

March 2017

# Yukon-Koyukuk School District Staff Connections

## *Meaningful Tribal Consultation with Yukon-Koyukuk School District*

Superintendent Boyd

YKSD has eleven tribes who are strong advocates of education and cultural and community perseverance. To capture the desire and wishes of the tribes, YKSD will be working with each of the tribes using a systematic approach. YKSD is currently developing a plan for meaningful consultation that will bring about the top priorities that need to be included in our YKSD schools today.

Tanana Chiefs Conference, the regional non-profit social service agency for the Doyon Region held a summit of Interior Alaska tribal representatives and school districts on January 27-28, 2017 in Fairbanks. The federal act, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), mandates that school districts consult with tribes on federal grants and educational decisions.

The first meeting between Yukon-Koyukuk School District and the eleven tribes within YKSD met to build a relationship, discuss educational priorities, begin collaborating and to brainstorm ideas on what and how the tribes and school districts can make sure every student succeeds.

As we work through and with the eleven YKSD tribes, district and school personnel, and the YKSD Regional School Board, a solid plan along with policies and procedures will be prepared and implemented to ensure the students are receiving a well rounded, balanced approach to education that includes both traditional and western education. The educational plan will include priorities of local communities in collaboration with teachers, community members and school district leaders. Once the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development finalizes the state plan on tribal consultation, YKSD will share the plan with all YKSD community members. We expect the plan to be finalized and in place by June 2017. Meeting times and locations will be established within the next couple of weeks if you are interested in participating.



*L-R Some of the tribal representatives and Yukon-Koyukuk School District administrators:*

Gina Hrinko (Y-KSD Asst. Superintendent); Charlie Titus (Minto 2nd Chief); Josie Dayton (Koyukuk Sec./Treasurer); Paul Mountain (Nulato Tribal Administrator); Leo Lolnitz (Koyukuk 1st Chief & TCC Executive Board); Robert Albert (Koyukuk); Kerry Boyd (Y-KSD Superintendent); Pat McCarty (Ruby); Martha Demoski (Nulato); Gertie Sam (Huslia); Patty White (Y-KSD Assessment Director); Almira Beatus (Hughes); Harold David (Allakaket); Georgiana Madros (Kaltag); Victoria Honea (Ruby); Yvonne Mayo (Rampart); Susan Paskvan (Y-KSD Native Language Coordinator). Missing from photo: Norman Burgett (Huslia-1st Chief); Peter Demoski (Nulato); Janet Woods (Manley Hot Springs); Francine Wiehl (Minto); Gordon Riley (Minto); Clifford Charlie (Minto); Clara Sam (Alatna) Photo by Susan Paskvan

## *Meaningful Tribal Consultation with Yukon-Koyukuk School District continued.*

Superintendent Boyd



Issues important to tribes and school district include Native language; tribal management, social services; cultural camps, after school programming; teacher development; tribal consultation; and understanding the state's educational policies. Red dots represent tribal representatives; green dots represent school districts and educators. Photo by Susan Paskvan

## *Governor Walker Proclaims February as School Board Recognition Month*

Superintendent Boyd

Governor Walker has declared February to be School Board Recognition Month, a time to honor school board members and to express appreciation for their contributions. The Yukon-Koyukuk School District is joining with other districts throughout Alaska to recognize the important contributions board members make to their communities.

Alaskans benefit every day from the dedicated energies and countless hours devoted by a group of more than 300 men and women across the state. These public servants are elected to serve by local constituents. These men and women are the local school board members of Alaska. They unselfishly contribute their time and talents toward the advancement of public education. They represent a continuing commitment to local citizen control and decision making in education. Even though we are making a special effort during February to show appreciation to our school board members, we recognize their contributions reflect a year-round effort on their part. They are dedicated individuals who are committed to the continuing success of our schools and students.

Please recognize the YKSD School Board for their ongoing service and commitment.

**Maurice McGinty, Chairperson – Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato and Ruby**

**Fred Bifelt, Vice Chairperson – Allakaket, Hughes and Huslia**

**Dian Gurtler, Treasurer – Manley and Minto**

**Gloria Patsy, Secretary – Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato and Ruby**

**Shirley Kruger – Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato and Ruby**

**Wilma David – Manley and Minto**

**Wilmer Beetus – Allakaket, Hughes and Huslia**



# Board Recognition

The YKSD Regional School Board is pleased to highlight the excellence exhibited by our staff and students!

## Award Winners



**Michael Johnson**  
Custodian  
Andrew K. Demoski  
Nulato



**Larry Parker**  
Principal/Teacher  
Allakaket School  
Allakaket



**Casey Weter**  
Principal  
Jimmy Huntington School  
Huslia



**Chastity Alexie**  
Grade 12  
Andrew K.  
Demoski  
Nulato



**Jennafer Smith**  
Grade 3  
Minto School  
Minto



**Calvin Shenk**  
Grade 12  
Raven School  
Delta



**Davita Harris**  
Kindergarten  
Ella B. Verneti School  
Koyukuk

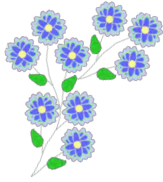


**Faith Jenkins**  
Grade 12  
Raven Homeschool  
Delta



**Millena Jordan**  
Grade 12  
Rampart School  
Rampart





# **Board Recognition**

## **Honorable Mention**

Jewel Alexander, Grade 3, Minto School, Minto  
Taylor Alexie, Grade 5, Kaltag School, Kaltag  
Daniel Brunner, Grade 10, Raven School, Wasilla  
Kellcee Collins, Grade 12, Raven Homeschool, Wasilla  
Maddelyn Crim, Grade 1, Raven Homeschool, Wasilla  
Dazlyn Dayton, Grade 4, Ella B. Verneti School, Koyukuk  
Chris Gomez, Grade 7, Gladys Dart School, Manley  
Jessica Hoffman, Grade 11, MHS Gladys Dart School, Manley  
Spencer Holt, Grade 10, Raven Homeschool, Juneau  
Caleb Koyukuk, Grade 1, Johnny Oldman School, Hughes  
Valarie Martucci, Grade 11, Raven Homeschool, Fairbanks  
Jack McCaslin, Grade 10, Raven Homeschool, Anchorage  
Jamie McGinty, Grade 7, Kaltag School, Kaltag  
Kiara Michel, Grade 3, Andrew K. Demoski, Nulato  
Alexis Moses, Grade 2, Ella B. Verneti School, Koyukuk  
Mason Rowe, Grade 11, Raven Homeschool, Fairbanks  
Crystalee Sam, Grade 4, Johnny Oldman School, Hughes  
Aiden Semaken, Grade 2, Kaltag School, Kaltag  
Cierra Sommer, Grade 5, Andrew K. Demoski School, Nulato  
Ben Swider, Grade 5, MHS Gladys Dart School, Manley  
Mariella Trinidad-Kriska, Kindergarten, Rampart School, Rampart  
June Tuluk, Grade 12, Raven School, Juneau  
Lewis Williams, Grade 5, Johnny Oldman School, Hughes  
Michelle Susanna Wingfield, Grade 4, Raven Homeschool, Delta

**Thank you to our principals, teachers and support staff  
for all of your efforts teaching our students!**





## *Happenings from the Office of the Assistant Superintendent and Federal Programs*

By Gina Hrinko

Second semester is off to a great start and it's hard to believe that spring break is just around the corner. Shortly after break, school will be coming to a close. Where did the year go? Let's plan to wrap up the year strong by insuring instruction continues in all classrooms up until the close of school. That way, our students are truly getting the most out of those last few days before summer break.

## *Grant Highlights*

By Gina Hrinko

### **ANE Virtual Careers:**

"The next activity that will be offered is our annual health academy which will be conducted in Galena."

**Pre-K / Primary Program:** On-site support as well as VTC support has been provided throughout the year and we are encouraged by all of the collaboration that is taking place among YK's primary teachers. The feedback we have received regarding the quarterly VTC professional development sessions and ongoing support has been positive.

**Expanding our Horizons:** Through this project, on-site mentoring and coaching for teachers

working in the primary classrooms continues to be provided. Kim Barnes and Rachel Reilly have traveled to selected school sites to provide on-site, in the classroom coaching.

**Indian Education:** Each school site has been provided an allotment that can be spent on supplies, cultural activities, art supplies, or support for remediation. Please make sure to work with Sean to ensure all of your needed supplies are ordered.

### **ANE Virtual Careers:**

Through this program, students have had numerous opportunities to participate in a CTE career related activities in health, education and other careers. The next activity that will be offered is our annual health academy which will be conducted in Galena. Please make sure your students take advantage of this great opportunity by getting their application completed and submitted.

## *Professional Development*

By Gina Hrinko

All of our Principals attended the RTI conference in Anchorage in January. This was a rejuvenating time and opportunity to network and collaborate with col-

leagues. Principal afternoon meetings are conducted the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday meeting is 30 minutes long and the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday is an

hour long leadership meeting for professional development.



## Primary Support Program

By Rachel Reilly



PreK Literacy Packs

**Pre-Kindergarten Literacy Packs** - This semester, we began distributing literacy packs to all of the families with children enrolled in the district's Pre-Kindergarten program. These packs include a new book, materials for an activity to be completed at home, and a bookmark with two suggested activities to support the child's literacy and development. In February, we're working on asking questions as we read and on responding creatively after we read. The packs will be sent home with the PreK students each month through May.

**Primary Professional Learning Communities** - In February, the PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teachers practiced using the Feedback Protocol they learned during in-service in an online environment. Each teacher posed a question that they have been working through, and then their colleagues responded to that question with positive feedback and helpful suggestions for the teacher to consider as they plan their next steps. It was an exciting opportunity for everyone to explore a new way that the tool could be used.

**Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals** - Congratulations to Nicole Cleaver of Ruby who earned her HQ status this quarter! If you're an aide looking to earn your HQ status, please contact Rachel Reilly by email ([rreilly@yksd.com](mailto:rreilly@yksd.com)) or phone (907-374-9418) to talk about your options. There are two ways to become Highly Qualified: 1) submit transcripts showing that you have earned at least 36 credits at an accredited college/university or 2) pass the ETS Parapro Assessment.

## Accreditation

By Rachel Reilly

This year, the YKSD earned its accredited status through AdvancED thanks in large part to the work done by our principals, teachers, and community members. In order to maintain this status, AdvancED requires that the district develop and enact goals, objectives, strategies and activities to address all of the Improvement Priorities identified by the external review team during their visit. Our Improvement Priorities are:

- 1) Develop, implement and monitor a prioritized plan to engage students in their learning through the use of experiential learning strategies.
- 2) Evaluate decisions to see that they are supporting system goals and values, leadership priorities, teaching & learning, and are financially sound.
- 3) Review and evaluate current professional learning program in order to imbed experiential learning strategies, including hands-on and project-based tasks in their performance.

The District Office's Accreditation Committee is in the process of establishing some preliminary goals and action steps that will be shared with the schools and community for input in the coming months. If you have questions or input about these priorities, or if you would like a copy of the full report from AdvancED, please contact Rachel Reilly ([rreilly@yksd.com](mailto:rreilly@yksd.com) or 907-374-9418).



## *Migrant Education*

By Sean Lawson

Over the past few months, our Migrant Education program has been busy taking part in a number of activities aimed at engaging and enabling our students, including the first of this year's Migrant Book Distributions. With this program, our State and Federal Programs Department staff send books to our migrant students all across the district so that they may continue to develop their reading and comprehension skills anywhere they are. Our staff members helped to distribute these books in conjunction with activities at each school designed to promote literacy and education, often with students as well as their families. This has been one of the most popular parts of the Migrant Education program, and we look forward to the opportunity to take part in another book distribution this spring!



## *Maintenance Department*

By Ben McFarlane

### *Meet Thomas Esmailka*

Tom Esmailka has been working for the YKSD maintenance department at the Merrelaine A. Kangas School since 2004. He initially served as a substitute maintenance person before becoming the permanent maintenance person in the fall of 2015. Tom studied carpentry, electrical, and plumbing as part of the construction trades technology program of the UAF Interior-Aleutians Campus. Tom enjoys keeping things running smoothly at the MAK school and the opportunity to work close to his grandchildren.

In his spare time, Tom enjoys staying active outdoors – taking care of his sled dogs, running them when he can, riding snowmachines, hauling wood, and setting traps. He remembers growing up without electricity, chainsaws, and snow machines and how this shaped his love for the outdoors.

Tom grew up in Nulato and recalls playing softball in the evenings with family and friends. Tom believes that softball is a positive activity that can bring a community closer together, build confidence, and reduce the rate of suicide and obesity among youth. Tom has been instrumental in developing a softball field for the community of Ruby. Last summer, a lot of progress was made on the field cutting down brush, putting up fencing, and widening the backstop. He is currently working on plans to construct a set of bleachers, and will continue the work of fencing and planting grass. Tom is grateful for all the work volunteers have completed and he is excited about the progress to come. The community is looking ahead to this summer when Ruby will host a regional little league softball tournament.

When asked what advice he would give to YKSD students, Tom emphasized the value of learning to work hard and listening to one's parents. He also noted that he would tell students to be confident, and don't be afraid to try new things. He recalled the values of hard work and confidence that his parents had instilled in him as a child and how that helped him when he joined the National Guard as a young man.

We are proud to have Tom as a part of the YKSD maintenance team and we are grateful for all his hard work at the MAK school and in the Ruby community!





## *Special Education Specifics*

By Cristina Welker



## *Counseling Corner*

By Cristina Welker

The Counseling Department has been working in collaboration with the YKSD sites and Tribal affiliates in organizing the Annual Health and Career fairs, which will be taking place in Nulato, Ruby, Allakaket, Hughes, Huslia and Minto for Spring 2017!

- ♦ Allakaket 4/11
- ♦ Hughes 4/12
- ♦ Rampart 4/18
- ♦ Nulato 4/20-21
- ♦ Minto 4/24-25
- ♦ Ruby 4/26-27
- ♦ Huslia 5/4-5



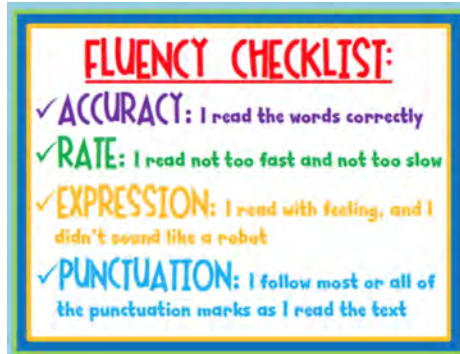
**The schedules are not yet finalized for each site but will be made available on the web-site when ready.**



## Teaching and Learning Department

By Chane Beam

Another important component of reading is fluency, which is the ability to read with feeling at the appropriate rate. Fluent readers "sound good" when they read.



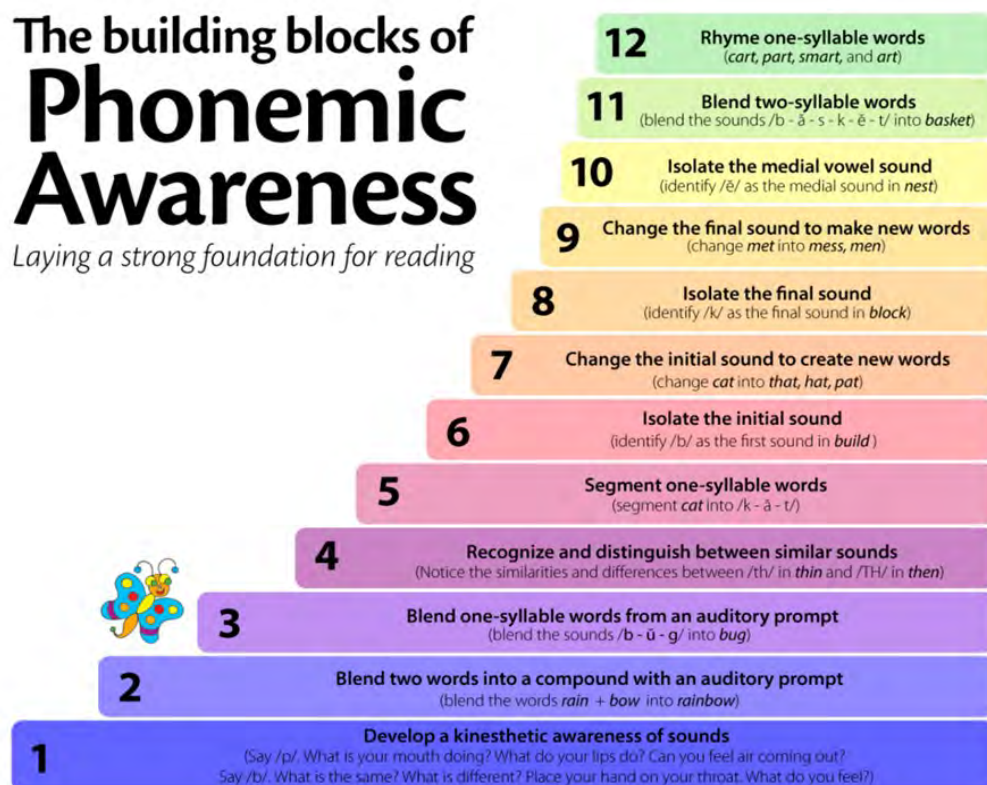
**Fluency** can only be practiced by the student reading out loud to an already fluent reader who can coach them. Here are a few tips that families can do at home:

- \*Fluency is best practiced when the student and an older fluent reader take turns reading the same passage. That way the student can hear what it supposed to sound like before taking his or her turn.
- \*Fluency practice can be as short as one sentence or even one phrase at a time.
- \*It's impossible to work on fluency and learn new words at the same time...remember, fluency is about how it sounds.
- \*Fluency practice is a great way to spend a few minutes with your child!

**Phonemic Awareness** is the very first step to successful reading and is appropriate for preschool students. Research shows that students must understand that words are made of sounds and recognize that sounds combine into words before they can read successfully. Below are twelve building blocks of Phonemic Awareness.

## The building blocks of Phonemic Awareness

Laying a strong foundation for reading



## Teaching and Learning Department continued

By Chane Beam

This is an easy to do lesson that promotes Phonemic Awareness by helping preschoolers become aware of how sounds are formed, how our mouths make sounds and how sounds are similar or different.

### Phonemic Awareness

#### A Kinesthetic Awareness of Sound

Discuss the following questions to help the students begin to think about words.

What is a word? *Answers will vary.*  
 What are some examples of words?  
 What makes words different from each other?

Words are made of sounds.  
 There are 45 sounds that combine together to make English words.  
 Is 45 a lot of sounds? *Answers will vary.*

One of those sounds is /p/. Say /p/. /p/  
 What does your mouth do when you say the sound /p/? *My lips are closed and then pop open.*  
 Put your hand in front of your mouth as you say /p/. What do you feel as you say the sound? *air popping*  
 Can you plug your nose and say /p/? *yes*

Now say /b/. How is your mouth shaped when you say /b/? *My lips are closed and then pop open.*

How is it the same as /p/? *It is exactly the same.*  
 Can you feel air coming out? *yes*  
 Can you plug your nose and say /b/? *yes*  
 Why are these sounds different? *Answers will vary.*

Place your hand on your throat as you say /p/ and /b/. What do you feel? *My throat buzzes or vibrates when I say /b/ but not /p/.*

The place that is vibrating is called your voice box. When you use your voice box to say a sound, it is called a voiced sound. When you do not use your voice box to say the sound, it is called an unvoiced sound. *Un-* means not, so *unvoiced* means not voiced.

Place your hand on your throat and say the sound /p/. /p/  
 Is /p/ voiced or unvoiced? *unvoiced*  
 /b/ /b/  
 Is /b/ voiced or unvoiced? *voiced*

Now say /f/. How do you say /f/? *I put my top teeth on my bottom lip and blow.*

Put your hand in front of your mouth and feel the air as you say /f/.

Now say /p/ and /f/ and feel the air coming out. How are they different? */p/ has a short puff of air and then it stops. For /f/ the air keeps coming out.*

Now say /v/. How do you say /v/? *I put my top teeth on my bottom lip and blow.*

Put your hand in front of your mouth and feel the air as you say /v/.

Now say /f/ and /v/. How are they the same? *My mouth is the same for both of them.*

Place your hand on your throat as you say /f/ and /v/.

How are they different? */f/ is unvoiced. /v/ is voiced.*

By putting our mouths in different shapes and turning our voice boxes on and off, we can make different sounds. These sounds make up words.

Mirror  
 Dr. Seuss books



#### Teacher Tip

By discussing how sounds are formed, students will develop a kinesthetic awareness of sounds. This will provide students with the additional tool of feeling the difference between sounds, not only listening for the difference. This is vital for kinesthetic learners and for students with weak auditory skills.

#### Multi-Sensory Fun



Have students look in a mirror while forming the sounds.

#### Book List



Read a Dr. Seuss book each day this week. Encourage students to listen to how Dr. Seuss plays with sounds.

#### Multi-Sensory Fun



If a student is struggling to feel the difference between voiced and unvoiced sounds, have her place her hand on your throat to feel the vibrations.



#### Teacher Tip

Don't be concerned if students do not master the terms: voiced and unvoiced. Rather help them to experience how the sounds are formed.





## Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

**Student "A"**  
reads **20 minutes**  
each day

3600 minutes in  
a school year

**1,800,000 words**



**90<sup>th</sup> percentile**

**Student "B"**  
reads **5 minutes**  
each day

900 minutes in  
a school year

**282,000 words**



**50<sup>th</sup> percentile**

**Student "C"**  
reads **1 minute**  
each day

180 minutes in  
a school year

**8,000 words**



**10<sup>th</sup> percentile**

By the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)



## *Denaakkenaage' / Denakenaga' Hunek 'Our Language News'*

By Susan "K'etsoo" Paskvan

January was a cold month in Interior Alaska. The language students at Yukon-Koyukuk School District learned the vocabulary and sentences for clothing. In English, the verb "put on" applies to any type of clothing. In Denaakk'e, the verb changes depending on the type of clothing. Students learned the different verbs by playing the game Setsoo Deenee, an adaptation of Simon Says; singing songs, and clothing races.

Students made clothing cards to play board games and a paper doll with traditional clothing. After the clothing unit, they learned about dog racing. They made a miniature dog sled and dog team. Students had to write sentences about their team. The verbs used included ownership, number of dogs, color of dogs, position in the team, and commands. The sixth hour class, grades 5-8, made Google Slides about their dogs.

In preparation of Valentine's Day, elementary students made pop-up cards to give to their friends or family. They practiced their phrases by 1) choral response (everyone repeats after me) and 2) a game of rock, paper, scissors. Students sang a song about friendship, Seggenaa' Eslaanh, an adaptation of the Indian Rock n Roll by Louis Demoski by Velma Schafer. In this song, students learned action verbs like "my friend is dancing, my friend is nice, my friend is playing etc." A Musical Valentine Heart game reinforced the verbs by students physically acting out the verbs.

The next unit will be on spring time animals and animal tracks. Student artwork will include making faux stained glass of different animals.

## *Valentine Musical Hearts*

By Susan Paskvan



Students in Ms. Alicia Schuh's Minto class played Valentine Musical Hearts. Each Heart had a command to do a physical activity, such as: ghiyol (you walk), in which the student then says ghesyol (I'm walking).

Photo by Alicia Schuh



## *Food Service Department— YKSD EATS!*

By Trevor Bridgewater

The Food Service Department has had a busy few months! We are proud to report that all ten schools are now serving breakfast and lunch meals daily. This is great opportunity to offer two meals a day to our students at no charge. The mission of these programs is to encourage students to be on time for school, reduce distractions and interruptions from being hungry, and increase instruction time available during the school day. I am proud to work with the cooks as well as the principals, aides, and teachers that support these programs. Now that we have all sites operating, we look forward to input about the program and ways we can continue to improve.

Our most recent additions to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are Ella B. Verneti School in Koyukuk as well as Johnny Oldman School in Hughes. Starting a new routine can be challenging, but the support we have in these schools has helped to make for a smooth transition. As renovations were completed this fall in Nulato, the kitchen and dining areas were given an update to accommodate the hungry students. I have really enjoyed going to each site and working with our staff to make lunch time a success. Pictures shared are of the renovations completed to our sites. Stop by for lunch with the students, they would love to share a table with you!

In the spotlight this month is Leona Kriska at Ella B. Verneti School in Koyukuk and Melanie Burtis at Johnny Oldman School in Hughes.

Leona, graduated from junior high and high School in Nulato before attending Sheldon Jackson College for Dentistry. As a dental assistant working with Indian Health Services, Leona has traveled to most of the villages in the Tanana Chiefs region. Moving to Koyukuk in 2014, Leona now splits her day cooking for our students in the morning and is a Tribal Transportation Planner in the afternoon. "I love working with the kids in our community and learning more about them. I feel the best way to anyone is through a good meal. They are happier." Leona has three children (Daniel, Leonard, and Jaylein Naomi) and 6 grandchildren (5 girls - Kailey, Riley, Rainey, Grace, and Molly and 1 step-grandson Elias).

Melanie, grew up in Fairbanks and her family is from Galena. She moved to Hughes almost 8 years ago now. Melanie's hobbies are cooking, bowling, going berry picking, and she loves working on moose and making dry meat. Melanie loves spending time with her two sets of twins. She is on the School Council and has been pushing for our breakfast and Lunch Program for 4 years. "I love how the kids are so happy for our program and they ask me 'Can you cook everyday please!' Our community and parents have been very supportive."





## Technology Update

By Luke Meinert

### ASTE Presidential Award

YKSD's Luke Meinert, was ASTE's 2017 President, and he awarded Superintendent Kerry Boyd with ASTE's Presidential Award. This is the presentation he shared with ASTE's membership when presenting the award:



Every year the president of ASTE gets to award a Presidential Award to someone that reflects the values and vision ASTE represents. It's my great honor to present this award to the superintendent of one of the largest districts geographically in the state covering 70,000 square miles (roughly the size of the state of Washington). She has been serving as the district's superintendent since July 1, 2008 supporting over 1,600 students who attend one of the district's 10 rural schools or the district's statewide correspondence school.

She has been an educator for 22 years. She started her career as a classroom teacher specializing in special education. Before becoming superintendent of the district she now serves, she served as the Director of Federal Programs for the district. Additional Alaskan experience includes her work as the coordinator for IDEA International DOD Homeschool program and as a special education teacher for Galena City School District's Interior Distance Education Alaska.

I'm very fortunate to work with this Kerry Boyd! She serves as an amazing mentor and leader of our district, and I LOVE how much she supports our work in the Technology Department at YKSD. Thank you for all the amazing things you do for the students and staff at YKSD.

### ASTE's IT Support Person of the Year

Luke Meinert nominated Brad Kennon for ASTE's IT Support Person of the Year and he was selected as this year's award winner. You can find the nomination literature below:

This individual is in his fourth year serving Yukon-Koyukuk School District as their technology coordinator. In this short timeframe, he has spearheaded the implementation of many exciting projects. Some of the most noteworthy have been the design and implementation of a new wireless network across 15 buildings, the build out of a robust active directory infrastructure, the configuration and maintenance Palo Alto Networks firewalls in each of our schools, the implementation of a new video conferencing bridge that is used by students and staff on a daily basis, and a 1:1 Chromebook deployment for our middle and high school students.

This young man has an uncanny ability to design and implement amazing network solutions while also fielding day to day support calls. I consider him the MacGyver of our tech department as he can do more with less than anyone I've ever met. He is constantly on the go, and is always willing to put aside his projects to help assist users with technical issues. He's truly someone that eats, sleeps, and breathes his job as on many occasions Brad has pulled 24+ hour shifts to ensure the issue at hand is solved.

The students and staff of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District are very fortunate to have Brad Kennon at their service, and I can't think of anyone else more deserving of this award.

Congratulations  
Kerry & Brad!



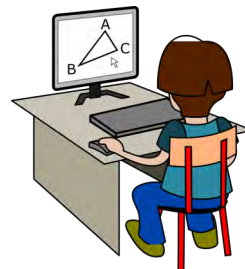


## Technology Update continued

By Luke Meinert

**PEAKS Testing** The Tech Team is busy preparing for this year's [PEAKS Assessment](#). YKSD will be utilizing the computer based assessment at all Raven Homeschool locations, along with Nulato, Koyukuk, and Kaltag. The district purchased 30 additional computers to help support this year's testing cycle.

**Microsoft Office 365** - YKSD has rolled out Office 365 for both river & Raven students. Office 365 Education is a collection of services that allows you to collaborate and share your schoolwork. It's available for free to teachers who are currently working at an academic institution and to students who are currently attending an academic institution. The service includes Office Online (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneNote), 1TB of OneDrive storage, Yammer, and SharePoint sites. This service allows teachers and students to install the full Office applications on up to 5 PCs or Macs for free!



## Assessment Department News

By Patty White

The new Statewide Assessment Performance Evaluation for Alaska Schools (PEAKS) from DRC will first be administered this spring 2017. Students will take the English language arts and math assessments in grades 3 through 10, and the science assessments in grades 4, 8, and 10. Students in Allakaket, Hughes, Huslia, Manley, Minto, Rampart, and Ruby will take the test on paper and students in Kaltag, Koyukuk, Nulato, and Raven will take the assessment on computer. Please check with your school for the exact testing dates and help your child be prepared by getting proper sleep before testing.

These end-of-year assessments inform policy makers and the public, including parents, about how well students are meeting Alaska's academic standards; provide data to improve schools and to close achievement gaps; and ensure equity in educational opportunity for all students. School districts will continue to use classroom assessments throughout the school year to monitor student progress and inform instruction.

A six-minute video that explains the purpose of Alaska's statewide assessments is at <https://vimeo.com/193465985>. Frequently asked questions may also be accessed through the following link:

[FAQs for Parents: Why Should My Child Take the State Assessment? \(pdf\)](#)



Upcoming assessments for YKSD students include: PEAKS, the annual State of Alaska test March 27 – April 28; and MAP end of year testing April 24 – May 5.

Please feel free to contact Patty White at [pwhite@yksd.com](mailto:pwhite@yksd.com) or 374-9407 if you have any questions or would like more information regarding District Assessments.

## *Youth Leadership News*

By Andrea Durny

### Phlight Club

Spring Phlight Club will be in Fairbanks, at Effie Kokrine Charter School. Phlight Club is a three-day, "lock-in" style, student leadership program. This opportunity is offered to students in grades 8-12 as part of the grant-funded CARE program. Students from EKCS and other villages are welcome to participate. At Phlight Club students will learn the importance of a personal web of support and gain the hard and soft skills necessary to turn their dreams into reality for themselves and others. They will begin to think about life after school, and how they will access career and post-secondary opportunities. Applications will be available in March.

## *3rd Annual YKSD Jamboree*

By Andrea Durny

Was held January 13-14, 2017 in Ruby. A total of 58 passengers flew into Ruby for the 12 game Jamboree. The students were wonderful and the Jamboree continues to be a incredible experience for the students. From Susan Pas-kvan, "I enjoyed chatting with all of them. My best memories are the smiles I saw as they played basketball. The last tournament in Ruby was 2007, ten years ago!! The Ruby people were so happy to have a tournament at the school again. Thank you Anne and staff for your hospitality."



2017 Jamboree ~ Ruby

## *7th Annual Virtual Pizza Party ~ April 21st*

By Andrea Durny

We will be celebrating the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Virtual Pizza Party. Last year over 100 pizzas were sent to all sites to celebrate their testing efforts. Each year the party continues to be a huge hit. Students present during PEAK Testing are given “do your best” novelties and entered into drawings for prizes such as: a goodie basket, \$10 iTunes Card, \$25 Visa Card, DVD, Phone Card, dodge ball. They will also be entered into the drawing for the following Grand Prizes:

**Grand Prizes:**  
**Grades 3-6: Bikes**  
**Grades 7-12: (4) \$50 gift cards**

Tips for PEAK Testing:

- \* Good night's rest (8+ hours)
- \* Nutritious Breakfast
- \* Positive Attitude
- \* Take your time~ it is not a timed test.
- \* Answer every question
- \* Do your best!



## *YKSD Boarding Home Program*

By Andrea

To date YKSD has 15 students enrolled in the YKSD Boarding Home Program and we are currently accepting applications for the coming school year. The program is for students grades 8-12 transferring into YKSD or within the district that meet eligibility requirements. Together with our communities and families, this program is intended to assist those students within our district who may need additional tangible supports in reaching their academic goals, and don't want to leave the cultural/family setting. For more information please contact Andrea Durny, [adurny@yksd.com](mailto:adurny@yksd.com), 907-374-9424 beginning in August. Deadline to apply is in October 2017



Make  
Today  
Amazing



## *Battle of the Books*

By Breanna Semaken

### **Battle of the Books District Winners**

#### **K-2**

Wolfpack (Andrew K Demoski School)

#### **3-4**

Bobreaders (Raven Homeschool-Anchorage)

#### **5-6**

Diamond Willow (Raven Homeschool-Wasilla)

#### **Middle School**

Raven Readers (Raven Homeschool-Wasilla)

#### **High School**

Coconut Sharks (Raven Homeschool-Delta)



There were some awesome battles this year; a couple teams had near perfect scores, a few great challenges on questions, and we also had a battle that went into a tie breaker round. Thank you to the all staff and students for an exciting week!

### **Battle of the Books District Participants**

#### **K-2**

Owls (Raven Homeschool-Fairbanks)

Wolfpack (Andrew K Demoski)

AK Blazers (Allakaket School)

Lakers (Minto School)

#### **3/4**

Starlight (Raven Homeschool-Wasilla)

Reading Ravens (Raven Homeschool-Juneau)

Wolfpack (Andrew K Demoski School)

Bobreaders (Raven Homeschool-Anchorage)

Eagles (Raven Homeschool-Fairbanks)

#### **5/6**

The Unwanted Mysteries (Raven Homeschool-Anchorage)

Bubble Squad (Raven Homeschool-Juneau)

Diamond Willow (Raven Homeschool-Wasilla)

#### **Middle School**

Reading Ravens (Raven Homeschool-Fairbanks)

Raven Readers (Raven Homeschool-Wasilla)

#### **High School**

Coconut Sharks (Raven Homeschool-Delta)

## *Congratulations Coconut Sharks!*

By Chane Beam

Congratulations to the Coconut Sharks (Raven Homeschool Delta) for placing 2nd in the High School State Battle of the Books! They competed against 22 other district champions and battled through three rounds, making Yukon Koyukuk School District and Raven Homeschool proud each step of the way.

Go to <http://www.akla.org/akasi/bb/hsresults17.htm> for official results.

Great job, Rachel Brown, Anna Davitadze, Tristian Walker and coach Heidi Mintun, advisory teacher in the Raven Delta office!

## *Johnny Oldman School*

By Patty White



Students at Johnny Oldman School were excited to have breakfast and lunch at school! Melanie Burtis is our new cook. The kitchen was remodeled in January to prepare for the food services. The program started on February 6 and is off to a great start. Students are arriving at school on time for breakfast and don't have to walk home in the cold for lunch. Our attendance has already improved and students are learning to try new food items. The students and staff wish to thank the district for their commitment to providing this program for the students!



## *Kaltag School*

By Patty White



The students in Kaltag have been very dedicated and practicing their Native dancing all year. Many evenings, they practice for several hours in preparation for the Festival of Native Dance in Fairbanks. The students will be traveling to Fairbanks and will dance for the public at the festival.



In addition, Tonio Verzone, educational consultant, returned to Kaltag in January to continue working with the staff and students on the Response to Intervention (RTI) process.



## *Ella B. Vernetti School News*

By Patty White

The students in Koyukuk also are enjoying the new breakfast and lunch program! The school began serving meals on February 6. Leona Kriska is our new cook. The students and staff wish to thank the district for their commitment to providing this program for the students!

In addition, the students are excited and getting ready for the Iditarod to come through Koyukuk in March. This is only the second time the Mushers have had a checkpoint in Koyukuk.



## *Jimmy Huntington School*

By Casey Weter & Ava Vent



With the extreme cold weather, the middle school students have been learning, building and repairing racing sleighs with Wesley Henry. Submitted by Casey Weter



The middle school students have also been learning about dog care and shots that the race dogs need with Floyd Vent, Sr. and Wesley Henry. Submitted by Casey Weter



Ms. Vent's Kindergarten class making human shapes during 'Our Wonders' reading time. Submitted by Ava Vent



## Allakaket School

By Evelyn Esmailka

### *Preschool, Kindergarten & First Grade News*

#### Family Literacy Night

Family Literacy Reading Night on January 27 from 6-8 pm was a huge success. We had a great crowd of parents, grandparents, and students reading, eating, and telling stories. I modeled reading a book, asking questions, and the parents took turns reading to their younger babies and kids. Thank you Rhea Linus, my FEA member, for reading to most of the kids and Rebecca Linus for helping with the spaghetti and snacks.



#### Valentine's Day

We had a Valentine's Day party in my classroom, and passed out one hundred cards that students had made to the whole school. Parents send snacks with their students and we had a great time eating, and reading our valentine's cards.

#### Perfect Attendance

Perfect attendance for my classroom goes to Hazel Strassburg! Congratulations to her and parents

for making sure that she was at school the entire second Quarter!

#### Christmas

We had a Christmas party & Christmas program! A special thanks goes out to all of the parents for helping their student prepare and memorize their parts to recite from the poem, "Twas The Night Before Christmas." We also sang songs in Denaakk'e and in English. My class teamed up with Mrs. David's class for the poem.

## Merrelaine A. Kangas School

By Anne Titus

MAK Students are quite busy with their afterschool activities. Students in grades K-10 are on a wrestling team coached by JD McBride. They are excited at the prospect of a snow machine trip to Galena where they will be competing against the Galena Hawks the first weekend in March. Our thanks to Huslia for the loan of snow machine helmets.

Coach Tori is leading rousing Little Dribblers practice sessions with the 2-5<sup>th</sup> grade students three times a week.

Students in JD's CTE class have switched to 3-D printing this semester. It is pure delight to see students program their computers, following oral and written directions, discuss the procedures, hit the send button and off the printer comes such amazing things such as screws, goggles, and their favorite Fallout 4 toys.



I over heard in Primary Class one morning, as the children were getting their books and settling down in the library to read, "Hey, can you move your crisscross applesauce over so I can sit by you?"

With the Iron Dog Race and Iditarod coming through Ruby, it is certainly heading into an eventful spring.

## *Rampart School*

By John Hersrud

The days in Rampart are getting warm and light, let's hope spring doesn't come in like a lamb and out like a lion. Mr. Main's class has added video therefore differentiation of instruction has the students at the edge of their seats, and Mr. Main is giving them a broad education from world geography, up and including science, daily news, to go with the six levels of math and language arts.

Expanding the horizons of our children is taking place throughout the rest of the school as well, with beading and sewing, online science labs and exploratory, open gym, afterschool dance and singing every day and, afterschool tutoring 4 days a week.

We are all getting excited for the FNA where all the students will be dancing; and then the Spring Carnival on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> is right around the corner. Rampart school will be hosting a K-8 basketball tournament as well as being involved in the rest of the fun.



## *Gladys Dart School*

By: Patty White

Students are busy and excited to have the Iditarod checkpoint in Manley again this year. The student council will be making sack lunches for the mushers and other visitors to grab and go or eat while they rest.

Our high school seniors took a trip to Hawaii in January to escape the cold and enjoy some sunshine. They had a great time and learned about the culture and people of Hawaii.



## *Minto School*

By Alicia Schuh



### **Mrs. Alicia's 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class**

We enjoyed having the elders from our community this month. Mr. Charlie Titus, Jr. and Mrs. Ruth Folger came and discussed how the Life Cycle and living a Subsistence life style go hand in hand.



## *Andrew K. Demoski School*

By Jason Johnson

Our students have been extremely grateful for the "Small Engines" course that they have been a part of as it has been a welcome vocational opportunity for many! They are currently disassembling and reassembling multiple Briggs and Stratton motors as part of their course and are hopeful to dig into their snow-machines soon! In other exciting news . . . Our boys and girls made many new friends and saw several sites for the first time as they both traveled to Tok and our girls visited Minto and Northway during their trip. Moving forward, we are anticipating the start of a little league baseball camp during the spring and expect a huge turnout of students! Last, but certainly not least . . . Our, K-2 Battle of the Books kiddos and their teacher's hard work paid off as they won their competition and their reading scores are soaring





## *Raven Homeschool—Anchorage*

### *Welcome!*



Raven is happy to announce that Alexa Morales has returned to the Raven Team! Having worked for several years for YKSD, Alexa took a few years off to be a stay-at-home-mom. She is now back to work as the Assistant to the Director of Distance Education and enjoying every minute of it! When not at work, Alexa enjoys spending time with her husband and four adorable children; two boys and two girls. Her family is her world. When they can find the time, they enjoy traveling to Florida to visit family.

Submitted by Andrea Cottrell

Hello everyone, I'm Kelsey and I am the new Administrative Assistant and Family Representative for the Raven Anchorage office. A little about me... I was born in Soldotna, grew up in Nikiski, and moved to Anchorage when I was 12 years old. I graduated from South Anchorage High School, and have an Art degree from UAA. I am loving all of the students and families I've been meeting thus far, and look forward to meeting more. I appreciate everyone's patience as I get settled into this new position.



## *Anchorage Happenings*

By Kelsey Stone



Students at the Math Madness Competition at the BP Energy Center.



Making pillows in Sewing Class!



Field Trip to the Alaska Rock Gym.



Field Trip to the Fire Station.



First day of Chess Club!

## *Raven Homeschool—Eagle River*

By Andrea Cottrell & Randi Shrider



Raven is excited to announce that we will be opening a new office in Eagle River for the 2017-2018 school year to support our growing student population. With over 1,450 students program-wide and almost 100 in the Eagle River area, the Eagle River Office will support our current families in that area and our outlying area students.

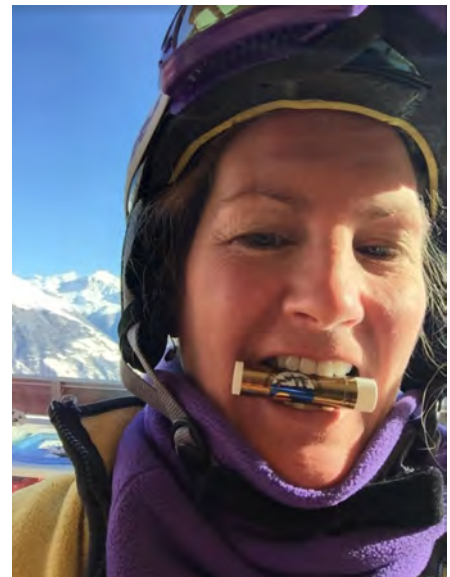
To support our students, host workshops, activities and field trips, Randi Shrider has been selected to serve as the Advisory Teacher. Randi has a variety of skills and extensive educational background that will make this transition successful. She holds a teaching certificate along with an administrative and counseling certificates and has been working with Raven families for the past four years. She served as an Advisory Teacher in Wasilla for two years and has been supporting the Anchorage and Wasilla students the past two years working as the K-12 Counselor for those offices. We are excited to have her head up this endeavor and believe she will bring dedication and energy to the position to have the office be successful.

## *Raven Homeschool—Delta Junction*

By Heidi Mintun



Chinese New Year Celebration!



Heidi Mintun's cousin, Samantha Gibson, skiing in the Swiss Alps with Her Raven lip balm.



Congratulations Calvin Schenk for being chosen Student of the Month!



## *Raven Homeschool—Fairbanks*

By Mo Ott



Raven students enjoyed an afternoon of bowling. Getting out for some fun and exercise on these cold winter days.

Raven Homeschool hosted their annual Holiday Party for all the families on December the 13<sup>th</sup>. Our theme this year was “The Magic of Christmas”. Our staff enjoyed decorating the office and library for the festivities. Along with a Gingerbread House building contest for our students, there was a life size snow Globe. Our families and staff had a wonderful time. We also had students play holiday music throughout the evening.

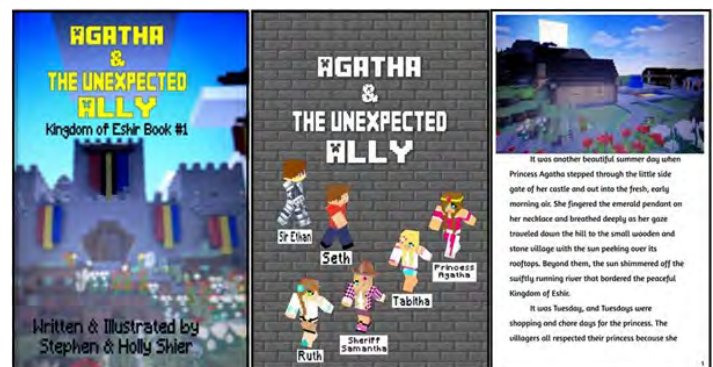


## *Raven Homeschool—Juneau*

By Holly Shier



For World Read Aloud Day on Feb 16, we hosted a Pajama Party at the Juneau Office. We had 15 students join us for the fun. We read about a dozen books out loud and used small objects to make up two different collaborative stories together. The students had a great time listening to fun stories and making up ones of their own. It was an excellent way to celebrate literacy and at the end of the hour, the kids did not want it to be over.



Do you know someone who eats, sleeps, and breathes Minecraft? Our nephews and nieces love telling us about all their latest creations whenever we see them, so for Christmas we decided to do something special and different for their gift—we built a Minecraft kingdom and published a book with their namesakes as the characters. *Agatha and the Unexpected Ally* can be found online at <http://www.blurb.com/b/7612645-agatha-and-the-unexpected-ally>. Here is a little about the book: The Kingdom of Eshir is a peaceful place to live with a kind princess and friendly villagers. Everyone's lives are fairly routine until one day items start going missing. Will the visiting knight be able to help solve the mystery? Teamwork is the only thing that will rescue the kingdom from impending disaster.



## *Raven Homeschool—Wasilla*

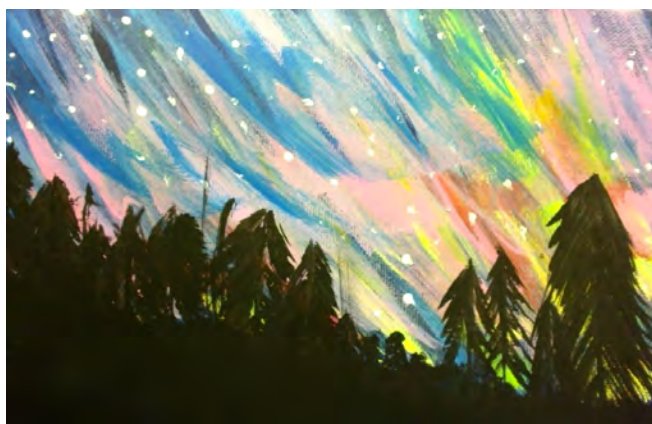
By Monique Ratzlaff



Taking on the challenge of gymnastics is Maddelyn C, a first grader. Maddelyn became interested in gymnastics around the age of 5 (she is now 7). As soon as she learned how to do a cartwheel, it became her mode of transportation. You could see her doing cartwheels all around the store, the library, it didn't matter where! A coach spotted her budding talent while she was at an open gym time at Excel Gymnastics. The coach asked her to join the Hot Shots Team program! During her time on the team, she overcame her fears and gained confidence. She has learned how to do a backhand spring, handstand on the beam, front and side splits, and so many more things! Maddelyn spends 6 hours a week at the gym training but many more at home practicing, on top of her daily school work. She loves her routine on the bars the most. Most amazing of all, after only 4.5 months, Maddelyn was invited to join the Level 3 Competition Team! Her training hours increased to 9 hours a week at the gym. She is very excited!

Kellcee C. is a Raven Homeschool senior with a giant personality and creativity to boot! She's gifted in art and sewing, evident in her latest original creation that she wore to the ANIME Convention, Senshi Conference held in Anchorage, October 2016.

Just before the holidays, Kellcee applied for the YKSD/CTE Education Academy. She was quite apprehensive, but when accepted, was over the moon. The ten day November academy allowed Kellcee to observe educators with different teaching styles, inspiring her by how they interacted with their students. Kellcee took the opportunity to help a young student with math in such a way that it was easily understood. She was rewarded with a hug. Kellcee was sold! She will begin her studies this fall to become an elementary teacher or perhaps a special education teacher. But one course, *Introduction to Education*, she no longer needs to take as she has earned both high school and college credit for it.



Kristina Z. is a sophomore here at Raven who graces our Wasilla office with her artwork. We also get to sample culinary creations from her cooking class. She is an expressive, responsible student who loves to paint and craft as well as cook. She has job applications out to cook at some small local businesses. We are anxious to know where she will be established, so that we can vouch for her cooking!



## YKSD Birthdays

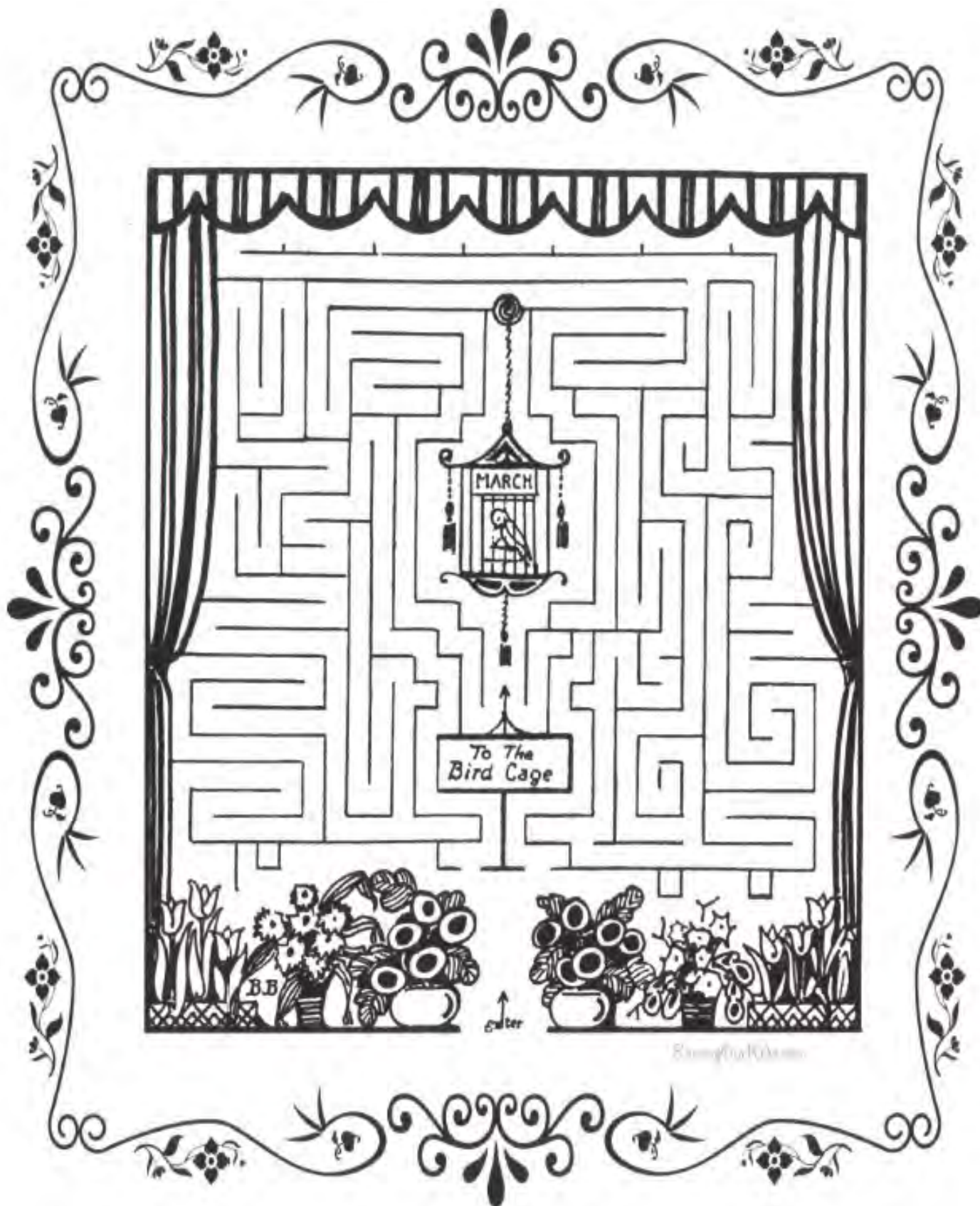
April	
JD McBride	3-Apr
Tim Main	7-Apr
Anne Elshazly	17-Apr
Chelsea Moore	17-Apr
Patty Hill	19-Apr
Rolland Linus	20-Apr
Teresa Miller	20-Apr
Michelle Patterson	22-Apr
Steve Swatling	22-Apr
Steve Barnes	27-Apr
Tim Pavlick	28-Apr
Danae Davis	30-Apr

May	
Josephine McGinty	5-May
Shirley Kruger	6-May
Alexander Solomon	7-May
Annette Moses	9-May
Mo Ott	9-May
Thomas Esmailka	10-May
Barbra Stahr	11-May
Nicholas Graves	12-May
Neil Sommer	19-May
Victoria Patsy	23-May
Terri Dann	25-May
Kara Kennedy	28-May
Chuck Backe	30-May

June	
Teresa Trinidad	4-Jun
Marilyn Mashall	9-Jun
Anne Titus	18-Jun
David Fields	26-Jun
Wayne Smoke	26-Jun
Breanna Semaken	30-Jun
Kia Wiehl	30-Jun
Maneline Williams	30-Jun



*March Maze*





## *School Photos and Yearbook*

By Susan Paskvan

Capture Your Memories in this Year's  
**Yukon- Koyukuk School District**  
Yearbook!



**Add Photos & Memories to Your 2 Free Custom Pages**

- » Add photos from your computer, Facebook & Flickr.
- » Add memories & photos from throughout the year. Share them with your classmates to include in their personal pages.
- » Send and receive Bling and signatures. A great way to share expressions of friendship!

**To Purchase & Customize Your Yearbook:**  
\*Must be a parent or guardian of a student in the school.

- 1 Go to [www.TreeRing.com/validate](http://www.TreeRing.com/validate)
- 2 Enter our school's passcode:  
**1014207409961115**

Yearbook Price: **\$30.00**  
Deadline: **Apr 10**

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