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The online magazine can be found at: tinyurl.com/alumnispirit

Music freshman Tiger Amornkiat performs at a rehearsal for the 23rd annual Symphony of Sounds concert on Feb. 23–24, 2019, in the Fine Arts Building on UAA’s campus.

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It’s been an eventful spring semester at UAA! After a long winter, we are happy to witness the changing of seasons, as our snow melts and daylight returns. The energy around campus is invigorating as we prepare for the end of the semester and commencement on May 5.

In this issue of Alumni Spirit, you’ll read about UAA’s response to the 7.1 magnitude earthquake we experienced in Anchorage on Nov. 30, 2018. Many alumni joined forces with university staff in recovery efforts to quickly return our campus back to normal operations.

You’ll hear from a father-son duo that graduated together last December, an alumna that is co-founder and CEO of an innovative Alaska-based drone safety company, and an alumnus who was very busy the day of — and for several weeks following — the 7.1 earthquake.

Also inspiring is the story of Terry Gryting, who returned to college in her 40s. A mother of two, she attended classes part time and earned a civil engineering degree in 2017. She created the “Smart Mom” Scholarship to encourage parents, like her, studying engineering as a second (or third or fourth) career. Meet Terry and a recipient of the scholarship on page 17.

On pages 18 and 19, you’ll hear from Chancellor Cathy Sandeen on some of the major initiatives she’s put into play since arriving on campus last September, in addition to information on the UAA School of Education accreditation issue and the University of Alaska budget situation.

Throughout the magazine are opportunities to Go. Help. Connect. Give. to your alma mater. We look forward to seeing you on campus!

With Green and Gold Spirit,

Jessica Hamlin
Editor
“Faced with one of the largest earthquakes in U.S. history, our UAA family proved what they are made of,” said Chancellor Cathy Sandeen. “We reopened campus in five days and our students completed their fall studies. Students scheduled to graduate did so on time. Management and facilities teams restored and reopened 70 buildings in less than a week. It’s a testament to the commitment of UAA and a wonderful example of Alaska spirit. It makes me proud to be here.”

**INCIDENT MANAGED**

While most of the UA community received a surprise five-day weekend after the earthquake, Facilities and Campus Services (FCS) sustainability and business manager Ryan Buchholdt, B.B.A. ‘12, M.B.A. ‘17, was just getting his day started.

Buchholdt is part of the Incident Management Team (IMT), a diverse group of employees who are trained to mobilize during emergencies. The team’s effectiveness lies in its fluidity and ability to respond to constantly shifting priorities, referred to as an incident command approach.

By noon, when many were still navigating post-earthquake traffic, Buchholdt and the rest of IMT had set up an Incident Command Post. After FCS staff completed a sweep of campus and it became apparent there were thankfully no health issues, emergency operations became facilities-centric, with Buchholdt assuming the role of incident commander.

Due to finals scheduled for the following week, the top priority was reopening campus, likely to the detriment of last-minute crammers. In order to stick to the tight timetable, Buchholdt and his internal team of staff and external network of contractors worked through the weekend, early mornings and late nights to clean up, assess and repair each building on campus.

“What was inspiring wasn’t so much a system or process, but the dedication of the staff that showed up for the cleanup,” said Buchholdt. “And the contractors, they knew the campus and culture enough to be very integral, an extension of the in-house team. In many ways, the reason we were able to open that Wednesday was because of not only the dedicated staff, but also the dedicated contractors that had experience with us.”

**ALUMNI ASSEMBLE**

Of all the contractors who offered their services to UAA, Mike Fierro, B.S. ’89, M.S. ’01, a senior structural engineer at Reid Middleton, is the most familiar with campus. In addition to his alumni status, Fierro is behind the UAA/APU Consortium Library and ANSEP, Health Sciences, and Engineering and Industry Buildings.

Fierro returned to UAA immediately following the earthquake to help FCS staff conduct rapid screenings of each building, quickly searching for damage and assigning a green, yellow or red tag. Afterward, Fierro designed repairs for the damages he found. Although he describes this as an almost Sisyphean task, as originally unannounced damages would be discovered or new ones would be created during aftershocks, Fierro was pleased to see how the buildings held up.

“The university buildings range from being built in the ’70s to the last few years, and overall they performed pretty well. The newer ones performed outstanding, but I’m biased,” joked Fierro.

Off campus, the alumni response was just as strong. Just an hour and a half after the earthquake, Department of Transportation project engineers Mahear Abou Eid, B.S. ’09, M.S. ’17, and Randy Lenig, B.S. ’15, stood above the northbound Minnesota Drive exit ramp looking over the scene of the now-iconic photo depicting a miraculously undamaged GMC Terrain (pun not intended) marooned on the collapsed ramp.

Equally as iconic as the photo is the remarkably short time it took to rebuild the ramp, which Lenig estimates took three days and 4,600 tons of materials. About Eid credits the expedient reconstruction to the whole community of engineers and contractors coming together, not to mention uncharacteristically cooperative weather.

“The Anchorage community really came alive. It was impressive what the community, DOT and the contractors were able to pull together,” said Abou Eid. “It was just a really well-coordinated effort, and it was the perfect situation as far as weather. If there was snow on the ground, that would’ve caused a huge pain in trying to figure out what was broken and how to move things.”

**SOLID DATA**

Talk to enough people who were on the front lines of the earthquake
recovery and one thought becomes clear: Anchorage was lucky to sustain as little damage as it did. Part of this was due to the depth and short duration of the earthquake. Originating 27 miles underground, by the time the shaking reached the surface, it had mostly dissipated.

Strong codes and strict enforcement also played a huge part in Anchorage’s earthquake resilience. The success of the building codes are even more impressive when you take into account they were drafted without any scientific data from the 1964 Good Friday earthquake, which UAA associate professor of civil engineering and seismology expert Utpal Dutta, Ph.D., says was due to there not being any sensors in Anchorage at the time.

“From an engineering point of view, this earthquake really enriched our understanding of how to build on the land and outfit buildings to withstand the next inevitable earthquake as paramount,” Dutta says. “Being able to understand the ground response is going to help plan the city — where you should not build high-rise buildings, schools or hospitals,” added Yang. “We learned that certain areas of the town are definitely more susceptible to liquefaction and ground failure. So how do we make sure those properties will not sustain damage as some have during this event?”

The duo’s tangible data paint a scientifically accurate portrait of earthquake activity and ground characteristics around Anchorage. According to Dutta, this information is a valuable resource for city planning. For instance, due to the shrinking amount of available land between the Chugach Mountains, Knik Arm and Turnagain Arm, taller high-rise apartments will need to be built to accommodate population growth.

Dutta’s findings on the recent earthquake complement the data collected by his frequent collaborator, UAA professor and chair of the civil engineering department and foundation engineering expert Joey Yang, Ph.D. After the earthquake, Yang visited sites and collected perishable data on ground fissures, slope failures, bridge abutments and building foundations through his involvement with the Geotechnical Extreme Events Reconnaissance (GEER) team.

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“Based on my discussions, there hasn’t been a huge revelation of anything the building code missed, which is good,” Hamel said. “For instance, lots of code changed after the 1994 Northridge earthquake in Southern California. Fortunately for Anchorage, many of the buildings were built post-‘94, so there’s no smoking gun yet.”

“Most fatalities during major earthquakes come from non-ducted concrete buildings, so they’re also known as killer buildings, and Anchorage has a lot of them,” said Hassan. “L.A. enforced the seismic retrofit of all non-ducted concrete buildings based on our research. Many other cities are following that impact, and I’m hoping to do that here. That’s why we need to work hard on promoting, advancing and assessing the seismic safety of infrastructure in Alaska.”

What about buildings built before the ‘90s? According to UAA associate professor of structural and earthquake engineering and concrete specialist Wael Hassan, Ph.D., there are still a lot of them around Anchorage. The codes at the time of their construction weren’t as strong, alluding to Dutta’s revelation of the lack of scientific knowledge until the ‘80s.

Hassan cautions against being lured into a false sense of security because no buildings collapsed, citing the earthquake’s shallow depth and short duration as the reason the city’s older buildings remained largely unscathed. Using the recent earthquake as a springboard, Hassan hopes to lead the charge and convince policymakers to retrofit Anchorage’s older, more vulnerable buildings, which is a movement he’s had previous success with in California.

“The road ahead is long,” said Hassan. “We know we have to do better, and luckily we have the tools to do it.”

THE ROAD AHEAD

Currently, the United States Geological Survey and other scientific bodies are analyzing the data collected by responders and researchers. More data is expected to come to light throughout the year as the weather warms and the ground thaws, possibly uncovering delayed damage.

While new information continues to pour in, many experts, including UAA associate professor of structural engineering and steel expert Scott Hamel, Ph.D., S.E., Ph.D., expect minimal updates to the already strong measures in place.

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If a penny is dropped from a skyscraper and hits a person on the ground, how much harm would it cause? Now imagine that penny was instead a crashing drone. “The reality is that if 20 pounds falls out of the sky and hits you, that’s not just hurting you, it’s killing you,” stresses Amber McDonald, B.A. Journalism and Public Communications ’10.

McDonald is president, CEO and co-founder of Indemnis Inc., an Anchorage startup on a mission to minimize damage from falling drones. The company’s commitment to safety is even evident in its name, as indemnis is Latin for “without injury or damage.”

Safety remains the biggest obstacle facing the burgeoning industry. PricewaterhouseCoopers estimates the global market for drones will reach a value of $127 billion by 2020. Adopting this new technology also has the potential to revolutionize a host of industries, including agriculture, construction and telecommunications.

Despite being ready for takeoff, the FAA has strict controls on drone use, limiting their size, weight and speeds. Most restricting is the ruling that drones aren’t permitted to fly over crowds, effectively grounding the widespread use of drones to make deliveries, which McDonald considers “the Holy Grail.”

Indemnis’ first product — dubbed the SLS — was born after the company’s CTO and co-founder got the idea from a James Bond movie in which the titular spy survives an avalanche by encasing himself in a protective, inflatable bubble housed in his jacket. “If you could do that concept on a drone, it would essentially protect anything it ran into,” McDonald explains.

The SLS was a strong first step, but it was Indemnis’ second solution that has propelled the company forward. While workingshopping improvements to the SLS, McDonald and her team revisited the use of parachutes, originally written off as impossible by the industry due to their propensity to get entangled with propellers upon deployment. By moving the parachute’s launch point away from the drone’s body, it can successfully deploy without getting caught. And so, the Nexus was born, proving the second time’s the charm.

The Nexus itself is a welded tube that sits on the drone’s frame. When the sensors indicate a failure scenario, the Nexus inflates a tube in 30 milliseconds. From that tube, a parachute is deployed at 90 mph, safely avoiding the propellers and quickly decreasing fall speed.

Key to the Nexus is the use of Dyneema material for the construction of the tube, for which Indemnis developed and patented the bonding technique. According to the manufacturer, Dyneema is 15 times stronger than steel and light enough to float on water, making it the only material strong enough to withstand the ballistic launch of the parachute. “That’s our No. 1 milestone, the ability to weld Dyneema. It’s what makes our product possible,” says McDonald.

After that first milestone, more have quickly been added. By demonstrating a working concept of the Nexus, the startup has been able to cut their own piece of the multibillion-dollar pie, so far raising $4.2 million from private investors and securing a partnership with DJI, the world’s leading drone manufacturer, accounting for 70 percent of the global market.

Most recently in December 2018, the Nexus became the only drone safety technology to pass compliance standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials. The certification is a crucial demonstration to the FAA as it slowly but surely works to find a way to guarantee safe widespread drone application.

While Indemnis continues to work toward FAA approval, McDonald is making sure her team is ready when it arrives by preparing the company for their next milestone: officially launching the Nexus in summer 2019. After that, the sky’s the limit.
On Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, graduates in black robes and mortarboards with green and gold tassels filled the Alaska Airlines Center for UAA’s fall commencement. In the College of Engineering section, Mike Swalling, M.S. Engineering Management ’18, looks three rows ahead to catch a glimpse of his son, Chase Swalling, B.S. Construction Management ’18. Both father and son are sharing this momentous occasion, with Mike completing his master’s degree and Chase earning his bachelor’s.

Swalling is a name that has been in Alaska since 1947, when Mike’s father started Swalling Construction Company. The company was handed down from father to son, and Mike took over in 1972 after graduating with a civil engineering degree from Santa Clara University in California. For Mike, life took its meandering turns. He married, had children and juggled business and home life, leaving no time for graduate school.

“It was just one of those things that hangs in the back of your mind — you started it; you really ought to finish,” said Mike of finishing his master’s degree. “You know, your mother tells you, ‘Finish what you start.’”

Chase’s educational path was not typical either; he did not immediately attend college after graduating from high school. Growing up in Alaska’s construction industry, he instead jumped into the family business. It wasn’t until his late 20s that he felt the need to earn a college degree.

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Everyone in Anchorage remembers where they were at 8:29 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 30, 2018. Jeremy Zidek, B.A. Journalism and Public Communications ’02, was cozy in bed, enjoying a well-deserved day off. Then the earthquake hit, and his plans to relax crumbled. Duty called.

Zidek works as a public information officer for Alaska’s Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM). When emergency strikes, his job is to communicate crucial information to the community quickly, thoroughly and across all media channels.

“We are the official source for information,” Zidek describes. “It’s my job to go out there and talk to people during disasters about what they should do, what emergency protective measures they can take, and to give them information that really paints the picture of what’s going on.”

The specifics of Zidek’s responsibilities shift depending on which one of three modes DHSEM finds itself in. Most of the time, he is in preparation mode. In this phase, his role involves helping the public prepare for disaster so when the second mode arrives, they aren’t caught off guard.

That second mode is disaster response, most recently experienced in Anchorage on Nov. 30. The picture Zidek paints of this mode is like a movie scene: a room lined with screens running the news, filled with officials monitoring the situation and dispatching emergency services.

While DHSEM is still engaged in some disaster response activity, Zidek has effectively moved into the third mode: recovery. Under this phase, his communications include notifying survivors about the disaster recovery programs available to them.

By Zidek’s own estimation, Anchorage’s seamless transition from response to recovery is due to the strong infrastructure already in place, which is also a testament to how valuable the work done during preparedness mode can be.

Whereas other communities experiencing catastrophic events struggle while waiting for federal aid, Alaska’s own assistance programs proved a sufficient holdover by the time a federal declaration was approved on Jan. 29, 2019. “As Alaskans, we have to consider ourselves very fortunate,” says Zidek. “There’s a bit of luck, but also a lot of preparation.”

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

There are currently 50,000 UAA alumni spread across the globe working in industries from media and marketing to business and finance and many sectors in between. Many have landed careers directly related to their majors, while others have used the skills developed in their degree programs for entrepreneurial pursuits.

So what does it look like to be a UAA alumni 5, 10, 15 and 20 years after graduation? According to these four — a radio journalist, a small business owner, an entrepreneur and a historian — being a member of #SeawolfNation has helped them realize their career goals and dreams.

Wesley Early, B.A. Journalism and Public Communications ’16

Wesley Early puts locals from around the state on the radio with Alaska Public Media’s (APM) 49 Voices, a series about the everyday lives of the modern Alaskan. In addition to hosting 49 Voices, Early holds APM’s education beat and is producer of Alaska News Nightly, as well as the web editor for alaskapublic.org. But before Early realized his destiny was to pursue the news, he was honing his journalism skills on the school bus as a kid.

Born in England, Early is the son of a linguist for the Department of Defense, which meant moving a lot. When he moved to Alaska in his teens, he’d lived in four countries and three U.S. states. He mastered asking people the right questions early on, which eventually led him to his career.

“What other people find mundane in the everyday routine, Early finds fascinating. It’s the details of peoples’ lives that excites him and prompts him to learn more.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but knew I wanted it to be interviewing people and making some type of sound piece out of it,” said Early.

In the final semester of his senior year, Early caught his big break when he applied for an internship at APM. Radio provided a unique and powerful venue for storytelling and he was immediately hooked.

Tara Gondek, B.B.A. Finance ’09

For as long as Tara Gondek can remember, she had always planned on owning her own business, and in fall 2014 she opened the doors to Bateau Bridal Boutique in Anchorage. Gondek was inspired to open the boutique after her own experience shopping for wedding dresses in Alaska, and realized there was a need for brides to have another in-state option to shop for their perfect bridal gown.

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Linda Leary, M.S. Global Supply Chain Management ’04

For more than 30 years, UAA alumna Linda Leary has been a leader in Alaska business. Recently, she opened Leary Consulting, a full-service firm specializing in

Gondek sought the help and advice of the Small Business Development Center, a UAA-hosted program that provides free assistance to entrepreneurs to guide them through the process of launching and growing their small business. She also credits her finance education for providing the foundation she needed to open her bridal boutique. “I think about some of the classes I took at UAA and they really taught me how to negotiate, because you’re always negotiating contracts with vendors,” she said. “I mean all my classes — marketing, economics, statistics, even real estate — it all rolls together and I can definitely attribute my education background to some of my success.”

Nearly five years later, business is good and Gondek has established herself as one of the go-to places for a personal bridal experience in Alaska, and that makes her happy and proud. She may have missed out on the Alaska bridal experience she wanted, but now through Bateau Bridal Boutique, she’s able to provide that to brides-to-be from all over the state.

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helping companies grow, from developing strategic plans to executing sales and marketing.

For the majority of Leary’s career, she was president and CEO of Carlile Transportation, growing the company from an eight person team to more than 700 employees and 10 facilities nationwide. She was also the brain behind pitching Carlile to the History Channel, resulting in the transportation company being featured on the hit TV show Ice Road Truckers. Leary has business savvy in spades, and in 2015, she used her industry skills to turn her favorite hobby of fly fishing into a profitable boutique clothing company, Fishewear, which specializes in women’s sport fishing gear.

“I decided I wanted to do this and get it off the ground before I regretted not ever doing it,” said Leary in a 2016 UAA Green & Gold News interview of her new company. Although sports gear had come a long way for women in other recreational sports, the fishing industry left much to be desired in women’s clothing, so Leary created her own.

In 2018, Leary’s Fishewear brand collaboration with Orvis, an outdoor clothing company that’s recently focused on women’s clothing, created Orvis + Fishe Slingpack, an instant bestseller.

As a recipient of scholarships herself, Terry wanted to give back, but could not have imagined how her story would come full circle.

It was amazing when UAA alumna Terry Gryting, B.S. Civil Engineering ’17, and dual mechanical engineering bachelor’s and master’s student Kelsey Frasier met recently — it was the first time the two had crossed paths.

Both Kelsey and Terry have been connected to Alaska’s engineering industry in one way or another over the last 10 years, but it wasn’t until Kelsey received the Smart Mom Scholarship established by Terry that the two met.

Terry created the scholarship upon graduating from UAA to encourage and inspire other parents like herself to return to school mid-career and live to pursue an engineering degree. Terry is exactly the kind of student Terry was hoping to help. What she didn’t realize was, “I was thinking I was encouraging Kelsey [with the scholarship] when it turns out that she had also been encouraging me.”

When Kelsey graduated from high school, she helped establish Alaska’s first robotics programs, including the FIRST Lego League. Coincidently, at the time, Terry was Girl Scouts of Alaska’s STEM manager and applied for a grant with FIRST Lego League to launch the nonprofit’s robotics team. For many years, Terry and Girl Scouts across the state participated in the robotics program Kelsey had created. In fact, this experience played a large role in Terry’s decision to change careers, go back to school and become an engineer.

As a recipient of scholarships herself, Terry wanted to give back, but could not have imagined how her story would come full circle.
manage this latest budget proposal, know that our commitment to UAA’s mission and values remain steadfast. What can you do? Advocate! Tell your amazing UAA story and let your voice be heard! Attend budget-focused events on and off campus. Contact your legislators. Even using the #supportUA hashtag on social media goes a long way. When advocating for the university, don’t underestimate the power and influence of your story.

UAA was notified on Jan. 11, 2019, that the Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) revoked accreditation of initial teaching licensure programs at the UAA School of Education.

At the Feb. 28–March 1 UA Board of Regents meeting, the board concluded it required more information to determine the best path forward for students. UAA provided an expedited program review to the board at the end of March, and the board voted at its meeting on April 8. (This magazine went to press in mid-March.)

Admissions to initial licensure programs were suspended, pending BOR actions. There is a path to licensure for UAA graduates of initial licensure programs through summer 2019. This was made possible by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development’s decision to accept program verifications from UAA for teacher candidates and consider these students to have graduated from a state-approved program. Beyond August 2019, UAA initial teacher preparation programs do not provide a clear path to licensure, pending decisions that had yet to be made prior to publication.

UAA is holding students harmless from costs and fees associated with transfers, and will continue to ensure students have a path to licensure either at UAA or through accredited programs offered through UAF or UAS.

For more information, visit uaa.alaska.edu/soed.

Since Gov. Dunleavy announced his proposed budget in February, university leaders have discussed the implications of the $134 million proposed budget cut — the largest cut in the institution’s 100-year history.

At its meeting Feb. 28–March 1, the UA Board of Regents considered how to move forward if the governor’s budget is approved, ranging from elimination of programs to consolidation of administrative functions, community campuses, and other academic and administrative programs and services.

The university is undeniably entering uncharted territory and difficult decisions will need to be made. While there continues to be uncertainty ahead, what is certain is that UAA — and the entire UA statewide system — is critical to our state and is the most important investment in Alaska’s future. As we manage this latest budget proposal, know that our commitment to UAA’s mission and values remain steadfast.

What can you do? Advocate! Tell your amazing UAA story and let your voice be heard! Attend budget-focused events on and off campus. Contact your legislators. Even using the #supportUA hashtag on social media goes a long way. When advocating for the university, don’t underestimate the power and influence of your story.

For more information, visit uaa.alaska.edu/chancellor.

Since UAA Chancellor Cathy Sandeen touched down in Anchorage last September, she’s immersed herself in UAA culture and life in the 49th state. From experiencing the hustle of fall semester to addressing graduates at her first commencement ceremony, Sandeen has not sat still since her arrival. Her hands-on, communicative style is evidenced in her regular updates on Facebook and Instagram, providing campuswide updates to students, faculty and staff.

“We are taking action, we are moving forward and we are bringing new voices to the table. We have concrete things that we’re going to start doing,” Sandeen said. “I’ve been spending my time getting to know the institution and understanding the community.”

• Task Forces: Chancellor Sandeen has created several task forces and exploratory groups to tackle issues from research to faculty and staff professional development across all UAA campuses.

• Reaffirmation of UAA’s institutional accreditation through the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities: NWCCU’s accreditation allows UAA to operate fully as a university, and to provide important services such as federal financial aid to students, veteran’s benefits, and transfer of credits to other accredited universities.

Follow Chancellor Sandeen on social:
@UAAchancellor
@CathySandeen

UA needs your support

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For more information, visit the School of Education website at uaa.alaska.edu/soed.
Alumni Life

Find them pursuing their dreams all over Alaska, the United States and the world.

PAGE 20: UAA Fine Arts Building manager, stage lighting pro and co-owner of 49th State Tours Cedar Cussins, B.A. ’05, on the catwalk above the Mainstage Theater. ■ Portugal. The Man singer John Gourley Instagrams a bite of muktuk that he is about to eat. Bethel-raised writer Don Bearden (right), M.F.A. ’05, partakes as well. (Loren Holmes / Anchorage Daily News) ■ Pearl-Grace Pantaleone, B.A. ’14, recently earned the designation of Certified Professional Services Marketer from the Society for Marketing Professional Services.

PAGE 21: Anchorage rock band Thera, which includes guitarist Ronnie Plate, B.S. ’10; guitarist John Mason Venhaus, A.A. ’15, B.S. ’17, B.A. ’18; and frontwoman Stephanie Plate, B.S. ’09, rehearse to open for national act Taking Back Sunday. ■ Alaska Native Cultural Charter School teacher Danielle Riha, B.Ed. ’01, is the 2019 Alaska Teacher of the Year, and is one of four finalists for 2019 National Teacher of the Year.
Have pics of your life after UAA? Send them to seawolf.forever@alaska.edu.


CBPP adjunct professor John Duffy, B.A. ’79, receives an honorary doctorate from the National University of Mongolia on Feb. 28.

Joe Howell, A.A.S. ’15, B.B.A. ’16, planning his next shot during the annual Alumni ParTee: Nine in the Spine event at UAA.


Former track and field student-athlete David Registe, B.S. ’12, is the director of programs at The Dome in Anchorage.
THE 49TH STATE RANKS FIRST WITH WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

During a Women’s Entrepreneurship Week celebration event on Oct. 16 at UAA, lead analyst for the Center for Economic Development Michelle Johnson, B.A. ’15, reported that 26 percent of all employer firms in Alaska are owned by women, which is the highest in the U.S. The majority of those businesses are less than five years old, with 71 percent having fewer than five employees and 15 percent earning more than $1 million annually. Data also suggests these female-entrepreneurs and 15 percent earning more than $1 million annually.

Two new members join the UAAAA board of directors

The UAA Alumni Association is pleased to announce the addition of two new board members. Journalism and public communications alumna Cassidy Davis, B.A. ’18, currently oversees brand communications for Conrac Solutions in Seattle. She also serves as scholarship chair for the Public Relations Society of America Puget Sound Chapter. Aviation technology alumnus Mark Skolnick, B.S. ’01, is a flight instructor and adjunct professor at UCLA for nearly eight years, and graduated from UCLA School of Law in 2007.

Middle school teacher up for 2019 National Teacher of the Year

In October 2018, middle school teacher Danielle Piha, B.Ed. ’16, was named 2019 Alaska Teacher of the Year. Three months later in January, Piha was announced as one of four finalists for 2019 National Teacher of the Year. This spring, Piha will travel to Washington, D.C. with her fellow finalists to participate in the national competition. Piha teaches at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School and has been with the school since its founding in 2007.ÜN DON’T MISS EVENTS AT UAA

Spring Commencement

Sunday, May 5, 1 p.m. Alaska Airlines Center

Join UAA in celebrating a new class of alumni! Commencement could not happen without volunteers who contribute their time and energy to make this day a success. Volunteer to be a part of the celebration: uaa.alaska.edu/commencement. RSVP required to attend.

Anchorage Mayor’s Marathon & Half-Marathon

Saturday, June 22, 7:30 a.m.–3 p.m. Bartlett High School/ Delaney Park Strip

A summer solstice tradition, the Mayor’s Marathon returns for its 46th year. The course runs from Muldoon to the Delaney Park Strip downtown, offering sweeping views of the city and the Chugach Mountains along the way. Race fees benefit UAA Athletics. Details and registration: mayormarathon.com. Volunteers are needed to help with setup, aid stations and more.

Alumni meet with legislators in Juneau

UAA director of alumni engagement Tina Teaford, UAA Alumni Association board member Crystal Enkwist, B.A. ’10, M.P.A. ’13, and Emily Edenshaw, B.A. ’12, joined alumni from UAF and UAS in Juneau for the annual Legislative Fly-in. Over the first week of February, they met with state officials and participated in legislative meetings to advocate on behalf of the UA system.

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Scaling the effects of caffeine on the tallest mountain in the world

UAA’s Sleep and Chronobiology Lab team, which includes English alumnus Timo Munkul, B.A. ’13, assistant professor of biological sciences Chris Jung, Ph.D., and MEDEX graduate Rich Wehling, recently studied the effects of caffeine at high altitudes. Jung and Wehling traveled to Everest Base Camp in Nepal, gave climbers a caffeine pill and ran them through a series of cognitive tests. Analysis is ongoing, but preliminary results indicate that caffeine is compensatory with high altitude, meaning the benefits of caffeine, like its ability to strengthen cognitive function, can lessen the negative effects of high altitude, such as tachycardia and tachypnea.

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LENS ON CAMPUS

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING YOU’D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOUR ALMA MATER? CONTACT US TO SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE, SHARE A PHOTO OR UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION.
seawolf.forever@alaska.edu

CLASS NOTES

1980

1988
Dottye Holt, B.A. ’88, retired in June 2018 from Verizon Communications after a 20-year career as a technical writer and editor, webmaster and project manager.

1989
Crystal Enkvist, B.A. ’93, M.P.A. ’13, and her family were featured on the cover of the January 2019 issue of Southside Neighbor magazine.

1993
1996
Sarah Pederson, B.B.A. ’99, was named as the Anchorage Press’ second Person of the Year for overcoming breast cancer and her work in Anchorage’s live music community.

Doreen Schenkenberger, B.B.A. ’96, was an inductee during the 29th annual YWCA Alaska/BP Women of Achievement and Youth Awards.

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Jeremy Worrall, A.A.S. ’99, B.S. ’10, has been elected to serve on the board of directors of the Northwest Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives.

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Sarah Pederson, B.B.A. ’99, was named as the Anchorage Press’ second Person of the Year for overcoming breast cancer and her work in Anchorage’s live music community.

Stacie Meisner, B.A. ’11, M.A. ’15, rejoined the Seawolves volleyball staff in 2019 for her third season overall and her first as the program’s top assistant coach.

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Stacie Meisner, B.A. ’11, M.A. ’15, rejoined the Seawolves volleyball staff in 2019 for her third season overall and her first as the program’s top assistant coach.

2014
Micah Chelmo, B.S ’14, recently established the Kapka Athletics and Leadership Academy, a camp where he advises and mentors students in Kenya who are seeking scholarships at U.S. colleges and universities.

2017
Johanna Richter, B.A. ’17, joined Cornell’s debate coaching staff where she’s responsible for coaching students in World Schools Debate, also known as British Parliamentary Debate.

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Brooke Pottle, A.A. ’17, joins the Seawolves volleyball staff for her first season as a collegiate assistant coach in 2019.

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NOMINATE AN ALUMNI OF DISTINCTION

Deadline: Monday, June 17

Celebrate the successes of alumni making important contributions in their communities by submitting a nomination for the Alumni of Distinction Awards! Categories include Alumni of Achievement, Alumni Humanitarian and Alumni Emerging Leader. Awardees will be honored at the Homecoming Breakfast on Friday, Oct. 4. Visit uaa.alaska.edu/alumni for award information and nomination forms.