

# The Counting Cord



## A whale's tale

### Joy of Planting

*Gardeners thinking spring  
at Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh  
Greenhouses*

**'Wellbriety'  
brings culture  
to sobriety**



**Winter 2024**

**FREE!**

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**Marking the days with a counting cord**

A counting cord, niłnuqeyishi, "the thing that is knotted," is a traditional Dena'ina string calendar. Knots or beads or feathers are tied into the cord to mark the days or record special events.

The Counting Cord publication is the newsletter of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. It is published quarterly to mark the days and record the special events of Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina, "the Kenai River People."





Na'ini is our courage and bravery. It is the courage to face challenges in our lives, and the strength to overcome our fears. We look within ourselves, take inventory of our strengths and weaknesses, and have the humility to ask for help when we need it. The value of Na'ini helps us on our journey to sobriety, overcoming abuse, and rising above our circumstances "to assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever."





# *Na'ini | Our Courage, Bravery*







# Yaghali du?

In January, the Tribe once again hosted the Kaht-nuht'ana Hey Chi'ula Native Youth Olympics Invitational. On behalf of the Tribal Council, chiqinik, thank you, to all who continue to make this a successful annual event.

This year's event drew teams from across southcentral Alaska. In addition to Kenaitze's Ggugguyni team, athletes came from Salamatof, Homer, Seward, Ninilchik, Sterling, Anchorage, and Chickaloon – 225 competitors in all.

One of the things that makes NYO so special is the attitude of the competitors. While each athlete strives to do their best, they cheer for everyone else to succeed as well. In fact, it's common to see coaches and athletes helping each other – regardless of what team they're on.

We would like to commend all the teams and athletes for your effort and sportsmanship throughout the three days of competition.

It takes a committed team behind the scenes to make the event happen each year, too. The Yaghanen Youth Culture and Language Program staff coach our athletes, and staff from many other programs and departments pitch in with support, planning and logistics. Many departments also contributed gift baskets for a silent auction.

We also appreciate the group of officials who judged, measured, and recorded each of the events.

A cultural performance is also part of the weekend, and we're grateful that Bunny Swan and Curtis Erickson were able to step in on short notice and perform at the "Dinner and a Show" event. The Yaghanen program's Jabi-la'ina Dancers and the Idatqen Salamatof Drum Group also performed.

The NYO Invitational also draws support from our community. Nearly 40 businesses contributed to the event's success. (see p. 25.)

NYO is such an important way to celebrate our culture, and we are grateful to all who have a hand in organizing and running such a wonderful event. Your hard work and dedication is appreciated.

Duk'idli, respectfully,  
Bernadine Atchison,  
Tribal Council Chair



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# Tribe finds new location for Transportation hub



The Tribal Council is pleased to announce that the Kenaitze Indian Tribe has purchased the former Kendall Ford property in Kenai to serve as its transportation center.

"Access to reliable transportation is a major barrier for many people in our community. The Tribe continues to work to fill in the gaps to meet the need. We're excited to have a facility to house our Transportation program, and to help our Tribe and our community thrive," said Tribal Council Chair Bernadine Atchison.

The building will be called Hetl Qenq'a, which means "Sled House" in Dena'ina.

The three-acre parcel is located at 10288 Kenai Spur Highway in Kenai, at the corner with Marathon Road. The building has 20,177 square feet of floor space, as well as a 4,136-square-foot mezzanine.

"We have been working with the Federal Transit Administration since 2019 to identify a location and building. It is with gratitude to those staff who

**'Access to reliable transportation is a major barrier for many people in our community.**

**The Tribe continues to work to fill in the gaps to meet the need. We're excited to have a facility to house our Transportation program, and to help our Tribe and our community thrive.'**

*- Bernadine Atchison, Tribal Council Chair*

worked with the Tribal Council to come up with options when we had roadblocks. This is a significant partnership we will have with the FTA as it will provide a building, fleet and support staff for our Transportation program," Atchison said.

The Tribe's current Transportation fleet totals 65 vehicles, including minivans and SUVs, full-size vans, trucks, shuttle buses and full-size buses. In 2023, the Transportation program provid-

ed 12,840 rides for people who receive services from the Tribe.

The Tribe is close to launching the Kahtnu Area Transit fixed-route bus service for the central Kenai Peninsula, and Hetl Qenq'a will serve as its hub.

The new facility is intended to provide space for cleaning and maintaining the Tribe's vehicles, extending the life of the fleet, as well as to house office space and conference and training rooms for Transportation staff.



# Executive Order supports tribal sovereignty

Tribal Council Chair Bernadine Atchison attended the 2023 White House Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, D.C., in December. The Summit provides a chance for federally recognized tribes from across the country to share priorities with the federal government, and for federal agencies to provide updates on actions that affect tribes.

One of the highlights of the gathering came when President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order to better support tribes and promote tribal self-determination.

The Executive Order includes provisions to ensure federal funding for tribes is accessible, flexible, and equitable. It establishes the Tribal Access to Capital Clearinghouse, a one-stop-shop for federal tribal funding. It also directs federal agencies to measure chronic tribal funding shortfalls, and develop recommendations for what additional funding and programming may be necessary.

"I am grateful for the federal government's renewed com-

mitment to tribal self-determination. Recognition of and respect for our sovereignty is an important part of fulfilling our vision, 'to assure Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina thrive forever,'" Atchison said.

This Executive Order is intended to strengthen the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the federal government, and deepen the respect for tribal sovereignty by giving tribes more autonomy over how to spend federal funding.

## The Kenaitze Indian Tribe is highlighting businesses owned by Tribal Members with a new directory on the Tribe's webpage.

### To see the list of Tribal Member-owned businesses:

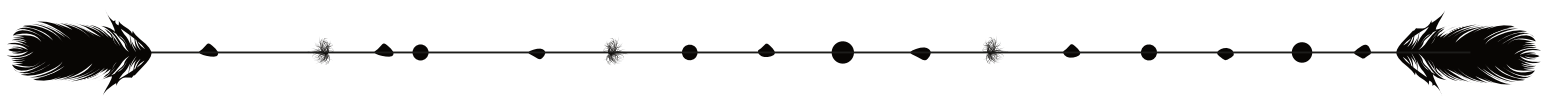


- Go to [www.kenaitze.org](http://www.kenaitze.org) and look for "Kenaitze Tribal Member-Owned Businesses" in the "Member Services" dropdown menu.
- Or, scan the QR code.

To have your business listed, download and submit the form on the Kenaitze Tribal Member-Owned Businesses page.

For more information, contact the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance office at 907-335-7247.





# ‘The show must go on!’



*Bunny Swan is pictured during a recent performance. Swan is working on a new album, which she will debut this summer.*

When Byron Nicholai was unable to make it to Kenai to perform during the Kahtnuht’ana Hey Chi’ula Native Youth Olympics Invitational, Bunny Swan Gease was honored to take his place. Winter 2024

“It’s a really important place, and I was very happy to be able to jump in,” Swan said. “The show must go on!”

Swan, who was joined by Curtis Erickson for the performance, said

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she just happens to be working on a new album, and was able to share some of her new songs.

“It was fun to exercise some of the new music. We had a really good reception,” she said.

The new album will be called “Auntie’s Cantina” after her aunt Nancy Hufana, an avid musician who played several instruments.

The album includes a song she wrote in Dena’ina. Swan is also working on a collaboration with fellow Tribal Members Josie and Ali Jones. She said she is scheduled to perform at Soldotna’s Music in the Park on July 10, where she will debut the album.

Swan said she was proud to see the enthusiasm from the youth performers who took the stage with the Tribe’s Jabila’ina Dance Group and the Idatqen Salamatof Drum Group.

She also appreciated the camaraderie and energy shared by the NYO teams.

“It’s exciting to be a part of that,” Swan said.





# Joy of Planting

Gardeners thinking spring at Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh greenhouses

*Greenhouse Coordinator Jessica Newton, Nancy Dull and Marian Petla plant the first seeds of the year as Maria Sweppy watches during a workshop at the Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh Greenhouses. While the temperature outside hovered around zero, workshop participants enjoyed planting flowers and produce.*

Outside the Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh Greenhouses, the temperature hovered around zero. Inside, a group of gardeners was already thinking about spring.

"I love working with plants," said Nancy Dull, adding that she especially appreciates native plants. She also loves the warmth the greenhouse provided.

The gardeners were participating in a "Joy of Planting" workshop, and were sowing some of the first seeds of the year.

For this year's planting, Greenhouse Coordinator Jessica Newton said she focused on ordering

seeds for plants with a proven track record in Alaska. Tomatoes are among her favorites.

"I love doing tomatoes. When I was ordering seeds, I needed some restraint," Newton said.

"Lemon Boy" yellow tomatoes and rainbow-colored cherry tomatoes did particularly well in the greenhouses last year, Newton said.

Most of the produce from the greenhouses and surrounding gardens goes to Tyotkas Elder Center for use in salads and lunches, and Newton coordinates crops with Elders staff. For example, they prefer English cucumbers.

The greenhouses also produce a variety of greens, which is appreciated by those dining at Tyotkas.

"Salad all winter – that's a blessing," Dull said.

The gardeners were also planting flowers that be used in baskets, planters and beds around Kenaitze facilities this summer. Newton said she envisions youth involved in the Tribe's various programs to help with some of the planting.

Marian Petla said she's new to gardening, and was at the greenhouse to pick up some tips. She said that growing up, she was al-





*Flowers planted at the greenhouses will be used around Kenaitze facilities, and the produce is used in meals at Tyotkas Elder Center.*

*Below: The "Joy of Planting" workshop also included an opportunity to paint garden art on rocks.*

ways out in the wilderness finding plants to use for food and medicine, though.

"I love harvesting, I just have to learn how to garden," Petla said.

The workshop finished with rock painting. Participants created garden art by painting on rocks.

In addition to hosting regular workshops, the Ch'k'denetyah yuyeh Greenhouses are open from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Monday through Friday. The greenhouses are located at 255 N. Ames Road off Beaver Loop Road in Kenai. For more information, call 907-335-7588.







# 'Wellbriety' brings culture to sobriety



*A small altar holds traditional ceremonial items used during recovery support meetings at Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House.*

Some of those who come to the Tribe for recovery support services have participated in other programs, and have said those other programs are missing something: a connection to traditional values and culture.

To add that missing piece, several counselors and clinicians in the Tribe's Behavioral Health department took part in training at White Bison, which provides training in culturally based healing to the Native American and Alaska Native community.

"We're able to incorporate more cultural traditions into sobriety,"

said Jamie Farrell, a Chemical Dependency Counselor at Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House. "Being able to incorporate cultural teaching into recovery is huge."

For example, the medicine wheel and traditional values are blended with 12-step program work. Programs are designed from a Native American cultural perspective, though they are made for everybody to take part in.

"They're based on tradition and culture. You need that," Farrell said.

Farrell compares incorporating culture into recovery to the

program's Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum group, which has its origins in the sobriety movement of the 1990s.

"It calls you in and speaks to your heart," Farrell said.

Traditions and culture are at the center of the program philosophically and also literally – a small altar holding traditional items is at the center of the circle during group meetings.

The altar was made by an un'ina who was grateful for the group. The altar holds an eagle feather, sage and sweet grass, an abalone





*Jamie Farrell, a Chemical Dependency Counselor at Chuq'eya Qenq'a, Birch Tree House, is a drum keeper for the Heartbeat of Mother Earth Drum. "Being able to incorporate cultural teaching into recovery is huge," Farrell said.*

shell, a drum and drumstick, and a small cross. Each item has come to the group as a gift. The family of the late Ron Petterson, the Tribe's first Chemical Dependency Counselor, provided the sage and sweet grass. Farrell said the cross came to the group anonymously.

White Bison and the Wellbriety movement started in 1990s with a Native American man's vision after the birth of a white buffalo calf. In the vision, a willow sapling loses its leaves and forms itself into a circle. Then, 100 eagle feathers arrive from the four directions and attach themselves to the hoop. Each feather represents a Native American community.

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In 1995, during a gathering of Elders, a hoop resembling the one in the vision was created. The Elders placed four gifts in the hoop – healing, hope, unity, and the power to forgive the unforgivable.

Wellbriety goes beyond sobriety to include wellness and healing in all aspects of a person's life. The White Bison philosophy looks to traditional values and culturally relevant support to overcome drugs and alcohol and find healing.

"The Wellbriety component brings acknowledgement and connection to the un'ina in a way that is purpose driven, and helps them to connect personal relation and meaning to recovering in their

community," said Heidi King, the Chemical Dependency Manager at Chuq'eya Qenq'a.

King said the concept of a Healing Forest is at the root of the Wellbriety model and mission. A forest rooted in negative feelings – anger, guilt, shame and fear – will grow a toxic community. However, a forest rooted in forgiveness, healing, hope, culture and traditional values grows a healthy community.

"All the good stuff in this world," Farrell said.

Creating a Healing Forest fosters a sense of interconnectedness and community.

"They can experience sharing with others in a way that speaks to them from a whole-person approach. The connection has a ripple effect in their lives and helps the recovery of the whole family and community," King said.

Chuq'eya Qenq'a provides services for people from many cultural backgrounds, something Farrell said adds depth to the experience.

"The way they come together and talk about their own culture's stories and traditions is amazing," Farrell said.

Wellbriety also uses the concept of the red road, symbolizing the road to sobriety.

"When you think of a path, walking a path is pretty narrow. It can be too narrow, with no room for mistakes," Farrell said. "The red road is big enough to allow for forgiveness."

If you or a loved one are in need of support, you can reach the Behavioral Health department, including sobriety services, by calling 907-335-7300. Walk-in substance use assessments are available on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



# Council provides updates at Quarterly Meeting

During a Quarterly Tribal Membership Meeting in January, the Tribal Council provided updates on a number of projects. Tribal Members also had an opportunity to share comments with the Council.

Tribal Council Chair Bernadine Atchison reported that the Tribal Council continues to work toward collaboration with the Kenai City Council on a number of projects. One project involves the playground in Old Town Park. Atchison said the city would like the remodel of the playground to incorporate elements of Dena'ina culture. For example, playground equipment could represent Native Youth Olympics events.

The Council is also discussing replacement of culverts to improve salmon passage, an issue important to the Tribe.

The Tribe also continues to look at grant opportunities to replace one of the city's fire engines. The Tribe is eligible for federal funding for the project, and while an initial grant application was not accepted, feedback will be used to submit a stronger application moving forward.

Atchison said the Council plans to hold an annual work session with the city council, and maintain regular contact through the Executive Director.

Atchison also shared that Bertrand "Bert" Adams Jr. has accepted the position of Executive Director. Adams will start full-time in April, but was on hand for a strategic planning session in January.

Council Member Gabe Juliussen Jr. reported the Tribe is working



*Tribal Council Chair Bernadine Atchison speaks during the Quarterly Membership Meeting.*

with a consultant to look at ways to use its remaining COVID funding for economic development.

"That would be a big opportunity for the Tribe," Juliussen said.

Council Member Wayne D. Wilson Jr., chair of the Environmental Protection Committee, said the Tribe is collaborating with the Kenai Watershed Forum on a water quality monitoring project.

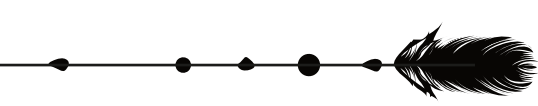
The topic of a permanent Tribal fishery came up, and Council Vice Chair Mary Ann Mills said a workgroup has been formed with other tribal organizations throughout Cook Inlet to establish a tribal fishery. A survey to determine the needs of Tribal Members is being developed as well.

Atchison also reported that work is being done to further develop the Tribe's new strategic plan. The focus is being narrowed to goals for the next one to three years, and the plan will be streamlined so that it fits on a one-page document, making it easier to understand.

The topic of the Qiz'unch' Tribal Court and Na'ini Family and Social Services also was brought up during the question and comment portion of the meeting, continuing a discussion that began during the Annual General Membership Meeting in October.

A handout was distributed at the meeting which answered many of the questions from the Annual Meeting. In response to concerns that had been raised about nav-





igating the Tribal Court process, the Tribe is re-establishing the position of Tribal Court Liaison. The Liaison will be a neutral party who is available as a resource to Tribal Court participants. The Liaison will answer questions and advise participants on Court processes.

Other questions involved the appeals process and the application of the Indian Child Welfare Act, which, it was explained, prevents the state from taking Alaska Native children into custody and returns their cases to Tribal Court.

Much of the discussion was emotional, and some questions could not be fully answered as they involved active cases.

Mills, who chairs the Tribe's Court Code Committee, thanked those involved for sharing their concerns.

"We do have a process. When it involves children, the best interest of the the children is always number one," Mills said. "... If the process isn't strong enough, we can certainly look at it, which, because of everything that's been brought up, we are in the process of looking at it. ... It's not going to happen overnight, but it happens because people come to us say, 'We want you to look at this. We want a fair assessment,' and that's what we're trying to do on both sides."

Sharon Isaak, a Tribal Member attending the meeting, wrapped up the question and comment session by describing it as a "blessed" day, because "we as Tribal Members have been part of this family's challenge at a very deep level."

"I believe productive listening is happening," Isaak said.

The next Quarterly Membership Meeting is scheduled for April 27.

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# Kenaitze Indian Tribe Purchased and Referred Care

- Purchased and Referred Care provides funding for referred or emergency health services at non-tribal medical providers and facilities.
- Purchased and Referred Care funding is not guaranteed. Eligibility requirements apply.
- To learn more about Purchased and Referred Care eligibility and coverage:
  - Visit <https://www.kenaitze.org/purchased-and-referred-care/>
  - Call the Dena'ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500, Option 1
- Report Emergency Room/Urgent Care visits within 72 hours.
- Referred care outside of Tribal Health Facilities should be reported prior to your scheduled appointment.

## To report Emergency Room/Urgent Care visits or scheduled treatment outside of Tribal Health Facilities:



- Use this link: <https://bit.ly/KenaitzePRC>
- Scan the QR code
- Call 907-335-7500, Option 1

**Questions about Purchased and Referred Care? Call the Dena'ina Wellness Center at 907-335-7500, Option 1.**



# A whale's





# tale











*Previous Pages: Participants and staff from the Semester by the Bay program pose with the articulated beluga whale skeleton after it was transported to the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus and assembled in the culture classroom. Also pictured are Dena'ina Language Institute Director Jennifer Williams, back row, fourth from left, and Dave and Sharon Isaak, front row, second and third from right.*

*Left: Dean Denlinger and Damo McMullen of Blazy Construction and James Rendle, Kenaitze Construction Director, use ropes to gently lift the skeleton to its final resting place in the entrance at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.*

*Above: Semester by the Bay staff and participants unload the carefully packaged beluga whale skeleton at the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus in January.*

In February, an articulated skeleton of a Cook Inlet beluga whale was hung for display in the atrium of the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus.

But the whale's journey to the Tribe actually began more than four years ago.

In September 2019, a beluga whale, "qunshi" in Dena'ina, washed up on the beach south of the Kasilof River.

The whale, given the National Marine Fisheries Service identification number 2019405, was first observed on the Kasilof

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beach Sept. 30, 2019. Because Cook Inlet belugas are listed as endangered, a necropsy is performed each time a dead whale is found.

Dr. Deborah Boege Tobin, a Professor of Biology at the Kenai Peninsula College Kachemak Bay Campus in Homer, led the team that conducted the necropsy on Oct. 2. The team primarily included students in the University of Alaska Anchorage's Semester by the Bay program, which attracts biology students from across the country.

Analysis determined the whale had died of natural causes, and was 29 years old. Tobin said that is on the older side for a beluga whale. The whale was 442 centimeters long, or 14 1/2 feet.

Cook Inlet belugas are a genetically distinct population of whales, and were listed as endangered in 2008. The population was estimated at 331 animals in 2022.

The whales are gray as calves and white as adults. They use echolocation to hunt for prey in the muddy waters of river mouths and estuaries of Cook Inlet, mov-





*Jayda Mitchell helps articulate a beluga whale skeleton at the Kenai Peninsula College Kachemak Bay Campus in Homer. Students from the Tribe's Yaghanen Youth Language and Culture Naqut'ana program participated in the articulation process.*

**'The plan is that it's used as a teaching tool at our education campus. Dena'ina Athabascans were the only Athabascans to border saltwater, and the only Athabascans that hunted these whales. For the most part Dené is an inland language. (With the whale) we're able to teach people a lot of things – and unique things – about Dena'ina culture. I hope this whale will open up those kinds of conversations.'**

*- Jennifer Williams, Dena'ina Language Institute Director*

ing between saltwater and fresh-water. The whales feed on seasonal runs of salmon, eulachon, and herring, as well as other fish, octopus and squid, shrimp, clams and snails.

Dena'ina hunters used a variety of methods to take the whales, including a "yuyqul," an upturned spruce tree sunk into the mud of the tidal flats at low tide. The base and roots of the tree provided a hunting platform when the tide came in.

The agencies involved in recovering the whale in 2019 also reached out to the Tribe. Joel Isaak, a Tribal Member, and Jennifer Williams, who were part of what was then called the Dena'ina Language and Culture Revitalization Project, helped with the necropsy and recovery of the whale's bones.





*Dr. Deborah Boege Tobin, a Professor of Biology at the Kenai Peninsula College Kachemak Bay Campus, in red, shows Yaghanen Youth Language and Culture Naqut'ana program students a gray whale skull on display at the campus in Homer.*

At the time, the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus was still in the design phase – construction work would not start until the summer of 2020. However, the open design of the atrium for the new building would lend itself perfectly to display the whale.

"Initially, we wanted to have access to (the whale skeleton) for education, to teach the kids," Williams said.

Most of the whale's blubber, tissue and organs were removed at the recovery site and returned to the water. The skull was taken to the Kachemak Bay Campus for cleaning, while the rest of the skeleton was buried in manure on Isaak's parents' property nearby. Over the course of almost three years, microbes in the manure broke

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down the remaining tissue, leaving just the bones.

The skull was cleaned by boiling it in a large pot of water to remove most of the tissue, and then soaking in hydrogen peroxide. The teeth were removed and sent to a lab to determine the whale's age – beluga teeth have annual growth layers that show the whale's age.

Students in the Semester by the Bay program checked the bones in 2021, but determined that they were still too oily to prepare for articulation. The skeleton was finally excavated in 2022, and cleaned with soap and water to begin the process.

Before assembling the skeleton, students, under the guidance of Tobin and Adjunct Professor Lee Post, took detailed

measurements and photos of each bone. Three-dimensional images were also made.

Articulating the skeleton began with determining how it should be posed for display. Unlike other whales, a beluga can move its head from side to side, so the head was positioned for a good view of the skull and teeth.

A steel rod holds the spine in place. Students used the Kachemak Bay Campus' designated bending equipment – the rod is wedged between some handles on the campus Dumpster, and students use their body weight and brute strength to make the bends.

The skeleton was then assembled using an epoxy product with the consistency of modeling clay to hold it together. Semester by the Bay students were joined by





*Students from the Tribe's Yaghanen Youth Language and Culture Naqut'ana program and the University of Alaska Anchorage's Semester by the Bay program articulate a beluga whale skeleton at the Kenai Peninsula College Kachemak Bay Campus in Homer.*

students in the Tribe's Yaghanen Youth Language and Culture Program to help with some of the articulation work.

The completed skeleton was partially disassembled and delivered to the Kahtnuht'ana Duhdel-diht Campus in January, and hung in the atrium in February.

Tobin marvels at just how many students have learned from, and continue to learn from the whale. Several cohorts of Semester by the Bay students have been able to help with the necropsy, the process of cleaning the skeleton, and articulating the bones.

In addition, staff and students from Kenai Peninsula College's

Kenai River Campus in Soldotna, summer interns, volunteers involved in beluga whale monitoring work, and community members have helped with the process.

"Incredible satisfaction," Tobin said of having so many people take part. "There have been lots of different people involved. It's an amazing experience to have so many students learn from one specimen."

Moving forward, Williams, who now leads the Tribe's Dena'ina Language Institute, would like to install some educational and interpretive panels around the whale, so that people continue to learn from it.

"We can talk about how the Dena'ina people used whales, and what makes the Cook Inlet population unique," Williams said.

Panels would also explain how the Dena'ina hunted the whales.

"The plan is that it's used as a teaching tool at our education campus. Dena'ina Athabascans were the only Athabascans to border saltwater, and the only Athabascans that hunted these whales. For the most part Dené is an inland language. (With the whale) we're able to teach people a lot of things – and unique things – about Dena'ina culture. I hope this whale will open up those kinds of conversations," Williams said.



# K'beq' Cultural Heritage Interpretive Site



**Come walk in the footprints of the Kahtnuht'ana Dena'ina**

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- Historic cabin



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K'beq' is operated by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe under  
a special use permit from Chugach National Forest.



# Bequsilna, *'those who are gone'*

## Dorothy Eleanor Hermansen



Lifelong Alaskan and Kenai Peninsula resident, Dorothy Eleanor (Petterson) Hermansen, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family, on Jan. 8, 2024, at the youthful age of 96. Her final days were spent reminiscing and sharing memories with her daughters.

Dorothy was born on Dec. 4, 1927, the eldest child of Urban and Louise Petterson. Her arrival was marked by a snowstorm, a detail her mother fondly recalled.

In 1945, Dorothy married the love of her life, Herman Hermansen. Together, they embarked on a life centered around commercial fishing, purchasing a set net site in 1949 on Humpy Point Beach, Coho, which now includes a fish buying station. Even at 95 she remained actively involved at the fish camp.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her beloved husband of 64 years Herman Hermansen, as well as her granddaughter Jasmine Webber and sons-in-law Dwain Namken and John Withey.

She was the eldest of 12 siblings and preceded in death by sisters Beatrice Stanford and Alida Bayes; brothers Urban, Carl and Vernon Petterson; step-father Michael Juliussen; sister Sigrid Mott/Clos; and brothers: Nels, Melvin, Eugene, William and Norman Juliussen.

Dorothy is survived by her baby brother Michael Juliussen (Marie) of Kenai, and her daughters Linda Withey, Karen Webber-Wing (Ed), Dorothy Hermansen (Walt), Susan Hermansen-Jent (John), Theadora "Terry" Hermansen and Randi Markussen (Doug).

She is also survived by her grandchildren Ragan Webber (Mallissa), Miranda Denner (Jeramy), Kurt Hermansen-Jent (Cailey); and great grandchildren Amara and Zaylee Webber, Cooper Denner and Knox Hermansen-Jent.

Read Dorothy's full obituary at <https://bit.ly/DHermansen>.

## Glenn Milton Kooly



Glenn Milton Kooly passed away Jan. 18, 2024, at his home in Soldotna surrounded by his loved ones.

Glenn was born Feb. 23, 1940, in Kenai to Odman and Marva Kooly.

Glenn enjoyed digging for clams, fishing, and boating. If he wasn't at the beach or on the water, you could find him out and about socializing often with his family and friends. He had a love for music and could whistle beautifully. He was always full of jokes and quite witty. Glenn dedicated his life to being a good family man and loved seeing his grandchildren. Glenn lived a long and respectable life.

Those left to cherish his memory include his wife Carol Kooly; his children, Pamela Kooly, Corbin Kooly, and Darrell Kooly; and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Glenn was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren.

Services were held at the Peninsula Memorial Chapel on Jan. 30, with burial services at Soldotna Cemetery.

## Harold Lee Wik



March 19, 1938 – Nov. 30, 2023

Harold Wik was born in Kenai to Alfred Wik and Sussanna March Wik.



Harold grew up living a pioneer lifestyle, hunting, fishing and trapping. He was a legendary Cook Inlet fisherman. He would fish where others wouldn't dare. Harold was not afraid to leave some bottom paint on a few rocks or ding up a prop or even end up on a beach to get his set.

When Harold wasn't fishing his boat in the summer, his favorite activity was ice fishing in the winter. He was bold in this endeavor, as well. One of his trucks still rests at the bottom of Hidden Lake.

His dog, Poopers, was a loyal companion for 18 years and was with him on many adventures, both land and sea, including the Hidden Lake incident.

Harold was preceded in death by his mother, Sussanna March Dalton; father, Alfred Wik; step-mother, Vida Wik; brothers, Jordan and Hayward Wik; and sister, Betty Ann Kirshner.

He is survived by the mother of his children, Bonnie Haviland Attleson; his three children, daughter Billie Lee Ferrell; son Ricky Wik and his wife Debbie Wik; and son Kaarlo and his wife Ginger Wik; sister Norma Johnson; grandchildren Gold, Shiloh, Noah and Kaarlo Gober, Logan, Riley, Kelsey and Dalton March Wik. Harold also had many nieces and nephews that he loved dearly.

Harold's full obituary is posted on the Tribe's Facebook page, <https://bit.ly/HWik>.

## Robert James Mamaloff II



Robert James Mamaloff II was born Aug. 26, 1985, and passed away Nov. 28, 2023. He is the son of the late Robert and Christina Mamaloff, and the brother of Darla Mamaloff.

# Kahtnuht'ana Hey Chi'ula Native Youth Olympics Invitational

Hosted by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe and Salamatof Tribe Chiqinik, thank you, to our Sponsors and Supporters!

Acapulco Restaurant  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
Alaska SeaLife Center  
Alaska Wild Gear  
Alyeska Tires  
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Cabin Fever Creations  
Cannery Lodge  
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Love It Again  
Mad Creations  
Mike's Welding

Northcountry Fair  
Paisleys Boutique  
Pizza Boys  
Southcentral Foundation  
Sportsman's Warehouse  
St. Elias Brewing  
Sugar Magnolia's  
Sweeney's Clothing  
Three Bears Alaska  
Ultimate Tan  
Wilderness Way  
10PAXT  
Rose Tepp





# Tribal Member News

## Jackson, Crump earn bachelor's degrees



Tribal Members Sasha Jackson and Jessica Crump recently earned their bachelor's degrees from Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage. Degrees were awarded in a ceremony on Dec. 9, 2023.

Jackson and Crump each earned a degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Non-Profit Organizations and a minor in Alaska Native Governance. They each also earned an Undergraduate Certificate in Alaska Rural Management.

## Yeoman wins Conference wrestling title, places third at state tournament



Tribal Member Jenna Yeoman, a student at Kenai Central High

School, won a Kachemak Conference Girl's Wrestling individual championship at 152 pounds.

Yeoman followed that performance with a third-place finish at the Alaska School Activities Association Girls Wrestling State Championships in December.

## Juliussen earns degree from Montana State



Sydney Juliussen recently earned a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana. Juliussen graduated with Highest Honors. Degrees were awarded during commencement ceremonies on Dec. 15, 2023.

Juliussen, a 2019 graduate of Soldotna High School, is pursuing a career in the oil and gas industry and is starting a job as a Project Engineer with Marathon Petroleum in Washington.

Juliussen said she is grateful for the support she has received from the Tribe, including the academic scholarships that helped her pursue her degree.

## Sutherland, Kane announce marriage



Michelle Kathleen Sutherland and Jhenry Daniel "Jay" Kane were married in a small ceremony on a lakefront homestead in Nikiski, Alaska, on Oct. 7, 2023.

The ceremony had only family in attendance and was kept very casual with only one person, their daughter McKinley Grace, in the wedding party. They were married by Jay's step-father, who is an ordained pastor.

Michelle is the daughter of Matthew and Jolene Sutherland, the granddaughter of Mary Ellen and Jimmie Gibson and the great-granddaughter of Mal and Grace Cole (Johansen).

## Connick shines on, off the ice at Alvernia



Earlier this season, Khenzie Connick, a Tribal Member from Anchorage, was named Middle Atlantic



Conference Offensive Player of the Week for the Alvernia University women's ice hockey team.

Connick also earned United Collegiate Hockey Conference Player of the Week and Rookie of the Week honors for the second time this season.

Connick, a graduate of Dimond High School, plays forward for the Golden Wolves. Through Feb. 5, she has nine goals and nine assists through 21 games.

Off the ice, Connick is a first-year Nursing student and excelling in the classroom.

### **Isaak named Department of Education Deputy Commissioner**



Joel Isaak, a Tribal Member, has been appointed as Deputy Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

Joel has served as the Director of Tribal Affairs for the department. His work in that role has been integral to the creation and implementation of State-Tribal Education Compacting.

Joel has been involved in the Tribe's Dena'ina Language and Winter 2024

Culture Revitalization Project. He worked with a number of Dena'ina first language speakers to develop a pocket dictionary and online audio dictionary, among other accomplishments. He also teaches Dena'ina at Kenai Peninsula College.

Joel earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and his Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from Alfred University in Alfred, New York. He is currently working toward a PhD in Indigenous Studies from UAF.

His artwork includes three major bronze installations representing Alaska Native culture: "Łuq'a Nagh Ghilghuzht," which means "Fish Camp," at the Dena'ina Wellness Center in Kenai; "Grandma Olga" at Ship Creek in Anchorage; and "One's Spirit" at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Hospital in Bethel.

Joel was honored with the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Tribal Member Legacy Award in 2021 for his dedication to Alaska Native culture, heritage and communities.

### **Kooly joins Cook Inlet Tribal Council Board**

Jake Kooly has been named to the Cook Inlet Tribal Council Board of Directors.

The Cook Inlet Tribal Council is a tribal nonprofit organization serving Alaska Native and American Indian people residing in the Cook Inlet region of southcentral Alaska.

CITC serves more than 12,000 people each year through an array of integrated programs and employs more than 400 people. CITC programs include education and youth services, employment and training services, career devel-

opment, family preservation, and support for individuals recovering from addiction, substance abuse, or incarceration.

Through the Alaska Native Justice Center and Clare Swan Early Learning Center, CITC addresses the Alaska civil and criminal justice system and supports working families with childcare through an Early Head Start curriculum.

## **Share your news**

***Do you have any news you'd like to share? Graduations, marriages, or births? Any other personal milestones?***

Email [news@kenaitze.org](mailto:news@kenaitze.org) to be considered for inclusion in a future edition of the Counting Cord.

## **Have you lost a loved one?**

For information about services and support provided by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, please contact Jessica Crump, Tribal Member Services Supervisor, by phone at 907-335-7204 or by email at [jcrump@kenaitze.org](mailto:jcrump@kenaitze.org).



# Cooking with Kenaitze



**Creamy Tomato Soup  
with Smoked Salmon**



# Creamy Tomato Soup with Smoked Salmon

What better way to warm up from a blustery late-winter's day than with a bowl of hearty tomato soup? Better yet, add some smoked salmon and make it a meal! This easy-to-make recipe features ingredients you already have in your pantry or can easily find at your local grocery store.

Yield: 4 servings  
Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 20 minutes  
Calories per serving: 390

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup chopped onions, frozen  
(or 1 medium red onion, chopped)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 5 cups canned whole tomatoes in their juice  
(from three 14-ounce cans)
- 1 cup reduced/low sodium or unsalted stock  
(vegetable, seafood, or chicken)
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 celery stalks
- 2 teaspoon everything bagel seasoning
- 8 ounces smoked salmon, diced/flaked
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2-3 tablespoons capers
- 1 1/2 tablespoons dried dill  
(or 1/3 cup fresh dill)
- 1 cup croutons

## Directions:

1. Add the onions, garlic, tomatoes and their juice, the stock, heavy cream, sugar, everything bagel seasoning, celery; season with pepper. Bring the soup to a boil over high heat, breaking up the tomatoes with the back of a spoon. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes.
2. Using a handheld immersion blender, blend the tomato soup until it's smooth. If a handheld blender is not available, you can work in batches and transfer the tomato soup to a blender and puree until smooth.
3. After the soup is blended, add the smoked salmon, capers, dill, and lemon juice. Mix until thoroughly combined. Season with black pepper if needed.
4. Place into four bowls and top each bowl with 1/4 cup of croutons.
5. Top with avocado, parmesan or other cheese, cucumber, and chives as desired.

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. To make an appointment, call 907-335-7500.





# Dena'ina naqenaga

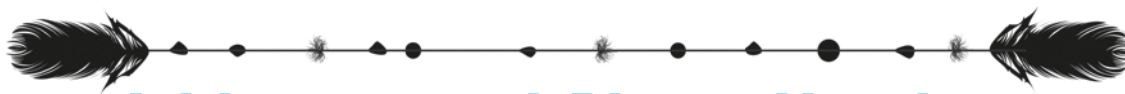


## Ten tughedetlaq'

### *Rotten ice*

Dena'ina naqenaga is "our Dena'ina language." Find more Dena'ina language resources online at <https://www.kenaitze.org/education/denaina-language-institute/>, including an interactive audio dictionary with many Dena'ina words and phrases.





## Addresses and Phone Numbers



**Administration Building**  
150 N. Willow St., Kenai  
907-335-7200



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



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



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



**Kahtnuht'ana Duhdeldiht Campus**  
12271 Kenai Spur Highway, Kenai  
907-335-7667



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



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



**Kenaitze/Salamatof Tribally  
Designated Housing**  
1001 Mission Ave., Kenai  
907-335-7228



**KENAITZE**  
**INDIAN**  
**TRIBE**

**150 N. Willow St.**

**Kenai, AK 99611**

**[www.kenaitze.org](http://www.kenaitze.org)**

**907-335-7200**





Kenaitze Indian Tribe  
P.O. Box 988  
Kenai, AK 99611



TO

ASSURE

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