ACTIVITIES | ATTRACTIONS


KENNON CALIWANAGAN

Ketchikan's celebration of the Fourth of July finishes with a bang and a flash. Fireworks launched from a barge between the islands (plus indy pyrotechnics) dazzle onlookers.

■ Take a *walking tour* of downtown or the West End to breathe in our town's past. Maps are at KVB tour centers, the *Daily News* and other businesses. Sponsored by Historic Ketchikan Inc.

■ Visit the *Southeast Alaska Discovery Center* on Main Street for interpretive displays and a film. One of Alaska's premier attractions.


CARL THOMPSON

Ziplines offer thrilling rides where the tall trees grow.

■ *Totem Bight State Historical Park* 10 miles north of town has great totem poles, a long house and an extraordinary oceanside setting.

■ Visit *Misty Fiords National Monument* by boat, floatplane or kayak—grand from any angle.

■ *Historic Creek Street* has been home to a shingle mill, totem poles, homes and brothels. It's now lined with shops, galleries and museums above the watercourse. *Dolly's House Museum* displays the red-light days.

■ *Totem Heritage Center* between Deermount Street and Ketchikan Creek presents Native culture and historically significant totems in an interpretive setting.

■ *Saxman village* south of Ketchikan offers a world-class collection of totem poles and a cedar clan house.

■ *Go fishing* with a local guide; saltwater trips can be on powerboats or open kayaks. Half-day charters are available for visitors with tight timelines. All-day trips take off from our docks; multi-day lodge stays in remote areas provide all-inclusive adventure. Check online for your options.

■ Hike *Perseverance Lake* or *Talbot Lake trails* to see the rain forest from USFS paths composed of open ground and boardwalk; they're fairly easy for fit hikers. *Ward Creek Trail* curves along a scenic stream and is an easy walk. *Deer Mountain Trail* is a 2,500-foot challenge with superb vistas. *Rainbird Trail* above the Third Avenue Bypass has in-town access and great views of the waterfront from a forest setting; it is also less demanding. Trail maps are at the Discovery Center.


GREGG POPPEN

Waters around Ketchikan are extraordinary for kayaking alone or in a tour group.

■ *Thomas Basin* harbor is home to working and pleasure boats. Walk down from the historic Union Machine Shop and Potlatch Bar to stroll the floats, or amble out the breakwater for a view of town and mountains.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

■ When you're here on the *Fourth of July*, catch the parade at mid-day and our spectacular fireworks at night. On the first weekend of August, *Blueberry Arts Festival* offers arts and food; music; fun contests in beard-tending, slug-racing and pie-eating; dance concerts; and a poetry slam.

■ *Bar Harbor* in the West End is our largest harbor; find an astounding array of vessels: commercial fishing boats; motor and sailing pleasure craft; tugboats and tenders; luxurious motor yachts; liveaboards; and even fast law-enforcement boats. Two ramps offer pedestrian access to the floats.

■ Take a *kayak tour* for a close, quiet and exciting encounter with Alaska. Tours range from near-town excursions to several-night wilderness visits in Misty Fiords National Monument. Southeast Sea Kayaks, Southeast Exposure and Ketchikan Kayak Co. offer tours.

■ Our tall conifers have inspired *zipline adventures* at Southeast Exposure north of town and Alaska Canopy Adventures south of town. Descend through the tree canopy from thrilling heights in magnificent trees.

Public harbors are great places to walk right up to Alaska's mix of working and pleasure boats. Check calendars online for an opportunity to see Alaska Native dancers. Chief Kyan Pole in Whale Park is on the walking tour.

NATIVE CULTURE

A TALL CEDAR TREE FALLS. A STORY IS WRITTEN BY THE SHARP EDGE OF AN ADZE.
NORTHWEST COAST NATIVES DEVELOPED A UNIQUE ART FORM IN CARVED WOOD. TOTEMIC WORKS RELATED LEGENDS, HONORED ANCESTORS AND PRAISED LEADERS. EVEN POSTS THAT HELD UP CLAN HOUSES WERE INSCRIBED IN THIS 3-D LANGUAGE. AND BEHIND ALL OF THAT: A CULTURAL SYSTEM AND ECONOMY SUITED TO THE PLACE.


HALL ANDERSON

Stephen Jackson worked in Saxman's newly enlarged carving center to create the Seward Pole that went up in 2017 as the second replication—or interpretation, really—of an artwork originally created 130 years ago.

TOTEM POLES ARE THE START FOR A LOOK AT ANCIENT WAYS

Art and practicality are linked in Northwest Coast Native cultures. Creative work is integral to the way of life of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples of Southeast Alaska. Intricately woven cedar bark baskets were traditionally used to hold foods and household goods. Ornamented robes expressed family backgrounds—a sort of walking genealogy. The canoes carrying Alaska Natives to trading sites and fish camps were carved and painted with mythical and family emblems. Even halibut hooks bore artistry: carved figures to beguile fish for the catch.

Sometimes unremarked behind the artistry is the utilitarianism in Northwest Coast Natives' decorated objects: cedar baskets woven tightly enough for parboiling food; woven hats that kept out rain or kept in air for a personal flotation device; and halibut hooks sized to select medium-aged fish, not young spawners nor stringy old fish.

For millennia, Northwest Coast peoples carefully traced family lineages within and among their villages. They maintained intricate webs of honor, privilege and duty. In a rain forest realm equal parts bounty and challenge, they founded their subsistence on salmon and cedar—and built up from there in an economy with widespread trading.

Totem Heritage Center on Ketchikan Creek is indispensable for learning about ancient ways and artistry. Southeast Alaska Discovery Center presents Native culture in replicas. Parnassus Bookstore has material on the culture. Potlatch Totem Park, a private business at Totem Bight, displays totem poles and replicas of village houses.

Chief Johnson is depicted in "The Rock" on Ketchikan's docks. Master carver Nathan Jackson modeled as the Tlingit chief for sculptor Dave Rubin.


KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

Early photos of Kasaan and other Native villages are in the interpretive program at Totem Heritage Center. The center's mission of preserving 'heritage' has an educational component; artists teach Natives and non-Natives in tool-making, carving, weaving and regalia-making.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

Members of the Cape Fox Dancers celebrate the raising of a new totem pole in Saxman—singing *out of* the rain under cover in a concession to Alaskan weather. Chief Harvey Shields led the dance honoring the Three Eagles Pole behind them, carved by Haida artist Donald Varnell, member of a new generation of Native artists.

DANCE AND VISUAL ART CARRY ON A LEGACY

Native artists and dancers in Ketchikan take their traditions to coming generations, as well as to visitors. Almost 20 percent of Ketchikan's population has some Alaska Native lineage; cultural preservation is important to identity.

Carvers and weavers take on apprentices and students to extend the culture. Young Natives get involved through dance groups. Prime examples in this area are the Haida Descendant Dancers, Tongass Tribe Dancers, Cape Fox Dancers and New Path Dance Group. Youths and elders work together on regalia, language and dances, fashioning cultural links while presenting the art form to non-Natives.

Subsistence harvests and traditional foods also help to keep culture alive. Many Alaska Natives are expert at old ways of taking and preserving foods from the sea and shore.

Village corporations and regional corporations set up in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in the 1970s boost heritage. Through economic development (such as Cape Fox Corp.'s lodge, tours and store) and foundation support (such as Sealaska Heritage Foundation), corporations project the past forward.

A local program brings Native elders to schools to introduce arts and folkways. Projects at the University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan campus—such as anthropological visits to abandoned village sites—double as conservation and outreach.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION IS IMPORTANT TO IDENTITY FOR THOSE WITH NATIVE LINEAGE

TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER

Preservation of objects from the past was a key mission when the City of Ketchikan founded Totem Heritage Center in 1976, but the facility has become integral in moving traditional Native culture forward. The center was tasked with holding 19th-century totem poles retrieved from former Tlingit and Haida village sites near Ketchikan. Functioning in part as a museum, the center displays these priceless cultural artifacts and more recent carved poles, along with Alaska Native artifacts.

Totem Heritage Center also furthers the traditional arts and crafts of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures in a nationally recognized program of Native arts classes and activities. Master carver Nathan Jackson and master weaver Delores Churchill—both recipients of National Heritage Fellowships—have taught at the center, as have many distinguished artists from across North America.

The center is open to visitors year-round.

CHRONICLES, MYTHS & STATUS IN CEDAR

Northwest Coast peoples possess a sophisticated suite of fine arts and crafts, but their totem poles are best-known. The art form predates Western contact, but flourished in the prosperity of the fur trade in the 1700s and 1800s. Poles were commissioned by wealthy village leaders to display their status and affluence. Some poles tell of legends, clan lineages or notable events. Some celebrate cultural beliefs and others merely demonstrate carvers' artistic talents. Poles also illustrate stories, commemorate historic persons, represent shamanic powers or incorporate ridicule—the so-called shame poles. One of the most-told and most-carved Native stories is The Theft of Daylight, or Raven Steals the Sun. A fine example stands beside the museum on Dock Street.

Raven Steals the Sun

The Old Man at the Head of the Nass River was very rich and owned three boxes containing the stars, the moon and the sun. Raven wanted these for himself. Raven transformed himself into a hemlock needle and dropped into the water cup of the Old Man's daughter while she was picking berries. She became pregnant with him and gave birth to him as a baby boy. The Old Man doted over his grandson, but Raven cried incessantly. The Old Man gave him the Box of Stars to pacify him. Raven played with it for a while, then opened the lid and let the stars escape through the chimney into the sky.

The Old Man gave him the Box of Stars to pacify him. Raven played with it for a while, then opened the lid and let the stars escape through the chimney into the sky.

Later, Raven cried for the Box of the Moon, and after much fuss the Old Man gave it to him, but after stopping up the chimney. Raven played with it for a while and rolled it out the door, where it escaped into the sky. Finally Raven cried for the Box of the Sun, and after much fuss the Old Man relented and gave it to him. Raven knew well that he could not roll it out the door or toss it up the chimney because he was carefully watched. So he waited until everyone was asleep and changed into his bird form, grasped the sun and flew out the chimney. He took it to show others, who did not believe that he had the sun—so he opened the box to show them and it flew up into the sky, where it has been ever since.

Contemporary totemic poles are sentinels at Beaver Clan House in Saxman. Visitors to Saxman and to Totem Bight State Historical Park find rich arrays of artwork.

WORLD-CLASS TOTEMS DISTINGUISH KETCHIKAN

Publicly accessible collections of Northwest Coast totem poles in Saxman and at Totem Bight offer comprehensive looks at an art form known around the world. Carved cedar in museums and at private sites contributes to making Ketchikan the single best place in the world to explore this cultural legacy.

Saxman Totem Park has been prominent almost a century as a monument to totemic art—and as a training ground for generations of Alaska Native carvers. Contemporary poles and from the New Deal era stand along Totem Row, which leads to Beaver Clan House. Poles in Saxman are for the most part replications of village poles dating to the 1800s and early 1900s—although some express more modern themes. Native dance performances and interpretive programs are conducted in the clan house. The newly enlarged carving shed in Saxman provides a work site for master carvers and apprentices. The totem park is open to the public; Cape Fox Corp.'s paid tours and programs take in the clan house and carving shed in addition to guiding visitors through the totem park.

Totem Bight State Historical Park 10 miles north of Ketchikan has an outstanding collection of poles replicating those from Native villages. A brochure and interpretive signage along the easy forest path provide information on Native culture and natural history. The trail leads to a seaside clan house replicating the traditional village gathering place. Haida Descendant Dancers perform monthly; check community calendars. Park admission is $5, May through September.

Both parks are on bus routes.

Totem Heritage Center off of Deermount Street displays ancient and contemporary totem poles, as well as artifacts; there is a fee for interpretive tours in the city-owned facility.

Chief Johnson Pole on Stedman Street and Chief Kyan Pole on Mission Street are replications. Another salient totem is in front of UAS Ketchikan campus on south Stedman Street. Ketchikan Indian Community's health center boasts poles by Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian artists.

Six modern poles in the Council of Clans stand between Cape Fox Lodge and the civic center. Privately commissioned totem pole collections can be seen on paid tours at Rainforest Sanctuary at Herring Cove and in Potlatch Park at Totem Bight.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

STATS | DATES | FIRSTS

Selected features of Ketchikan's natural history, our unique human history and our way of life between the rain forest and the ocean

17:28 Hours and minutes of daylight in Ketchikan on the summer solstice in June.

7:06 Hours and minutes of daylight on the winter solstice in December.

4 hours Number to add to local time for Eastern time; add 9 hours for Greenwich time.

23.6 feet Greatest predicted range between successive tides in Ketchikan in 2017: on Dec. 4, a high of 19.6 feet at 12:39 p.m. and a low of minus 4.0 feet at 7:11 p.m.

$25 Annual fee levied by the Forest Service for lease of an entire Tongass Forest island for fox farming in 1907. Nine fox farms started up near Ketchikan and others were founded around Prince of Wales Island before World War II. In 1925, a blue fox pelt was worth $100-$150 to brokers for European interests. But the cost of starting a fox farm was estimated at $7,300.

3,001 feet Elevation at the peak of Deer Mountain, Ketchikan's distinctive backdrop. The summit is only about 6,500 lateral feet from the nearest ocean shoreline.

4,592 feet Elevation of Reid Mountain, tallest peak on Revillagigedo Island.

5,800 Number of people who visited Ketchikan as tourists on excursion steamships in 1898, according to U.S. Forest Service records.

1,007,600 Cruise ship passengers calling at the Port of Ketchikan in 2017—greatest-ever number of visitors on ships affiliated with Cruise Lines International Association.

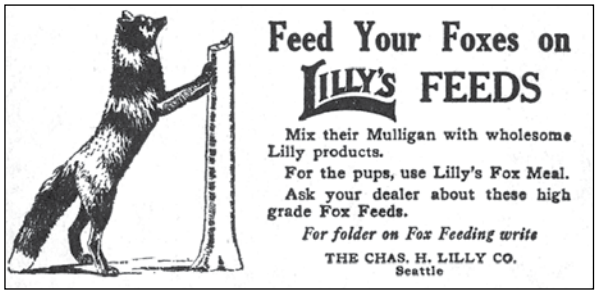
507 Total number of port calls by cruise and exploration ships in 2017.

Factor of 10 Difference in length of the largest and the smallest cruise and excursion ships calling at the Port of Ketchikan in 2017. Celebrity Solstice was largest at 1,040 feet, Alaskan Dream smallest at 104 feet. Solstice has 2,850 passenger berths; Alaskan Dream has 40 passenger berths.

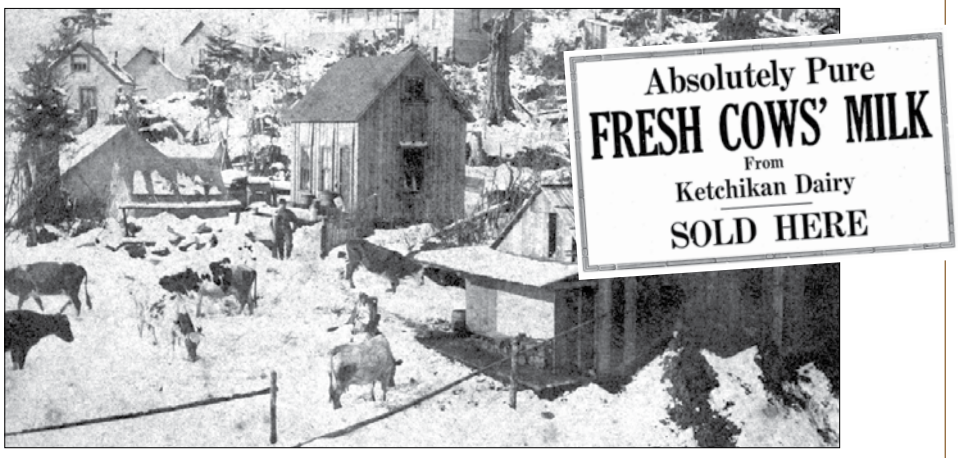
1892 Year the Ketchikan post office was established—eight years before incorporation of the city.

24 percent The slope of a portion of Washington Street in the West End. Gear down: it's the most vertiginous stretch of pavement in a community that's built on a mountainside.

GREGG POPPEN



KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS



KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

1959 Year when Ketchikan's last milk cow was shipped out, from Homestead Dairy four miles south of town. Between 1902 and 1959, half a dozen commercial dairies produced for the local market, operating on Revilla, Pennock and Gravina islands. The first was the Pittenger dairy at the top of Bawden Street, established about 1902. A street bears the name of the dairy's founder.

99950 Greatest number in the zip code system of the U.S. Postal Service, assigned to the Ketchikan post office for mail aimed at residents of two remote villages: Kasaan on eastern Prince of Wales Island and Edna Bay on Kosciusko Island.

1913 Year when the first concrete building was constructed in Ketchikan: Tongass Trading Co., still standing and in use at Front and Dock streets.

1901 & 1989 Years of the raising of Chief Johnson Poles near Ketchikan Creek. The first pole was commissioned by Chief Johnson and dedicated to the honor of the Kadjuk House of the Raven Clan of the Tlingit Tribe; it's now in the care of the Totem Heritage Center off of Deermount Street. The second pole was raised as a replica by carver Israel Shotridge.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

GREGG POPPEN

J.R. Heckman Founder of Ketchikan's first mercantile store, at Main and Dock streets—where his namesake concrete building (see it above) is still in use for retail stores and offices. Heckman is also historically credited as one of the primary inventors of floating fish traps, which decimated natural salmon runs as they harvested salmon for local canneries. They were outlawed in 1959 as a condition of Alaska's achieving statehood.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

1923 Year when Ketchikan became the first Alaskan city to pave a street, replacing planks on Front Street between Grant and Mill.

$28 million, 0.9 mile Cost and length of Third Avenue Extension, completed in 2004. The Third Avenue Bypass, as we call it, rises above Newtown to provide an alternate route from the West End to Bear Valley and the city center. Its engineering centerpiece is a wall 1,000 feet long and 90 feet high made of 120,000 tons of compacted concrete. Which leads us, naturally, to one of the most locally significant events to occur on this road …

1,976 The number of residents and visitors who strode the Third Avenue Bypass *en masse* in May 2013 to claim the Guinness World Record for most people to "race" in rainboots—or wellingtons, in the vernacular of the record-keepers and of the *former* titleholders in Lincolnshire, England (who had mustered 1,366 people for their race). This was Ketchikan's second attempt to take the record; an effort a year prior brought out fewer than 1,200 rainboot racers in the footwear that we call "Ketchikan sneakers." (See an example above.) Alas, Alaskans: Our preeminence was short-lived. The record was snatched from our very feet in May 2014, when 3,194 people did a rainboot scoot boogie in Killarney, County Kerry, Ireland. What *is it* with islanders and footwear contests?

These visitors streaming off of cruise ships, greeted by the seven bronze figures of The Rock, are part of a record-setting summer influx. More than a million cruise-line passengers came to our port in 2017 and even more were forecast for following years in a surge for the industry.

GREGG POPPEN

VISITOR INDUSTRY

VISITORS COME BECAUSE WE HAVE WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE & WANT TO DO. SO WE DEVELOP MORE SITES & MORE ATTRACTIONS FOR MORE PEOPLE. FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER, THE TRICK IS TO WELCOME, DISPERSE & ENTERTAIN A MILLION VISITORS WHILE ENSURING THAT KETCHIKAN IS LIVABLE FOR EVERYBODY.

SEANNA O'SULLIVAN / K.V.B.

Two vrrrrooms, harbor view—Small, customer-operated inflatables set out from Thomas Basin for guided excursions amid our rain forest islands. Kayakers who prefer quiet transit also visit this harbor to ogle boats.

GREGG POPPEN

Hey, let an umbrella be your smile! Light rain didn't deter visitors from a walking tour in historic downtown Ketchikan. The guide is togged in typical local apparel for a wet day: a hooded, waterproof jacket, rain pants and rubber boots.

SEANNA O'SULLIVAN / K.V.B.

Motorized backcountry outings have proliferated in recent years and help to spread out our flood of visitors on days when as many as half a dozen ships call at the port.

More" and "bigger" are the best words for Ketchikan's visitor sector, an increasingly essential engine of dollars and jobs in the community. More cruise ships and bigger cruise shipss are making port in Alaska's First City.

A few days before the close of the 2017 season, the year's millionth cruise passenger to visit Ketchikan descended a gangway to a celebration featuring community and industry dignitaries, a performance by an Alaska Native dance group and the conferring of a royal purple sash. That sash might well have been the color of money. The visitor from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., if typical, would spend more than $150 ashore in services, goods and sales tax. Cruise lines had never before delivered a million passengers to the port. The forecast for 2018 was for even greater numbers.

At season's end in 2017, Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska counted 1,007,600 passengers arriving at the port on ships affiliated with the international industry. Small regional lines and boutique excursion vessels brought thousands more. Alaska Airlines, Delta and the Alaska Marine Highway landed visitors in the thousands for longer stays that garner even greater benefits for lodging providers, retailers, services and restaurateurs. About 40,000 independent travelers were tallied in Ketchikan in the most recent yearly survey of the travel sector. Those visitors spend several hundred dollars apiece in the community.

The visitor industry is a leading generator of Alaskan jobs—and nowhere more than in Southeast. A study commissioned by the state in 2016 reported that 21 percent of Panhandle employment is accountable to the visitor industry—more than twice the percentage in Southcentral.

Global growth in cruise touring makes Alaska a destination second only to the Caribbean and the east coast of Mexico. Recent expansion of the Panama Canal enables cruise lines to run larger ships back and forth between these Alaskan and Caribbean seasonal circuits without resorting to a long trip around Cape Horn. The biggest lines are putting newer and larger ships on the Inside Passage—increasing the pressure on ports to upgrade shore facilities. Celebrity was first to break the four-figure mark with its Celebrity Solstice, at 1,040 feet long. Norwegian Cruise Lines puts the brand-new Norwegian Bliss into Alaskan service in 2018; the ship is 1,082 feet long and carries more than 4,000 passengers. The Port of Ketchikan can handle two of these post-Panamax giants at once, but ship berths must be lengthened to accommodate any more.

21 PERCENT OF PANHANDLE EMPLOYMENT IS ACCOUNTABLE TO THE GROWING VISITOR INDUSTRY

The port must make ready for nearly 50 ships per season in coming years. American Cruise Lines' new 175-passenger luxury ship is due to arrive in 2018. The Windstar, Azamara, Viking and Cunard lines plan new entries in the Alaskan cruise trade by 2019.

CRUISE LINES DELIVERED MORE THAN ONE MILLION PASSENGERS TO THE PORT IN 2017—A RECORD

Princess Cruises landed seven ships in Ketchikan in 2017—including the MV Emerald Princess, new to the Alaskan cruise market. Holland America Line's seven ships in Alaska during 2017 included the MV Eurodam, making its inaugural visits. Carnival, Celebrity, Norwegian and Royal Caribbean cruise lines called at the port, along with several luxury lines and small-ship excursion vessels. Disney Wonder has tied up since 2011.


GREGG POPPEN

Independent visitors who stay in local lodging or bring their RVs and take part in numerous activities—such as renting boats to fish for salmon and halibut—number in the tens of thousands.

If they come, you must build it: that's the rule for infrastructure and services in a world-class cruise port. Ketchikan boasts four docks capable of handling Panamax-class ships. In the 1990s, the cruise industry helped to pay for expanding Berth 1. Ketchikan citizens OK'd a $38 million bond issue to build Berth 3, finished in 2007; municipal receipts from the commercial passenger vessel excise tax (CPV), initiated by Alaskan voters, paid off the bond. CPV revenues since 2007 upgraded Berths 1 and 2 and funded other port improvements. That levy is also helping to prepare the Port of Ketchikan for post-Panamax ships. A local business linked to the stevedoring company constructed Berth 4 in 2008 and leases that deepwater moorage to the city.

Planning is under way for expansion to provide berths for the post-Panamax generation. Early estimates of costs range to more than $50 million. But Ketchikan can't cede the big hulls to other ports in Alaska or British Columbia without paying in forgone business activity, port fees and sales tax. The port routinely hosts six ships and 10,000 passengers in a day; on one day in May 2017, nominal ship capacity of 13,200 was nearly equal to the local population.

The pressure on infrastructure has increased in 20 years. In 1998, cruise lines brought 35 ships to Ketchikan for 488 port calls; passenger capacity was 523,000. The numbers →

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

DOWNSTREAM EFFECTS—Happy visitors stopped where Ketchikan Creek pours into the sea and memorialized their visit with a group selfie. In Ketchikan's economy, their visit will be logged in the forms of retail spending and contributions to our sales tax fund. One study estimates that each cruise ship passenger leaves $160 ashore.

GREGG POPPEN

increased steadily until the U.S. economy tanked in 2008. Recession in the Lower 48 and overseas pushed down Southeast's cruise industry. Cruise lines put only 26 ships on the Inside Passage in 2010; passenger capacity was 825,000. Economic recovery and assertive selling lifted cruise lines to record numbers in 2017 and 43 ships booked 507 port calls in Ketchikan.

The most recent economic study estimated that visitors spend almost $140 million a year in the community. The visitor industry in 2012 supported more than 1,140 jobs directly and another 400 indirectly—about 15 percent of local employment.

Most visitors don't stay long, but they're essential to residents' year-round comfort and convenience: 24 percent of local taxable sales in 2012 was attributed to visitors. When you add up all the revenues to the city and borough from the visitor sector—city moorage fees, CPV revenue, sales tax and bed tax—it ran to nearly $17 million of support for local governments.

Cruise-ship passengers who come ashore leave an average of $160 per person—or about $120 million over the season, according to a recent estimate. Tour operators, charter skippers and retail stores take in most of that spending. Independent travelers who stay one or more nights tend to spend several hundred dollars each day and spread it across a greater range: lodging, groceries, restaurants, sporting goods, etc.

WE TURNED AROUND THE K.V.B. TAG LINE—*THEIR* LIFESTYLE IS *OUR* REWARD

Ketchikan Visitors Bureau (KVB), one of the state's oldest tourism promoters, is a membership nonprofit that markets Ketchikan as a travel destination. Its tag line trades on our unique ways and place: "Ketchikan: our lifestyle, your reward." KVB produces visitor guides and advertises the community in magazine ads and in a web site. KVB staff attend off-season trade shows and industry exhibitions to get the word out. Outreach through Facebook and Twitter entices visitors. The bureau connects with travel writers and film companies to engender positive media portrayals.

KVB markets for Ted Ferry Civic Center, a convention and conference facility owned by the City of Ketchikan; the bureau's promotional efforts also benefit a couple of large local hotels that provide conference services.

More people do systematic research via phone and internet before setting out on independent travel. They find out how to use the Alaska Marine Highway, Alaska Airlines and Delta to get here; they find hotels, B&Bs and vacation rentals, and line out activities before they arrive. The web is a year-round and inexpensive marketing tool.

Attractions are diverse. Totem parks and Creek Street are standouts. Salmon fishing charters and flightseeing draw tens of thousands. Diversions from amphibious tours to ziplines are popular. Kayak excursions and walking tours offer compelling perspectives on our setting and our city.

In a balance developed across a century, Ketchikan's economy is inseparably reliant on leisure travelers. Yep, we turned it around. *Their* lifestyle is *our* reward.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

AWARD-WINNING VIDEOS OUTLINE OUR HISTORY AND WAYS OF LIFE

KETCHIKAN STORY Project

The story of Ketchikan is told in six videos focusing on some of the most prominent features of the community. The project, distributed on DVDs and on the Internet, is intended to educate Ketchikan's visitors, but the series was also a hit with local audiences crowding premieres.

Awards panels, too, have applauded. Story Project videos on Alaska Natives, bush pilots and the timber industry won seven regional Emmys. The national Tellys conferred laurels for two videos, the web site and interactive kiosks.

Local producer Kali Enterprises initiated the project in 2009 and enlisted Ketchikan Visitors Bureau as a partner. KVB asked the Ketchikan Gateway Borough for support and the borough assembly greenlighted greenbacks from the CPV fund.

When the last chapter rolled out in mid-decade, segments were showing on cruise ships in Alaska and on Alaska Airlines' in-flight video players—but more importantly from a marketing standpoint, the stories were seen on cruise ships in the Caribbean.

Producers posted the videos on a web site and created an app for mobile devices, KETCHicons. Kiosks in town presented material interactively. The series is on local TV.

Running times in the series range from 27 to 44 minutes. DVDs are available in Ketchikan stores. Short segments online offer extracted features on local personalities.

www.KetchikanStories.com
KETCHicons app is available for iOS and Android

RISING TIDE FOR TOURISM—
A steamship moored at low tide looses a crowd of passengers toward Mission Street in the early 1920s, when the territory was already a popular tour destination.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

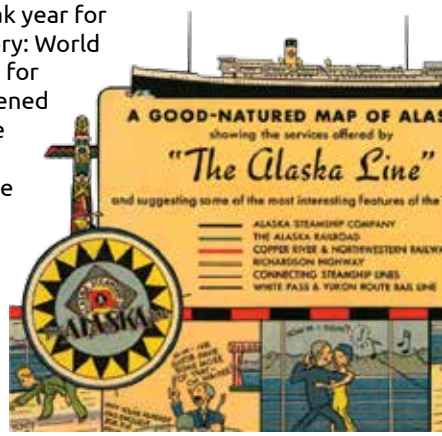
STEAMING IN

Ketchikan's earliest tourists got here not long after the first white settlers. Even before 1900, steamships brought pleasure travelers and early stores stocked "curios."

Some cruises included side trips to abandoned Alaska Native villages—most notoriously, the Harriman Expedition of 1899 led by railroad baron Edward Harriman. Well-heeled sightseers cruised with scientists, anthropologists, artists, photographers and officials of the National Geographic Society and Smithsonian Institution. The expedition was excoriated decades later for taking totem poles and artifacts along a swath from Ketchikan to the Aleutians.

History records 1915 as a peak year for steamship travel to the territory: World War I disrupted vacation plans for the leisure class and they fastened on Alaska as an exotic but safe destination. As many as four steamship lines plied the Inside Passage by the 1920s.

President Warren G. Harding's visit to Alaska in 1923 was a marketing boost. Reporters chronicled the wonders of the Last Frontier, from Ketchikan to the Interior.



FAQ?

FAIRLY AGONIZING QUESTIONS
Don't ask *these* when you visit

The best question ever asked of a Ketchikan resident by a visitor is apocryphal—it's a joke. But we love it.

VISITOR Little fella, does the rain in Ketchikan ever *stop*?
BOY I don't know—I'm *only* five years old!

The *real* questions that *real* visitors ask are fairly amazing. Agonizing, even. When you're here, don't ask *these*.

What's the elevation in Ketchikan? See the water under your ship? Sea level. That's zero. Count up. Go ahead, use your fingers.

What time do the Northern Lights come on? They're on a randomizer and we never know in advance. Sometimes they come on in daytime and only cavedwellers see them.

Where do you people go in the wintertime? Oh, you know. Some do temp work at the North Pole, some just den up.

How old do deer have to be before they turn into caribou? Well, it's not so much about age as it is their willingness to wear the bigger antlers.

You can see the waves coming. Can't you just steer around them? Well, that's for people on the *premium* charter.

In Juneau the ramp from the ship was about level when we got off and it was really steep when we went back. Why'd they raise it? Ah, I bet the ship floated higher after they offloaded the mail.

What are those white things on the water? The whitecaps? They're a chemical reaction of salt, oxygen and salmon spit.

On the map, Alaska looks pretty close to Hawaii. Is it cheap to fly there? Yeah, because competition from all the interstate bus operations keeps airline prices down.

Joe Williams Jr. hears funny questions as he conducts walking tours in Ketchikan and Saxman. He's a lifelong resident and an Alaska Native. He's also been mayor of the City of Saxman and Ketchikan Gateway Borough—so he knows how to remain diplomatic. But he's heard some doozies over the years.

This is an island? So, does that mean there's water all around it?

Do you take American money here?

How long have you been an Indian?

Williams has provided interpretive walking tours for decades. He said goofy questions are dwindling and good questions are increasing. "Travelers are getting smarter," he says. "I think it's because of the Internet."

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

NICK BOWMAN

THEY CALL IT
'THE IDITAROD WITH
A CHANCE OF DROWNING.'
IS THIS WHERE 'VISITOR INDUSTRY'
ENDS & 'SURVIVOR INDUSTRY' STARTS?

The motivation is adventure in a motorless race to Ketchikan

RACE TO ALASKA IS 750 MILES OF WAVES, WINDS, TIDES AND LONESOME IMPROVISATION. BUT IT MUST BE QUIET OUT THERE WITHOUT ANY MOTORS RUNNING.

R2AK was conceived in Port Townsend, Wash., and in 2017 celebrated its third year of impelling sailors and rowers on motorless transits of the Inside Passage.

Or is it the *inside passage*, a head trip for the intrepid few who welcome the rigors and risks of a wind- and human-powered voyage from Puget Sound to Ketchikan?

"It's the Pacific Northwest and Alaskan spirit," said Jake Beattie, whose brainstorm in 2013 engendered the race. He directs the Northwest Maritime Center in Port Townsend. "We can get over ourselves, but we can do impressive things. Extreme things can be impressive but commonplace."

Beattie uncorked the race idea with friends in a beer tent in 2013. In summer 2014, they announced that the inaugural Race to Alaska would launch a year hence. "We declared a $10,000 prize, but we didn't actually have it," he said.

Promotional efforts online and in the sailing community drew two dozen entrants for the first race in 2015. Cheeky marketing must have helped. R2AK was styled as "the Iditarod with a chance of drowning." First prize of ten grand in cash would be nailed to a board in Ketchikan. Second prize, a set of steak knives, would be handed over without apology or ceremony. The stated reward for just finishing: "cathartic elation."

Race to Alaska offered a "buy back" deal to each finisher in Ketchikan: sign over the boat to R2AK for $10,000—but only the first claimant could get the money.

Few entrants expect cash or cutlery. They share the R2AK devotion to motorless boating. "We're developing a message and promoting an ethic," said Beattie. "We want to demonstrate that simple and affordable boats can do great adventures, can work in unison with the elements rather than overpower them."

HALL ANDERSON

Team Ketchikan finished 14th in the second Race to Alaska and still made money—for scholarships. Ketchikan Yacht Club organized funding and bought a 27-foot sailboat. Mike Fiari (at left), Charley Starr and Tom Logan (aft of the mast) sailed 10 days and 19 hours and arrived, weary but smiling, in Thomas Basin. The yacht club raffled off the sailboat and put $10,000 into a scholarship fund for youth interested in careers at sea.

In the first three years, motley flotillas left Port Townsend on the 40-mile shakedown leg to Victoria, B.C.—where entrants must arrive within 36 hours to remain in the race. Monohull sailboats were most numerous. Homemade hybrid vessels and watercraft with pedals or oars ventured out. In year three, a paddleboarder completed the race. Sleek catamarans and trimarans set the pace in every race.

Many were called, but few were frozen: Capsizes, mishaps and breakdowns winnowed the fleets and about 60 percent of entrants finished the races.

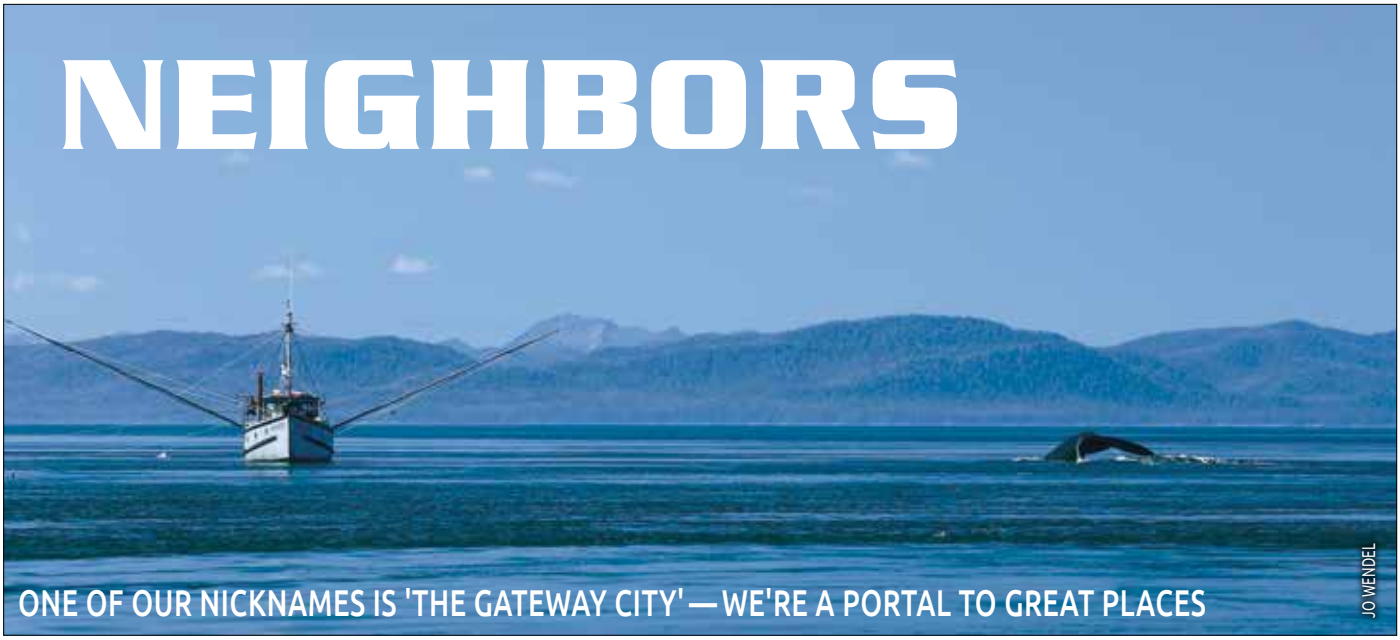
R2AK draws increasing attention. The online race tracker, tied to SPOT beacons on the boats, drew webhits from hundreds of thousands of race fans in years one to three. CNN, NPR, *Outside* magazine and *Senior Living* ran reports. The sponsor roster grew. The Alaska House in 2017 approved a bill for a contest akin to the Nenana Ice Classic: buy a ticket, guess the winner's finish time, win cash. (The bill was in Senate committee review at presstime.)

The winners in 2015 sailed into Thomas Basin after 5 days, 1 hour and 55 minutes. In 2016, Team MAD Dog logged a mad dash by catamaran in 3:20:13 to win R2AK. Team Freeburd, from Marblehead, Mass., had a real race in 2017: their trimaran, at 4:03:05, was only 6 minutes ahead of Team Big Broderna.

Race organizers' promise of cathartic elation was realized by one bedraggled, unbowed sailor who reached Ketchikan after three weeks at sea and told Beattie: "I truly think everyone should do this!"

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

NEIGHBORS



Humpback whales and orcas are routinely seen on whale-watching excursions—and, in this case, on a troller's ordinary workday.

PRINCE *of* WALES ISLAND

Ketchikan is the takeoff point for travel to the nation's third-largest island. The island we commonly call "P-O-W" has several friendly small towns, tall mountains and a thousand miles of shoreline. The island is accessible for passengers and vehicles via Inter-Island Ferry Authority's daily, three-hour transit to Hollis. Air carriers offer scheduled and charter flights.

Prince of Wales Island boasts nearly 2,000 miles of roads, from smooth highways to backcountry tracks. More than 250 miles of roads are Alaska Scenic Byways. Visitors find many lodging options, from B&Bs to RV parks. The towns offer fishing charters and whale-watching excursions. The U.S. Forest Service offers tours of massive El Capitan Cave on the north end. Around the island, USFS cabins provide rustic getaways.

Native culture is prominent in totem parks in Klawock, Hydaburg and Kasaan. Kasaan also has the newly restored Whale House on its scenic waterfront.

Prince of Wales Chamber of Commerce provides a good roundup of information for visitors launching their explorations from Ketchikan. Browse online at princeofwalescoc.org.

The Forest Service offers free tours in El Capitan Cave.

Whale House in Kasaan is spectacularly revived.

METLAKATLA

The state ferry MV Lituya makes a 45-minute run between Ketchikan and Annette Island several days a week to put this unique community within reach. A 15-mile road leads from the ferry landing to the town of 1,400 people on scenic Chester Bay. Local air carriers make scheduled trips to Metlakatla.

Most residents are Tsimshian Indians whose ancestors resettled here from Canada in the 1880s. The self-governing Metlakatla Indian Community is the municipal authority within the Annette Island Reserve—Alaska's only Native reserve.

For information about visiting the town and attractions such as Duncan Cottage and a historical church, browse to the tribal web site, metlakatla.com.

Metlakatla's waterfront faces into scenic Chester Bay.

TIMES OF THE SIGN

THE CHANGING WELCOME ARCH ON MISSION STREET MARKS KETCHIKAN'S EVOLVING SELF-CONCEPT

The Welcome Arch of the 1930s, at far left, featured our prowess in packing salmon—a simulated salmon can in capstone position. By the '40s, sportfishing was the marketing focus and a neon design featured a salmon and fisherman. The 1951 layout is adopted in today's sign.

This focal landmark goes back to the 1930s, when Americans were car-happy and towns were welcome-arch-happy. Our highway is the sea, so *our* arch faced the steamship dock. Arches have been friendly foreground for our mountains for about 90 years. They've also indicated our choices in "branding." The first arch over Mission Street was of wood and boasted that we were "the Canned Salmon Capital of the World." After WWII, a new arch dubbed Ketchikan "Salmon Capital of the World," with a salmon and fisher counterpoised in neon-lighted battle. The 1951 design claimed All-America City status and had neon animation. That arch stood for almost 20 years and was replaced by a wood design with a totemic motif; a wayward truck took out that arch in the '90s. Historic Ketchikan Inc. led a drive to replicate the 1951 arch; the version installed in 1996 had funding help from the city and the Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association. The city repaired and restored this First City icon in 2016 after another encounter with an arch nemesis: a drunk driver whose car collided with the north-side support pole and dangerously canted the entire structure.

GREGG POPPEN

First Lutheran Church in Newtown was established when Ketchikan was home for an influx of Norwegian-American commercial fishing families.

WORSHIP

The visitor or new resident interested in a congenial church home will find the range of Christian denominations well-represented in the community.

St. John's Episcopal Church is in the heart of downtown on Mission Street—the very street named for its pioneering mission on the frontier. Congregants worship in a wood-paneled sanctuary built in 1903.

First United Methodist Church parishioners worship at Main and Grant streets, where their forebears were the first in Ketchikan to erect a church building.

First Lutheran Church E.L.C.A. calls worshippers to a prominent sanctuary founded literally on the rock—surmounting an outcropping at the edge of Newtown.

Holy Name Catholic Church is one of the larger congregations in town.

The parish sanctuary and elementary school are along Jackson Street in the West End.

Many other churches are firmly established in Ketchikan. Among them are Baptists and Presbyterians; Church of the Nazarene and Church of God; Church of Christ and the Assembly of God; and Seventh-Day Adventists.

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have active ministries in Ketchikan.

Clover Pass Community Church is on the north end and a sister fellowship, South Tongass Alliance Church, is at Fawn Mountain south of town; the two ministries are affiliated with Christian Missionary Alliance.

The Salvation Army has a strong presence at harborside downtown.

A group adhering to the Baha'i Faith is active.

GOSPEL RUSHED TO ALASKA WITH MINERS AND FISHERS

Ketchikan was opened to the Word in a sort of missionary cascade as the 19th century passed into the frontier's frenzied boom. Early-arriving denominations established congregations still active today.

The first to preach here was the Rev. James Young, a Presbyterian who founded a Saxman school in 1895 for Tlingits relocated from villages.

In 1897, the Episcopal Rev. A.J. Campbell offered services around Ketchikan, mostly for Native people. In 1898, Agnes Edmond opened an Episcopal mission school. A Jesuit priest, the Rev. A. Trivelli, celebrated mass in 1899. The Rev. V. Roy Bennett, a Methodist, followed in 1900. Fellow Methodists in 1901 were first to build a Ketchikan church: at Grant and Main, where First United Methodist stands today. St. John's Episcopal Church went up beside the Edmond mission school in 1903. The church is still in use; fill has pushed the sea back hundreds of feet, to Thomas Basin.

The Jesuits, in 1904, refashioned a schoolhouse as their church. It was used until 1969; Holy Name Catholic Church is now in the upper West End. Presbyterians established a mission in 1925 and built a church on Stedman Street in 1931; they meet nowadays on Second Avenue.

First Lutheran Church lifted its steeple in 1930 in Newtown, amid an enclave of Norwegian fishermen.

GREGG POPPEN

AVIATION

ALASKA HAS MORE PILOTS & PLANES PER CAPITA BECAUSE ALASKA HAS MORE OCEAN, LAND, ISLANDS, SMALL TOWNS & GORGEOUS SETTINGS. FLOATPLANES HAVE BEEN ESSENTIAL IN LIFE AROUND KETCHIKAN FOR NEARLY A CENTURY. THEY SHARE LOCAL SKIES WITH TWO OF THE LEADING U.S.AIRLINES, ALONG WITH CHOPPERS & FREIGHT CARRIERS.

The skies above Ketchikan feature the sort of aerial mix you find only in Alaska. Floatplanes, jet aircraft, commuter planes on wheels, helicopters and bald eagles share an airspace bounded by mountainsides and offering landing sites on saltwater and tarmac.

The local floatplane fleet is linked to shore along miles of Ketchikan waterfront, where operators' docks provide passenger and freight access to our workhorse aircraft. We have a number of one- and two-plane businesses that make most of their revenue in the summer, when visitors are eager to see Alaska, close-up, from the seats of small aircraft. These locally based airlines also provide charter service to remote lakes and cabins. But the aviation matrix also has larger enterprises running four or more aircraft during the peak season.

NATIONAL AIRLINES LAND AT OUR AIRPORT WHILE THE STRAIT BETWEEN OUR ISLANDS IS A LANDING STRIP FOR LOCAL FLIGHTS ON FLOATS

The throbbing chuff of the DeHavilland Beaver's engine is the most familiar sound in Ketchikan's air year-round—aside from the cries of eagles and ravens. The Canadian-built plane on floats is the local workhorse for most carriers. But the manufacturer's turbine Otters are also in the air. Plane-spotters will also see a smattering of older and newer Cessnas—the latter including wheeled and amphibious Caravans.

Recreational fliers keep small floatplanes ready for flight, mostly during summer season. Piper Cubs are the dominant aircraft in the pleasure fleet; one of them dates to 1939, with more than 60 years of flying logged around Ketchikan.

Misty Fiords National Monument, about 30 miles from Ketchikan, is a favorite sightseeing destination. Flights to that dramatic wilderness are essential in local operators' summer revenues. Granite escarpments reaching thousands

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

C. HOGGARD

In a place comprising as much salt water as solid ground, aviation is indispensable for travel, mail, tourism and—well, for the odd emergency. Say your boat motor breaks down in a remote bay. But the mobile works. You call to town for a part. The parts guy passes it off to a pilot. The pilot sets down near your folding jon boat for the handoff. The part goes in. The trip is saved. It's Southeast Alaska. What a trip.

of feet straight out of deep fjords are not diminished by being observed from an eagle's vantage. Some flights to "Misty" include a landing on salt water—for what you might call the bear's-eye view of the landscape and shoreline.

KETCHIKAN'S SKIES ARE PARTICULARLY BUSY IN THE SUMMER. F.S.S. STAFF LOG ABOUT 1,000 CONTACTS WITH FLIERS PER DAY IN JULY COMPARED TO A TYPICAL FEBRUARY TALLY CLOSER TO 3,500 FOR THE *ENTIRE MONTH*

Alaska Airlines brings several flights a day north- and southbound through Ketchikan International Airport. Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is 680 air miles away—about one hour and 40 minutes. Juneau is 225 miles and 40 minutes distant.

Alaska Airlines has outlasted intermittent competition in Alaska. Rivals such as Western Airlines and Delta came and went in the 1980s and 1990s. MarkAir, an Alaska-based carrier, competed for less than a year before folding. Delta returned for summer service to Ketchikan and Sitka in 2015.

The airport is owned by the State of Alaska; it's operated by Ketchikan Gateway Borough, as are ferries that provide access to the airport on Gravina Island.

After the airport was built in 1973, the borough bought used ferries from an operation on Lake Champlain. The ferries used today were built at Ketchikan Shipyard. The first, christened in 2001, honors the late Oral Freeman, a Ketchikan businessman and state legislator; the second is the Ken Eichner II—christened in 2013 to honor the helicopter pilot. →

ELLIS ISLANDS Bob Ellis and his Waco in 1936. In the '50s, island-hopping Grumman amphibians carried residents and tourists.

FIRST PERSON | BOB ELLIS

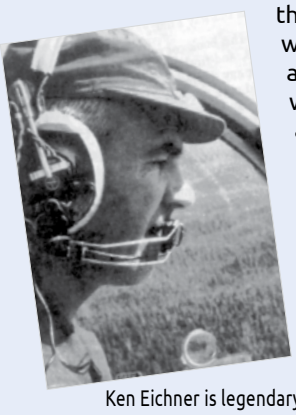
"In addition to the routine of flying and managing my small company, I took on many other activities. I kept track of the wives out there in the West Coast who were approaching motherhood, so that I could get them to the hospital in time. I kept track of the prisoners in the Ketchikan jail who were about to be released so that I could get them home before they got into further trouble, and also of the West Coast patients in the hospital, so I could report back on their progress to their relatives. I even sadly returned their dead bodies, when things did not work out so well. On every trip back to Ketchikan I stuffed my pockets with notes: buy me this, bring me back that. This I did as I wheeled about town on my bicycle. I never had a baby born in a plane that I was flying, but I had many a close call. I remember particularly Mrs. Arlie Dahl, the wife of the school principal at Craig. I urged her not to wait for the next day to go in to Ketchikan to have her baby because a storm was moving into the area. She hurriedly packed and away we flew toward Ketchikan, but the storm was not "tomorrow"—it was "today"! I butted my nose into half a dozen passes, only to find them choked with falling snow. Finally I had to go back to Craig for more gas. With Dolly still cheerfully riding along, I tried again and this time elected to land in Klawock Lake to watch the pass for a break in the visibility. The snow came down so fast it covered the wings of the Waco while we sat and hoped and waited for a clear spot. I went ashore, cut a spruce bough and when the break came I swept the wings clean. At last we sailed happily through the Harris River Pass and in twenty minutes landed at Ketchikan. One hour later Dolly's baby was born in Ketchikan General Hospital. It became a standard joke: get Ellis to shake you up for a quick, painless birth!

— From *What? No Landing Field? Adventures of an Alaskan Seaplane Pilot*, by Robert (Bob) Ellis and Margaret (Peg) Ellis, edited by Elizabeth Richardson. Bob Ellis Aviation Scholarship Foundation, 1998. Used with permission.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

FIRST PERSON | KEN EICHNER

After I learned to fly solo and prior to getting my license ... we had a lost preacher. A Methodist preacher had gone up Deer Mountain to make a long-range hike across the mountains and was to end up in White River. A day later the airplane went to pick him up, and he wasn't there. A search started, and a couple of days later they finally spotted the preacher in a river valley where there were a lot of salmon and a lot of black bear. He was waving a handkerchief, but he apparently couldn't walk, so they came to TEMSCO and needed a helicopter to rescue him.



Ken Eichner is legendary in Southeast Alaskan aviation.

The helicopters were all out working, and I was the only one there. I had the B-model, but I didn't have a license, so I couldn't do it. They said, "You've got to do it. The preacher's been out there three nights now, and we've got to get him." So I said, "Well, okay. I'll tell you what I'll do. You send Jack Cousins"—he'd located the preacher—"over to George Inlet, and he can locate the preacher for me by circling him. I'll come over with the helicopter and land wherever I can and pick the preacher up and take him to the beach in George Inlet, where Jack can take him back to town. That way nobody but you two will know I did it, because if I'm hauling people without a license, I'm liable to never get my license."

THE PREACHER WANTED TO TELL THE MEDIA AND HIS CONGREGATION ABOUT THE RESCUE ... I SAID, 'NO, YOU CAN'T ... OR I'LL NEVER GET MY LICENSE.'

I took off and Jack spotted the preacher for me. I found a little muskeg which looked pretty good. It was pretty narrow, but it was big enough to get into. I had a couple hundred feet for a takeoff area, which you kind of needed with the old B-model Hiller. I landed in the muskeg and shut off the helicopter. Then I hiked down the creek and got the preacher. I was surprised to see that he had been eating dead salmon. Actually, when you get right down to it, parts of the salmon were still pretty good. The bear liked it, and the preacher said it wasn't too bad. It was sure better than nothing. The preacher's feet were so sore he couldn't walk, so I assisted him by half-carrying him back to the helicopter.

This was my first landing and takeoff in a confined area. I lifted up about a foot and made a running takeoff. I flew him down to the beach ... and Jack took the preacher to town in his little Luscombe seaplane. Well, the preacher wanted to tell the media and his congregation about the rescue, and he wanted to mention my name. I said, "No, you can't ... or I'll never get my license." ... He honored my request begrudgingly.

— From *Nine Lives of An Alaska Bush Pilot*, by Ken Eichner. Taylor Press, 2002. Used with permission. Eichner died in 2007.

Two national passenger carriers use Ketchikan International Airport on Gravina Island. They share the long runway with express shippers; local scheduled carriers using wheeled aircraft; private pilots; and even the occasional military training run.

Borough and state officials were at work in 2017 on plans for extensive improvements to the ferry system. Dual ferry landings for both ends of the route were on the drawing board. Plans for the Revilla Island side included new traffic corridors, amenities for walk-on passengers and an enlarged parking area. Project costs were anticipated to run in the $70 million range and would be paid from the remnant of a congressional earmark for bridge access to Gravina Island—a fund divided and diverted by state authorities years ago.

Walk-on passengers pay $6 for a same-day round trip on the ferry. An automobile costs $7 each way.

Ketchikan International Airport is busy and multi-dimensional. The federal Flight Service Station advises aircraft on the runway and floatplanes on Tongass Narrows. Airspace in Ketchikan is unique in the nation: Along a narrow, two-mile band of sea and land, floatplanes and wheeled planes share the sky above a busy waterfront of fishing vessels, cruise ships and recreational craft—a port area tightly restricted under Homeland Security. It's officially designated "uncontrolled airspace" because the FSS doesn't control air traffic as it would around a metropolitan airport. But you could call it *coordinated* airspace.

Alaska Airlines' Boeing 737s are familiar features in our skies. During the summer, Delta flies Bombardier 700s through Ketchikan. Both carriers connect from SeaTac through the First City to other Alaskan communities.

Ketchikan's sky is particularly busy in summer. FSS staff count about 30,000 contacts with fliers each July, compared to a typical February tally closer to 3,500. Floatplane flightseeing to Misty Fjords National Monument is a boon to local commercial aviation and makes up for some of the passenger traffic lost when the timber industry shrank back 20 years ago. Floatplane trips to remote fishing lodges are another seat-filler for local operators, who often emplane passengers who walk from the airport terminal to the airport's floatplane dock.

Flight Service Station staff estimate that about 100 aircraft on wheels or floats are based in Ketchikan. Air taxis and flightseeing operators favor DeHavilland's Beavers and Turbine Otters, along with a variety of Cessna aircraft. About 20 helicopters are based here.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

DARING IN THE AIR EARLY PILOTS OPENED A FRONTIER

FIRST CITY'S FIRST FLYBOY LANDED AN AIRCRAFT THAT WAS JUST ABOUT A BOAT HULL WITH WINGS

One of Ketchikan's own made the first flight from Seattle to Ketchikan, in July 1922. Roy Jones landed his small Curtiss Seagull to the cheers of folks lining the docks and rooftops downtown and Ketchikan became the First City for coastal flights, not just for plodding steamships. The inaugural aircraft wasn't much: a double wing with a push-prop engine mounted on an open boat hull. But it was a flying start.

Jones sold his passenger seat to dozens of excited flightseers that summer. He also developed a business flying passengers out to inspect fish traps, to look at mining prospects or to take a quick trip to an outlying community. He became, in fact, one of Alaska's first commercial aircraft pilots. But the glorious takeoff for Southeast Alaska aviation crashed after Jones' first season; he wrecked his so-called Northbird in a local lake and couldn't reclaim the sky. (A mountain on Revilla Island bears his name.)

MORE CANNED SALMON IS PACKED IN KETCHIKAN THAN IN ANY OTHER CITY IN THE WORLD

Ketchikan Alaska Chronicle

Independent But Never Neutral — Always the News, Fearless in Views

KETCHIKAN, ALASKA, MONDAY, MARCH 18, 1929.

First Airplane Passengers to Territory Arrive Here

Flying Boat Completes Trip From States; Leaves Tomorrow

The first passengers ever to travel from the states to Alaska by air arrived in Ketchikan last night at 6:30 o'clock when the Boeing flying boat of the International Airways company made a graceful landing in Tongass Narrows.

Thus, the arrival here becomes an historical occasion, marking a new era in development of the Territory.

P. T. McCarthy, president of the company, aboard as observer and passenger, was delighted with the trip. He reported that they had no difficulties whatever en route from Seattle to Ketchikan. While they were several days on the way, it was through choice. They made three stops, resting and making general investigations at each as to conditions and accommodations.

Mrs. J. W. McCord and Mrs. McCarthy, wife of the president, were delighted with their experience and pleased to have the honor of being the first women ever to fly from the states to Alaska.

Captain E. J. Burke, pilot of the plane, expressed the opinion that with proper equipment it will be a simple undertaking to fly directly from Seattle to Ketchikan. Mr. McCarthy concurred

One of the interested persons who conferred with the aviators is Roy Jones of Ketchikan. He was the first person ever to fly a plane from the states to Alaska, which was in 1922. His machine was not nearly as sturdy as the machines of today, nor was the engine anything like those now in use. Nevertheless, he made the trip of nearly 700 miles without serious mishap.

The plane will take off for Juneau about noon tomorrow, Mr. McCarthy announced.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

An aerial era opens with passenger flights in 1929.

The next historically notable flights came in 1929 and featured Bob Ellis, a native Vermonter who was navigator for the first Seattle to Juneau non-stop that year; Alaska Washington Airways' Lockheed Vega made the trip in about seven hours. The airline soon made regular circuits of the region. Ellis earned his pilot's license and flew out of Juneau for several years, learning the tricky weathers and challenging terrains of Alaska. In 1936 he took the yoke of his own flying business, founding Ellis Air Transport in Ketchikan and writing aviation history.

AMPHIBS RULED THE AIR

Ellis' personal enthusiasm and aerial skills, complemented by a loyal hangar crew, powered steady growth. Ellis flew regularly to the west coast of Prince of Wales Island and occasionally to Seattle. He served in Alaska with the Navy Air Force during the war and was elected mayor when he came home. His company flew half a dozen aircraft and its employee roll was a couple of dozen by the 1940s. At its zenith, the re-named Ellis Air Lines had versatility and passenger capacity unmatched in Southeast Alaska, with eight Grumman Goose amphibians and a single PBY. Pan Am's Ketchikan-bound passengers landed on the runway at the WW II air base on Annette Island and rode Ellis Air Lines' 18-mile amphibious shuttle to a water landing in Ketchikan—a 12-minute flight. The company took visitors into the sky for flightseeing adventures during the summer season. Shuttles, flightseeing, charters and mail flights kept 100 Ellis Air Lines employees busy into the 1960s.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

Pan Am routed Flying Boats to Ketchikan in 1938.

Local aviation burgeoned all across Alaska after the war, and every city of consequence boasted one or more flying services. The timber industry's demand for convenient travel to far-flung work sites and the tourism industry's desire for aerial thrills created demand. Ellis merged his airline with Alaska Coastal Airways in the early 1960s. Coastal-Ellis in turn was folded into the fleet that became Alaska Airlines.

Southeast Alaska's first helicopter service grew along with increasingly diverse industrial activities. Ken Eichner was a pilot of wheeled and float-mounted small aircraft when he branched into choppers in 1959. His business listed its customer base in an acronym: Timber, Exploration, Mining, Surveying and Cargo Operations: TEMSCO. Choppers were handy for mining prospectors. TEMSCO provided essential aid to businesses and agencies developing mountaintop communications. The company served commercial logging, moving surveyors and timber cruisers, and providing field support for heavy-lift choppers. Tourists boarded TEMSCO whirlybirds for dramatic views of the so-called Ketchikan Alps. TEMSCO extended to Juneau in the 1980s and has provided contract service in the Lower 48.

Eichner was a founder of Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad. KVRS relied on TEMSCO's helicopter fleet for many search and rescue missions.

PAN AM CAME & WENT & CAME BACK

Ketchikan's first commercial air connection to Seattle and the Lower 48 opened in August 1938, when Pan American Airways brought in floating Clipper aircraft for test flights. Townsfolk were so excited about the first flight that police had to clear crowds from the floats for fear they'd sink. The thrill was short-lived: Pan Am ended service four months later, defeated by Alaskan winds and weather.

Pan Am resumed Ketchikan service after World War II, landing DC-3s on Annette Island near Metlakatla, where passengers boarded floatplanes for the shuttle to Ketchikan. By 1958, Pan Am was flying Boeing 707s to Annette. The airline was decertified in Alaska by federal authorities years later and other air carriers took over the route.

For decades after World War II, residents and visitors longed for a direct air connection. Land fit for runways is scarce in Ketchikan, but in 1967 ground on Gravina Island was secured and construction started in 1969. Ketchikan International Airport was dedicated in August 1973. Federal, state and local money went into the terminal, taxiway and 7,500-foot runway. A federal grant added a north taxiway in 2005.

AERIAL ARRAY

TEN FLOATPLANE OPERATORS KEEP KETCHIKAN SKIES ABUZZ AS THE LONGEST-LIVED LOCAL CARRIER REACHES 40 YEARS

GREGG POPPEN

MISTY MOUNTAIN PROP—Floatplanes in the Taquan Air fleet take off for summer flightseeing trips to Misty Fjords .

Local air carriers come and go in Ketchikan. Some thrive even in the ups and downs of a competitive market. Others are lost in the prop wash of the changeable local and national economies. The inherent perils of aviation in challenging country consign some operations to history.

Ten Ketchikan-based operations were flying floatplanes in 2017, one of them bearing a nameplate with a four-decade heritage—and expanding after taking on its biggest competitor's assets.

Most of the rest are closing in on the two-decade mark—and a number of them boast pilots with long local experience, including time with carriers that closed.

Taquan Air turned its first propeller in 1977 when founders Jerry and Candi Scudero offered flights between Ketchikan and Metlakatla, taking as their business name a word in the Tsimshian language meaning "village by the sea." Jerry Scudero was the sole pilot of Taquan's three-passenger Cessna 185. Service was on demand, not on a schedule—and days of six or seven flights were common. Charters for Annette Island Packing Co. and aerial spotting for Metlakatla's herring fleet mixed with routine traffic between the two cities.

Within five years, Taquan Air was flying two Cessnas and a DeHavilland Beaver. By the mid-1980s, the operation expanded into scheduled service to outlying towns. The closing of two other local carriers boosted Taquan's passenger count. Jerry Scudero was honored by the U.S. Small Business Administration as Alaska's small business person of the year in 1990.

When Taquan Air took over assets of Ketchikan Air Service in 1997, the carrier was the largest floatplane operator in North America, with 28 aircraft. An Alaska Native village corporation bought a share of Taquan from the Scuderos in the late 1990s, then took sole ownership in 1999—but shut down the airline mere months later. The timber-based sector of Southeast Alaska's economy suffered a downdraft while Taquan and its subsidiary AirOne were flying routes from Haines, Alaska, to Prince Rupert, B.C., with more than 250 on the payroll.

Venture Travel LLC acquired five DeHavilland Beavers and the Taquan Air name under the ownership of second-generation Ketchikan pilot Brien Salazar in 2000. The company won Forest Service and postal service contracts and operated passenger service to nearby towns. In summer, like other local carriers, Taquan flew charters to fishing lodges and provided flightseeing tours. The carrier achieved its first Medallion Foundation safety star in 2004.

Salazar moved Taquan Air to its present location at Harbor Point seven years later. The new facility allowed for an expansive maintenance hangar, an updated dispatch space and room for a growing office staff.

In 2016, Taquan Air bought the aircraft and contracts of longtime rival Promech Air. The company expanded the dock at its base during its 40th-anniversary year in 2017. Its fleet boasted three turbine-powered DeHavilland Otters and 11 Beavers. Taquan is a five-star Medallion Foundation air carrier and maintains year-round service to 18 communities in southern Southeast Alaska.

Although Taquan Air is the longest-lived nameplate in Ketchikan's skies, Misty Fjords Air is close behind. Founded in 1981 and operated by two generations of the Doyon family, Misty Fjords Air is Ketchikan's second five-star Medallion Foundation carrier. The carrier flies a turbine Otter, two Beavers and a Cessna 185 from Doyon's Landing south of the city.

Pacific Airways operates four Beavers and a Cessna 185 from a dock near a historic marine service building. Pac Air, as it's often called locally, has been flying since 2000. The carrier flies year-round to nearly 20 communities.

SeaWind Aviation was founded by a second-generation local pilot as a one-plane operation in 2003. The carrier has expanded into a fleet with two Beavers and a Cessna 185 at its dock in the heart of the aviation zone.

RdM Air and Alaska Seaplane Tours are co-owned and fly a Beaver and a Cessna 185. The operations go back to 1998 in local skies and are based north of the city. The carrier also has a small helicopter for sightseeing excursions.

Carlin Air's Newtown address has a rich aviation heritage: Its building was the hangar for fabled Ellis Airlines. Carlin Air has flown since 2000 and operates a Beaver and a Cessna 185.

Island Wings Air Service flies a Beaver out of Newtown and has been operating since 1993.

Family Air was founded here in 2001 and flies a Cessna 185.

Mountain Air Service is the newest local carrier. The business operates a Beaver and opened operations in 2011.

Island Air Express, based in Klawock on Prince of Wales Island, but operating a counter at the Ketchikan airport, runs four Cessna Caravans—two of them amphibians. The operation debuted in 2008.

SOME CARRIERS THRIVE IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET. OTHERS ARE LOST IN THE PROP WASH OF THE CHANGEABLE LOCAL & NATIONAL ECONOMIES.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

THE RAINBIRD

A MYTHICAL BIRD IN THE LAND OF MISTS

Mythical but nearly ubiquitous, the rainbird stoically endures Ketchikan's prodigious rains. This somber avatar for our own resignation turns up in myriad forms: logos, shoulder patches, pins, ads, signs and business names.

As it is with many American icons, Hollywood had a role in the birth of this one. Paramount Pictures was in town in 1937 to film locations for *Spawn of the North*, a drama set here. Persistent rain kept the crew from filming, so one man whittled. His block of wood yielded the first Rainbird: back bent against the deluge, head drooping, eyes looking for an end to the downpour. When the Ketchikan shoot wrapped, the movie man gave his carving to a curio store with a card: "Ketchikan Rainbird, Trapped for Hall's Trading Post by Mitch Crowley of Paramount Pictures."

A year later, Dwight Chase of the U.S. Lighthouse Service built a five-foot-tall likeness from driftwood, plywood, doorknobs and jointed pipe. It stood in Chase's yard and then in the Main Street yard of Dr. Arthur Wilson for decades, until it disintegrated in the rain—naturally.

More rainbirds hatched. Artist Bill Gabler inked versions with umbrellas, raincoats and rainboots. Someone ordered lapel pins. The bird showed up in newspaper ads. It nested in logos for mariners, firefighters and other groups. The local public-radio corporation took its name. A tour business uses the name and image.

Like Ketchikan's precipitation, the rainbird is all over.

Bill Gabler's original drawing of the rainbird; the U.S. Coast Guard shoulder patch; the yard bird rainbird; the yacht club's logo

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

GREGG POPPEN

Ketchikan students get a running start on life in our public schools. Point Higgins Elementary, a Blue Ribbon school, looks over the ocean from a hillside north of town.

EDUCATION

THE COMMUNITY COMMITS TO SUCCESS IN SCHOOLING FOR YOUTH & ADULTS FROM PRE-K TO POST-GRAD

Ketchikan is committed to a public education system with diverse school choices from elementary grades to high school and up-to-date technology all the way.

Beyond high school, young adults and lifelong learners find a rich array of classroom-based and distance-delivered offerings at University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan campus—which boast resources of the U of A system and the close-up concerns of the community college that thrived here from the 1950s.

Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District has two Blue Ribbon programs in its five elementary schools and sends the community's youngsters on to a middle school and two options for high school.

Ketchikan High School is a spacious and light-filled place for about 650 students. It was completely rebuilt in the 1990s. A challenging and broad-based academic program is housed in Kayhi's distinctive architecture.Vocational programs at the high school include courses in conventional "shop" areas, but Ketchikan's proximity to the sea and to commercial fishing grounds drives an appropriate program in maritime education. Faculty use the commercially equipped, 44-foot-long MV Jack Cotant as the classroom. And they're not just going through the motions. Kayhi's maritime program is the only one in Alaska to own a permit to fish commercially for halibut.

SCHOLARS GET SUPPORT

Public schools in Ketchikan marshal 175 dedicated professional educators and dozens of paraprofessional support staff. The special education program serves all disability categories. Advanced placement

NAME ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT THAT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN THE IVY LEAGUE AND IN HALIBUT FISHING. WE'LL GIVE YOU A STRONG HINT: YOU'RE LOOKING AT IT.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

PETER STANTON

Ketchikan's teams in academic decathlon and drama, debate and forensics take on the best in the state and succeed. The academic decathlon team posed just before leaving for statewide competition in 2017. This Kayhi squad finished second by a hair, losing the team title to a 10-time state champion school from Fairbanks. Final score: 38,856 to 38,459.5. The drama, debate and forensics team from KHS won the Alaska title in 2016.

CONSIDER SOME OF OUR GRADS IN THE PAST DECADE. FOUR WERE IN THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMIES. ONE GRADUATED FROM HARVARD AS ANOTHER ONE ENTERED HARVARD. TWO GRADS WERE ON 10-YEAR GATES MILLENNIUM SCHOLARSHIPS. THE LIFE OF ONE ALUMNUS WAS ALL UPS & DOWNS: SHE'S A FIGHTER JET PILOT IN THE U.S. NAVY.

REVILLA HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOENBAR MIDDLE SCHOOL

KETCHIKAN HIGH SCHOOL

FAWN MOUNTAIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

courses are offered in math, science, English and social studies. In a recent ranking, our AP program was in the top 50 nationwide.

Ketchikan's music and extracurricular academic programs excel in the region and statewide. The KHS drama, debate and forensics team was Alaska's best in 2016. The academic decathlon team bested every Alaskan school but one in 2017.

In 2017, high school seniors claimed more than $2.4 million in college and vocational scholarships. About the same time, KHS was ranked seventh among Alaska's more than 110 high schools by *U.S. News & World Report*.

The district and the community support our athletes. Kayhi teams compete regionally and statewide in basketball; swimming; volleyball; wrestling; soccer; football; baseball; softball; track and field; and cross country. They're truly student-athletes: in 2017 our basketball team won the third-place trophy at the state tournament and ranked highest academically. We also prize the social aspect of athletics: Kayhi's baseball team took the good sportsmanship award at state in the same year.

Borough homeowners levy property tax to support local public schools. More than half of school operational funding comes from the state of Alaska. The state has been a vigorous champion of school construction in recent decades, reimbursing the greater part of building costs.

The $10 million renovation of Schoenbar Middle School brought the community's facility for 7th- and 8th-graders up to date several years ago. A strong faculty led by veteran teachers streams the community's adolescents on to Ketchikan High School or the Revilla High School alternative program. Revilla, with about 100 students, is based on independent study with subject packets, led by professional teachers.

AN ARRAY OF PRIMARY COLORS

Valley Park Elementary School opened in 1973 in Bear Valley, cutting-edge at the time for its open classroom plan and massive timber posts holding it above a play area. The building is emblematic of Ketchikan's demand for education options: →

It houses Ketchikan Charter School, a core-knowledge elementary program founded in 1997, and Tongass School of Arts and Sciences, a charter school established in 2003 to offer hands-on, interdisciplinary learning. Point Higgins Elementary opened in 1986 in a handsome building 12 miles north. Houghtaling School, established in the 1950s, offers a traditional neighborhood setting and is the most populous elementary school. The newest facility, Fawn Mountain Elementary School 4 miles south of the city, traces its lineage to White Cliff Elementary School, whose building closed in 2003.

Tongass School and Point Higgins School were recently accorded Blue Ribbon School status.

FAST TRACK IS AT ONLINE SPEED

The district launched Fast Track Virtual School in 2009. Fast Track enrolls local and farflung students. Online classes are supervised by highly qualified teachers and the program provides educational support to home-schooling families. Every student receives a computer, an Internet connection and financial support for the diverse curriculum. Customized instructional methods ensure that each student's needs are met.

PACE School, based in the Craig District on Prince of Wales Island, has a Ketchikan program for K-12 students. PACE (Personal Alternative Choices in Education) provides funding for conventional and online components. The curriculum, led by qualified teachers, is delivered online. PACE provides internet access and computers.

SURVIVING SCHOOL … & WE MEAN LITERALLY

Students face many standardized tests, but one examination in Ketchikan is tuned to our local way of life. Every May, eighth-graders go with teachers and chaperones on a "survival trip" to remote shoreside forest. Except for a sleeping bag and a square of plastic sheeting, each student's provisions for a two-night stay must fit in a one-pound coffee can. The trip is conducted come rain, wind or shine and the stranded adolescents get a hands-on course in subsistence foods, safety, shelter-building and teamwork.

TONGASS SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES


KETCHIKAN CHARTER SCHOOL


HOUGHTALING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A CAMPUS OF THE STATEWIDE U. IS THE LOCAL LINK TO HIGHER ED


Traditional classroom instruction and a range of distance learning run through UAS.

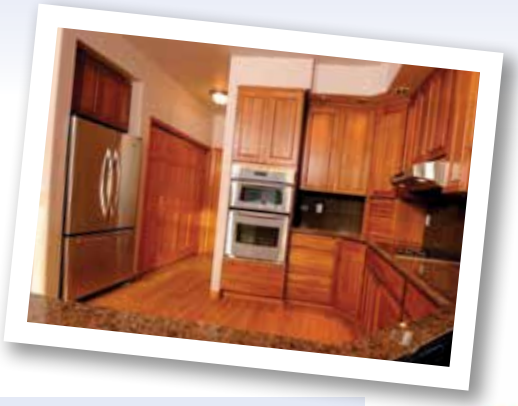
Classroom offerings at University of Alaska Southeast Ketchikan campus are augmented by extensive opportunities for distance and e-learning. The campus offers certificates, associate's and bachelor's degrees in liberal arts and social science, available across the state through innovative e-learning.

This campus is Southeast's hub for maritime training and offers more than 30 U.S. Coast Guard-approved courses, workforce credentials and endorsements.

Award-winning and nationally recognized faculty along with supportive staff provide students with a rich educational environment and personalized focus. Small class sizes promote interaction with faculty for more effective learning. Students participate with faculty on research projects and creative endeavors and have been invited to attend professional conferences to present their own undergraduate research to national audiences.

Degrees are available via local and distance-delivered instruction. Each year, the campus awards more than 25 degrees and trains hundreds of people in voc-tech courses.

YOU KNOW RE/MAX®



DREAM WITH YOUR EYES OPEN™

And RE/MAX® of Ketchikan knows Southeast Alaska!

Luxury Waterfront – Residential – Commercial – Vacation Cabins – Remote Recreational – Property Management – Land

RE/MAX® of Ketchikan

907.225.6191

Remaxofketchikan.com

Our agents have been making dreams come true for more than 30 years!


GREGG POPPEN


HALL ANDERSON

STUDENT-ATHLETES COMPETE AT TWO PREMIER FACILITIES THAT ARE NAMED, QUITE APPROPRIATELY, TO HONOR EDUCATORS

Spacious Clarke Cochrane Gym was part of the original Ketchikan High School constructed in the 1950s—and remained such a perfect venue decades later that a new Kayhi was built around it. Since the 1980s, the gym has borne the name of a revered Kayhi teacher and coach.

Ketchikan's football and soccer players, as well as our track and field athletes, welcomed a new facility a few years ago. A FieldTurf surface ringed by a competition track brought a new era to interscholastic and recreational play. Esther Shea Field at Fawn Mountain honors an Alaska Native elder who presented her Tlingit people's traditional ways and language for many years to students across all levels, from primary grades through college.

SCHOOLS: A FOCUS FROM THE FOUNDING


KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

Gravina Island had a one-room school in the early 1900s.

A BIA school on Deermount schooled Alaska Natives.

Frontier Ketchikan rang in a new century and sounded a school bell.

Among the first acts of the Ketchikan Common Council after incorporation in 1900 were electing a School Board and setting a property tax of 7.5 mills, heavily weighted to support of education.

Local leaders budgeted $752 for a six-month school session and spent $1,377 to build, and $180 to paint, a schoolhouse along boardwalk Main Street. One teacher was hired.

In the early years, schools popped up at Saxman, Gravina Island and Wacker City near Ward Cove. (The Saxman schoolhouse from the late 1890s is the oldest local building.) There was a state school at Charcoal Point, near today's Alaska ferry terminal, for kids out a rough road. Clover Pass families opened a school at the far north end in the '40s. (The schoolhouse's reclamation was a project for present-day neighbors and Historic Ketchikan Inc.)

Main School served students from kindergarten through high school. In the 1920s, fast-growing Ketchikan was the most populous city in Alaska, with more than 5,000 residents. In 1927, White Cliff Elementary School opened for Newtown and West End kids. It was Alaska's oldest school when it closed in 2003.

North-end families built Clover Pass School after WWII.

Alaska Natives attended a Bureau of Indian Affairs school in Ketchikan's first half-century. Lawsuits, time and hard-won wisdom ended that separation in the late 1940s.

Houghtaling Elementary in the upper West End opened in the 1950s, as did a new Ketchikan High School, responding to the population boost tied to the pulp mill's startup. Schoenbar Junior High was built at creekside in the 1960s.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

CHARLES HABERBUSH

ARTIST — ANN FROESCHLE
MODELS — CAITY WIDNESS & KATRINA JONES

TALK ABOUT MODELS!
Ketchikan's Wearable Art Show is the model for other runway shows of whimsical but wearable artistry, in Alaska and far beyond.

ARTS

AN AUTHOR SCANNED THE NATION 20 YEARS AGO & JUDGED KETCHIKAN TO BE ONE OF THE 'TOP 100 SMALL ART TOWNS'

Just so we're perfectly clear on that: The *town* is small. The *art* is a big thing.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

Ketchikan is uniquely nourishing and encouraging for visual and performing artists. The community also boasts an amazing array of talented crafters. There's a wide array of galleries and stages for artistry of all kinds and an eager hometown audience.

And in the shadow of a forest, art fashioned from wood fiber is the native glory. Crane-your-neck totem poles and intricate basketry woven from conifer root and bark express a living heritage.

We were already vitally active in Northwest Coast arts and Western European art forms in the 1990s, when an author named Ketchikan among the "top 100 small art towns" in the nation. Native artists and traditional painters alike find a home in this charged scene. The First City also boasts a variety of what you might call "participation arts"—performing groups, artisan exhibitions, folk-art gatherings and seasonal festivals.

If we're a *small* art town, we're also a *tall* art town. Totem poles and art-bearing harbor pilings represent the salience of creativity in our lives.

Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council (KAAHC) is a hub for arts programs. The nonprofit produces some of our favorite cultural events and provides an umbrella for volunteer-led organizations. The arts council collaborates with other arts organizations, as in Gigglefeet Dance Festival, produced with First City Players and Ketchikan Theatre Ballet.

Several long-running arts features are homegrown and engage the community. The arts council's Wearable Art Show each February stretches fashion into fantasies of myriad materials. Founded here in 1986, "Wearable" has been adopted across Alaska and far beyond.

The arts council brings performers to town in the Torch Nights series and promotes local artisans' work in the Winter Arts Faire. Main Street Gallery in KAAHC's historic building presents diverse fine-art exhibitions.

First City Players produces a full season of mainstage and second-stage shows, led off by a major fall musical enlisting scores of community members. *Chicago*, *My Fair Lady* and *Les Miserábles* have gone on the boards in the auditorium at the high school,

First City Players presents a full season of adult and youth theatre. *Boeing, Boeing* was a crowd-pleasing farce in 2017 for this busy community theatre company.

which features professional-quality theatrical apparatus. The company's seasons range into drama and comedy. Youth is served twice each year in productions by the student company. FCP's wintertime Jazz & Cabaret Festival brings in professional musicians for a song camp with local singers and instrumentalists, followed by gala evening performances.

Ketchikan Theatre Ballet trains hundreds of young dancers each year in areas from classical ballet to jazz and tap. KTB is Alaska's oldest dance school. Professional instructors and volunteers produce shows in February and May and present *The Nutcracker* every holiday season.

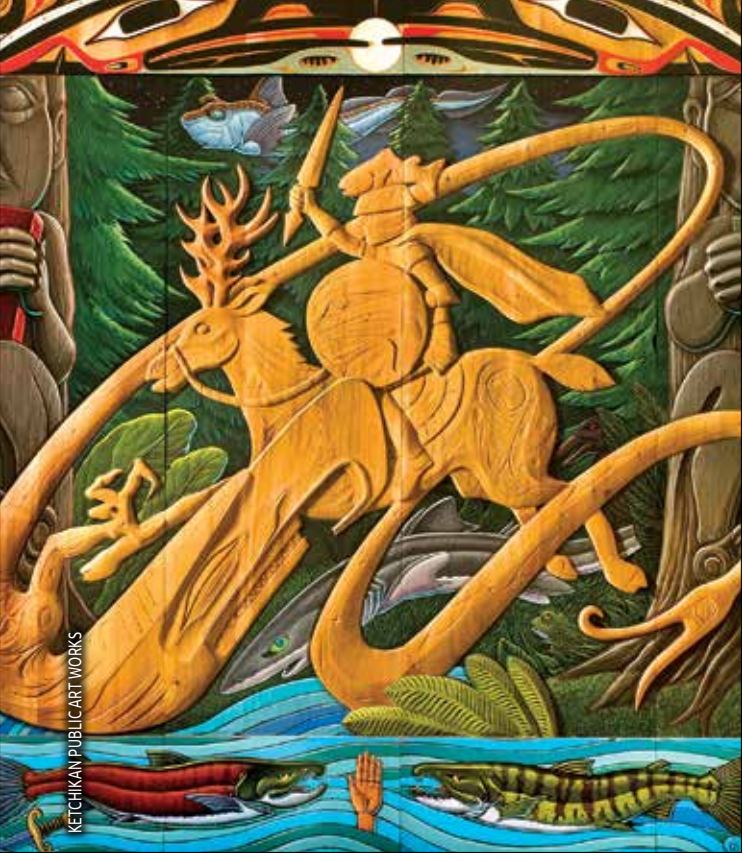
Totem Heritage Center on the creek is an important teaching institution for Northwest Coast art. The center draws instructors from Ketchikan's own experts in design, carving, toolmaking and weaving, and brings in teachers who have global renown.

IF WE'RE A SMALL ART TOWN, WE'RE ALSO A *TALL* ART TOWN. TOTEM POLES & ART-BEARING HARBOR PILINGS REPRESENT THE SALIENCE OF CREATIVITY IN OUR LIVES.

Our populace is deeply engaged in creative and expressive endeavors. Quilters, painters, folk dancers, bagpipers, harpists, Renaissance fanciers, drummers and lovers of any number of other pursuits find their outlets in Ketchikan.

Main Street Gallery has space for youthful ambition and unique vision, as seen in Grace Freeman's mask show.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE



Western European and Northwest Coast arts commingle in our culture—nowhere more literally than in this collaboration by the painter Ray Troll and the Alaska Native carver Donald Varnell. Their piece, commissioned in the state's Percent for Art program, is in Schoenbar Middle School.

The City of Ketchikan and the arts council put a song in the heart of downtown with a summer series, Music on the Dock. Local musicians played two days a week for visitors and residents.

CREATIVE PURSUITS

Gigglefeet Dance Festival in August makes spectacular use of the high school auditorium, where sophisticated tech equipment augments the creativity of choreographers and dancers.

Resident artists in a wide range of media exhibit in our galleries. Jim Guenther's "Storm Surge" was in a sea-oriented collection painted in acrylic inks.

Artistry by Terry Pyles (left) and Stephen Jackson surmounts otherwise prosaic pilings around Thomas Basin. These pieces and others offer visual rewards to art lovers who stroll the mile-plus of our waterfront promenade.

Sic gloria transit—
Even some of our mundane civic fixtures express our love of art: catch a ride on a bus painted by Marvin Oliver (shown above) or by Ray Troll.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

Oh brothel, where art thou? A melodramacomedy tells our history, sort of

***Fish Pirate's Daughter* is Ketchikan's** history viewed through the bottom of a bootleg whiskey bottle in the parlor of a Creek Street cathouse where a tinny piano is playing.

First City Players created the show in 1966, just a year after the community theatre company formed. The troupe wanted to mount a summer show to draw the tourist trade and to amuse the home folks. Bob Kinerk wrote the libretto, with Alaskan types rendered in slanty genre forms: a mustachioed villain; a naive hero with a badge; an innocent damsel; a feckless father; a couple of town drunks; a chorus of kindly hookers; and a madam with a heart of gold. Jim Alguire wrote music for Kinerk's lyrics.

Roles have been summer diversions for longtimers and one-timers alike. Residents get so familiar with the script that they switch characters from year to year. FCP has even staged gender benders in which men and women swap roles. Seasonal citizens jump into the stock slots just for an Alaskan lark.

Local ladies played ladies of the evening in the debut season of '66.

The story floats on some actual local history. In territorial times, there *were* desperadoes who stole salmon from fish traps: fish pirates. Ketchikan *did have* brothels and bootlegging during Prohibition: notorious Creek Street. And the hand of the U.S. territorial government *was* upon us—although the show's "commissioner of fish," Sweet William Uprightly, is more *golly-gee* man than G man.

JEFF FITZWATER

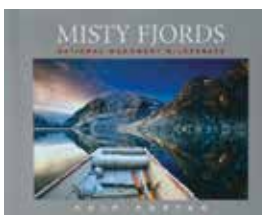
Fish Pirate's Daughter's faux hookers offer comical exaggerations of actual history.

The show opened on an improvised stage in the Stedman Hotel at Front and Dock streets. It was a hit from the get-go and First City Players took it to Petersburg—another town where audiences could cherish its Alaskan exaggerations. FCP has presented *Fish Pirate's Daughter* in a number of venues around town in more than 50 years. The show now plays in the spacious Ted Ferry Civic Center each July as dinner theatre featuring a crab and salmon feed.

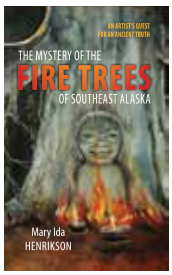
BETWEEN COVERS

KETCHIKAN RESIDENTS HAVE THEIR HANDS IN A NUMBER OF PRINTED BOOKS, RANGING FROM MEMOIRS, RECIPES AND PHOTOGRAPHY TO ILLUSTRATIONS FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

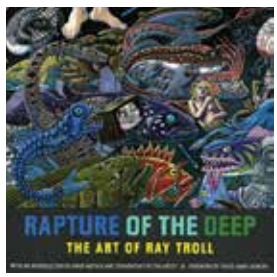
Biz Robbins published a memoir of teaching in a Southeast Alaskan logging camp and of overcoming family tragedy in ***Life Jacket: Memoir of a Float Camp Teacher.***



Chip Porter's artistic photographs from back-country treks and boat trips are collected in ***Misty Fjords National Monument Wilderness.***



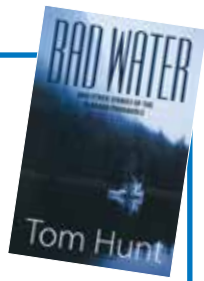
In ***Fire Trees of Southeast Alaska***, artist Mary Ida Henrikson weaves personal history and a lifelong love of sea and forest with theories that Alaska Natives cached fire in cedar trees and may have created navigation aids.



Ray Troll's fish art is known around the world, showing up on T-shirts and in major museum exhibitions from coast to coast. ***Rapture of the Deep*** is a collection of his scientifically faithful paintings of animalia in surrealist activity.

Mary Giraudo Beck was a serious and devoted scholar of Alaska Native culture. Her ***Potlatch: Native Ceremony and Myth*** is one leg of a remarkable triad; two other books look at aspects of heroism and at the supernatural in Native culture.

Hall Anderson photographed local news at *Ketchikan Daily News* for 30 years; his distinctive photojournal-ism and images from more idiosyncratic pursuits are collected in ***Still Rainin' Still Dreamin': Hall Anderson's Ketchikan.***



Tom Hunt's ***Bad Water and Other Stories of the Alaskan Panhandle*** pits tough people against rough nature. "People can lose themselves there … as long as they are very careful and listen to the weather reports. Alaska has a price."

Raincoast Sasquatch is J. Robert Alley's exhaustive account of "a large, reclusive species of relic hominid" in coastal B.C. and Alaska—built on interviews, field research and ethnographic study.

Commercial fisher LaDonna Gundersen knows fish. ***The Little Alaskan Halibut Cookbook*** is the sequel to her little book of salmon recipes. Photos by husband Ole give the glamour gloss to foods and to life on an Alaskan boat.

Noted Ketchikan artist Evon Zerbetz illustrated, among other books, ***Little Red Snapperhood***, Neal Gilbertsen's treatment of a classic tale.

*Many of these titles are at **Parnassus Bookstore** on Stedman Street. **Soho Coho Gallery** on Creek Street carries art-oriented books.*

Ketchikan Community Concert Band presents two major performances each year. Director Roy McPherson rehearsed the group for their spring 2017 concert. Even the walls and musical apparatus in this studio setting betray Ketchikan's artistic bent. A large canvas painted on commission by Dave Rubin imagines the creating of music in mythic grandeur. Behind the percussion section stands an exotic set of chimes handmade in wood and metal by band members.

CONTACT POINTS FOR THE ARTS IN KETCHIKAN

These organizations—many of them affiliated with the arts council —serve the breadth of our creative and expressive pursuits, from folk dance to bagpipes, from harps to quilting.

Alaska Square Dance
907-225-2211 | Facebook

Boombal Dance Hall
907-225-2211 | Facebook

First City Players
907-225-4792
FirstCityPlayers.org | Facebook

Ketchikan Area Arts & Humanities Council
907-225-2211
KetchikanArts.org | Facebook

Ketchikan Artist Directory
907-225-2211
ketchikanartliveshere.org

Ketchikan Children's Choir
907-225-4792 | Facebook

Ketchikan Community Chorus
907-617-6661 | Facebook

Ketchikan Community Concert Band
907-225-3650
ketchikanconcertband.org
Facebook

Ketchikan Medieval and Renaissance Society
907-225-2211 | Facebook

Ketchikan Theatre Ballet
907-225-9311 | KTBDance.com

Misty Thistle Pipes & Drums
907-225-2211 | Facebook

The Monthly Grind
907-225-2211 | Facebook

Rainy Day Quilters
907-225-5422
rainydayquilters.com
Facebook

StudioMax Dance Studio
907-821-0498 |
studiomaxktn.com

Totem Heritage Center
907-225-5900
ktn-ak.us/totem-heritage-center | Facebook

The web site ArtLivesHere.org is a portal to the First City's creative community and arts organizations. It was created for the recent Year of the Artist and is maintained by the arts council.

Ketchikan Community Chorus offers vocalists opportunities to blend in seasonal concerts that feature a range of challenging contemporary and traditional music.

Rainy Day Quilters' annual exhibition presents a remarkably diverse array of fiber art. Guild members work together in many projects.

The Monthly Grind in the Beaver Clan House presents local talent to sell-out audiences.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE

THE BALLET SCHOOL'S ORIGIN STORY TELLS OF LOGGING, WEDLOCK & AN I-BEAM

Virginia Klepser founded Ketchikan Theatre Ballet when *she* was found out as a classically trained ballet dancer. Nearly 60 years later, she stopped for a photograph before her training session, as a fill-in instructor, with KTB dancers.

The time is mid-century. The place is a timber and fishing town in Alaska, population 10,000, give or take. Given all that, the question is: Would you call a start-up ballet school "improbable" or "inevitable"?

The correct answer is "yes."

Virginia Klepser founded Ketchikan Ballet School in 1961 because her mother-in-law let it out that Virginia was a devotee of Terpsichore and because a church congregation had vacated a West End building. Improbable, you could say.

Klepser was new to town and newly wed to the son of a local family. "I didn't decide that I had to have a dance school," she says decades later. "Some people came to me and asked if I would do it. My mother-in-law had told them I was a dancer." See? Inevitable.

The dance school, in its sixth decade, has become Ketchikan Theatre Ballet. Thousands of young dancers have taken instruction in classical ballet. Thousands have challenged themselves in jazz, in tap, in creative dance. KTB's seasonal showcases and holiday performances of "The Nutcracker" are mainstays of Ketchikan's community life.

The founder of Ketchikan Ballet School and first artistic director of Ketchikan Theatre Ballet spends most of her time in Ketchikan, although visits with her sons in Idaho allow her to enjoy, at 80, fitness that must derive from the discipline of her lifelong art. "I'm still skiing. I skied 25 days this year," she says over coffee in a Ketchikan cafe.

Virginia Klepser had an itinerant girlhood with parents who ran an independent logging operation in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. Amid all the moves, she discovered movement—and pursued dance in her teens. "I was going to be a professional dancer—and I was, to a certain extent," she said. She studied at the Novikoff School in Seattle and performed with Northwest and traveling companies. She also earned a very practical business degree in statistical analysis from the University of Washington. Improbability had its first *pas de deux* with inevitability at Boeing, where she worked as a material analyst and met Frank Klepser. "Frank is the reason there is a ballet school," she says.

They came to Ketchikan as newlyweds. His family ran Nordby Supply marine store. When her artistic secret identity was outed, Virginia Klepser responded to local parents' desire for ballet training, renting a recently vacated church.

> **"I DID NOT THINK THE TOWN WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO SUPPORT A BALLET SCHOOL. BUT FRANK SAID, YOU MIGHT AS WELL DO IT AND SEE WHERE IT GOES."**

Meanwhile, Frank tore apartments out of the upper floor of Nordby, installed a long steel I-beam and scratch-built a dance studio. "I did not think the town was large enough to support a ballet school," Klepser says. "But Frank said, you might as well do it and see where it goes."

Ketchikan Theatre Ballet spun off in 1968 as a nonprofit performing company. Klepser, as artistic director, and the board of directors leveraged artistic opportunities for their dancers. Klepser choreographed major pieces set to contemporary music—in one piece, rock music by Queen. KTB presented "The Creation of Salmon" to tourists, at a buck a head, in Totem Bight's clan house; the piece ran nine summers, featuring Klepser's choreography and original music by an Alaskan composer. KTB dancers performed around the state and studied Outside. Klepser brought in choreographers to expose her dancers to other styles. To extend her own capabilities as an instructor and choreographer, she studied in London during the off-season.

Her Capezios left footprints statewide on the Alaska State Council on the Arts, where she represented her art for several years and served a stint as chair.

Klepser retired from KTB in 1981 and turned the company over to the board. In 1984, a former student, Marguerite Auger, was hired as artistic director and served more than 20 years. Klepser says Judy Auger, Marguerite's mother, was indispensable as a board member and grant writer in KTB's early years—when the nonprofit's hardworking board contributed in areas from fund-raising to costume construction and lighting design.

Klepser calls dance "a total art form" for its physical and mental demands, its challenges in performing and its intimate integration with music.

In one Alaskan city, knowing what you know now, you could also call it an improbable and inevitable art form.

RETURN TO CONTENTS PAGE