

The Nome Static

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Dear Friend,

Summer is a busy and festive time in Western Alaska. As the days grow to nearly 24 hours of full sunlight, people across the region take full advantage of each and every day. We need to catch salmon, pick berries, and stockpile supplies before winter sets in again in a few short months.

But Alaskans play just as hard as we work. Around the summer solstice, Nome holds its annual Midnight Sun Festival. Events include a 5K race along the coast where runners compete to claim a gold nugget, a polar bear plunge in the Bering Sea, and even a mock bank robbery that harkens back to Nome's Gold Rush days!

As always, those unable to participate in person tune in to the festivities by radio. People out at fish camps use radio airwaves to send birthday greetings and personal messages to loved ones back at home. Your support is the glue that keeps communities connected during the summer months. Thank you!



Nomeites participate in the mock bank robbery on Front Street during the annual Midnight Sun Festival. Photo from the KNOM archives.



Nome-Beltz High School seniors ride in the celebratory parade before the graduation ceremony. Photo by Greg Knight.

Frost and circumstance

On May 16, a procession of fire trucks, police cars, and privately owned cars snaked its way through the streets of Nome to the tune of "Congratulations" by Post Malone. The guests of honor at this particular parade were teenagers clad in caps and gowns. Through gravel streets and mounds of snow still left from winter, the column of cars reached its destination, Nome-Beltz High School gymnasium.

A grand total of 38 students graduated from NBHS that day. At the graduates' request, KNOM broadcast the parade and the ceremony live for all to hear.

As class salutatorian, graduate Sophia Marble offered advice to her underclassmen: "I hate to say it, but time really does fly. Cherish the time you have in this school. Stay focused and turn in your work on time. But on that same note, remember it's never that serious, and make time to share

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

laughs and make memories.”

Graduates Devon Crowe and Dorothy Callahan were co-valedictorians. In their remarks, Crowe reflected on how their class persevered through the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic, while Callahan focused on how they grew together over the years.

Rachel Finney, Nome Public Schools’ Teacher of the Year for 2023, said of the graduates, “I know they’re going in several different directions, doing some really awesome things, and I hope they enjoy every minute of it.”



Top: Nome-Beltz High School Principal Teriscovky Smith addresses the Class of 2023. Photo courtesy of Nome Public Schools.

Bottom: Nanook junior Finn Gregg (right) coaches younger players at basketball camp. Photo by Greg Knight.

Basketball builds bridges

Basketball is an institution in Western Alaska. Even after the regular season and state tournaments are over, Nome’s youth are ready for more. Nome-Beltz High School annually hosts a basketball camp for third through ninth graders; this year, more than 50 campers spent their evenings in the school gym in the last week of May.

Over the past several years, Nome-Beltz High School has built a reputation for its sterling basketball program. Nome’s Nanooks were state champions in 2022 and runners-up in 2023. Now, the high school Nanooks turn around and offer one-on-one and group coaching to the younger campers.

Head coach Pat Callahan told listeners, “It gets the younger players excited about being a Nanook someday. The biggest value here is having the high school players, varsity players, coaching the younger kids and having to figure out how the coaching side of it works. I think there’s a lot of learning when they’re teaching. And this is all stuff we want them to do a better job of as well. So, I think there’s a huge value here. These are the role models that these kids look up to.”

One of those student coaches is junior guard Finn Gregg. He played on both Nanook teams that went to the state finals over the past two years.

“It’s to show them the culture, how we like to do things, give them a little preview before our team camp because most will be going with us,” Gregg said. “It’s like a little boot camp to get them prepared mentally for what’s coming up in the next six months or seven months.”

Jocelyn Takak is a freshman at Nome-Beltz who found this year’s camp particularly challenging.

“We do drills with the boys,” Takak said. “During basketball (season) we don’t, we just play with the girls. The boys challenge us.” She expects to compete as a Lady Nanook this winter.

New home for healing in Hooper Bay

A partnership between local native tribes and the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP) recently opened a new child advocacy center in the village of Hooper Bay.

The Bay Haven Child Advocacy Center will provide Hooper Bay and the nearby villages of Scammon Bay and Chevak with resources for people who have experienced domestic violence and sexual assault. Until this center opened, the only option for children seeking support was an hour flight by bush plane to Bethel, the regional hub more than 100 miles away. Rendering assistance to a child in Bethel often required multiple trips and successive conversations with different case workers. Tribal Administrator for the Native Village of Hooper Bay Jan Olson commented, "Having a child to tell their story over and over, that's just reliving their trauma."

Renovation of the facility in Hooper Bay's Sea Lion Building was completed in April. The Bay Haven Child Advocacy Center opened on May 16 and will provide aftercare and survivor groups. Its goal is to embrace cultural values and holistic approaches as children and families heal.



Above: The Bay Haven Child Advocacy Center in Hooper Bay. Photo courtesy of RurAL CAP.

Right: A map of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region, showing the locations of Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, Chevak, and Bethel.

Today's Gospel [...] begins with one of Jesus' teachings: "Do not let your love of family get in the way of being my disciple."

If Jesus were saying this today, he would probably put it something like this: "Avoid nepotism at all costs. Be fair to everyone. Do not let family loyalty get in the way of doing what you know to be right. Furthermore, do not think about what's in it for you."

Being Jesus' disciple means that at times, you will have to go without. You will have to carry the cross. You will have to sacrifice.

Finally, know that whoever welcomes you, whoever helps you even in the smallest way, is also willing to help Jesus. There is a lot in this Gospel for us to think about. What are you willing to do for Jesus in your life?

— Patrick Tam, Sharing the Word in Western Alaska, July 2, 2023



Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least brothers of mine, you did for me.

— Matthew 25:40

New leader for the mission

KNOM is pleased to welcome Miranda Musich as our new General Manager. To fill the role, the Board of Directors sought someone with a deep connection to Western Alaska, and that is what they found in Miranda. She has lived most of her life in Nome, and has been a lifelong friend of longtime General Manager Tom Busch's family.

Miranda owns a farm just outside Nome and runs several small businesses that serve her community. Before becoming KNOM's General Manager, she taught applied business for seven years at the Nome campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She brings to the role business acumen and a strong professional network throughout the region.

KNOM would like to thank Iñuraaq Evans, who briefly filled the General Manager role before resigning for personal reasons, as well as Davis Hovey, who served as Interim General Manager for six months while the Board of Directors carried out its search.

You can read the Board's full statement about Miranda as our new General Manager at knom.org.

"We pray that Catholics may place the celebration of the Eucharist at the heart of their lives, transforming human relationships in a very deep way and opening to the encounter with God and all their brothers and sisters."

— Pope Francis' prayer intention for July 2023

Glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, One God. All praise be to You, the almighty and eternal God, who have graciously allowed me to attain the beginning of this day. Direct my thoughts, feelings, and actions throughout the day, that they may all be according to Your holy Will. [...] Grant that I may carry out my tasks with diligence and integrity, and that I may bring honor to Your holy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

— Saint Athanasius



Above: A teenage Miranda Musich (far right) attends a birthday party at the home of longtime General Manager Tom Busch (left) in 1997. Photo courtesy of Kate Dumais, née Busch, used with permission.

Below: Miranda Musich today, with a horse on her farm on the outskirts of Nome. Photo courtesy of Miranda Musich, used with permission.



Please consider KNOM in your estate planning.
