

The Nome Static

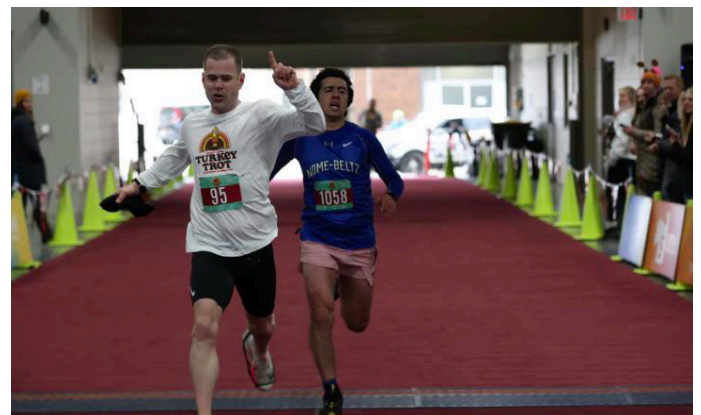
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Dear Friend,

It's wonderful to begin the year celebrating Mary, the Mother of God, a figure of profound significance. Her motherhood emphasizes her pivotal role in Christ's life, reminding us of her enduring compassion and understanding. Just as Mary experienced challenges during Jesus' birth, she empathizes with the struggles of vulnerable people today, especially those facing poverty and conflict. KNOM radio offers hope to remote communities in Western Alaska, providing companionship in the midst of harsh conditions. Your support means so much; thank you! As we embark on this new year, may Mother Mary's blessings enrich your lives with peace, hope, and an abundance of God's grace.



Going the Distance for Nome's Nanooks

The Iditarod Trail is famous for its annual sled dog race, but every year human athletes test their endurance on its expanse as well. The Iditarod Trail Invitational gathers bikers, cross-country skiers, and runners to race the 1000 miles from the Anchorage area to the famous burlwood arch in Nome. Alternatively, athletes can race a shorter 350-mile course from Anchorage to the city of McGrath on the Kuskokwim River.

Among those training for this year's ITI 350 is Ryan Fox, cross-country coach at Nome-Beltz High School. Fox hails from Connecticut, so he is no stranger to winter, and he has been running for 14 years. Even so, he considers racing the interior of Alaska "wildly uncharted territory."

As much as athleticism, the ITI is a test of survival and endurance. Competitors are allowed to carry only small, consumable necessities like food, hand warmers, and batteries. In addition to the essentials, Fox plans to pack his Nome-Beltz

*Above: Ryan runs under the Aurora Borealis.
Below: Fox placed second at the Anchorage Turkey Trot with a 5:25 per mile pace. Photos courtesy of Ryan Fox, used with permission.*

Nanooks jacket and hat to honor the team he currently coaches, as well as one that he hopes to coach soon.

Fox is raising funds to establish a track team at Nome-Beltz High School for the spring season. The Nanooks have not had a track team in over a decade, but he is resolved to make it happen. "I'm running for opportunities in Nome, for kids," he says.

For his training, Fox runs 70-75 miles a week, ran an ultramarathon over Christmas break, and plans to run the perimeter of Manhattan. The ITI will begin in February.

City of Diomed Building Slides into School

Residents of Little Diomed, an island village, located 135 miles northwest of Nome, woke up to find that their city building adjacent to the school partially collapsed due to deteriorated stilts, causing it to lean onto the school structure. Thankfully, no injuries were reported.

The Bering Strait School District announced the immediate closure of the village's school during a meeting. To ensure the continuity of education, the Diomed School shared via social media that students will attend classes remotely through video conferences.

A little over a week later, Governor Mike Dunleavy issued a disaster declaration. According to a press release, a structural engineer from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and representatives from Kawerak, the Bering Strait region's tribal consortium, assessed the situation. They suspect that ground settling and the age of the city building contributed to the collapse. Jeremy Zidek, a public information officer for the Alaska Division of Homeland Security, says that contractors are actively demolishing the building, but the timeline is heavily dependent on weather conditions.

Susan Nedza, the district's Chief School Administrator based in Unalakleet, highlighted the challenges faced in assessing the situation. Teachers residing in school housing are being relocated to other schools within the district. Despite this transition, education continues as teachers conduct classes remotely through Zoom. Efforts are also underway to provide Chromebooks to families, leveraging the improved internet accessibility now available thanks to the recent activation of Starlink in Little Diomed.

Moreover, the district is dedicated to providing essential services, including plans to distribute prepackaged meals to students, acknowledging the crucial role the school plays in providing meals for families within the district.



Top: The city building shifts into the school due to rotten stilts. Photo courtesy of Carla Ahkvaluk, used with permission.

Bottom: Little Diomed, a village in the Bering Strait, is only accessible by aircrafts during the winter. Photo from KNOM archives.

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

— Pope Francis' prayer intention for January 2024



Above: A photo of Nikki Corbett of Sew Yup'ik posing at her AFN table in October. She shared her booth with her sister, owner of Urban Atsaq. Photo courtesy of Nikki Corbett, used with permission.

Crafters from Western Alaska Prepare for Gift-giving Season

In this vibrant region, two incredible women poured their heritage and craftsmanship into every piece they create as they prepared for the holiday shopping season.

Shirley (Kiparalria) Hootch, a Yup'ik jeweler from Emmonak, handcrafts exquisite earrings using caribou antler and walrus ivory sourced from her family in Point Hope. Inspired by her lineage of artists, Shirley's creations echo the beauty of traditional Yup'ik masks. Each pair is a testament to her heritage and artistry, with no more than five pairs of the same design, ensuring every set is truly one-of-a-kind.

Nikki (Quluqaaq) Corbett, owner of "Sew Yupik" in Bethel, specializes in qaspeqs, and her pieces embody the essence of Alaska Native culture. Crafting with intention and care, Nikki infuses her creations with individuality, ensuring no two are alike. Her meticulous process begins long before the needle touches fabric, as she believes in setting positive intentions to imbue each piece with good energy.

Sharing the Word in Western Alaska

Today we celebrate the Christmas Feast with the Epiphany of the Lord, one of the oldest Christian feasts. The word "Epiphany" means a showing or manifesting of God's presence. Early Christians took 12 days to celebrate the wonderful mystery of Jesus coming into the world and revealed as the Son of God.

The celebration included Jesus' birth, but also his Baptism and his first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana. These three events show that Jesus was the promised Messiah sent by God.

Matthew's Gospel is the only one that tells the story of foreign wise men who observe the stars and planets. In their culture, the events in the sky were signs of important events on earth. When they noticed a bright new star, they understood it as a sign that a great new king had been born. They made the long, dangerous journey to look for the newborn King, and when they reached Jerusalem, King Herod and the Jewish religious leaders used their holy writings to point the way to Bethlehem.

To the Jewish people God gave his promise of a Savior through the words of the prophets. God used signs and wonders to lead them to the Christ. God sent his Son Jesus for all peoples and all cultures.

How have our own cultures and traditions prepared us for welcoming Jesus, the Son of God?

And how will you share the Word this week?

— Patrick Tam, Epiphany Sunday, January 7



Top: Children gather to play a game of fish pond at the Fireman's Carnival.

Bottom: Crowds gather at the Fireman's Carnival for the bingo games. Photos courtesy of John Handeland, used with permission.

Happy New Year from the KNOM Staff!
Nome crew (top): Teresa, Miranda, Tate, Sophie (left to right), Arielle (center)

Anchorage crew (bottom): John, Tara, Cindy, Ava (left to right)

Fun and Games with Firemen

The annual Fireman's Carnival took place at the beginning of December to benefit the Nome Volunteer Fire Department. Hundreds of Nome residents gathered at the local recreation center to partake in the festivities. The raffle prizes included a brand new 2024 SkiDoo Snowmobile, two round-trip Alaska Airline tickets, \$1000 shopping spree, 100 gallons of heating oil, 100 gallons of unleaded gasoline, a 65" flat screen TV, a \$500 Alaska Industrial Hardware shopping spree, two round-trip tickets on Bering Air, a 14" Stihl battery chainsaw and a DeWalt 5-piece combo pack.

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