

The Nome Static

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Fr. Michael presides at the Easter Vigil mass at Old St. Joe's. Originally from Poland, Fr. Michael is one of two traveling priests who are based in Nome. Photos by Greg Knight.



Sixteen was the magic number when reporter Greg Knight tagged along with a group of 16 elementary students who braved temperatures of -16° to learn ice fishing.

Dear Friend,

This month, people around the world pray for a rediscovery of evangelization. Since the broadcast model was first created in the early days of KNOM, the mission has been to evangelize by attraction. It starts with a smile and warm welcome: a recognition that all humans have beauty and dignity. Attractive ministry is kind, transparent, and interested in meeting others' needs.

Radio waves carry unique opportunities to be present with listeners, every minute of the day. In a region where radio is a constant companion, we can inform, engage, and inspire. Together, we meet needs with engaging news coverage, good music, faith, and critical information: in Western Alaska and wherever the signal carries.

Students ice fish for Elders

"They're learning the traditional way of providing food on the table," cultural educator Sandi Keller said. "Today's catch is going to go to the Elders, which is also an Inupiaq value."

Second-grader Kanon Lewis explained why he likes to fish and give the catch to Elders.

"To be kind and nice," Lewis said. "It's important to me because I like to share, and I like to catch fish."

Parent Briana Piscoya agreed. "I think this is really wonderful for them to be out here ice fishing, and outdoors," Piscoya said. "I also think it's a great thing for patience, which we are all learning right here."

The lessons in ice fishing, or *manaqing* as it's known in the Yugtun language, are a staple of the curriculum and happen several times in the year.



Jade Greene (No. 13) edges around an athlete from Utqiagvik at the state basketball tournament. Photo by James Mason, used with permission.

Family and friends celebrate basketball skills at state

"Nome, it's a community built on basketball, and the love of basketball," Rose Gray said. "There's a lot of camaraderie and brotherhood. It's just a big family."

Gray helped organize a watch party in Nome so friends and family could see their very own high school basketball players compete in the state tournament without an expensive flight.

The basketball players' success at the statewide tournament had family and friends beaming with pride.

"I'm very proud of Peyton and the boys," Dena Okitkon said. She is a family friend of athlete Peyton who was at the watch party from Nome, said. "Peyton is just a freshman, and the boys did a really good job this year. They fought hard and I'm very happy that they made it to the championships again."

The Nanooks made it to the championship game before losing to an Anchorage private school. It was no small feat for a small-town team outside Alaska's road system, who had to win against teams with far more extensive resources. Two of Nome's athletes, Jade Greene and Finn Gregg, were honored by induction into the all-state team.

After races end, business owners take stock

With mushers, dogs, visitors, and tourists back at home, shop owners and artisans shared their thoughts on Nome's tourism revenue from after the 2023 race — traditionally, one of the busiest tourist seasons of the year.

"There were a lot more people in town, especially after last year's Iditarod," city manager Glenn Steckman said. "The flights were full."

While this year's numbers were down from the pre-pandemic era, there was a clear increase from last year. Particularly for people who depend on tourism for income, like crafters and artists, 'Iditarod week' is an important source of revenue. Cheryl Thompson organized the annual Iditarod Craft Fair, which has been a staple of the community for more than two decades. She said the fair was well-attended.

"We pretty much had customers all week long," Thompson said. "It looked like there were a lot of people in town."

With only 33 mushers and dog teams participating this year, roughly half the usual race size, there were not as many fans traveling to see the finish. Also, the closure of a hotel that sustained fire damage during the record storm last fall meant 47 fewer rooms available for visitors.

"We pray that Church movements and groups may rediscover their mission of evangelization each day, placing their own charisms at the service of needs in the world."

— Pope Francis' prayer intention for May 2023

Community rallies to support injured Nome-Golovin racer

After a crash during this year's Nome-Golovin snowmachine race left contestant Ivory Okleasik paralyzed, the community has come together to support her.

"Ivory is one of the most kindhearted young women that I know," her friend EJ Rochon said. "When I first moved to Nome, I was alone, and she said she saw me in the hallway and she said, 'I'm going to be friends with her.' And we were inseparable since then; she spent a lot of time taking care of me when I had my struggles."

Rochon organized a medical fundraiser so that she could focus on healing and rehabilitation without financial strain. The fundraiser has been seen and shared thousands of times on social media.

"I'm happy that she is starting to open up to having help. She's kind of an independent woman, and I know it's hard for somebody like Ivory to ask for help," Rochon said.

Okleasik is known for her love of the outdoors and never turning down an adventure. Even as she faces the reality she may never walk again, her humor and determined spirit is obvious.

"She's been in a pretty positive mindset," her friend EJ Rochon said. "It's been so inspiring to hear her say, 'I'm going to do this.' It's one day at a time."



Ivory Okleasik shows off her bib number for the 2023 Nome Golovin 200 snowmachine race. Photo courtesy of Ivory Okleasik.



The annual Iditarod Craft Fair, held at Old St. Joe's, attracted visitors from near and far. Photo by KJ McElwee.

Easter Prayer

"Dear Jesus,

On this day, two thousand years ago, you died for all of our sins. You leveled the mountains between people like me and infinite grace, forgiveness and love – if only, one day at a time, I surrender totally to your will. On this day, I pray, make it so.

In your name, amen!"

– Scotty Campbell on the Morning Show



Arctic friendship: A five-member delegation from Greenland visited Nome to share knowledge and discuss solutions to challenges shared as a fellow Arctic nation. They discussed housing and infrastructure with tribal and city officials. One of the group's goals is to improve the framework for catching and selling seafood between Alaska and Greenland.

"We see a lot of common interests," said Rolf Lau Nancke, Greenland's Head of Maritime Affairs in the Ministry of Housing and Infrastructure.

Photo courtesy of Danielle Slingsby, used with permission.



Radio Day: A recent recruitment and networking event at Northwest College was a chance for listeners to meet the people behind the mic and inquire about work and service opportunities in radio. Photo by KJ McElwee.



Radio out of this world: Young co-hosts Zac Slingsby and Elizabeth Phan recording an episode of the Wednesday afternoon Kids' Show. In this space-themed episode they shared their favorite songs about space travel and discussed what other planets might exist past our own solar system. Photo by community volunteer Danielle Slingsby, used with permission.

During a severe winter storm, the door to KNOM's transmitter site was blown clean off its hinges. Braving the high winds to check on the transmitter, engineer Van Craft and Interim General Manager Davis Hovey caught it just in time and managed to jury rig the door shut for a quick fix. Damage is still being assessed, although it was minimal compared to the potential water damage. Photo by Davis Hovey.

Please consider KNOM in your estate planning.
