, 2021, following a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was 75.

Sasha was born Aug. 6, 1946, in Anchorage, Alaska. She spent time living in Washington, Alabama, and Georgia, and returned to Alaska for good in 1971. Her true home was always Yaghanen, the good land of the Kenai Peninsula.

Sasha took pride in living traditional Dena'ina values and demonstrated the values through her cultural practices. She loved her family, both blood and adopted, and the many animals that shared her path. In her Tribe, she was a beloved Elder, matriarch, cultural bearer, leader, and co-worker.

Sasha is survived by Larry and Ruthie Poage, Donna Allen, Stacy Poage-Cronin, Linda Cooper-Poage, Michelle and David Le-maire, Kimberley and Matt Sweet, Kenneth Oder, Royce and Merri Oder, 13 grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her mother, June Lindgren-Gagnon, and her brother Floyd (Smokey) Poage Jr.

Memorial services will be held in the spring.

Read her full obituary at <https://bit.ly/SashaLindgren>.

Violet Nora Mack



Violet Nora Mack passed away peacefully in Soldotna on Sunday, Oct. 17, 2021. She was 84 years old.

Violet Nora (Blatchford) Mack was born Jan. 13, 1936, in Golovin to parents Jenny Lee (Carlson) and Charles Blatchford. She was one of 17 children. When she was 13, her father and oldest brother went hunting one day and never returned, and she moved with her mother and the younger siblings to Homer.

Violet moved to Kenai in 1966 and started her business, Upik Fur Products, which she owned and operated for over 38 years, making beautiful fur garments and slippers.

She was a member of many organizations, including the Moose Lodge and the Eagles Club. She was proud to be a member of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Kenai Natives Association, and a CIRC shareholder.

Violet was preceded in death by her parents Jenny Lee and Charles; brothers Percy, Charlie, Charles, Kinegan, Pete, Peter, Joe, Allen, Andy, and Alfred; sisters Molly, Florence, Bernice, and Charlotte; daughter Brenda; son Cody; grandchildren, Jessica and Randall; and husbands Paul, Cody and Jack.

She is survived by sisters Rose and Gladys; sons Larry Jones, Roland Jones and Alfred Jones; 19 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; and countless friends and associates that she considered family.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Eagles Club in Kenai.

Read her full obituary at <https://bit.ly/VioletMack>.

Todd Eugene Smagge

Proud Kenaitze Tribal Member and CIRC shareholder Todd Eugene Smagge, 58, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, at Central Peninsula Hospital from complications of COVID-19.

Todd was born July 1, 1963, and was a lifelong Kenai Peninsula resident. He was a loving father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend to all. Todd loved the Alaskan outdoors and the felt of a poker table. During and after high school, Todd worked at Carrs/Safeway, interned at the Tesoro refinery, and finally headed to the North Slope to work at BP Alaska.



Todd was preceded in death by his parents Gene Hunter Smagge and Rita F.L. Smagge. He is survived by his sons, Brandon Smagge of Washington, Trevor Smagge (Andi) of Kenai, and Logan Smagge of Kenai; grandchildren, Joseph and Jacob Smagge of Kenai; ex-wives, Stacy Bonell and Denise Smagge; companion of 15 years, Annette Moore; siblings, Lorne Smagge of Anchorage and the Philippines, James Smagge of Soldotna and Suzanne (Paul) Jackson of North Kenai; uncles, James Segura, Bill Segura, Rick Segura (Patty); and aunt Clare Swan.

Todd also leaves behind all his cousins and extended family from Highland Trailer Park Days, including the Baktuit, Barlow, Childers, Curtiss, Mills, Pettengill, Shaginoff, and Tweedy families, and special friend of 48 years, Paul Rhodes.

A celebration of life will be held Saturday, Nov. 20, from 3-7 p.m. at the American Legion Post 20, 902 Cook Dr. in Kenai.

Read his full obituary at <https://bit.ly/ToddSmagge>.

Deborah 'Deb' Coveyou



Deborah "Deb" Coveyou (1955-2021) was born in Petoski, Michigan and raised in Kenai, Alaska.

Debbie was amazing, fiercely independent, hard-working and full of compassion. She was a mother, grandmother, sister, and more. She was always giving more than she could give, and stretching the threads a little further regardless of how frayed they were. She was mom and grandma to many grandkids and dearly loved, and will be sorely missed by all.

Deb is survived by her sons, Jack, Dustin, William, and Christopher; grandchildren Jackson,

Shyanne, Ravin, Ruby, Teyonnah, Josiah, Addyln and Rosie; her many beautiful great-grandchildren; brother James Coveyou; and sisters Carey Edwards and Virginia Fraase.

She was preceded in death by her father John Coveyou; her mother Gert Frostad; and her brother William Coveyou.

Debbie's celebration of life was held at the Challenger Learning Center in Kenai on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021.

Find her obituary at <https://bit.ly/DebCoveyou>.

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Addresses and Phone Numbers



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907-335-7200



Dena'ina Wellness Center
508 Upland St., Kenai
907-335-7500



**Yaghanen Youth
& Community Education**
150 S. Willow St., Suite 5
907-335-7606



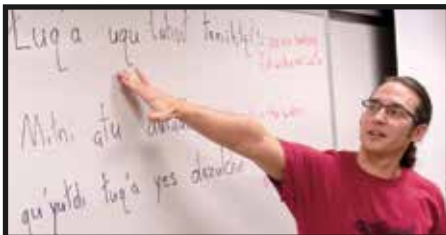
**Chuq'eya Qenq'a
Birch Tree House – Behavioral Health**
510 Upland St., Kenai
907-335-7300



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



Na'ini Family and Social Services
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7600



**Dena'ina Language
Institute**
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7667



**Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally
Designated Housing**
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7200



Qiz'unch' Tribal Court
508 Upland St., Kenai
907-335-7219



Tyotkas Elder Center
1000 Mission Ave., Kenai
907-335-7280



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TRIBE

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