

Scary spill

Fisherman

The Aleutians and the Pribilofs



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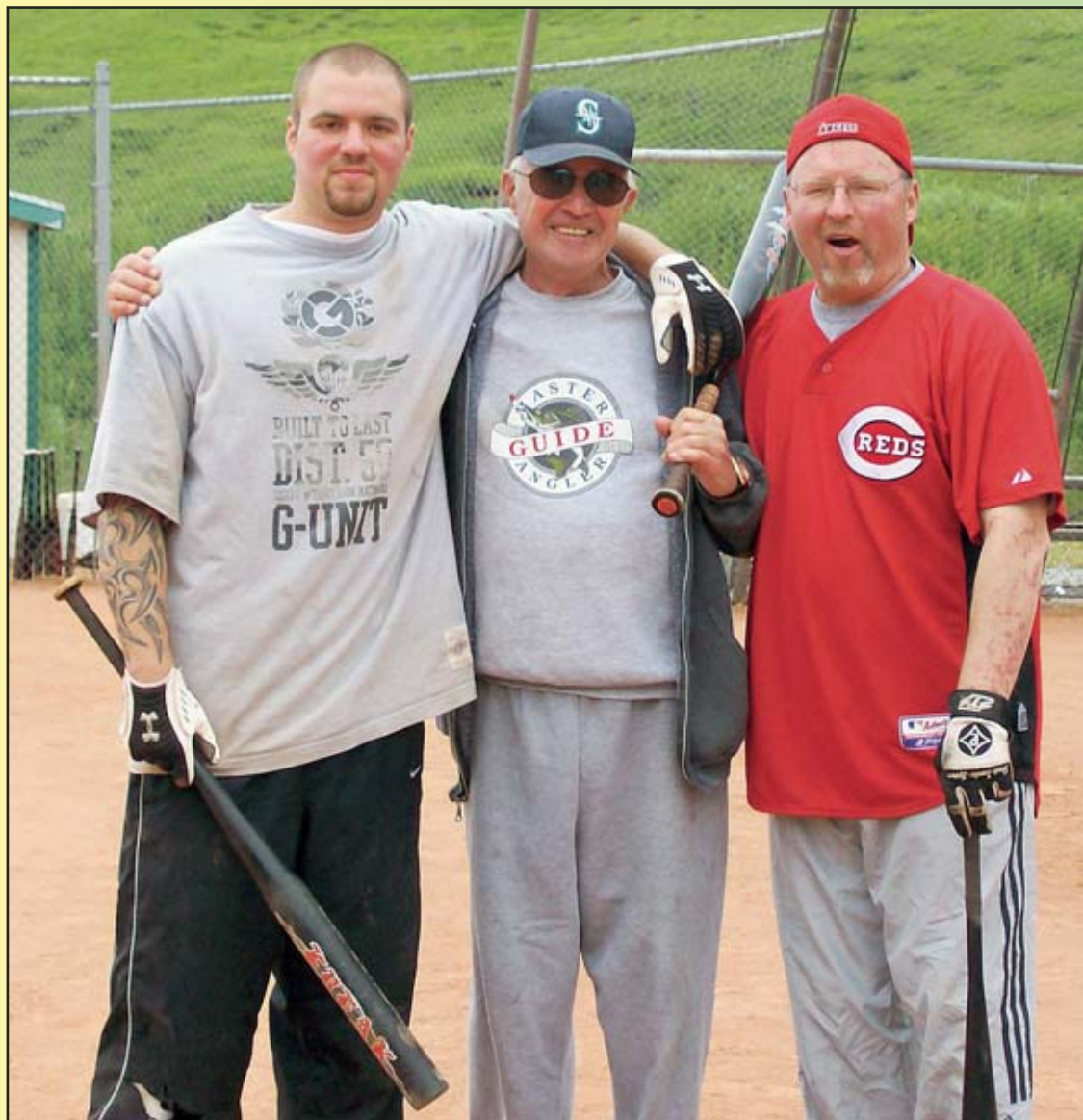
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THREE GENERATIONS OF SOFTBALLERS



Courtesy photo/Laskowski family
Three generations of Laskowskis played softball for the Dutch Harbor Yacht Club during a game on Sunday, July 22 at Kelty Field against Westward. John Sr., 79, John Jr., 50, and Jared, 22, joined forces for a convincing, lopsided win. John Laskowski Sr. is visiting his son and grandson from Yuma, Ariz., to escape the scorching heat. "This is the first time I've gotten to see the green hills of Dutch Harbor. I've always come when there's nothing but snow and ice," Laskowski said. During his visit, he attained the nickname, "G-Jack," short for Grandpa Jack, from his grandson. He will be in Unalaska until the middle of August. During the game, G-Jack got on base three times and made it home twice. John Laskowski Jr. has lived in Unalaska for 30 years and described watching his father run as "an adventure," claiming that his father is faster than he. "Everyone in town has been very friendly," the elder Laskowski said.

Subsistence board closes public caribou hunting lands

Slow population growth concerns wildlife experts

By The Fisherman staff

Federal lands in the lower Alaskan Peninsula have been closed to subsistence and state caribou hunting because of low population numbers.

The Federal Subsistence Board approved an emergency special action closing federal public lands from Aug. 1 to Sept. 30, following similar action by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Poor nutrition is believed to be the primary factory causing the decline, although human harvest and predation by wolves and brown bears have also been factors.

Blood tests taken on herd in the northern part of the Alaska Peninsula showed a blood disease that caused the spontaneous abortion of fetuses.

Sandra Siekaniec with the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge said that blood samples have been taken from Unit 9D herds but she hasn't received the results of those tests yet.

In the last four years, Siekaniec said they have seen a drop in population numbers during composition counts done by the state. The composition counts evaluate the number of calves per cows.

In the last survey, Siekaniec said they saw just one calf for every 100 cows. To have a

See Page 5, Caribou

Greenland online

For years, the planet's far North has witnessed the effects of climate change firsthand.

Alaska Newspapers' State reporter Dustin Solberg landed in Greenland Aug. 4 with the National Science Foundation to report on

research under way on Arctic tundra and the Greenland Ice Sheet.

Read Solberg's dispatches from remote outposts in Greenland at www.alaskanewspapers.com/greenland.



Solberg

www.alaskanewspapers.com/greenland

A lifeline in a storm

Tow system passes test, designed to prevent grounding

By Monica Southworth
The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

The last few days of July saw the successful test of a new safety procedure, involving the use of an emergency towing system that will prevent ships from running aground in waters near Dutch Harbor.

Several organizations tested a system that has been in production for only 3-1/2 months.

The entire process was initiated by Unalaska Mayor Shirley Marquardt as a reaction to the Salica Frigo incident in February.

The Salica Frigo was a freighter that almost ran aground off of Hog Island in February. About seven minutes before it would have run aground, an engineer discovered a clogged fuel filter and was able to restart the engines in time to prevent a wreck.

See Page 6, Storm

See related Mayor's Corner story, Page 4

Hovercraft begins King Cove service

Suna-X operators complete certifications

By The Fisherman staff

On Tuesday, Aug. 7, after six months of crew training, the hovercraft Suna-X began service between Cold Bay and King Cove.

The hovercraft belongs to the Aleutians East Borough, and its crew has been working to comply with Coast Guard regulations during the past months.

Restrictions on the borough's certificate of inspection were removed on July 10. Managed by its Coast Guard-endorsed operators, the borough may now officially charge fees for hovercraft passenger and freight service.

Based on its preliminary schedule, the Suna-X will operate seven days a week, departing King Cove at 10 a.m. and arriving in Cold Bay by 10:30 a.m.

The vessel will depart Cold Bay at 1 p.m., or as soon as possible thereafter depending on when the Peninsula Air flight from Anchorage has landed, arriving in King Cove at 1:30 p.m.

Based on preliminary cost estimates, rates have been posted at both hovercraft terminals.

The rate for passengers is \$76 one way. Vehicles will be carried at these rates:

- Cars and trucks: 6 cents per pound, one way, including the vehicle's driver.
- Four wheelers: Flat rate of \$100 one way, including driver. Trailers are not included.

The Borough's Website, www.aleutianseast.org, post details on schedules and fees.

"The training for hovercraft operators has been a thorough process," said Paul Tobin, hovercraft chief engineer.

"The type and size of the vessel dictated that we work closely with the U.S. Coast Guard in the development and implementation of the training program. This is a first for the Coast Guard, so we had to write the book, as none existed in their system," he added.

"The model for the training program was conceived from hovercraft operations in the Canadian Coast Guard. The CCG has been operating a hovercraft in search and rescue successfully for 35 years."

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New dry dock provides maintenance access to vessels

Magone service lessens need to go to Seattle

By Monica Southworth
The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

Magone Marine has purchased a dry dock capable of taking boats and other water vessels out of the water to do routine maintenance.

Until now, most vessels sailed to Seattle, Wash., for the service Magone is providing.

"It's exciting to see it happening after all this time, and a big help to all the business here in town," said Dan Magone, owner of Magone Marine.

The dry dock, of World War II vintage, has been operating in a shipyard for the past 30 years and is capable of removing vessels up to 1,000 tons. The internal dimensions of the dock are 45 feet by 200 feet.

The dock will be used for general dry-docking purposes, such as hauling vessels out of the water up to a maximum dead weight of 100,000 tons.

The first object taken out, on Aug. 1, was a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather buoy 12 meters in diameter, pushed by the landing craft Joshua, owned by Magone Marine.

After a long process of partially submerging



the floating dry dock, the weather buoy was pushed into the facility and secured, and the dry dock was refloated.

The dry dock used eight pumps, one attached to each of its tanks, to fill, sink and

then refloat itself, using power from the F/V Western Viking to power the pumps.

Because it is a floating dry dock, it will not damage the environment.

"In fact, it enhances it," Magone said.

Monica Southworth/
The Dutch Harbor Fisherman

On Aug. 1, Magone Marine used its recently purchased dry dock for the first time to do maintenance work on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather buoy.

Vessels based in Dutch Harbor now don't need to leave the island for routine maintenance. Instead of burning fuel traveling to and from Seattle, vessels can stay local for repairs.

"Staying here longer means that all the other (vessel) support services in town will receive their business. It's a blessing to them too, and we'll have a more stable customer base," Magone said.

Since 1981, Magone said he has been planning on purchasing a dry dock.

"In the past, we've done all kind of emergency things, to perform maintenance and repairs. Emergency hull damage, steering, etc. But now we have the ability to get boats out of water and do that kind of work in a dry environment and perform basic maintenance," Magone said.

Basic maintenance includes cleaning hulls and painting the bottom of vessels.

Magone said his own boats are in need of repair and he will be using the dry dock for that.

Hovercraft ...

From Page 1

The hovercraft has been operating since February, after a mechanical problem was fixed, while crew members obtained their training aboard the vessel. The Suna-X passed its stability tests with flying colors.

"So far, we have two people with hovercraft endorsements, and a third is on the way," said Tobin. "The underlying tone to the training program is professionalism and safety, and I believe we have accomplished that."

There is also a fourth hovercraft operator in training.

During training, hovercraft crewmembers transported passengers, vehicles and four-wheelers between King Cove and Cold Bay without charging any fees.

Perhaps most important, the hovercraft and crew have successfully completed every medical evacuation they have been asked to do.

"The medical evacuations provide the community with a safe, comfortably stable and timely transport to hospital care via Cold Bay," Tobin said. "Ultimately, the hovercraft allows us to save lives."

Assistant Administrator for the Aleutians East Borough Clark Corbridge said that with medical evacuations, the general practice has been to drive the ambulance onto the hovercraft and transport it to Cold Bay, where the ambulance is then driven off of the vessel and

to the plane.

At first, Corbridge says the borough is expecting to make one round trip every day starting from King Cove going to Cold Bay in the morning and returning later in the day. Every night, the vessel is stored in Lenard Harbor near Cold Bay.

The 93-by-44-foot hovercraft is powered by two sets of Detroit Diesel/MTU engines, which turn two five-bladed propellers.

These power the four fans in a cushion lift system.

The hovercraft has the ability to travel over water, mud flats, marshes and relatively flat land. The cabin is equipped with 47 seats as well as space for two wheelchairs.

A cargo deck can carry an ambulance and other vehicles. The vessel is capable of carrying large vehicles, with weight the only limiting factor.

"The feedback we've received from hovercraft passengers has been very positive," Tobin said. "When planes cannot fly due to weather, we provide a timely and safe solution to fill that travel requirement."

The Aleutians East Borough is the owner of the hovercraft, employs its operators, and is the primary government entity subsidizing it, at a projected \$500,000 to \$700,000 a year.

Corbridge said that like any public amenity, the hovercraft is not paying for itself, and the borough will be losing money for the new service.

Recently, the city of King Cove, the King Cove Corp., the borough, and the state of Alaska reached an agreement to seek funding



Courtesy photo/
Aleutians East Borough

The Suna-X Hovercraft is shown during a trial run before beginning regular services between Cold Bay and King Cove on Aug 7.

to build a road from King Cove to Cold Bay through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge ("Alaska delegation backs wildlife refuge land swap," July 5, The Dutch Harbor Fisherman).

The road would be a relatively cost-effective transportation system from isolated King Cove to the all-weather airport in Cold Bay. Funding for the bill was introduced in both the House and the Senate.

The Aleutians East Borough is the municipal government encompassing the southwestern portion of the Alaska Peninsula and a number of the easternmost Aleutian Islands.

It extends 300 miles along the eastern side of the Alaska Peninsula and includes the communities of Sand Point, Cold Bay, King Cove, False Pass, Akutan and Nelson Lagoon.

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