



Photo by Nadja Roessek

SIGN OF SPRING—A pair of tundra swans, some pintails and wigeons rest in a pond near Chicken Hill in Nome May 16. Birds of all feathers are now making their return to the area.

The Nome Nugget[®]

Alaska's Oldest Newspaper

• USPS 598-100 • Single Copy Price - 50 Cents in Nome •

VOLUME CIX NO. 20 MAY 20, 2010



Photo by Tyler Rhodes

SHOWSTOPPER—Buford Sallaffie, playing Alfred P. Doolittle, leads the chorus of “My Fair Lady” in the song “Get Me to the Church on Time” during the Nome Arts Council production last weekend at Nome Elementary. Seen on either side of Sallaffie are Leah Radde (left) and Dylan Johnson (right). For more on the show, see pages 10-11.

Peninsula rattled by earthquake

By Tyler Rhodes

Anyone still asleep in Brevig Mission at 10:30 a.m. last Thursday received an abrupt wake-up call to jolt them out of their dreaming.

Centered 19 miles away, a 4.56 magnitude earthquake rattled walls and furniture in the village just after 10:30 a.m., May 13, according to the Alaska Earthquake Information Center. “We had a big pop, things jumped and that was it,” reported Brevig Mission School Principal Robin Gray.

Emma Olanna, Brevig Mission’s village-based counselor, was in the middle of a coffee break with co-workers when the earth started moving. “We felt

the whole building shake; [it] felt like something hit the whole building,” she wrote in an e-mail shortly after the quake.

Gray said despite some reports of items falling off shelves, she had not heard of any pipes or connections being disrupted in the village a couple of hours after the quake. She said some parents came to the school to check on their children after the short scare. There were no reports of injuries.

According to the Alaska Earthquake Information Center, the quake was 13 miles deep and was centered in the Bering Sea 19 miles to the west-southwest

continued on page 5

Tentative teacher salary agreement struck

Board gives nod to deal that would give teachers 2%, 3% and 2.5% raises for the next three years

By Tyler Rhodes

After one round of mediation—in the wake of failed direct negotiations earlier this year—the Nome Education Association and the school district came to a tentative agreement on salaries for the next three years May 11.

The Nome Board of Education gave its approval to the agreement at a special noon meeting May 18 at the Sitnasuak Native Corp. board room. Teachers were to vote on the agreement

May 19 and 20. The Nome Education Association’s executive board planned on meeting on the afternoon of May 20 to ratify the vote.

If the deal gets the blessing from a majority of teachers union members, educators next year will see a 2 percent raise, a 3 percent increase in 2011-2012 and a 2.5 percent raise in 2012-2013. The initial negotiations between the two entities only aimed at establishing salaries for the next two years.

In a written statement, the teacher negotiating team voiced its full support of the agreement. The team noted that all other provisions of the contract negotiated in 2009 would remain unchanged. The agreement would stand from July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013.

For the district’s part, a little more financial wiggle room was discovered in the budget when insurance costs came in lower than estimated. “That’s probably where our saving

grace will be,” said the district business manager Jenny Martens.

Martens said the new health care cost information came only hours after the tentative deal had been brokered. “It’s not anything you can predict until the insurance carrier comes in,” Nome Public Schools Superintendent Jon Wehde said.

continued on page 5

Public presses for rehire, board holds firm

Battle of wills continues between school board and members of the public as recall election looms

By Tyler Rhodes

As the recall election for the entire Nome School Board approaches

next Tuesday, there is no sign that the tension between a vocal segment of the public and the majority of the board has abated.

The board’s final regularly scheduled meeting before the May 25 vote largely resembled each meeting and work session held since the board voted Jan. 12 to replace the administrators at the junior/senior high school next year. Members of public again came forward May 11 to admonish the board over the decision and to ask them to reinstate principal Janeen Sullivan and assistant principal Doug Boyer. Board member Barb Nickels once again tried to put a motion on the table to readdress the

Jan. 12 vote and was met with renewed silence from her fellow board members as she looked for a second.

The board’s March and April meetings largely dealt with the district’s 2010-2011 budget. Whether or not an assistant principal would be included at all in the next year’s lineup became the focal point of the budget debate. When the position made it into the approved budget, several members of the public stood up and asked that Boyer be returned to his job.

The board has yet to offer an official reason for the termination of either administrator, neither to the public nor to Sullivan and Boyer,

citing confidentiality provisions extended to the board for personnel matters. Board member Albert McComas said in the meeting that the board does not have discretion to make such an announcement, rather the decision lies with the superintendent.

Superintendent Jon Wehde had given both administrators positive reviews and had advocated for their retention before the board met behind closed doors Jan. 12 to discuss the matter. Those pushing for the recall argue that the closed-door session was improperly held. Wehde announced at a May 18 special noon meeting that the district’s attorney

had upheld that the executive session was properly handled.

At the May 18 meeting—held to vote on a new salary agreement with teachers (see story above)—Nickels attempted to have the board vote on releasing the content of the Jan. 12 executive session. While acknowledging that board bylaws do allow for such a vote, board president Gloria Karmun said she had no interest in releasing the information.

Board member Kirsten Timbers said one of the two administrators had made a request for the information pertaining to him that was dis-

continued on page 5

On the Web:

www.nomenugget.net

E-mail:

nugget@nomenugget.com



