

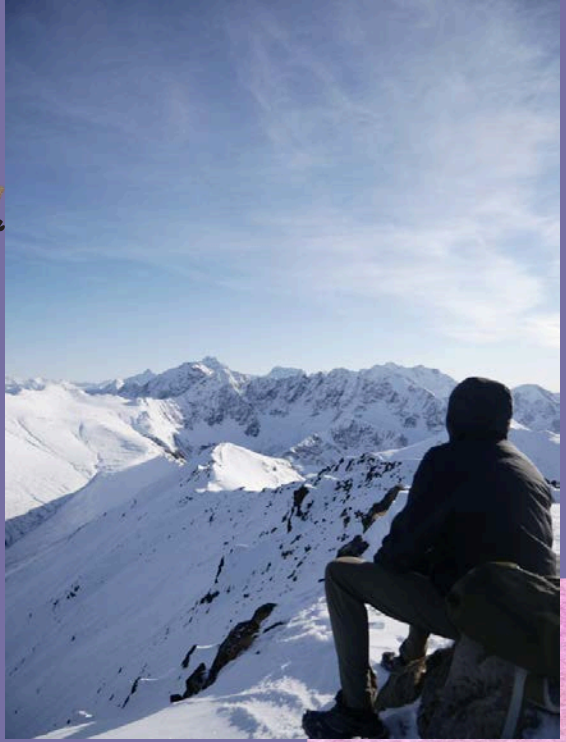
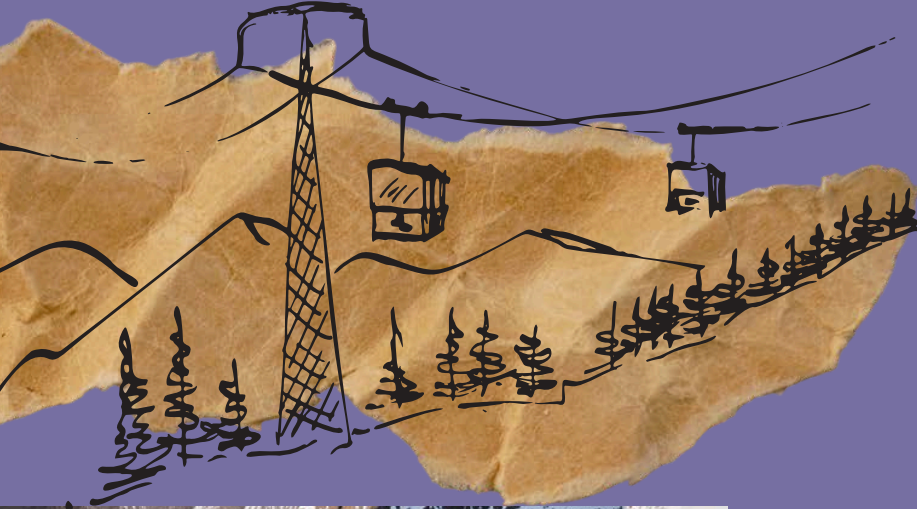
alaska
FELLOWS
Spring
2024



ANCHORAGE



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exactly
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any piece
here depicted
the post and punt.



the rays must be so low
v. s. v. s. and not from a
one
of artificial lighting
the source of light
the horizon—just
the lamp-post
lines on the ground
down from





Sarah

Most likely to drive a car



Austin

Most likely to have a hot beverage, a book, and a good attitude



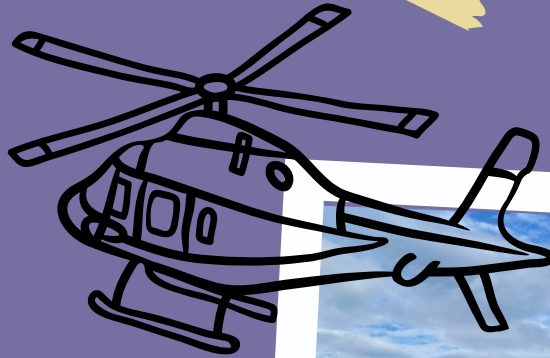
Lauren

Most likely to ask if you want to go on a walk



Kayleigh

Most likely to make others rally for a good time (or at least to try)



David



Most likely to overspice the community food and only tell you after you've eaten it

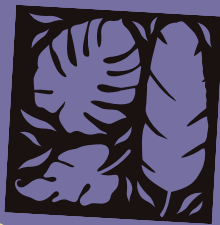


Alaina

Most likely to eat, pray, love

2024

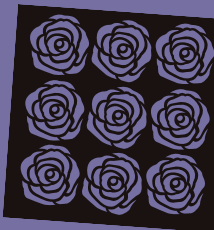




Marta



Most likely to whip up a Michelin star meal just cause they can



Sean



Most likely to be approached in a bar and be told he's the most handsome man in the world (pretty privileged)

Lasie



Most likely to double book themselves

George



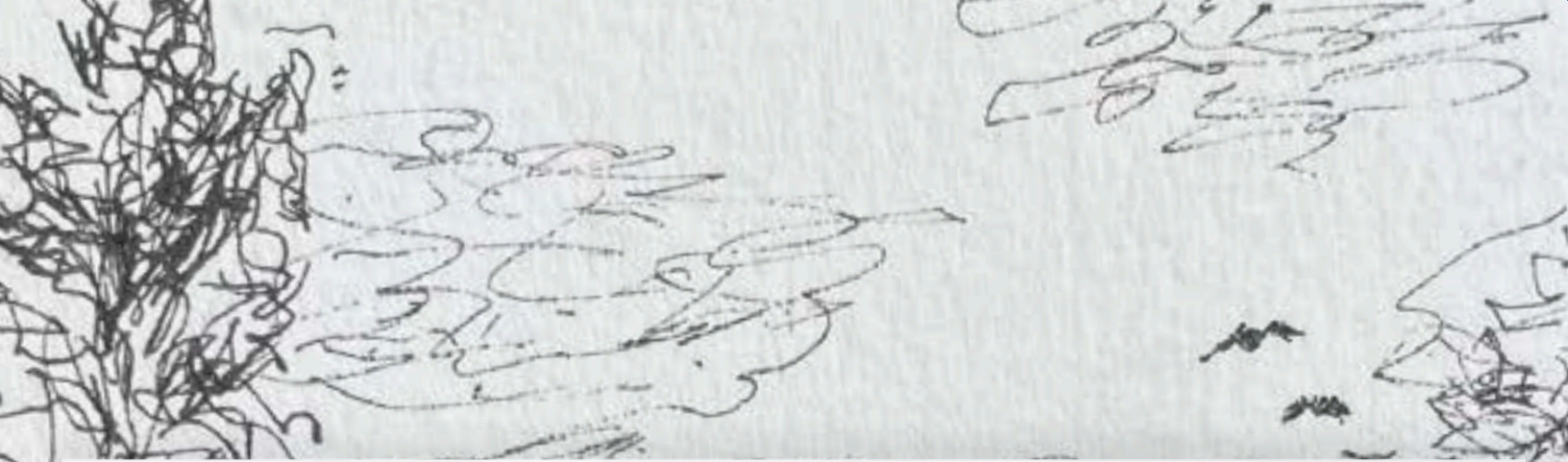
Most likely to come up with a pun - he's a pun pundit



Eva



Most 'famously chill'



**SKIING IN
KINCAID
WITH MOM
AND DAD**

Ink pen on
paper

6" x 5"





Josie Blumenthal Chicago, IL

2024

Exhibiting the spirit of exploration and adventure, Blumenthal's sketch captures a fleeting moment from their parents' recent excursion to Anchorage, Alaska. Executed with a deft hand, the sketch portrays their parents as diminutive yet determined figures traversing the majestic expanse of the Kincaid's 'Mize Loop' trail on cross-country skis. Amidst a dense aisle of towering pine trees, the scene unfolds with a sense of dynamic motion, hinting at the arduous journey undertaken by the intrepid travelers.

In the distance, ambiguous yet suggestive scribbles allude to the possibility of a grand vista awaiting at the trail's end, perhaps the awe-inspiring silhouette of Alaska's iconic Denali, shrouded in mystery and magnificence. Despite the physical demands and challenges encountered along the way, Blumenthal's portrayal captures none of the strain but rather focuses on the resilience and determination of their parents as they press onward towards the unknown.

Ultimately, after enduring the rigors of the trail, Blumenthal's parents are rewarded with a moment of transcendent beauty. Standing beneath an expansive cerulean sky, they are greeted by the breathtaking spectacle of what we assume is Denali, its crystalline peak piercing the heavens. In this sublime moment, any traces of pain from the journey are washed away, replaced by a profound sense of wonder and awe at the majesty of the natural world. Through Blumenthal's evocative sketch, viewers are invited to share in this transformative experience, where the trials of the journey yield to the sublime serenity of nature's splendor.

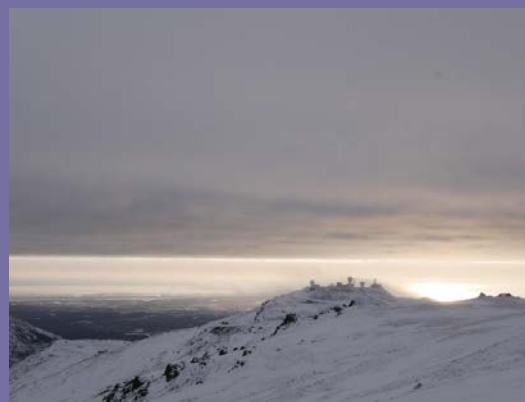
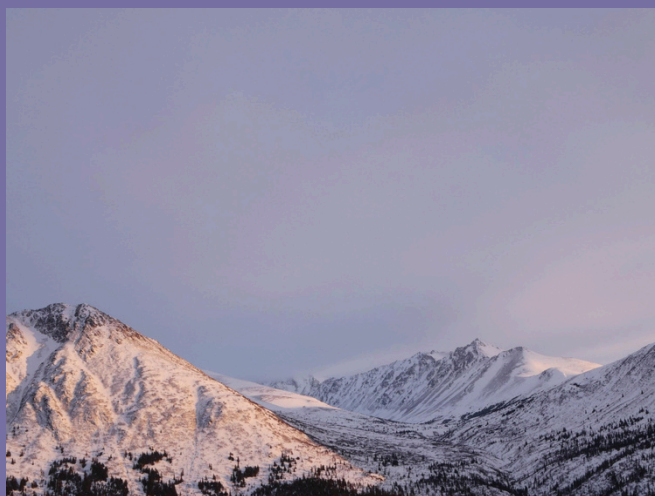
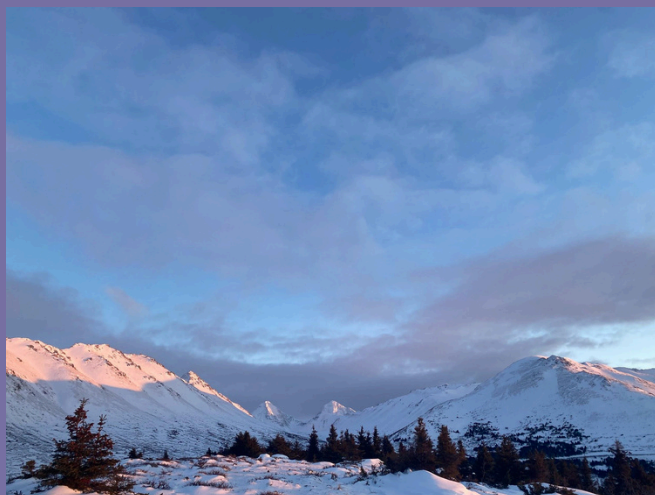
Written by Josie, edited by ChatGPGT and Sarah

George

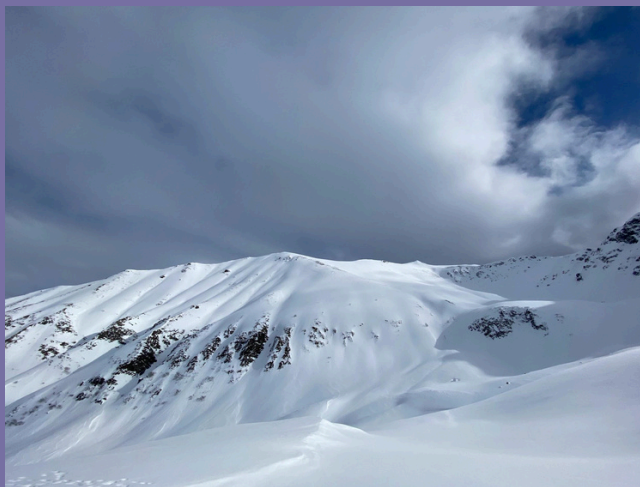
A Winter of Ski Touring in Anchorage

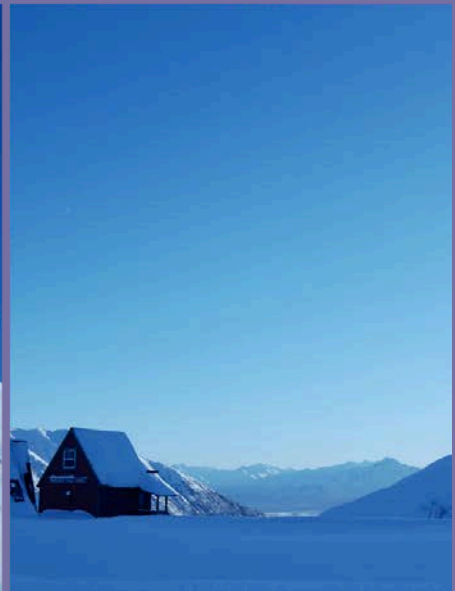
by George Kosinski

Living in Anchorage we're lucky to be surrounded by some outstanding ski terrain, with six distinct mountain ranges visible from the city. I've been skiing since I was nine or ten, but never outside the marked boundaries at local ski hills. I knew when I moved to Alaska that I wanted to make the most of my time here and gain some ski touring experience while exploring the beautiful peaks nearby.



The Chugach front range offers some great backcountry within thirty minutes of Anchorage--perfect for a quick run after work, though the snow can be hit or miss.





Heading North, the Talkeetna Mountains rise between the Chugach and the distant Alaska Range. Hatcher Pass offers access to a panorama of snowy slopes.



Meanwhile an hour drive south along the Seward Highway brings you to Turnagain Pass. Here the Kenai mountains tower above the road with seemingly endless features to ski.

As the snow starts melting and the Fellowship nears its end, I find myself feeling both sad and incredibly lucky to have had such unique experiences in this beautiful place with great people and community. I know I'll miss the Fellows, the mountains, and the city of Anchorage. Can't wait to come back and visit next winter!



SKEEYEE



Tax Trip Mishap

by Eva White

So. As many of you know, I am heading out to the village of Akiachak to do taxes from Friday to Sunday as part of the Volunteer Tax and Loan Program (VTLP) with Alaska Business Development Center (ABDC). My life is always full of acronyms, it seems.

Anyway, I completed about 60 hours of boring tax training to be ready to do taxes in rural Alaska! So lots of fishing, what to do with dividends from the Native Corporations, and how to make sure people get the maximum benefits from the earned income credit and child tax credit and stuff like that. It was really dull and difficult training and I almost quit several times but luckily I had friends to help me stay accountable and I'm so glad I finished it because I got to go on this awesome trip!

Leaving on Friday. On Thursday, we do not know what time our flight is. We also think we're going to New Stuyahok. Then we find out around 2pm that we're going to Akiachak instead, because there was basketball happening in New Stuyahok and if there was basketball, no one would come to do their taxes. Just wouldn't happen. Luckily, this site also has potable water, but I'm borrowing David's water filter just in case.

New plan, relatively same packing. Pierre (other brand new tax preparer) and I coordinate that he'll pick me up on the way to the airport, and he does so on Friday morning. We park the car in a lot where some cars are definitely snowed in, have to call for the shuttle bus, and make it to check in with Sherri and Mel. Pierre is a professional cellist and works with the youth orchestra, Sherri is a retired youth services librarian, and Mel is a retired civil engineer.

So, to recap. Me, a librarian, cellist, and engineer walk into the village of Akiachak to do their taxes.



Flight to Bethel on the jet is nice and easy. The flight attendant asks if anyone dropped their snowmachine key at the gate. Tough day.

Then, we take a little plane from Bethel to Akiachak. We wait for a couple of hours in this sterile, incredibly large room with a bunch of other randos. Overhear an insane conversation between traveling nurses about water in rural Alaska. Me and Pierre go for a walk to the cemetery, on his way he calls his friend Roberto (doesn't explain, just calls him) and we both talk to Roberto (I have met Pierre about 5 hours ago).

Then, we get on a 6 seater plane. My response to this type of insanity is just to laugh my head off, and honest to god the thought running through my mind was "the Wright brothers were crazy." What the HELL did they think they were doing??? This thing was so little, and we were going up in the sky in it, like way far off the ground. And it just kinda...took off! Super easily! And the ride was awesome, I was having an absolute blast. Gotta love a small plane.

Ok, so we ride in a truck from the airstrip to Akiachak, with our gear just kind of sitting in the back bed (the truck bed didn't have walls). We're sleeping in the school and working in the school library, so we go set up in there.



The next few days is a combination of microwaving meals (since that's the only real kitchen we have access to), doing TONS of returns (I did 35 returns in 3 days, refunding around \$55k), understanding extremely complicated family dynamics, and the occasional walk to the store or just down the road (tons of people are just out and about on ATVs or snowmachines). The town is about 900 people, about 250 kids in school K-12, and has one store.

Things of note: I work a 12 hour day doing taxes, which is absolutely exhausting. Pierre does 2 dog musher returns (this we did not know to expect), I do 3 fishing returns (including a captain!!). There are about 4 families who make up a considerable portion of the town. Overall, my feelings about this trip are that I am just so grateful to have been able to be in this community, doing this thing that's fulfilling. It didn't change my opinions about anything, because I think I knew what to expect. I have so much respect for all of the people I met, and they were so kind and welcoming to me and to each other. Definitely a restorative experience! (Also, Sean's blow up sleeping pad was super comfortable, which definitely made sleeping better. Thanks Sean!)



Now, the good part. We're supposed to get a flight back to Bethel at 4:30, to catch our 7:30 flight to Anchorage on the jet. We get picked up at around 3:45, load up a van that physically can't go above 15mph (2 seats in the front, no rows of seats, and then a single row of seats all the way at the back so everyone is separated by like 10 feet from front to back of van) and drive to the airstrip. On the way, we learn that Fox Air (what we're flying back to Bethel) is on a weather hold because of low ice fog. We pull up to the airstrip, and basically just sit there in mild silence with Baron (oh yeah, the principal's name is Baron who's hosting us at the school) for about an hour, waiting for news. In the middle of waiting, a dog team goes by. Ok?

Eventually, Baron calls Fox, and they aren't optimistic about the hold ending, so we drive back to the school. Then, Baron gets out of the van and goes inside, leaving us to wonder - what exactly will happen next? We know that there's another route - the ice road, which is just the frozen Kuskokwim River, has been plowed and people drive up and down the river to all of the villages. We learn later it's over 100 miles long (??) and when you're on it, there are basically forks in the road where the village is labeled on a highway type sign that gives the overall impression of an exit. Kinda out of this world.



The next series of events is best described as pretty extreme chaos over a period of an hour. It all happens while sitting in the van, which is just idling the whole time. I almost turn it off about 25 times, but the way I saw Baron start that van implies that I will somehow cause a chain reaction where the wheels of the van will fall off if I touch anything near the ignition.

Baron comes back, says he's asking around to see if anyone will drive us on the ice road to Bethel. We're calling Michelle, the notoriously iron fisted coordinator at ABDC, to see what we should do. We just kinda sit there for a while, making decision trees and trying to figure out cutoff times for things, given that it takes us a certain amount of time to get to the airport and we have to check bags and our 50ish pound tote with a bunch of our tax equipment in it. Michelle calls, saying Fox Air is beginning to think about flying again (other airlines are flying around the general area, so there's hope for this). Baron keeps getting calls, some are just regular people wanting to know if the tax people are still doing taxes, and some are with people he's asked to drive us down to Bethel. He's already driven to Bethel once today to get kids to the airport from the school in Akiachak.

Baron gets a call from someone named Buck, who can take us down to Bethel. He says Buck will be here in 20 minutes. It's getting close to the time we HAVE to leave to make our flight. But wait! Is our jet to Anchorage even going out? No, it's delayed. Ok, we have more time to get down the ice road. Michelle calls, saying Fox is sounding more optimistic. She's also not happy with the quote of \$290 for the drive - she wants it down to \$50 per person. (A flight on Fox air would be about \$100 per person). Then, Sherri calls Alaska Airlines to check the flight status, and a person on the other end tells her the flight is canceled. We are absolutely hooting and hollering in the van about this.

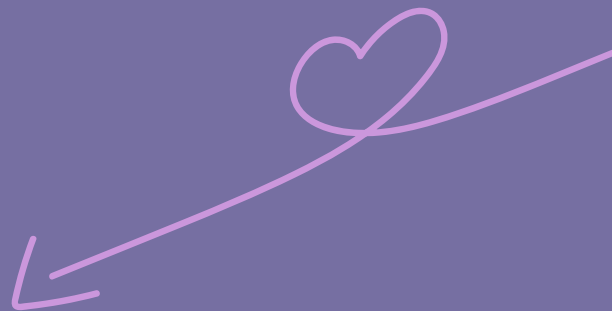
We call Michelle and tell her this, since if we go to Bethel we'll have to find a place to stay the night. She says no problem, you can stay at Pastor Adam's church. Here's his phone number. Then, we find out the jet is not canceled, just delayed 11 minutes when Pierre AND Baron check online. No idea what happened when Sherri called. Wait - can we still make it? If Fox Air left at that very instant, we'd have a chance. Speaking of, where is the ice road guy? It's been about an hour.

We also have to rebook the Alaska Air tickets by a certain time if we're not going to make it, and that time is coming. So given that we have a place to sleep in Bethel, we decide we won't make the flight and just go to Bethel instead. Michelle calls again, and says Fox might take off soon. At the instant she calls, Buck's pickup pulls into the school parking lot. Keep in mind, all of this has been interspersed with light chatting among the 4 tax people and Baron, who just happens to be caught up in all this mess, over a period of 2 hours. So, with instructions to haggle Buck down to \$250 from Michelle because I guess she's feeling stingy (even though ice road is cheaper than plane), we get out of the car. To get this \$250, we have all scraped together the cash that we have, with all of us having about \$20-40 left. Sherri is nervous to haggle, but it goes well, and he accepts the \$250 since we need to keep some cash for other things when we get to Bethel. Also, we have done this man's taxes, which is kind of awesome. Him, his wife, and his daughter have all come to pick us up, leaving 4 of us to cram in the backseat of his Ford F150 together with our backpacks that we can't let out of our sight because they have a combined 91 tax returns with people's personal information on them in there.

So we decide we're going the ice road route, since it's here and it's happening, and we lowkey want to go on the ice road. So we throw ourselves in the cab, our stuff in the bed, and bump along to drive onto a literal river with this lovely Yu'pik family to Bethel. It is a REAL bumpy ride, so much so that Pierre takes a chewable Dramamine and I cannot get any sort of clear photo out the window, but it's absolutely beautiful and we see 2 moose, listen to Yu'pik gospel music, and watch the sun set. Sherri is also on the phone, trying to figure out where the hell Pastor Adam's church is for Buck to drop us off. We get an address, and continue bumping along on this crazy thing that is a 2 lane ice highway.



Eventually, we make it to Bethel, and to the church, where another tax team about to go on a weeklong trip will be staying with us because they also got weathered in. Shoutout Pastor Adam! They're from University of Washington, here for a week of tax trips. Then, Sherri treats us to pizza, and we head back to bed down in various rooms of this church. Tomorrow, God willing (shoutout Pastor Adam), we will be on the 12:45 jet back to Anchorage! Never a dull moment.



A songwriter's songwriting journey

By Sarah Nabirye



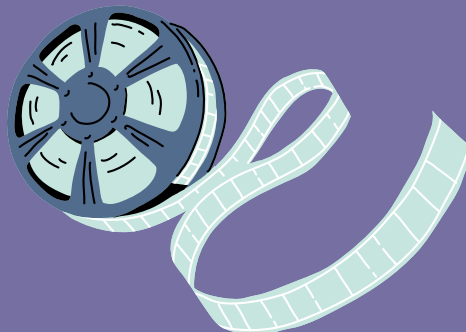
What is this about?

One thing I really enjoyed doing in 2024 was listening to my heart's desires and nurturing my songwriting and singing skills alongside my fellow fellas (Alaina, Josie & Kayleigh). You all know Sarah but you can't truly know and love Sarah without knowing Sazieroma -> Sazie -> Sazié. Let me reintroduce myself; I am Sazié and I am a singer/songwriter. I wanted to record a song I had been inspired to write and began writing last summer, so I did. The song is called "Resentment" and touches on the relatable experience of what my sister Nambi perfectly described as 'the crisis of conversing with loved ones' when you are going through a transition phase. In particular, this song talks about feeling the post-graduate pressure of finding a job and establishing oneself as an adult and the constant barrage of questions surrounding one's job prospects and plans. It highlights the ambivalent feelings of gratitude for the concern and keen interest in your future shown by your loved ones and the inevitable frustrations that arise from feeling overwhelmed in the transition.



Who is Involved?

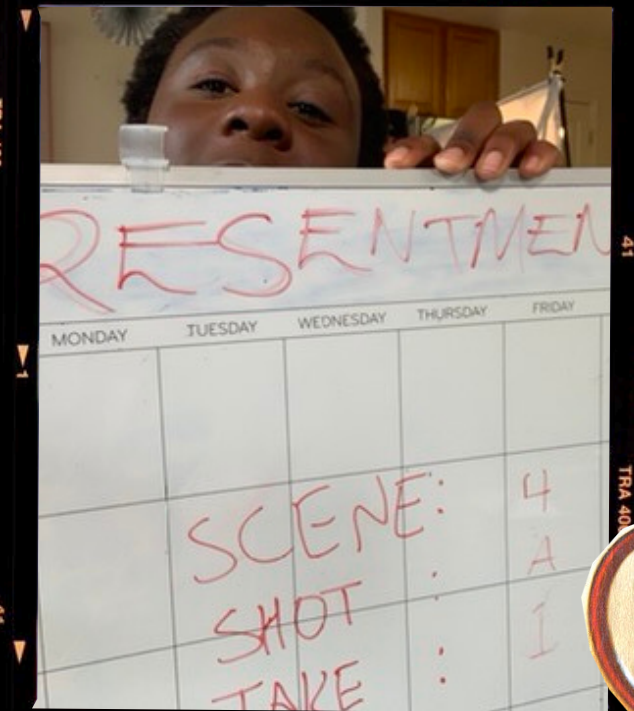
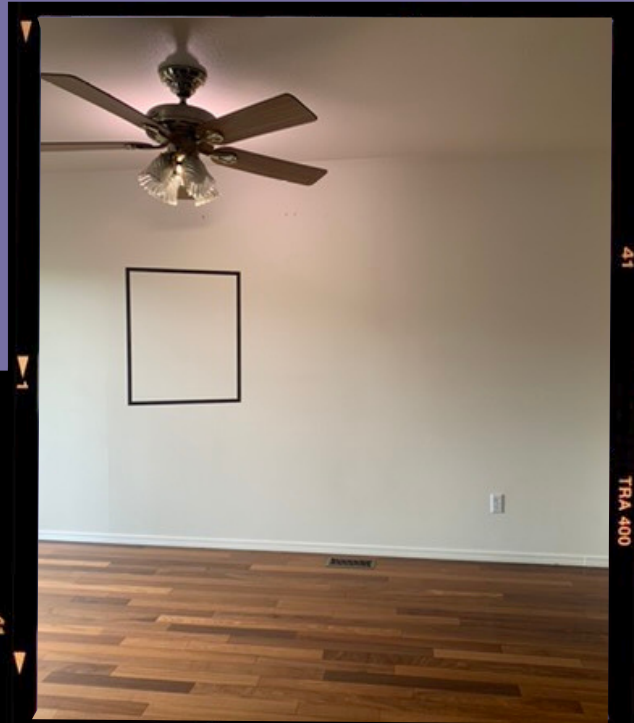
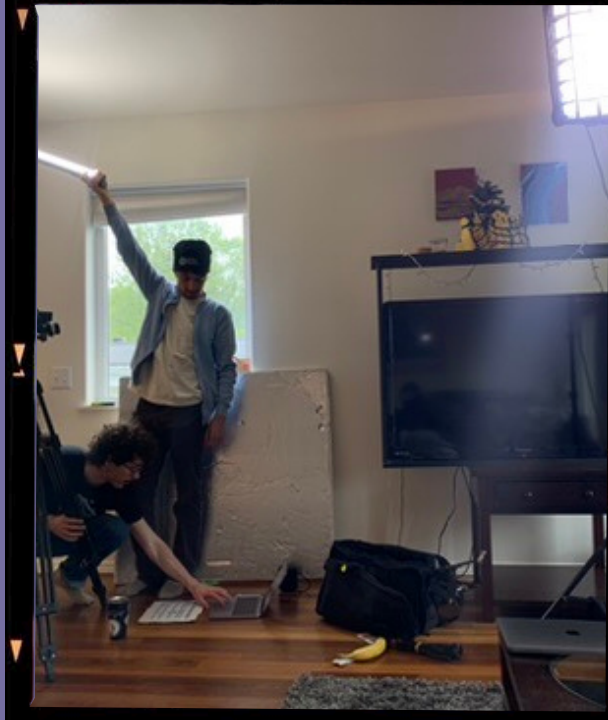
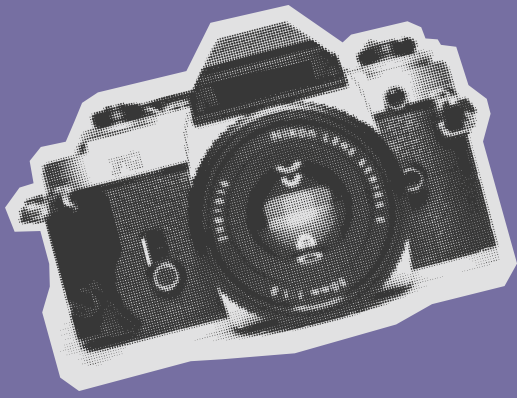
I asked Josie, Kayleigh, and Alaina if they wanted to join me, and they all were excited about the opportunity to jam together and get back into singing, as many of them had participated in choirs growing up and missed singing with others. Together, they formed 'the fellas' and assisted with background vocals in the track. I wanted this venture to be collaborative, low-stakes, and entirely for the purpose of ENJOYMENT. I wanted the project to be as exciting for them as it was for me. I reassured everyone that I wasn't looking for perfection but a collective indulgence in our creative passions and interests and an exploration of what we can create when we commit to a creative process. Very quickly, this started to become an all-fellow production. Austin was my director of photography, and George was the first Assistant camera for my music video. We met several times to create a shotlist for the music video to accompany this song and filmed it from 6:30 AM - 7 PM on Sunday before Memorial day. I was both the subject and the Director. Marta catered and delivered a nutritious meal on film day that fed the entire cast and crew and sustained us on the grueling set. I have also employed Sean's journalistic expertise to conceive and draft a press release for the song introducing Sazié & the fellas to the world.



SAZIÉ & THE FELLAS



RESENTMENT



Savoonga Saga

by Eva White



What everyone has been waiting for! The chronicle of my lovely, lucky tax trip to Savoonga. This is less a funny, wild story, and more of a pleasant recounting, so no need for emotional seat belts.

Earlier this week, I was under the impression I would be traveling to Point Lay through Utqiagvik to do taxes, but as usual, the Tuesday night email from ABDC came through that “Savoonga is the new Point Lay.” Upon receipt of said email, I typed Savoonga into Google Maps, and time seemed to slow down as it took me very, very far away to St. Lawrence Island. After I had picked myself up from a laughing fit on the floor, I did some more googling, and Savoonga is about 45 miles from Russia and you can see it on a clear day. What the hell is a girl from Maryland doing going to basically Russia to do taxes for free on the weekend.

Then, I go to work the next day and inform my coworkers about the change in travel (everyone at work is living vicariously through my tax preparation). I tell them I’m flying through Nome, and it comes to my attention that THE IDITAROD MIGHT BE FINISHING when I’m in Nome on my way back home. I had not put two and two together, and this really put the cherry on top. Feeling quite lucky to have scored this tax trip!

So I pack, and our flight gets delayed leaving for Nome on Friday. Pierre (resounding cheer) picks me up for the airport, we park his car, and off we go to Nome with our new trip leader, whose name is Steve. Pierre, as you might remember from my last tax trip, plays cello in the Anchorage Symphony, runs a chamber music festival, and works with the youth symphony. Steve gave me cookout dad vibes at first, and I couldn’t figure out how earnest this guy truly was. As of today, I think he’s pretty earnest, pretty nerdy about Alaska, and he really loves these tax trips. He also taught me how a dredger works in industrial gold mining, and looked both me and Pierre up online before coming on the trip and was locked and loaded with questions. He also told us a lot about his coat, which apparently did well in minus 50 on one of his tax trips. He worked for the USGS, flying all around Alaska, and I’m not entirely sure what his profession was, but he has his pilot’s license. He also has flown a million miles on Alaska Airlines, which I find out in the first 10 minutes of meeting him, and that’s a bit... loaded.





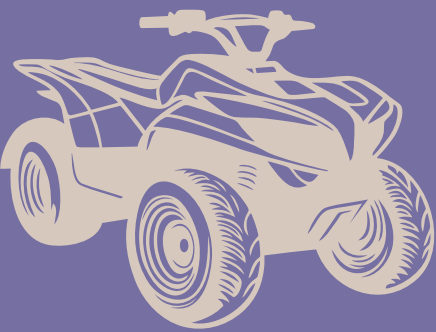
So we get to Nome after I kept getting verklempt about the river meanders out the window, and proceed to grab our bags in what felt like the most crowded auction of my life, since all of the bags were just slid onto a 10 foot pickup area that an entire 747 plane gathered around. We find some guy who's supposed to pick us up (extremely specific description: he's big, with a beard, and wearing a beanie and blue coat). We find him, wait an eon for my sleeping bag to come out of the plane, and then head off with this guy for a slow driving tour around Nome (read: going up and down the two streets that have businesses on them). Then check out our digs for the night (a senior center room with 3 exercise bikes, 5 sewing machines, and a TON of puzzles in the closet), and hoof it to Airport Pizza, where they also serve ramen and sushi in addition to Airport Pizza. Pierre and I house a veggie pizza while we find out Steve and Pierre stayed at the same Airbnb cabin somewhere in Alaska but at two different times, and I also learn how aforementioned dredger works (because Nome is a mining town).



With a slightly burnt roof of my mouth, we then stop at the Nugget Inn, which is having its grand opening that night because it burned down a few years ago. We walk in, find the bar, and enter a space with a whole bunch of characters, plus some bald guy with a septum piercing crooning nonsense at the piano. We head back to the senior center, and Pierre and I get suited up to go look for the lights, because it's a good night for them. We hike a bit out of town, Pierre calls Roberto again on the walk (Roberto and I are developing a rapport since the last trip where Pierre called Roberto on a walk in Bethel), and we see some faint lights, but still a win! Then we hoof it home and conk out before our 6:30 am wake up.



Up and at em the next day to head to Bering Air, for our 8:30 flight. The flight is absolutely breathtaking (again) - seeing the sun rise over the iced over ocean, seeing Russia from the plane (gasp), and landing in beautiful beautiful Savoonga was absolutely terrific. Our ride from the airstrip in Savoonga to the place we're working quits on us about 20 minutes before we take off, but somehow Steve and the ABDC office manage to find another ride. We land right next to a group of people on snowmachines and ATVs, and trade our luggage in the 10 person plane for some other boxes and two dogs. We get snowmachined and ATVed (my first snowmachine! It's been years in the making!) to the office we're working, which has a box of fresh reindeer antlers in the doorway and a really sunny room we're working out of.



We set up and do taxes for the rest of the day, with intermittent walks we take when it's slow. Notably, I had a couple of reindeer herders come through my tax line. I also walked to the windmills that no longer work, saw Russia from the ground in the afternoon (Steve did not think it was Russia, but I was pretty convinced), and had many lovely conversations with taxpayers. One old man came in, walked right over to me, and showed me earrings he had carved, asking me if I would like to buy them. You better believe I did, so watch the earlobes this week.

After a long day of taxes (we did about 30 returns?), we walked over to the lodge we were staying at by surprise! Living a life of luxury. A strange coincidence is that my coworker sent me a video to watch of this guy who goes to Savoonga and talks to a lot of the locals and spends a week with them in the summer. One guy, named Dean, is featured prominently, so I already kinda know his life story from the video, and he was the FIRST taxpayer that walked in, just to chat with us. The lodge where we're staying is also where this YouTuber stayed when he was here, and I am currently sleeping in the bed he slept in according to his room tour. The world is a little weird sometimes.



Anyway, after I read for a while and tried not to fall asleep, Steve came back from pull tab bingo and told me and Pierre we HAD to stop by. So over we went, and it's basically paper scratch off meets slot machine. It's huge here - the pull tab master made \$50k last year, which we know because we did her taxes.

Sunday is a quiet day. Daylight savings plus a generally chill vibe in the village meant we didn't do as many taxes, and I got to read, write some letters, and go for a breathtaking walk to the cemetery with its entrance framed by whale ribs. This is the day where it becomes apparent that Steve is a chatter - he adores chatting with anyone and everyone, and there were several moments Sunday and Monday where Pierre and I couldn't find Steve, and he was just chatting with some guy on the side of the road or at the airport or something. We check the Iditarod results and the flights out of Nome, and it doesn't look like we can swing staying until Tuesday night or Wednesday to see the first finisher because there isn't room on the flights back to Anchorage those nights. So, we'll likely not see any finishers in Nome, but we will see the hubbub! We also go for a walk in the evening to old town, where the older houses are. Old town has the power plant, tank farm for the gas, the water treatment plant, and a Presbyterian church. All in all, an interesting, beautiful day with lots of chatting and exploring, but nothing crazy to report.



Some of my biggest tax takeaways from Savoonga - dependency is often the trickiest part of a return as we knew from Akiachak, the reindeer herders were new, and a lot of people came through that were traditionally married but not married in the eyes of the law.

Monday, we're up and at em to catch the plane to Nome! Turns out when you bring your work computer on your tax trip, you don't get weathered in. I ride on an ATV to the airstrip this time, checking off another form of transportation - this trip is really doing it all. Me, Steve, Pierre, all of our stuff, and the keys to the Savoonga lodge where we were staying leave on the plane and stop in Gambell on the way to Nome, seeing the most incredible sunrise on the way. I'm leaning out of my seat like I have never leaned before to snap all the angles out the window. Eagle eyed Pierre spots the Diamede islands on the way back too - there are two, Little Diamede (USA) and Big Diamede (Russia) - so we (certainly) saw Russia again (no doubt from Steve here!)

We land in Nome, I realize I still have the keys to our lodging, and after a brief wide eyed moment we send them back on the afternoon flight to Savoonga. Yikes! Phew! Dan (our ride around Nome) then sneaks up on us in the airport waiting area, and then takes us over to Alaska Air to check our bazillion random bags, and then proceeds to just...drive us around Nome, again, narrating what everything is. We stop at the finish line of the Iditarod, where they're still moving snow around with construction equipment, and a guy who recognizes us from the Anchorage airport a few days ago tells us we can't go on the finish line because he doesn't want "any red" in the snow, implying we might get run over by a construction vehicle. From there, we go to the visitor center to "see Leon." Leon is not there yet, but from there we spot the Nome National Forest (leftover Christmas trees that the residents set up on the ice for a fun prank for the Iditarod tourists coming through). We then go to a souvenir shop, and it becomes clear that Dan intends on spending the whole afternoon with us, which is very kind of him. It also becomes clear that Dan is a pastor, which makes a whole lot more sense because he keeps talking about his church. I thought he was just a zealot. He's also a huge wife guy.



He then drops us at the craft fair in an old church (not his church, but across the street from his church), where all three of us go crazy and buy spoons, earrings, dryer balls, and jam. Steve buys a ton of jam. We then finish up there and head over to Dan's house, knocking on the door, since we said we'd take him to lunch. One of his favorite places around Nome is Golden China, because "they have great burgers." We go there, and Pastor Dan orders a chili cheeseburger, which is fries and a cheeseburger entirely doused in beef chili. He houses that chili cheeseburger, thanks to the help of his pocket Tabasco he whipped out as soon as he sat down. Someone named Ike walks by to pick up some food at Golden China and stops to chat with Pastor Dan, recounting his king crab trapping adventures of the past few days (he caught a few, and also has a little mild frostbite on his face), and offers some crab to Pastor Dan.



Then, Pastor Dan takes us to the convention center that is hosting the Iditarod events after finishing the race (read - a big room with tables and t-shirts for sale). Pierre and I are both deliriously tired at this point, and Steve and Dan are going strong, still chatting. Then, we head to the finish line again for some more quick flicks, and then off to the airport we finally go. There, we check Steve's jam, meet a service dog named Sebastian who is the most fluffed up poodle I've ever seen, and go through security and get on the plane with 3 high school basketball teams.

David picks me up from the airport, and I head home with my several new treasures, some absolutely amazing photos from days of beautiful weather and breathtaking flights, satisfaction and gratitude for doing taxes, and memories of a trip that will last a lifetime. And that's it! That's the write up! Nothing super funny, or crazy, just a good trip. This might be a first in Eva write up history.





This is a gouache painting of a photograph taken by fellow George at the Fairbanks retreat in October. A bright golden tree stands boldly as a soft column between a cluster of dark-green spruce. As the only deciduous tree present, its colors communicate the stark arrival of autumn- a short and abrupt, yet stunning season in Alaska.

Josie Blumenthal, 2024

This second gouache painting attempts to replicate the cold and crisp texture of the frosty snow that overcame Anchorage this past winter. The new ground of ice and snow that held us up for months gave us Earth-bound creatures temporary access to lakes, rivers, and lagoons, such as this one- Westchester Lagoon is my favorite place to glide on with ice skates or XC skis, but mostly I love it for the views and endless wildlife and people encounters.



GALENTINES

At A Bulous Valentines Night



Saturday February 10



4PM - 10PM



V'Court



QUEER & unapologetic





These pictures are from the 2nd Annual Galentines, coordinated by the ladies of V'Court: Alaina, Kayleigh, and me. The idea for this event was inspired by the wealth of friendships I have that nurture and rejuvenate my soul and provide sustenance as I navigate this world as a woman. Last year, as a senior at Columbia University, I hosted my first-ever Galentines, which I decided would become a yearly tradition of mine. I felt blessed to know all the incredible women I knew and called friends; recognizing the beauty of the individual connections within my circle of friends, I endeavored to forge bonds among them, fostering a community where mutual support could flourish.

Galentines, contrary to misconceptions, isn't a radical feminist stance against conventional love or masculinity but rather a celebration of love in its purest form – an expression of the desire to nurture one's own and others' spiritual growth (as Bell Hooks would put it). On the menu for the evening, we had an elaborate 4-course and vegan “girl dinner.” We also played games, had time to pamper ourselves, and had fun completing an impossible New Moon puzzle, painting our nails, or chit-chat. As the Vibes Coordinator, I of course, ensured the Vybzs were flowing with a 300-song Galentines playlist that I have been growing since the inaugural Galentines. Our gathering curated a sanctuary for meaningful dialogue, punctuated by journaling sessions with prompts reflecting on sources of personal inspiration, desired forms of affection, and what we think the brightest thing about ourselves is.

To finish the night, Kayleigh, Josie, Alaina, and I watched ‘Steel Magnolias’ (1989), a film whose thematic resonance beautifully encapsulated the essence of our evening.



Sarah Nabinye

Dune II and Perfect Days -- AFP Newsletter Edition

By Austin Todd

Hi AFP Newsletter! This is a little movie reivew/blog post I wrote a couple weeks ago during the last stretches of full-blown Anchorage winter. Since then the sidewalks have reemerged and the sky is even blue, on occasion! I didn't write this for the newsletter specifically, but it maybe gives an organic view of what occupied my mind during the cold months (many movies and books). Enjoy!

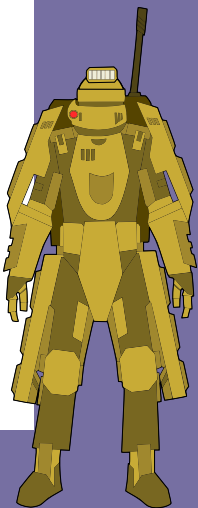
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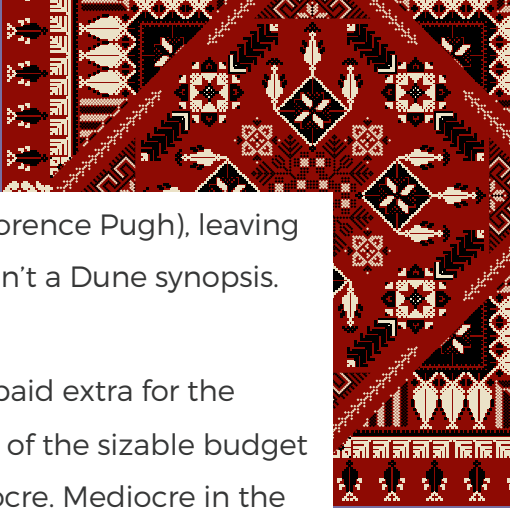
A couple weeks ago I saw Villeneuve's *Dune II* in IMAX. I was at a huge Regal Cinemas multiplex in Anchorage; I think it was the 8pm showing. One day later, at 4pm, I was in Juneau, wandering around town with nothing to do, and saw that a little arts theater called "Gold Town" was showing *Perfect Days*, directed by Wim Wenders, in thirty minutes.

I hustled over, bought my ticket, and sat down, arriving just a couple minutes into the start of the film. The theater was very small—especially with the memory of the previous night's IMAX grandeur still fresh in my mind. It could hold maybe forty people, and the screen was, estimating generously, 15ft. across. There were around ten older folks there with me, quietly crunching on their \$2 bags of popcorn.

Perfect Days follows Hirayama, a public toilet cleaner in Tokyo. He's older—40s or 50s—and lives alone, spending his days watering his plants, going to work, eating at a small underground restaurant, bathing, reading, listening to his cassettes, and taking photos of the sun-splattered tree he sits across from as he eats lunch in a park. There isn't much plot beyond all of these little things. At one point his niece runs away from home and stays with him for a while, and at another he meets the dying ex-husband of the bar-owner he (seemingly) has a crush on. Other than that, though, it's just a handful of normal, quotidian, "perfect" days.


Dune II, on the other hand...what could be more plot-heavy? The film is nearly three hours long, yet still manages to feel rushed. So much plot compressed into so little time on a big, big screen. In this long-awaited sequel, we see Paul (Timmy Chalamet!) make his gradual ascension to





messiah-figure of Arrakis, and ultimately marry Princess Irulan (Florence Pugh), leaving Chani (Zendaya) behind. Of course a lot more happens, but this ain't a *Dune* synopsis.

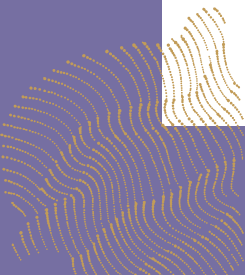
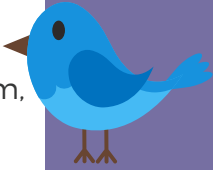
I walked out of *Dune: Part Two* honestly disappointed that I had paid extra for the IMAX ticket, and also disappointed by the film as a whole. In spite of the sizable budget and very starry cast, the acting and writing, surprisingly, felt mediocre. Mediocre in the way that acting and writing in TV live action adaptations feels: hollowed out, false, banal. What had even happened, what had even been said? During many of the film's action sequences, my thoughts kept circling back to the ongoing genocide in Gaza. For whom are these things entertainment, and for whom are they reality? How many Western theaters will be filled for Villeneuve's film and how many people in the audiences will, after the lights come up, continue to look away from the real catastrophe begging to be witnessed?



Perfect Days is very narrow in scope but more genuine in intention. Walking out of *Perfect Days*, —no, within the first ten minutes of the movie—I couldn't stop thinking that it was doing something emotionally, in the "shabby" Juneau theater I saw it first in, that *Dune* did not and maybe could not do.

There's a guy I used to follow on Twitter who thought (it was his PhD thesis, so maybe more than "thought") that all sci-fi is inherently conservative. I didn't agree with him; there's so much speculative/fantasy/sci-fi narrative that isn't just escapism or techno-fascist futurism, and actually helps us understand (see) reality better. Think afrofuturism, think Ursula Le Guin and Octavia Butler. HOWEVER, *Dune II* almost makes me think Twitter guy was onto something. [This LARB article](#), ("*Race Consciousness: Facism and Frank Herbert's 'Dune'*") by Jordan S. Carroll about modern fascists' perennial fascination with *Dune* supports, to an extent, these misgivings.

I don't think *Dune: Part Two* works to clarify reality, and I think *Perfect Days* does exactly that, in its own small way.



When I was a kid, my mom would take my sister and me along when she went to clean houses. She wasn't a professional house-cleaner, she just did a few houses a week, paid in cash. Coming from this other side of the cleaning/janitorial professions—so often looked down upon—of course biases me a little toward *Perfect Days*. There's a good scene where a kid is lost and sits crying out for his mother in one of the bathrooms. Hirayama finds him, takes his hand, and leads him around the park, asking where his parents are. Eventually they find the mother, who's also pushing a stroller along. She grabs the little boy, chides him, then immediately pulls out a wet wipe and cleans off the boy's hand where Hirayama held it. Kôji Yakusho acts Hirayama in this moment perfectly: his expression is neutral but for the smallest discernible amount of pain seeping through. The mother casts a single glance back before walking off, but then the little boy turns and waves, and Hirayama smiles, then laughs.

This and so many other little moments spoke to me during the film. And again, Wenders and the *Perfect Days* team managed it without a *Dune: Part Two* budget (190m vs. 14m)! Without the IMAX cameras, fancy soundtrack, titanic SFX, etc. etc.! Who would have thought that filmmaking can be more than its technical elements, than an equation where bigger screen + fancier camera + well-loved plot + pretty actors = highest emotion, thrill, enjoyment, pleasure?

Perfect Days ends with an almost uncomfortably long shot of Hirayama driving to work in the morning. He's listening to Nina Simone's "Feeling Good," and his face cycles repeatedly between joy and pain. Something I love about this movie is its comfort with opacity. Just as Hirayama is a man-of-few-words par excellence, *Perfect Days* is anything but forthright with backstories. We never know why Hirayama works cleaning public toilets, his history with the bar owner, who he was when he was younger, why his sister is rich, why he won't go see their ailing father, or why his niece says she identifies with the protagonist of a Patricia Highsmith short story who's driven mad by an emotionally abusive, haughty mother. We never know the answers, but we see them written on Hirayama's face as he nods, smiles, and cries along to Nina's voice:

*Stars when you shine, you know
how I feel*



*Scent of the pine, you know how
I feel Oh, freedom is mine And I
know how I feel*

*It's a new dawn
It's a new day It's
a new life for me*

*I'm feeling
good*





A Long Walk

Josie Blumenthal Chicago, IL 2024

The History of Weggsday

by Kayleigh Hammernick

A few of us are in Homer, Alaska on a much-needed getaway. Our open-concept tiny house Airbnb has one shower, and we're in that part of the morning where some of us have been ready to go for an hour and are starting to get twitchy about it while others still twitchily await their turn to shower. I hate feeling twitchy more than I hate feeling dirty, so I had opted out of the shower queue to instead lie idle and horizontal on one of the living room couches.

As I lay there I thought about a question I had seen posed on X (formerly known as Twitter) that I hadn't stopped thinking about for a few days. The place being an open-concept tiny house lent itself to having a conversation with the whole group quite well, so I called out to the inhabitants:

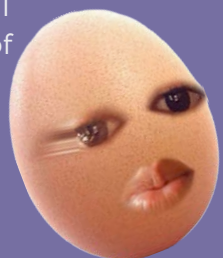


"Hey, how many eggs do you guys think you could you eat in a day?"

The discussion that followed lasted the remainder of the trip. We would think we had put it to rest, and then while reaching for the car door handle in the parking lot of a fish market Sean would say "No, I changed my mind. I am sure I could eat 30." "I asked Asma and they said they could eat 80!" Alaina exclaimed while marveling at the Homer coastline. "What form do the eggs have to take?" Eva mused as a fourth bald eagle swooped down and attacked the skeleton of a medium sized mammal. Sarah, delighted and amazed that we were continuing to deeply consider this question, confidently asserted her number: four eggs. (In the weeks that followed, she would not change this number once. God grant me the clarity and sense of self that Sarah has.) Friends from near and far were called upon to answer the question, every answer more incredulous than the last. I even gave my ex a call, who said he could eat 60. People were talking a big game.

Over the following weeks, the Anchorage fellows and friends continued adjusting our answers as we discussed the logistics, the strategies, the possibilities of how many eggs they could eat in a day. We agreed that hypothetically, it isn't about how many eggs you WANT to eat. It's how many eggs, if pushed to your absolute physical and mental limits, could you eat? Hypothetically, you would have one waking day to eat the eggs. Hypothetically, if one was to do this, they could make the eggs into any form or recipe as long as the eggs consumed were accounted for properly. Hypothetically, we all had our own strategy for how we would maximize our physical and mental threshold for eggs.

After a while, we had had enough of hypotheticals. I Instacarted 300 eggs to Virginia Court, and on Wednesday, February 28th, It was time to put our eggs where our mouths were. Anchorage AFP Fellows, alumni, and visitors from near and far participated; some having taken the day off, some of us working from home, and others participating from the office or popping into Virginia court on lunch breaks. All participants wrote their name on the windows with paint markers and the number of eggs they thought they could achieve. We then kept a tally of real time egg consumption (see accompanying photos).

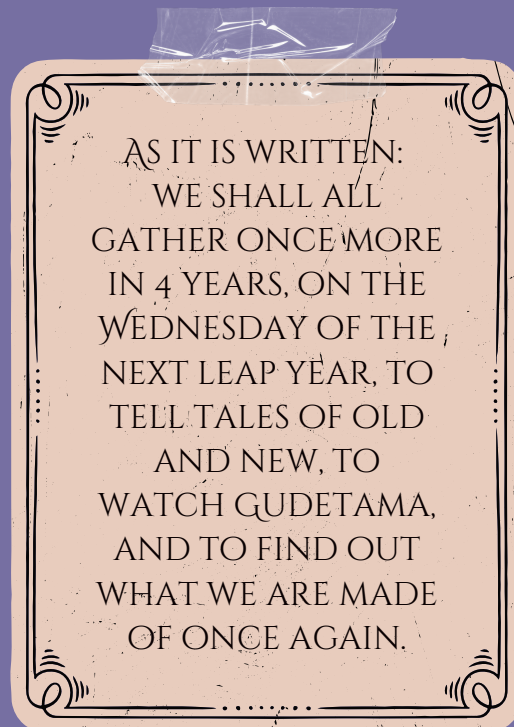


On that day, I saw my community do things with eggs that I never could have imagined, but I'd like to think that it is what JKT had envisioned when he started the AFP. The eerie yet dulcet tones of the Japanese cartoon egg Gudetama and the aroma of giant omelettes, egg salads, soufflés, custards, and deviled eggs filled the house. Across town, Alaina and Asma sent egg updates from work, where their bosses intermittently popped heads in to inquire about "egg day" and watch the spectacle.

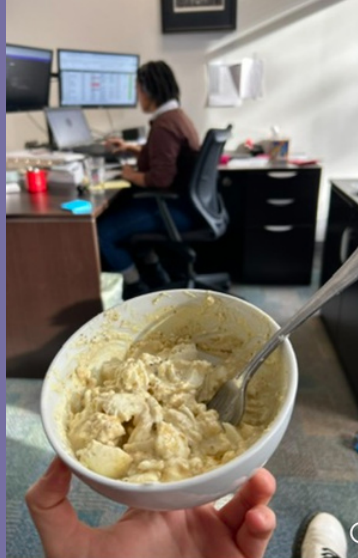
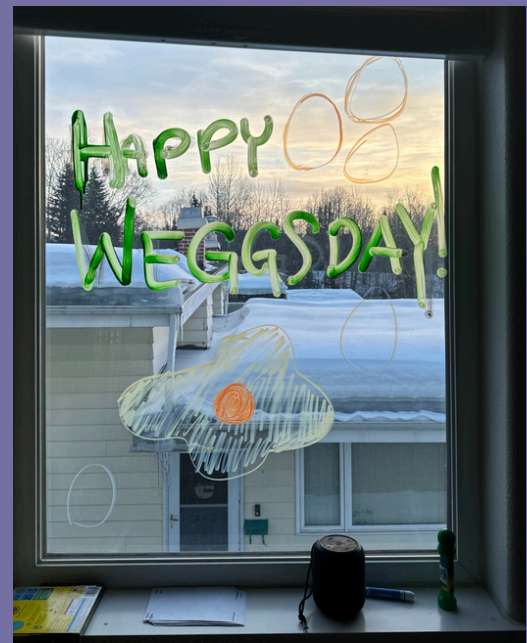
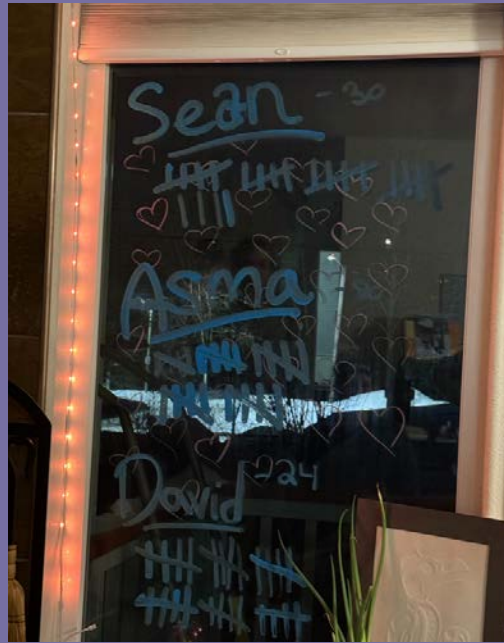
Everyone had their own journey, their own demons to face, but we faced them as one. I got the egg ick after my four morning eggs and immediately broke down mentally and had to change my game plan. In the end I fell 4 eggs short of who I thought I was. While several of us did not live up to our own eggspectations, not all of our stories were those of defeat. David had said he could eat 24 eggs, but after showing up before work and absolutely housing a 12-egg omelette and then another 12 on his lunch break, he popped back in after work for one final 6-egg omelette, overshooting his number and coming in at 30 eggs. Sarah had her four eggs. My ex Brian happened to be in town and put back the 60 eggs that he had promised. He and Sean took shots of raw egg together, two gritty men supporting each other on their parallel journeys.



On Weggsday of 2024, recipes were sent around, encouragements were shared, and I-told-you-so's were absent. It was a beautiful showing of community. While some of us put in blood, sweat, and tears, others simply came to be a part of the day, to show support, and to have at least one obligatory, but loving, egg.



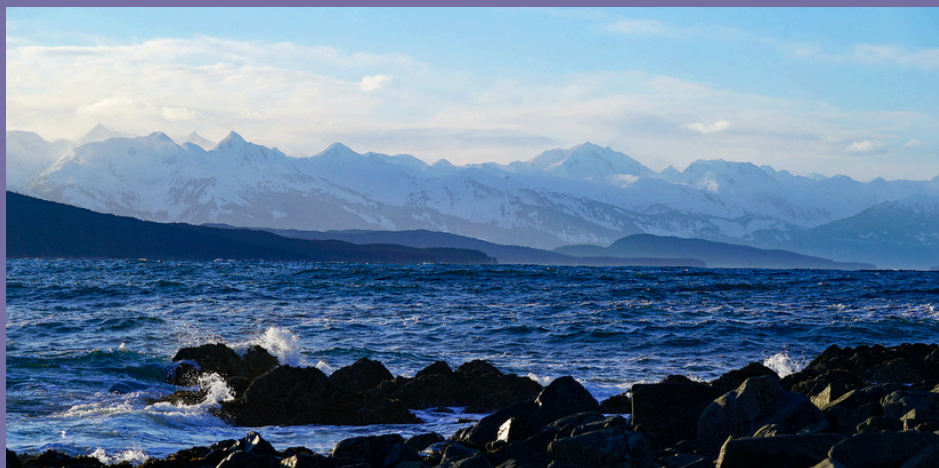
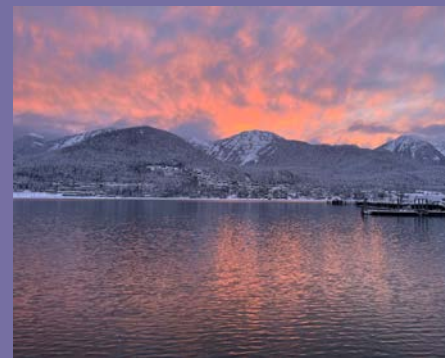
- Brian - 60 eggs (55 really since he booted his last smoothie)
- David - 30 eggs
- Asma - 25 eggs
- Sean - 24 eggs
- Alaina - 15 eggs
- Kayleigh - 14 eggs
- Josie - 8 eggs
- Eva - 8 eggs
- Abby (Juneau fellow) - 7 eggs
- Sarah - 4 eggs
- Savannah - 3 eggs
- Charlotte - 3 eggs
- George - 2 eggs
- Austin - 1 egg





JUNE Au





Juneau in a Day

By Kerrigan Ponsart

If you have 24 hours in Juneau, this is an excellent way to see some of its gems. Even in our seven months here, I can confidently say that we have yet to scratch the surface of everything this city offers. There will always be a new stranger to meet and befriend, another hike to take, another cup of coffee at Coppa, or a laugh shared over a drink at Amalga. And in no way could anyone do it all in Juneau in a day, a week, or even a lifetime. But, after having friends visit us, Luka and I have devised what we believe is a *perfect* day in Juneau.

Disclaimer: you'll need a car for this journey.

The first stop will be the drive-thru coffee hut, The Grind. Coffee huts are just one of the first things that struck me about Alaska, and as we are car-less at most times in Juneau, it's a charming and fun activity to start your day and get you fueled.



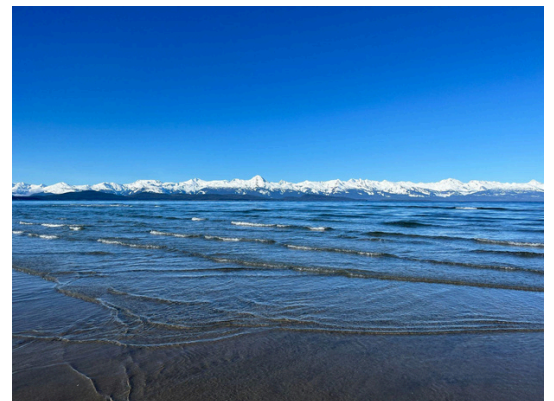
As you enjoy your caffeine, head “Out the Road” to explore some of Juneau’s further reaches. Visitors often baffle at our two ends of the road in Juneau, isolated from the rest of North America by an ice field roughly the size of Rhode Island (a fact that I was sure to share with our Rhode Island enthusiast, Abby Barton).

Along the road, you will need to stop at:



The National Shrine of St. Thérèse. This shrine is a really incredible site in Juneau and honors the patron saint of Alaska. There is something especially peaceful and unique about this place. A small island houses a chapel that overlooks the Lynn Canal.

Eagle Beach State Recreation Area. A short walk from the Methodist Camp, this beach is sprawling, especially at low tide. On a clear day, the Chilkats put on a show and the world can feel pretty infinite on that beach wedged between the sea and mountains. In the fall, we saw the northern lights from the beach during our fall retreat. Magical.



Mendenhall Glacier. You can't make a stop in Juneau without seeing the glacier. According to Pat, "It used to be bigger," but it's impressive even at its current size. There are MANY hikes you can take, but for this journey, I recommend Picture Point, which is just about 10 minutes roundtrip and then a 45-minute hike to Nugget Falls.

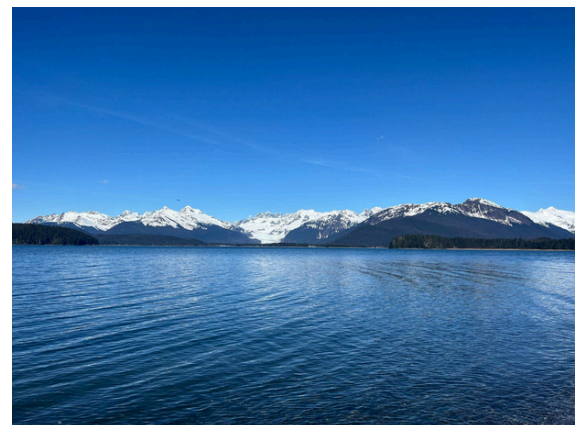


One of the most interesting spots, in my opinion, is Auke Lake. The lake completely freezes over in the winter which makes the ice a really beautiful contrast to the deep green trees on the shore. With the mountains in the distance, it feels otherworldly.

For lunch, you have options, but I recommend Forbidden Peak Brewery. Lunch will cost about \$20, but the food is incredible. Alex and Luka have loved the Kimchi from Costco, and for a small taste instead of the 53 oz jar that Costco provides, I recommend the Korean fried chicken sandwich.



After being rejuvenated with a healthy meal, head over to North Douglas. Although every stop on this journey has a special memory or place of my heart attached, I will admit that North Douglas is my favorite spot in all of Juneau. False Outer Point is a small beach where you can watch the waves roll in and stare at the Chilkats in the distance. There is a short hike nearby called the Rainforest Trail and the North Douglas Boat launch which are two more amazing spots for views.





In terms of dinner, we almost exclusively eat at home. And while I can say with 100% confidence that Luka's red curry could win a culinary award, I recommend Bocca al Lupo. The food isn't very expensive, but the restaurant seems right out of the show *The Bear*, with paintings of various butcher cuts on the walls and a lot of exposed brick. We've heard amazing reviews about the shells and cheese, but I also can't recommend the leek pizza enough.

Finally, it's the dealer's choice on where to go for drinks: Devil's Club or Amalga Distillery. Both are phenomenal; I prefer Amalga, but if you're into beer, then Devil's Club is the place to be. The drinks at both are between \$5-\$10 and hit the spot after a long day of exploring.



If you want a true Juneau experience, you must stop at The Alaskan bar. With karaoke on Wednesday nights and an open mic every Thursday, we can firmly say that 'the Alaskan' is always an adventure for the Juneau fellows. Seen here, Rachel, in the midst of a truly remarkable rendition of *Tiny Dancer* by Elton John.



Ode To Free Marketplace Table

By Rachel Levy



I needed a new craft table,
but I had no dollar bills.

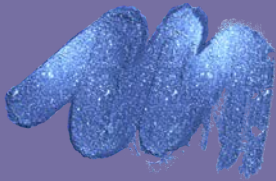
Then (per usual), Facebook Marketplace provided
and I was in for quite a few thrills.



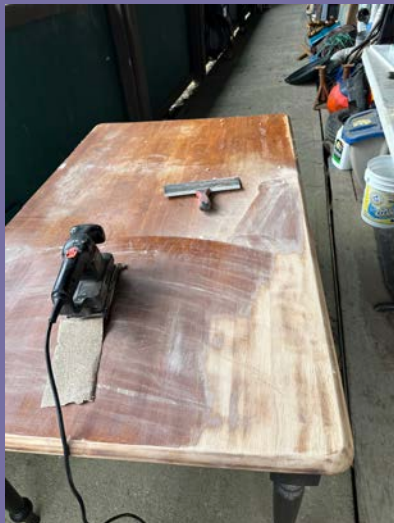
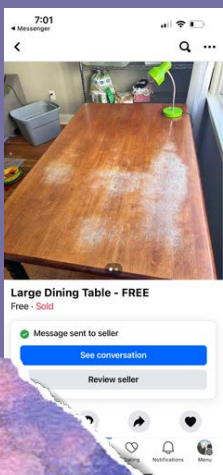
With the table in tow
I found a sander,
and then I proudly began to enhance her.

I buffed out old scratches
and dissolved them to ashes.

I applied a new finish
and she was really replenished.



Now I can finally focus
all on my fun hobby hocus pocus.



Taxes & Tiny Planes

Adventures in Hoonah & King Cove

By: Abby Barton

As a volunteer income tax preparer, I got to travel to Hoonah and King Cove—remote communities of approximately 700 accessible only by boat or plane. Some of the most powerful anti-poverty programs for working people in the United States—the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, the Dependent Deduction—are built into the federal tax code. Getting what you're owed is costly and complicated for everyone, but especially those in remote areas. It was a joy and a privilege to make the law real for the residents of Hoonah and King Cove, who graciously welcomed me into their beautiful communities, told me their history, shared town gossip, and got me hooked on kippered salmon.

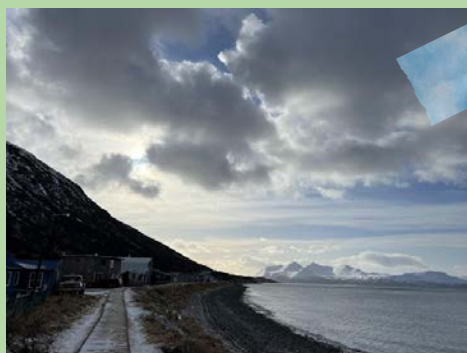
Hoonah:

In late January, I woke up at 4am to catch the ferry to Hoonah, an island community approximately 30 miles from Juneau. Snow kept me there an extra day, but on the way back I got to ride shotgun on the seaplane!



King Cove:

Mid-February, I spent 3 hours on a shaky eight-seater plane to King Cove, located on the eastern edge of the Aleutian Island chain. High winds should have stranded us an extra week, but a rather brave pilot showed up the day after our initial departure date and we made a rather harrowing exit.



Restaurant Reviews

By Eshita Rahman

Disclaimer: I am not a professional food critic.



Red Dog Saloon



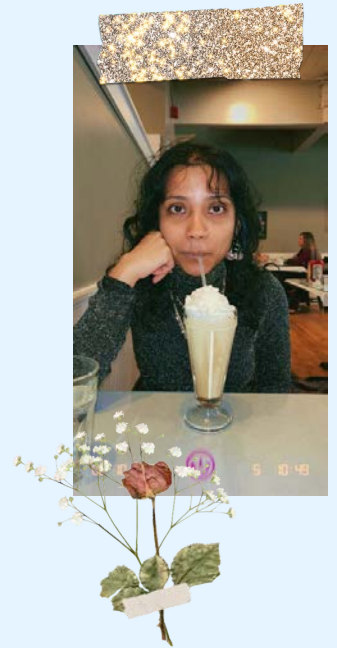
- Vibes: fun, chaotic
- Do note: your coworker will probably be here; they raise prices during tourist season (in fact, avoid going here during tourist season at all costs)
- Great for: dancing the night away, drag shows, live music
- Esh recommends: the basic burger and fries



Sandpiper Cafe



- Vibes: bustling, casual
- Do note: you will definitely bump into someone you know here
- Great for: weekend brunch, big portion sizes
- Esh recommends: the maple milkshake



The Rookery



- Vibes: café vibes, usually busy but ebbs and flows throughout the day
- Do note: you will definitely bump into someone you know here, hot spot for legislators
- Great for: sweet treats, lunches during the work day, coffee
- Esh recommends: the mocha, the dawn burger

Spice



- Vibes: main restaurant is intimate, but cafe is more casual; cultural, colorful
- Do note: on the nicer side, but you don't have to be dressed fancy, amazing & BELOVED owner -- Nimmy!!
- Great for: super fun cultural events, adjusting dishes for dietary restrictions/allergies, appetizers, flavorful dishes/fulfilling that craving for South Asian (Indian) food, live music, takeout or sit down dinner, looking at art while eating
- Esh recommends: the masala chai, chicken butter tikka

Roma



Holi
flashmob
with bus
going
through it



- Vibes: nicer side, special occasions
- Do note: the servers are fun and like banter here
- Great for: delicious/creative pizzas, splitting dishes
- Esh recommends: the Montecatini pizza



Zerelda's



- Vibes: casual, airy
- Do note: everchanging menu (literally changes every day) check their instagram for what they have each day; limited seating. One of Esh's favorites!!
- Great for: sweet treats, trying new dishes, variety
- Esh recommends: ube doughnut

In Bocca al Lupo

- Vibes: fanciest restaurant in Juneau, bright lighting
- Do note: can be expensive but can also split plates, during the day sometimes they randomly have ice cream
- Great for: dinner with parents, special occasions, nice food presentation
- Esh recommends: Wood Oven Roasted Cauliflower, Ube Oreo Ice Cream



Seong's Sushi Bar

- Vibes: casual
- Do note: you need a reservation!!!
- Great for: best sushi in town
- Esh recommends: the Hot Night Roll



Island Pub

- Vibes: casual
- Do note: restaurant that's open the latest besides Pelle's
- Great for: dinners after watching a show at The Perseverance :)
- Esh recommends: smoked salmon spread

V's Cellar

- Vibes: eclectic, dark lighting
- Do note: Korean-Mexican dishes, they give this whole spiel about the origin of their dishes and drinks, unpredictable dining experience (just ask the Fairbanks fellows)
- Great for: seeing the signed photo of Guy Fieri
- Esh recommends: fusion nachos, housemade shrub sodas



Alex's Adventure

by Alex Pear



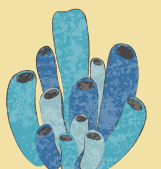
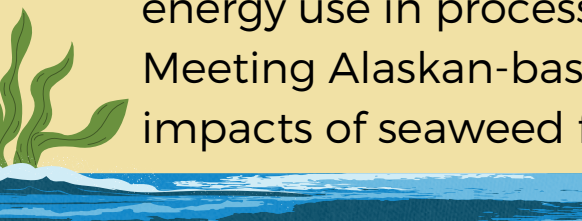
Thanks to an AFP-sponsored travel opportunity, I attended the 2024 Mariculture Conference of Alaska. It was an enriching experience where I learned about various funded projects at my host organization, Southeast Conference. I also had the chance to network with individuals involved in the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy (SASS) grant- the main focal point of my fellowship, as well as connect with Anchorage fellows and get a taste of their world.

During the conference, I was able to learn more about a project I'm reporting on- an oyster processing cooperative in Craig, and put faces to names of the individuals involved. Additionally, I was able to meet kelp and oyster farmers based in Juneau! Serendipitously, one of them joined our staff retreat in Haines, where I got to meet her family and see a glimpse of her world beyond the oyster farm.

I learned more about the carbon sequestration properties of seaweed, traditional Tsimshian methods of kelp preparation, and strategies for marketing Alaska's mariculture products. Many discussions centered on barriers to scaling the industry, such as permitting and logistics, and the innovative and intersectional ways individuals are working together to troubleshoot mariculture knowledge gaps and the current lack of adequate processing facilities. It was interesting to learn more about the unique challenges different communities face, what makes Alaskan kelp special, and to see the evident passion of everyone involved.



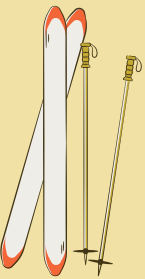
Given my focus on sustainability at Southeast Conference, discussions on food sovereignty, climate change, and renewable energy use in processing facilities were particularly valuable to me. Meeting Alaskan-based researchers studying environmental impacts of seaweed firsthand was super interesting.



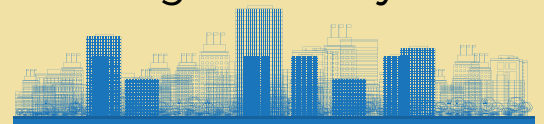
Perhaps most importantly, I got to spend five wonderful days with the Anchorage fellows who were gracious enough to host me. Amidst all the serious conference stuff, I found myself caught up in an equally serious egg-eating competition. David impressively wolfed down a dozen eggs before dropping me off at the conference, an accomplishment I vicariously wore all day, carrying his egg-eating tenacity with me as I conjured the strength to network.



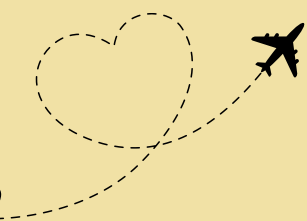
I also brought my cross country skis and skates with me to Anchorage, and was giddy to find that I could ski or skate right from the Fellows house. I didn't miss a single ski day while I was there and had some awesome guides (thank you Josie, David, and Sean)! Getting to connect with the Anchorage fellows and hear their perspectives on life in a different part of the state was invaluable as I continue to consider what's next.



Thank you, Tina and the rest of the AFP board, for the opportunity to immerse myself in mariculture and to visit Anchorage. And thank you to the Anchorage fellows for welcoming me into your cohort for the week!



This is perhaps a cheesy note to end this conference recap on, but by the time I boarded the plane back to Juneau, I felt a strong sense of camaraderie with everyone from the conference on my flight back. I smiled, cracked jokes, and exchanged numbers with folks, and felt a strong sense of gratitude for the opportunity to be involved and to be welcomed into their mariculture community.



Act II in Juneau

by Kerrigan Ponsart

Juneau can feel a lot like a sitcom. We have a rotating cast of characters, a charming setting, and (if I do say so myself) conversations that could come straight out of the SNL writer's room. The fall was Act I: we got the lay of the land and started exploring this beautiful place we got to call home for the last seven months. I now present to you a brief glimpse into Act II in Juneau with the Alaska Fellows Program:

The winter is not as bitter in Juneau as in some other AFP locations (cough cough, Fairbanks). While the temperature remained largely manageable, the snow set a new record in January. This resulted in several mishaps, including Eshita's car dying in the Nugget Mall Parking Lot, Kerrigan getting trapped at a house she was dog-sitting at, and Luka learning just how valuable ice cleats are on the sidewalks. However, it's impossible to deny that Juneau looks beautiful in the snow, especially on the days we were graced with a little bit of blue sky.

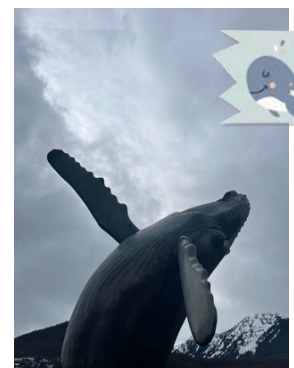


One of the most important parts of making it through the admittedly dark winter is getting outside. Although we can't say for certain what our favorite outdoor activity was, here are some glimpses into our pursuits:

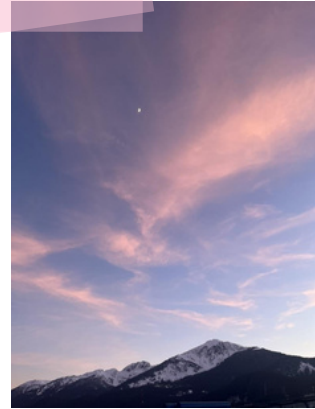
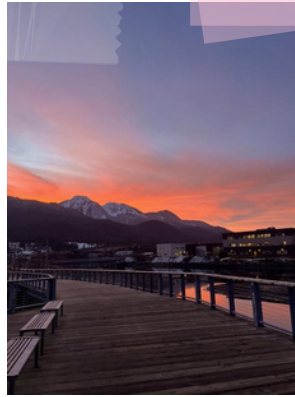
1. Abby and Luka on the Perseverance Trail:
2. Rachel attempting to sled down Franklin Street:
3. Luka skiing at Eagle Crest:



Juneau is located in the Tongass rainforest and receives on average 230 days of rain every year. It's easy to love Juneau in the sunshine, but I knew Juneau was home because I love Juneau in the rain.



During the darkness of winter, one begins to appreciate the sun in a way previously unimaginable. Luckily, Unit A has a large window for all cat-esque sunbathing needs when we are graced with its presence. And for what it's worth, the sunsets when we can see them are simply astounding.



Eleanor, on a visit to Juneau, talked about the fellows' "extracurriculars," and I'm happy to say we have a few fun extracurriculars as well!

Rachel has become an absolutely amazing printmaker, and we're constantly in awe of her work and dedication at the Makerspace. We have each been gifted a special print and gotten to see her creativity flow. She is going to start teaching a class next month, and we can't wait to see the creations!



Eshita explored Juneau's art scene, including theatre and dancing, engaged in activism, and tried new sports like a silks class and skiing for the first time.



Abby engaged in some stunning weekend warrior activities in and outside of Juneau including skiing and traveling through the Rural Tax Preparer Service, which took her to King Cove and Hoonah!



Alex explored Juneau's natural wonders at every chance she had through hiking and nordic skiing especially.

Luka has been exploring many aspects of Juneau from skiing, rock climbing, and swimming. He's also gotten to help out at Native Youth Olympics events in Juneau and other SE communities on the weekends.



I learned how to rock climb with Luka and how to ski, and walked dogs every week at the local shelter. I'm happy to report that my favorite dog, Moose, was adopted this Spring after over a year of waiting for his furever home.



Juneau Fellows

BINGO

by Eshita Rahman

Questioned
the worth of
your college
degree at
trivia

Saw a
legislator at
Imperial

Saw a
bear

Became a
drag show
regular

Attended a
rally in front
of the State
Capitol

Saw your
coworkers
at a bar

Participated
in a cold dip

Bumped into
Pat Race
while you
were on a
date

Unintentionally
met a former
fellow in the
wild

Won trivia

Swiped through
all the options on
a dating app (half
of them were
people you've
already met)

Got yourself into
a longer and
more
treacherous hike
than you'd
expected

FREE SPACE
#JustJuneau
Things

Played Jenga
in the back
room of the
Alaskan

Experienced a
rollercoaster of
emotions at
mudrooms

Danced the
night away at
the Red Dog
Saloon

Was
called an
"intern"

Went to
Pelle's
past
midnight

Developed a
crush at the
climbing
gym

Debriefed an
eventful night
at the Rookery
the next
morning

Got
cyberbullied
on Juneau
Community
Collective

Got a tarot
reading at the
metaphysical
library

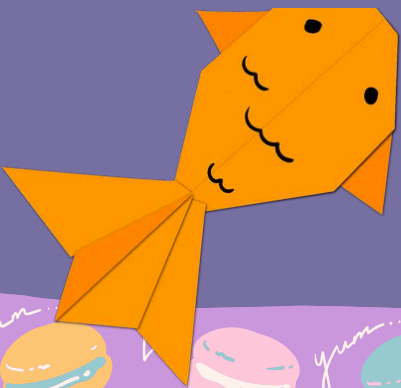
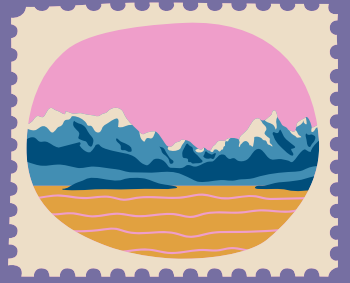
Skied with
the JVs

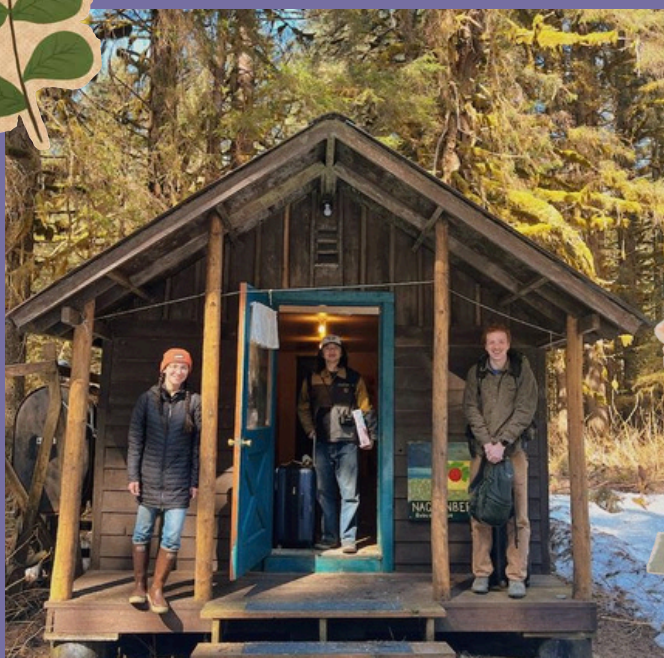
Hung out at
Amalga until
closing

Asked locals
in town about
someone's
lore



S i t k a








Sitka Bingo


Alaskan Fellows 2023-2024

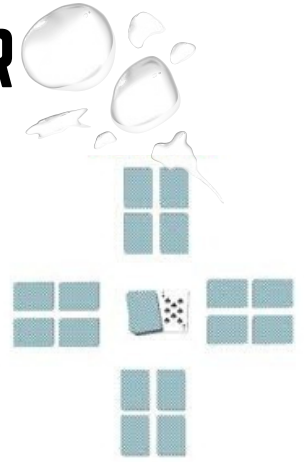
Harvested Herring Eggs	Spent a Night at the Harbor Mountain Shelter	Saw 5 People You Knew at Backdoor	Seen 3 or More Corgis on One Walk	Ice Skated on Swan Lake
Pithed a Salmon	Seen the Northern Lights	Waited in Line for White Elephant to Open	Hiked Mount Edgecumbe	Seen Dude Mtn 2 or More Times
Taken a Selfie at Picnic Rock	Ocean Dipped in the Rain		Gotten a Haircut in the 700 Etolin Backyard	Eaten Salmon Eggs
Ordered Pizza at Harbor Mountain	Walked to Magic Island at Low Tide	Played Late Night Cambio	Seen Whales	Eaten a Meal at the MEHS Cafeteria
Arrived at the Sitka Airport with McDonald's	Attended the Monthly Grind	Been to a Bonfire on the Beach	Feared Baba Yaga	Worked a Day in Soggy Rain Clothes


by Gabrielle Eggli

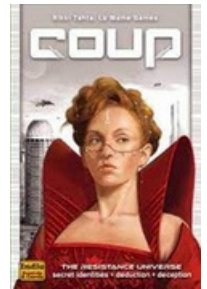



SITKA'S LIST OF ESSENTIAL BOARD GAMES TO SURVIVE THE DARK, WET WINTER

 **CAMBIO** IS A GAME OF MEMORY, STRATEGY, AND ATTENTION. PLAYED WITH A STANDARD 52 CARD DECK, PLAYERS ARE GIVEN FOUR CARDS FACE DOWN, THE KEY IS TO FIGURE OUT WHICH CARDS YOU HAVE AND TO ACCUMULATE FEWER POINTS THAN EVERYONE ELSE BY REPLACING HIGH CARDS FOR LOW ONES,, BURNING CARDS, AND SWAPPING CARDS WITH YOUR OPPONENTS.




 **COUP** IS A FAST-PACED CARD GAME OF BLUFFING AND STRATEGY FOR 2 TO 6 PLAYERS. EACH PLAYER ATTEMPTS TO ELIMINATE OTHERS BY CLAIMING SPECIAL ABILITIES AND CHALLENGING OPPONENTS' CLAIMS, AIMING TO BE THE LAST ONE WITH INFLUENCE STANDING IN A DYSTOPIAN SETTING.



 **BANANAGRAMS** IS A FAST-PACED WORD GAME WHERE PLAYERS RACE TO CREATE A GRID OF INTERCONNECTED WORDS USING LETTER TILES. UNLIKE TRADITIONAL WORD GAMES, THERE'S NO BOARD, TURNS, OR POINTS. INSTEAD, EACH PLAYER WORKS INDEPENDENTLY TO USE UP ALL THEIR TILES,, THE FIRST PLAYER TO FINISH WINS!!



 **DOMINION** IS A FANTASY DECK-BUILDING GAME, WHERE EACH PLAYER STARTS WITH A SMALL DECK OF CARDS AND AIMS TO ACQUIRE THE MOST VICTORY POINTS BY THE END OF THE GAME. PLAYERS TAKE TURNS USING THEIR CARDS TO PERFORM ACTIONS,, BUY NEW CARDS,, AND BUILD THEIR DECK FROM A SHARED POOL.. THE KEY IS TO STRATEGIZE WHICH CARDS TO BUY AND HOW TO BEST USE THEM.





SPOT IT IS A FAST-PACED MATCHING GAME. EACH CARD IN THE DECK FEATURES A UNIQUE SET OF SYMBOLS, AND THERE IS ALWAYS EXACTLY ONE MATCHING SYMBOL BETWEEN ANY TWO CARDS. PLAYERS COMPETE TO BE THE FIRST TO SPOT THE MATCHING SYMBOL AND CALL IT OUT.



EVERDELL IS A BOARD GAME SET IN A WOODLAND WORLD.. PLAYERS BUILD AND EXPAND THEIR OWN CITY WITHIN THE FOREST BY PLACING WORKERS AND PLAYING CARDS, WHICH REPRESENT BUILDINGS AND CRITTERS.. THE GAME INVOLVES RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING,, AS PLAYERS COLLECT RESOURCES,, DRAW CARDS, AND UTILIZE THEIR ABILITIES TO SCORE POINTS.



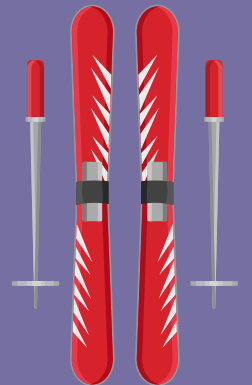
WINGSPAN (AKA BIRD GAME) IS A COMPETITIVE, ENGINE-BUILDING BOARD GAME. PLAYERS ARE BIRD ENTHUSIASTS WORKING TO ATTRACT THE BEST BIRDS TO THEIR WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES. EACH BIRD CARD EXTENDS AN ENGINE OF SYNERGISTIC COMBINATIONS IN ONE OF THE GAME'S HABITATS, WHICH FOCUS ON EITHER GAINING FOOD, LAYING EGGS, OR DRAWING CARDS. THE GAME FEATURES OVER 170 UNIQUE BIRD CARDS.

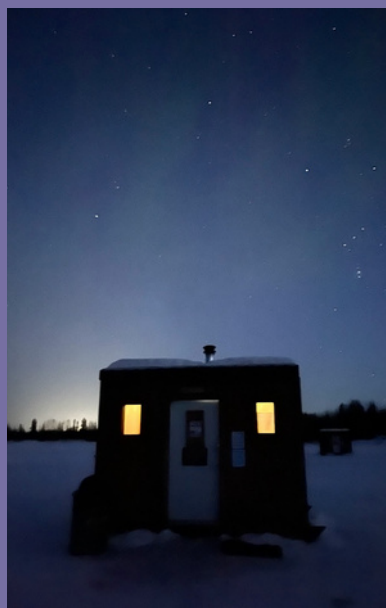


THE RESISTANCE IS A SOCIAL DEDUCTION GAME. PLAYERS ARE EITHER PART OF THE RESISTANCE, WORKING TO OVERTHROW A CORRUPT GOVERNMENT, OR SPIES TRYING TO SABOTAGE THEIR EFFORTS. THE GAME CONSISTS OF A SERIES OF MISSIONS. THE RESISTANCE MEMBERS MUST IDENTIFY THE SPIES AND PREVENT THEM FROM SABOTAGING THE MISSIONS, WHILE SPIES AIM TO REMAIN UNDETECTED AND CAUSE THE MISSIONS TO FAIL.





FAIRBANKS







 "Hearth," oil on canvas board 



Sophie Burchell
2024

In this captivating painting by Burchell, we are transported to the heart of a communal gathering around a bonfire inspired by a picturesque scene from the Sustainable Village neighborhood in Fairbanks. With delicate brushstrokes and a keen eye for detail, Burchell captures the essence of a crisp October evening, where the first snowflakes delicately blanket the landscape, lending an ethereal quality to the scene.

As the seasons transition, the bonfire becomes a focal point for both new acquaintances and familiar faces, fostering a sense of camaraderie that defies the harshness of the Fairbanks winter. Against the backdrop of a snowy landscape, the warmth of human connection radiates, casting a soft glow that pierces through the darkness.

Embedded within the narrative of this painting is a poignant moment of encounter—a fleeting glimpse of a moose startled by the distant rumble of a passing train. This unexpected interlude, though commonplace to locals, serves as a source of wonder and intrigue for visitors from afar, offering a glimpse into the unique rhythms of life in the Last Frontier.

Through Burchell's nostalgic portrayal, viewers are invited to immerse themselves in the tranquility and camaraderie of a Fairbanks evening, where the flickering flames of the bonfire serve as a beacon of warmth and companionship amidst the winter chill. In this intimate tableau, the artist captures not just a moment in time but the enduring spirit of community that binds us together.

Written by Sophie, edited by ChatGPGT and Sarah

Mountains Full of Joy: SheJumps and the Necessity of Creating Intentional Community – Top Down and Bottom Up

By Stephanie Larie Wright

“What’s your preferred name, what’s your floatation style, why did you want to take *this* course, and what goals do you want to accomplish while you’re here?”



The 11 SheJumps scholarship recipients, myself included, were selected to attend the Colorado Avalanche Level 1 course led by the American Avalanche Institute. Our guides whose introductory questions you read above were from our incredible guides Eryka and Mallorie. We all took turns recounting our experiences in the backcountry; some of those experiences included feeling unsafe with adventuring partners or wanting to know how to better take precautions in remote areas. Our goals included more knowledge, more community, and cultivating care. The truth of this is that our goals and motivations would be answered by the end of our time together only a day later.



SheJumps mission is to increase the participation of women and girls in outdoor activities and one initiative they have to do that is through the SheJumps Snowpack Scholarship. This program generates equitable opportunities to enjoy outdoor sports in supportive learning environments where community and connection are prioritized through women-led and attended courses with low-cost programming.

I applied to this program in November of 2023 and accepted the opportunity to participate about a month later. At that point I had been living in Alaska for almost 4 months. Winter was here and everywhere I looked, the mountains and trails, were white. Yes, with snow, and in lack of diversity. I sought funding opportunities for backcountry education outside of Alaska because of the scarcity of representation and funding for women of color in outdoor pursuits here. In my short time adventuring in the backcountry I knew I needed to know more in a space the uplifted differences instead of homogenizing folks to be the age old conquest-seeking, masculinity-centering, white narratives that “discovered” peaks and polar axis’ in which Indigenous folks thrived from time immemorial.



Our first day after about two hours of intros and discussing avalanche conditions in Colorado, was spent in Rocky Mountain National Park skiing across Bear Lake for avalanche rescue drills and learning to read the landscape. If you’ve ever wondered how to center intentional community in your programs listen closely.

Step 1. Adjust your plans to the conditions of your participants. Part way through the day we had not one, but two binding failures. Rental equipment and traveling distances means you might end up with issues and that’s ok! The plan to skin up the mountain and ski/board down no longer seemed like a safe option and we unanimously agreed to alter our plans. No hard feelings, no bad vibes. At the end of the day we went back to our goals for the course: did we learn something new, did we create community, and did we care for one another? Hell yeah.



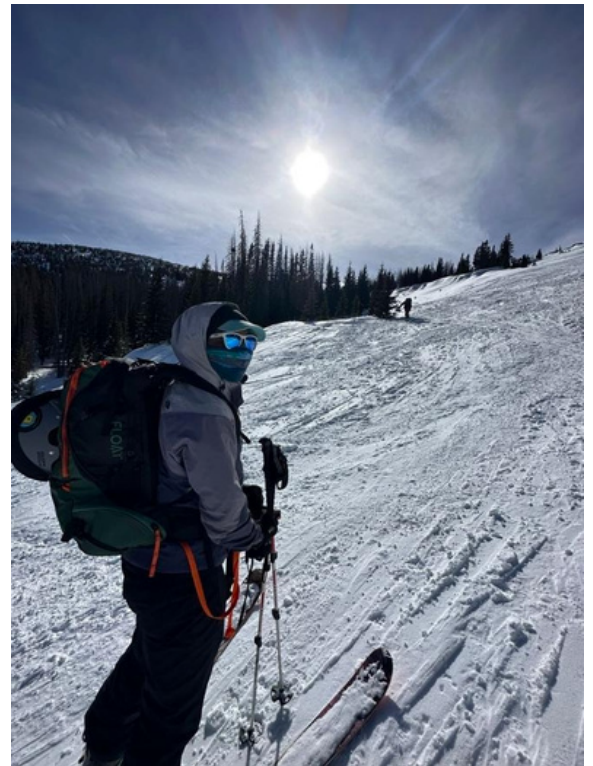
On the second day, our guides initiated a thought-provoking discussion centered around our voices and our capacity to navigate and mitigate risks in the backcountry. Eryka, drawing on insights from a Harvard Business Review study, highlighted a fascinating observation: traditional feminine leadership characteristics are more often what we look for from people in leadership roles but not often enough who is promoted into these positions, who are often surpassing their male counterparts in various leadership skills and display a heightened risk awareness. In avalanche terrain these skills translate into more holistic and safer decision making. In fact the thought for a while was that one woman in your group would statistically increase your chances of better decision making but because this ratio can introduce competition, they now suggest that you bring at least two women into the backcountry. Feminine leadership styles and decision making can translate into a preference for long-term thinking and planning, allowing women to adeptly weigh potential consequences and benefits over an extended horizon. In the context of challenging backcountry environments with accumulating risks, who then sounds like a better leader? (#WWTMVOMD, iykyk)



Step 2. For centering intentional community: Understand where your participants are and what they need to grow. Success in the backcountry for womxn, especially those that might present differently than the dominant personalities represented, means having confidence in your voice and your ability to lead.

Bindings were fixed and confidence and community were at an all-time high! We had mapped our routes in Caltopo and headed into the backcountry to put our skills to the test. It wasn't an easy day of climbing 2000 miles in Colorado elevation-- I'm speaking personally as Fairbanks lies somewhere around 440 ft while Estes Park lies at 7500 ft! That said I struggled with new weight and heights of adventure but my team never made feel like my learning jeopardized the fun.

Step 3. For centering intentional community: if you preach it, be about it. We all came into the experience wanting to learn from and each other create tighter bonds with which to lean on when we needed them. Our communities of likeminded folks in backcountry sports are small but growing and the way it continues to grow is through each of us, newbie to expert, to continue upholding the goals that are important to us. More knowledge, more community, more care. It works because those of us that seek it (participants) and those of us that have the means to make it happen (leaders) continually act and center the goals we all have agreed to. The SheJumps Snowpack Scholarship reduced a barrier to entry through reducing costs but we all showed up and put in the work to cultivate what we sought. Thank you SheJumps, Eryka, Mallorie, and the 10 other fantastic, badass ladies I now have in my community.



My accommodations in Estes Park were generously supported by the Alaska Fellows Program.

In the Ice Hut

We sit and we wait
Frozen and fishless we are
But we are content

by Mallory Durkin



133A

THE
PUB

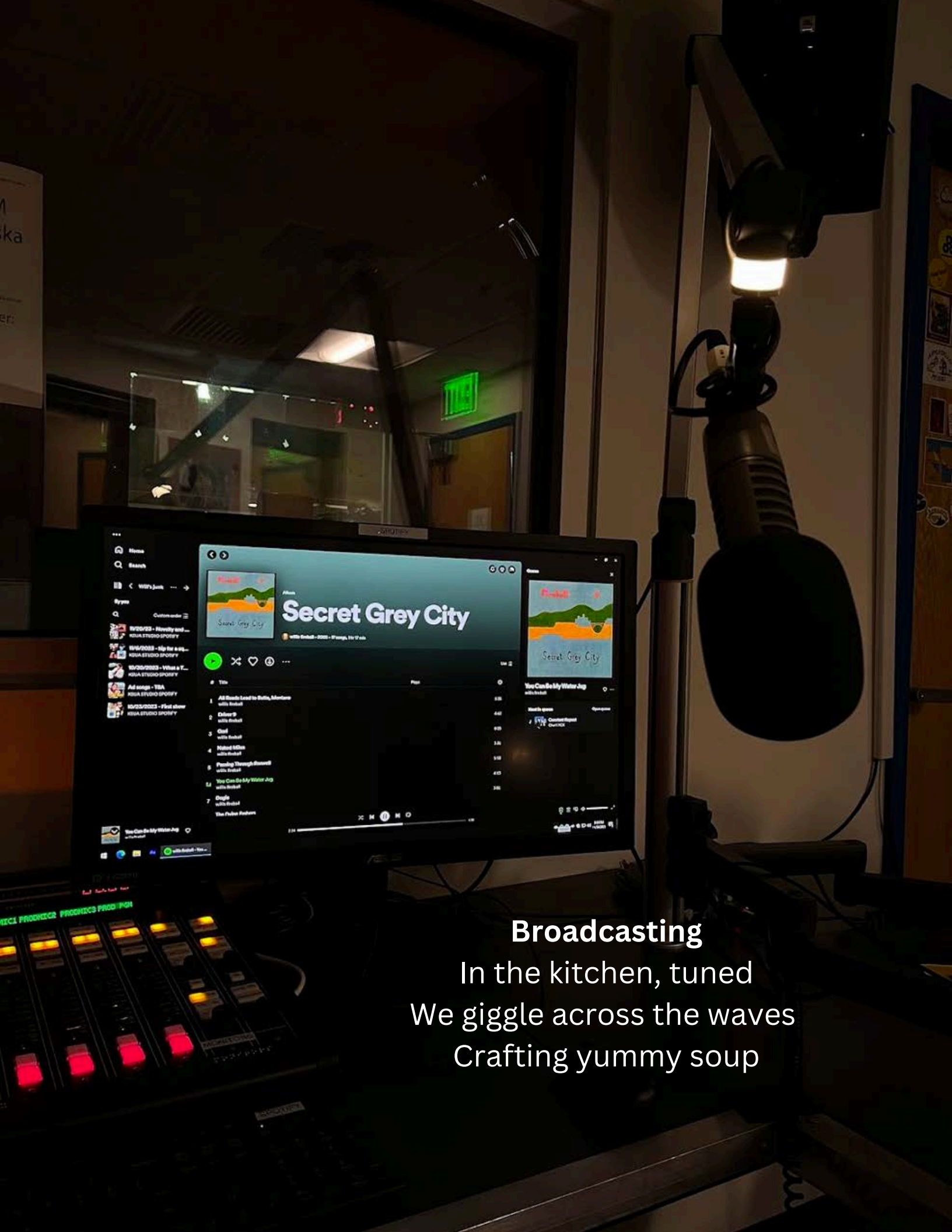


MON - THU
4:30 PM - 11 PM

FRIDAY
12:00 PM - 11 PM

SATURDAY
8:00 PM - 11 PM

(Second Place) Champions
Heads huddled, beers drank
“Spruce Moose,” they say, and we cheer
Once again, victors



Broadcasting

In the kitchen, tuned
We giggle across the waves
Crafting yummy soup

Egg Hunt

Off to the races

Eggs hidden, diving ensues

Who will find the gold?



Ode to Bunny & Skunk
Shivering, shaking
They fight to keep us going
Rest in peace, Bunny





The Village

Two houses as one
Crossing between, drinks in hands
Good company here

Cross Site Connections

