

The Nome Static

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History is made as Ryan Redington celebrates his race victory. His grandfather, Joe Redington Sr., co-founded the race. After numerous attempts by his grandfather and father, and 15 previous races of his own, Ryan is the first Redington to win first place. Photo by Greg Knight.

Dear Friend,

In rural Alaska, sled dog mushing remains an active, recreational sport for many. Sled dog teams were once a work tool, critical to the life of families who live off the beaten path — the horse of the Arctic. Today, they are a source of fascination and fun, and for some, a livelihood. In the later winter months between January and April, Alaska's race season brings life and energy (and tourists) to Western Alaska.

In Nome, the week of the Iditarod finishers' arrival is often described as a 'Mardi Gras of the North': an extravaganza of energy and community events — like basketball games — that take over the town. As the number of professional dog mushers has shrunk in recent years, excitement is only growing for other parts of the regional race season. That energy and attention puts the spotlight on Western Alaska and the remarkable stories that are told here every day of the year. Thank you for making it possible!



Students Ava White and Taylor Heckart chat with Interim General Manager Davis Hovey. They were part of a group of three journalism students who helped cover the Iditarod. Photo by KJ McElwee.

Students bring passion and talent to race reports

"It's been like having the curtain pulled back and seeing how radio is actually done," University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) [student](#) Matthew Schmitz said.

This year, three college students spent their spring break participating in KNOM's annual round-the-clock coverage of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Partnership with UAA allowed the young journalists the opportunity of a lifetime and made high-intensity Iditarod coverage possible despite short staffing at the radio station.

"We've been able to practice a lot of our skills here, and we're deeply excited about that," Taylor Heckart said.

Listeners and community members were impressed with the students. Their first full day in Nome, there was a small fire in Nome's Public Works garage (with, thankfully, no injuries except for the town's Iditarod siren). They were the first to the scene to report. Thank you to Taylor, Matthew and Ava for jumping right in and covering important stories as they happened.

KNOM: Faith, Inspiration, News and Information for Western Alaska



Natalie Tobuk dribbles the ball on her way to score. Photos on this page by Greg Knight.

Nome's basketball season ends on a high note

After winning their [final home game](#) of the season, the three seniors on Nome's Nanooks women's high school basketball team were in high spirits.

"It's been really awesome because we have a really close bond, and I think we work together very well, and just adding up those four years, it's really nice to be here," player Sophia Marble said. She and fellow seniors Asa Hukill and Natalie Tobuk said they share a strong trust, on and off the court.

"It's been great. We have a good bond, we don't keep any secrets or anything, and we trust each other," Hukill said. "I think that's a big thing."

The bleachers were full of proud community members and parents. Some dads were arguably more excited than the athletes.

"It's been a great learning experience, not just for the girls, but for the parents also. It's been wonderful and a great way to end our home games watching them tonight," Marble's father, Charles Marble, said.



Sophia Marble swerves around Bethel players to shoot a basket.



Natalie Tobuk, Sophia Marble and Asa Hukill celebrate four years of teamwork and friendship on senior night.

"We pray for the spread of peace and non-violence, by decreasing the use of weapons by states and citizens."

— Pope Francis' prayer intention for April 2023

Tribal-led study tests for toxins

"Help is not coming fast enough for our generation. So at the direction of our leadership, we will make sure measures are in place to protect our most vulnerable; our children and future generations," Savoonga citizen Vi Waghiyi with [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#) recently told morning show listeners.

For years, Waghiyi has spoken up about alarming side effects of pollution, like cancer and stillbirths, in her home community. She says toxins from abandoned industrial and military sites, especially on St. Lawrence Island, leak compounds like pesticides, heavy metals, fuel, and mercury into the environment — her people's food supply.

She and other community members have taken things into their own hands. They have partnered with researchers who, she said, deeply recognize the validity of her tribe's local knowledge of their home environment. That's why she was on the radio: the research team was in Savoonga, conducting tests in the school library of anyone who was willing to be screened. Their goal, she told listeners, was to get samples of blood, fingernail clippings and household dust. Testing these samples for toxins will help them determine how pollution impacts the population at large.

Morning Prayer

"Dear Jesus,

An old sports saying goes like this: Those who get better slower, get better better.

In the slow process of growing closer to you, patience is virtue.

Help me to let you lead me on my journey home to your love one day at time. Listening always for your still small voice.

In your name, amen!"

— Scotty Campbell on the Morning Show



Months after sustaining a severe accident while helping Golovin rebuild in the wake of Ex-Typhoon Merbok, Jessie Holmes claimed 5th place in this year's Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Photo by Matthew Schmitz, UAA student.



Dan Fishel records his show in Studio C. His revamped format showcases local companies and organizations. Photo by KJ McElwee.

Showcase highlights healthy workplaces

After two and a half decades of faithfully sharing jobs in the region during KNOM's weekly [Job Files show](#), Vickie Erickson retired last year. Dan Fishel, who took over the regular Job Files hour, is trying something new in addition to the usual show: an employer showcase.

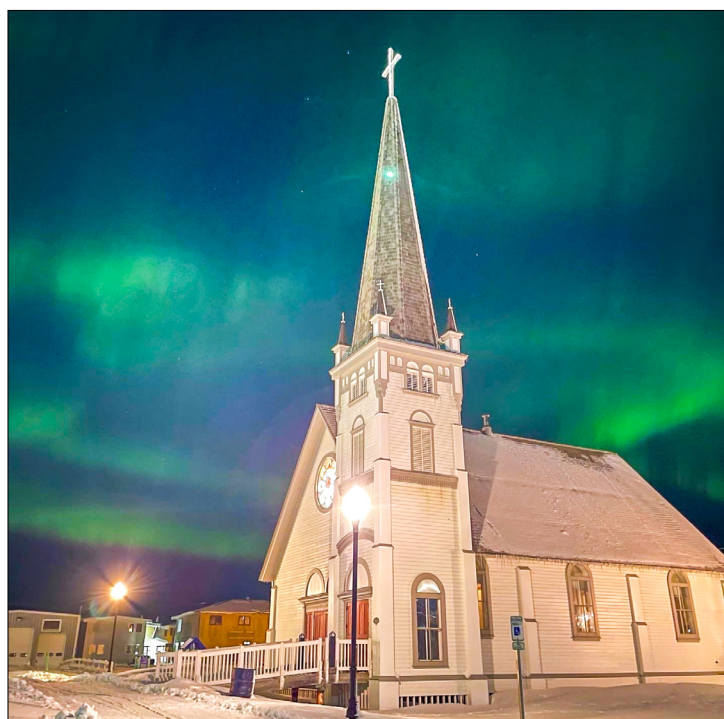
Fishel found himself trying to explain to people who visit the job center the reasons why certain local businesses are good places to work. "I had the thought: Who better to advertise a business, than the business themselves?" he said.

He estimated that out of a total population of 3,700, Nome has more than 500 jobs open. He hopes to bridge that gap and help employers market their positions meaningfully.

Fishel's first episode highlighted ways employers are attuned to the way of life in rural Alaska. In an interview with representatives from the Bering Strait Regional Housing Authority, they described ways their employees are supported, such as extensive paid time off for subsistence activities like hunting, fishing, and harvesting.



'Dog race' with engine noise - Tyler Aklestad and Nick Olstad park their rigs as victors in their 2nd consecutive Iron Dog snowmachine race victory. Photo by Hannah Smith, used with permission.



The lights are out - Northern lights fill the night sky above Old St. Joe's in Nome. Photo by KJ McElwee.

Please consider KNOM in your estate planning.
