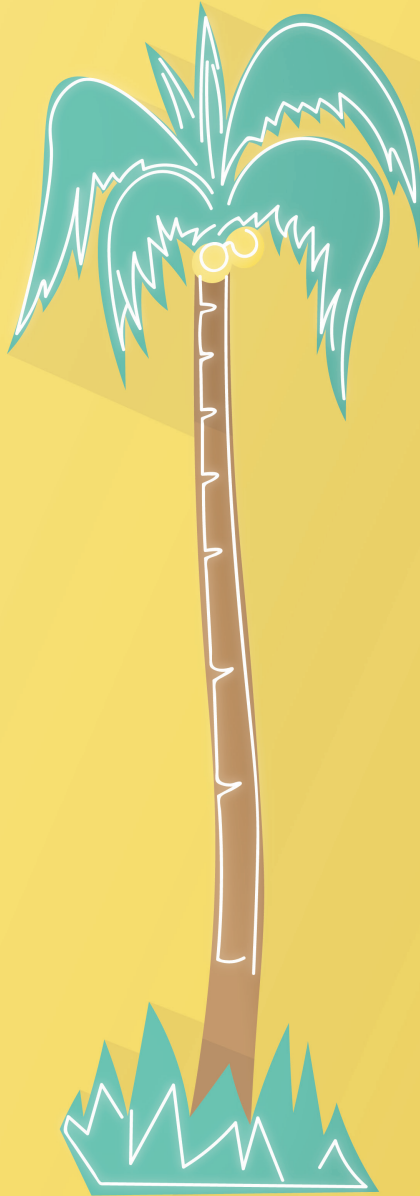


THE
SPENARDIAN



ISSUE 02
AUGUST 2018

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THE SPENARDIAN

The Spenardian is a hyperlocal magazine for the neighborhood of Spenard that is published three times a year. In addition to the current events and news of Spenard, The Spenardian features stories about food, culture, arts and entertainment, history and profiles of the neighborhood's businesses and inhabitants.

STAFF



VICTORIA PETERSEN
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Victoria Petersen made a career move to the Peninsula, but she drives by Spenard Builder's Supply every day, and she's still Spenardian by blood. As a fourth generation Spenardian, Petersen is passionate about her community, even from afar.



SAM DAVENPORT
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Sam Davenport is a freelance writer in Anchorage with plans to graduate in December. You'll usually find her eating chicken pad Thai at Pho Lena in her favorite baseball tee.



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Young Kim is a freelance photographer living in Anchorage, Alaska. He enjoys grilling steaks while relaxing at the lake on sunny days, coaching high school football and green teas with a hint of citrus.

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Special thanks to
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“Inn” the Beginning: The Paradise Palm

The neighborhood has come together over the Paradise Inn palm tree, a 22-foot-tall broken neon symbol of Spenardian pride. After a federal seizing, a legal battle, an auction and more, Spenardians have an idea for where they want their symbol to go.

Melissa Rustemov Lohr and Mike Linz both said in comments on our Facebook poll that they'd like to see it parked near food trucks, situated next to its sister symbol, the Koot's windmill. While others have said the palm tree represents a dark history. Kim Whitaker, the president of the recovery group Real About Addiction, told KTVA news that the the palm tree is evil. "If it was up to me, it would be shattered — like the lives that have been shattered and taken advantage of here. And the families of the loved ones that were here that have been traumatized," Whitaker said.

WORDS BY VICTORIA PETERSEN
ILLUSTRATION BY REJOY ARAMENTO
TIMELINE BY LEVI BROWN

SPENNAARD

COME ON

INN!



AAA IS AAA

PARADISE

PARADISE COMES TO SPENARD

The palm tree sat at the site of the Paradise Inn, which was built in 1962 as the South Seas Hotel and Lounge. The hotel and even the palm tree were sisters to the South Seas Bar and Lounge, which sat on Fourth Avenue and G Street in the 1940s. There, a smaller, curvier neon palm tree in the same California tiki-style, sat on top of the bar's sign. Anchorage Daily News reported that the hotel was built during a time when Anchorage was in need of accommodation options for a growing number of tourists.

PARADISE LOST?

After new ownership, the Paradise Inn began to attract sex trafficking, drug dealing and other criminal activity. In 2014, Kyong Taek Song, former owner of the Paradise Inn, was sentenced to prison after he sold meth to a government informant in the basement of the Spenard hotel. Since then, the Paradise Inn is now evicted, boarded up and in the hands of the United States Marshals Service, tree and all.

Timeline of the Palm



WHO'S TREE IS IT ANYWAY?

The story doesn't stop there. A legal battle, a crowdsourcing effort and more would decide the historic palm's fate. Denali Disposal, a local waste removal business, was contracted by the Marshals to remove 12 30-foot dumpsters and two 24-foot trucks of garbage from the building, in which the government paid \$37,000 to remove. While removing the trash, Denali Disposal's Bernadette Wilson was told she could take the tree. So she did. Then, the Marshals said they made a mistake. The tree was to be auctioned. In April 2018, the battle ended in court and in the favor of the Marshals who reposessed the palm and placed it for auction with a starting bid of \$4,500.

PARADISE FOUND

Jay Strange, president of the Spenard Community Council, created a GoFundMe page to raise the \$4,500 needed to buy the tree at auction. When the deadline came Strange had only raised \$2,700. The auctioneers, Gaston and Sheehan, created a new auction with a minimum bid of \$2,700 that Strange won with the donations of 59 other people. Strange originally planned to temporarily house the palm tree behind the Church of Love, but Vulcan Towing and Recovery, the company that was contracted to store the tree, was not able to fit their equipment in the back lot. Strange said he's working on a new plan to find the tree a public, permanent home.

"If we put it on private land, it might disappear again," Strange said.

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KINGFISHER COFFEE BREWS CONNECTIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

WORDS BY CHEYENNE MATHEWS
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

Business might as well be the middle name of the McGee family members. In September of 2017, the McGee women, mother Darcel, and daughters Emily and Alex opened up Kingfisher Coffee in Spenard.

Having her own coffee shop had been a longtime dream for Darcel, and when a location opened up, that dream started to become a reality.

“She had always wanted to run her own coffee shop, own and operate her own, so this [is] kind of [a] happy accident,” Alex said of her mom.

“People expect silliness and fun and yet they could come and talk to us. A lot of them do. The coffee is a bonus,” Darcel added. “It’s the friendships we built is why we started this.”

Alex is a Washington State University marketing graduate and Emily is a psychology student at the University of Alaska Anchorage. Both of them live and work with their parents, but Alex said that previous jobs working with their mom has helped her navigate this added business dynamic to their relationship.

Their dad Marty is no stranger to the family business dynamic either,

as he grew up in a real estate and construction family business.

“I like the idea of having a family-run business,” Marty said. “I grew up in one like that and my family was always close because of it. We developed the same kind of relationship where you have to allow all the family members to be business partners too, so you have to give them room and it’s not like you’re parenting all the time. The relationship changes. I like seeing that with these guys.”

The girls and their brother Mathew are fourth generation Alaskans, and their parents tried to help them become entrepreneurs and involved community members.

Since starting their business in Spenard, Kingfisher Coffee has been able to develop with the area.

“It’s cool to see Spenard grow, too,” Alex said. “I feel like even in the time we’ve been there, it’s changed a lot.”

Darcel worked at Cafe Del Mundo before starting her own shop, and while she brought over a few customers from her previous location, she’s been happy to grow a base of close-by Spenard regulars.





Darcel is the kind of woman who wants to sit and chat with her customers and develop friendly relationships with them. She hopes to one day own a larger establishment where customers can come, sit, chat and enjoy the venue. Until then, she hopes to see Kingfisher Coffee grow its regular customer base.

“Financially, it hasn’t met what we need, but customer wise we are thrilled,” Darcel said.

“We’ve built a lot of really great

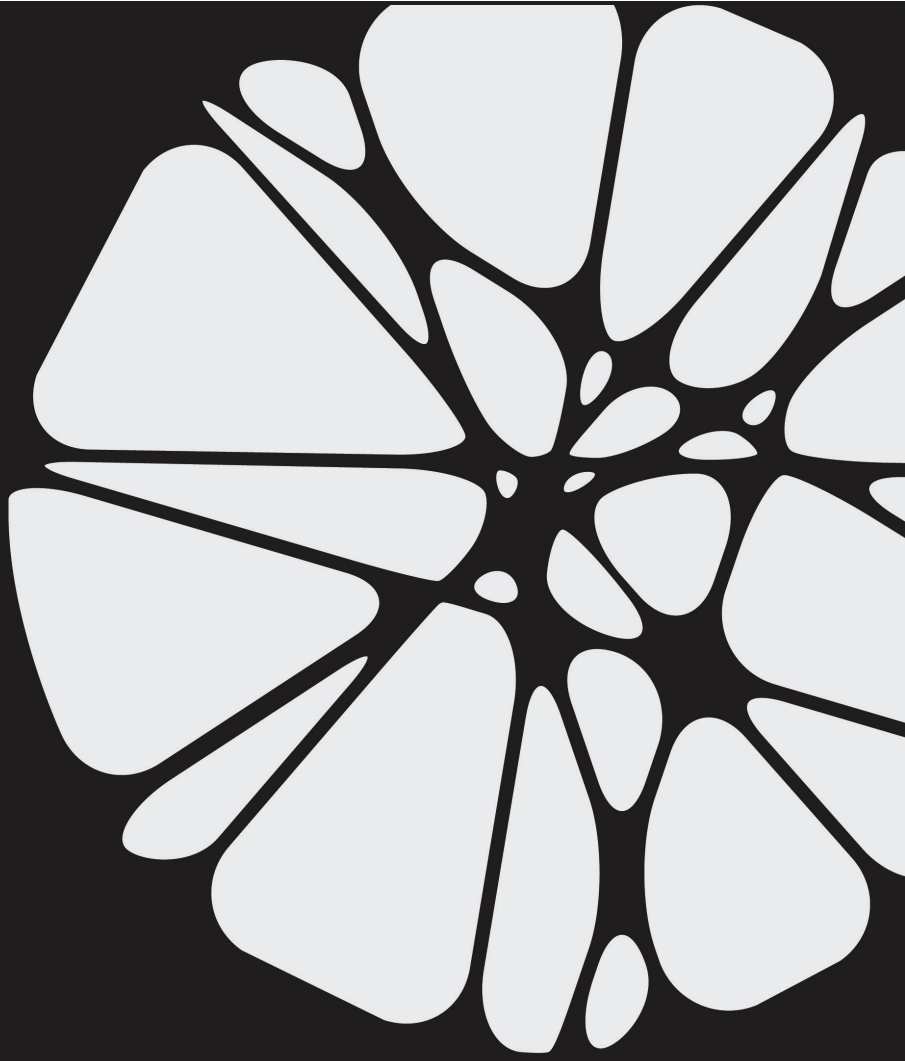
relationships with people,” Alex added.

“And that’s why we started this. We like people.” Darcel said.

The kingfisher logo, which Alex designed, is based off of a friendly kingfisher that visits the family home each summer.

You can try Kingfisher Coffee for yourself and see the McGee family at work at 3831 Spenard Road.





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Kanady Chiropractic: 30 Years in the Making

WORDS BY VICTORIA PETERSEN
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM

Throughout the years, a lot has changed about Spenard. Tim and Lynn Kanady, owners of Kanady Chiropractic, have seen that change unfold outside their shop's doors, on the corner of Fireweed Lane and Spenard Road. The couple will celebrate their businesses' 30th anniversary in August.

Both Tim and Lynn grew up in Alaska before getting married. Even though they don't live in Spenard, they've been in the neighborhood for a lot of life-changing events. Their wedding reception was in Spenard, at the old Millennium Hotel, and one of their first apartments together was in the building above their business.

On Aug. 21, 1988, the day before the Kanady's opened their shop, their first child was born, and from there the business and their family grew.

Tim works as the main chiropractor, while Lynn does much of the administrative work. Their daughter, Paige, also works at Kanady Chiropractic as a special projects administrator.

Both Tim and Lynn say Spenard was a different place in 1988.

"When we first opened up here, Spenard was still kind of the wild, wild west," Tim said.

"Fireweed [Lane] was old Alaska, we had Junior Town and McKay's Hardware, and



they're all gone now," Lynn added.

What used to be a corner well-known for prostitution and drugs has turned into an area in the neighborhood with other local businesses, like Pack Rat Antiques, Ray's Place, The Printer and Hulin Alaskan Design.

Through the decades, the Kanady's have been forming relationships with those businesses. In 2001, when Bear Tooth opened down the street, they said they ate lunch there everyday. Their favorite waiter was Bret Connor. Connor would later open up Hulin Alaskan Design, a screenprinting business just across the street from the Kanady's chiropractic practice. Connor even helped create Kanady Chiropractic team T-shirts.

The Kanady's say they can't imagine doing business anywhere other than Spenard.

"We wouldn't want to go anywhere else," Lynn said. "We love the neighborhood. We love everything about the area."

Tim said they have had their biggest year yet at the practice, and are due for celebration.

The couple hosted an anniversary bash for their business and the neighborhood Aug. 2.



SOUNDS OF SPENARD

WORDS BY MADISON MCENANEY
PHOTO BY DEBORAH MAGER-STRAH

If you look in the space between Anchorage's local cover bands and the acoustic songwriters, you'll find The SpeNerds. The surf-style band found inspiration from iconic groups such as The Ventures, Dick Dale and even the Pulp Fiction soundtrack. They enjoy playing covers of songs just as much as writing originals, and their shows feature a mix of both.

"The most fun part about being in a surf band is taking a popular song that everyone knows and can sing along to, but re-inventing it a little to make it our own surf song," Fred Brosius, the band's guitar player, said.

The SpeNerds features Fred Brosius on guitar, Allen Strah on bass and Joel Ramert on drums. Surf music was formed in 1960s California, and consists of heavy guitar and reverb with little-to-no vocals. However, the SpeNerds thought to shake things up when they decided to bring on vocalist Meagan Hayes, who would change up the band's genre with her singing.

"We wanted to do a James Bond thing with all those great vocal tunes. Our idea was that we'd play what we know, but add a singer to sing all these spy songs, and that's how we found Meagan as a singer. We started doing that and it evolved into 60s pop. As Meagan brought more to the table, the sound turned into what it is now, which is retro rock 'n'

roll," Brosius said.

The band formed in early 2012 and played their first show in June of that year at the Spenard Farmers Market. They've been playing together ever since.

"With our first show being in Spenard at the market, we feel it's extremely important to keep playing there and just in the neighborhood in general," Brosius said.

Many of The SpeNerds' original song names come from the neighborhood itself, with some of their most popular being titled "The Spenard Strut" and "Being from Spenard Confidential." Strah says that there's something iconic about the Spenard neighborhood.

"I have always thought of it as the funky, artsy area of Anchorage. That in itself, plus the many venues that have either passed through or stayed," Strah said. "Music is so happening here, it feels like every night is Saturday night in Spenard."

Brosius, Strah, Hayes and Ramert are hoping to record both their covers of songs and their original pieces before the year ends. They can be found playing shows anywhere from dive bars to private events.

Community Cookbook





Thompson Rhubarb Crisp

My grandmother, Patricia Thompson, lived in Spenard all of her adult life. She raised eight wild children in a tiny home on Dahl Lane, a tight budget and a whole lot of gardening. My father remembers it as being out of necessity, but Grandma Pat made her life, her garden and her resources work for her and her family.

Grandma Pat became an organic gardener and baker, long before it was trendy. She sourced many ingredients out of her garden that she shared with the late Judge Butcher. In that garden, she grew everything: from potatoes to raspberries, lettuce and of course, rhubarb. She would make rhubarb and dandelion wine, raspberry jams and our family gathering staple: rhubarb crisp.

As she grew older, the garden became smaller. Fences were put up, the wild vegetation of Spenard shrank as more people moved in. My dad moved one block away from her on Hillcrest Drive, which meant we kids were within safe walking distance to grandma's organic root beer, fresh raspberries and the homemade ice cream cakes she would make for our birthdays. She taught me how to make jam, harvest potatoes in the rain, and make her infamous rhubarb crisp.

Since her passing, our families don't gather as often. But we all still make some version of this rhubarb crisp. I think it connects us to our departed matriarch. Or, because its super easy to make, its tasty and cheap if you have your own rhubarb plant. Either way, here is my version of Grandma Pat's rhubarb crisp recipe. It's a Thompson staple, and can be yours too.

Ingredients

Crisp Topping:

- 6 tablespoons cold butter cut into small pieces
- ¾ cup of brown sugar
- 1 cup of flour
- 1 cup of rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Sprinkle of salt

Filling:

- 5 cups of chopped rhubarb
- 1 package of strawberries, chopped
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ¼ cup of white sugar
- Juice from ½ lime and ½ lemon
- 2 tablespoons flour

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Combine filling mix ingredients in bowl. Let marinate for 20 minutes or longer.
3. While filling mix is marinating, mix crisp topping in separate bowl until butter is pea sized.
4. Pour filling mix into greased pyrex baking dish.
5. Pour the topping on the filling. Sprinkle sugar on top and put into the oven for 40 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and let cool. I immediately cut into the rhubarb crisp and put into a bowl and top with rhubarb crumble ice cream from Wild Scoops because I hate waiting and there is nothing better than a hot rhubarb crisp with melted ice cream.
7. Enjoy!

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY
TAYLOR THOMPSON





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My Home Away from Home

WORDS AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIKEOS FOUNDEAS

My parents own Milano's, a pizzeria on 36th Avenue, near Spenard Road. My family opened the restaurant in the summer of 2001. They wanted a place where they could work and spend time with their kids.

I was six years old at the time. I remember waking up in the morning to watch the greek soccer league with my dad before we would head off to the restaurant. My dad was born in Exo Hori, Greece, an hour south of Kalamata.

Soccer played a big role in my adolescence. I only played soccer at first because my parents made me, but my passion didn't spark until Greece shocked Europe and went from 300-1 underdogs to the

European champions. From that point on, my game improved and my interest in Greek culture grew.

I began studying the language and watching soccer games with the intent of realizing my new found dream of becoming a professional soccer player in Greece.

Eventually, I grew up and my dream faded away, as well as the interest and pride I had with my culture. Still, my fondest memories of being at the restaurant was watching every major soccer tournament from the World Cup to the Champions League and listening to all my dad's Greek friends go wild for their teams.

On days that I didn't go to the restaurant, I would be at my grandmother's apartment in Spenard, on W 29th Avenue and Arctic Boulevard. I am half Filipino and half Greek. Growing up, there was always a get together on the weekends with my Filipino side of my family. There would be so much food that we usually ended up inviting our neighbors to come chat, eat and play.

The neighborhood kids were always welcoming. We would play basketball and touch football on the street. Some days, we would have backyard boxing and wrestling matches behind the apartment complex or lightsaber fights in the parking lot.

On days my grandma didn't make any of her bomb Filipino foods like Chicken Adobo or Dinuguan, my cousins and I would walk down the street and get cheeseburgers from Tommy's Burger Stop. We would

stumble back into the apartment and knockout from all the food we ate.

Everything looks the same from when I used to hangout there. The lone white door on the second floor of the apartment complex to the rusty basketball hoop next to the dumpster.

"I felt more a part of that neighborhood than my own."

Somedays I find myself driving past those apartments after an outing to Tommy's Burger Stop.

Being around many different people in open and closed situations sparked newfound interest in people and storytelling. I learned to be comfortable in so many different settings, which led me to pursue a degree in journalism and digital media.





THE EVOLUTION OF THE BEAR TOOTH SPECIAL

WORDS BY ZAKIYA MCCUMMINGS
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

Gathered around a table, tucked away, sits Bear Tooth's very own knights of the round table: general manager Steph Johnson and front-of-house managers Amara Liggett, Amy Mack and Brian Dagget. As plates start to arrive, so do the chefs: executive chef Natalie Janicka and sous chef Jessica Rose.

The Bear Tooth Grill, known for its locally-sourced ingredients and Latin-inspired flavors, combines the best of both worlds in a variety of house specials. The first Monday of the month brings new dishes inspired by everything from the changing seasons to fresh summer produce. The process of getting the plate from kitchen-to-table is one that takes extensive planning.

Janicka and Rose spend the early part of the month brainstorming and testing recipes before the first tasting with the management team. The first round is the most intensive; many dishes are prepared using multiple techniques to see if the smallest change can make a difference.

Upon first bite, the colorado crema, a smooth yet tangy sauce that brings the whole plate together, appears to be the star of the show. After tasting the dish a second time, this time with roasted arepas, the flavor profile changed completely.

"That's kind of the purpose of the group setting, so we can get feedback and constructive criticism from everybody," Rose said. "If you serve [a dish] with a lime wedge, is it going to completely change it because you've added that one thing that it needed?"

The watermelon gazpacho, for example, is a refreshing cold summer soup with a kick of spice that took time and patience to refine. The initial response from the testing was lukewarm: it needed more sweetness to balance out the tomato, as well an herb that could lift the flavor profile. For the second tasting, Rose added more watermelon, used locally grown tomatoes, replaced dill with fresh mint and thinned out the puree.

Johnson was pleasantly surprised by the new and improved cold soup. As the general manager of Bear Tooth, Johnson has been one of the first to taste specials as they come and go. While the arepa benedict and the watermelon gazpacho were tweaked before making the final menu, plenty of other recipes don't make it to the menu.

"I think it's really important when you show up at the table and when you're involved with the creation of specials to know that you're going to not succeed a good portion of the time," Janicka said.

Rose joined the Bear Tooth team back in February 2016, working her way up from the eggs station in the morning to sous chef. The ability to make new specials every month is an important creative outlet for her.

"The food is a big part of it for me," Rose said, "I went to school to be a pastry chef, to make wedding cakes because I like making pretty food. It's the art aspect of it that appeals to me."





Natalie Janicka
Executive Chef



The entree Rose presents at the tasting is an ‘everything bagel’ glazed salmon — prepared both grilled and broiled — with fried green tomatoes and cauliflower puree. Consensus on the salmon is swift: the char of the grill adds a depth of flavor. But the cauliflower puree doesn’t wow.

“It needs something more,” Johnson said. “It’s a little bland.”

Rose listened. During the second tasting, the cauliflower puree — made this time with cream instead of buttermilk — was suddenly bringing a lot more to the table.

“We have a list in the back of when produce is in season. This month is cauliflower,” Rose explained. “That’s an easy textural component that’s warm, that’s local, and who doesn’t love butter and cream?”

July is the heart of salmon season. Rose knew that she wanted to do a fresh plate for both local taste buds and those visiting from outside looking to try fresh Alaska salmon. But a simple grilled salmon won’t do at Bear Tooth.

“Natalie [Janicka] had fireweed shoots that she got. We were trying to find an application for them because they’re fresh and we could only get a certain amount, so she dehydrated them,” Rose explained.

They powdered the shoots, but still had the task of finding the right application of them within the dish. Trying to find a way to incorporate the powder into a glaze, Rose thought instantly of bagel spice.

The result is a fillet of fresh Alaska salmon with a one-of-a-kind flavor profile. It’s peppery with just a hint of earthiness from the fireweed, set on a bed of fresh Alaska sprouts and rounded out with tangy fried green tomatoes, surrounded by the rich cauliflower puree. The real test, however, always comes on the first Monday of the month.

“The first day of specials is hair pulling nuttiness,” Janicka said.

Execution on the first day doesn’t always go as planned. The Colorado crema had proven to be more difficult in practice than in theory. Unlike a smaller cafe, who might crank out new, elaborate specials everyday, Bear Tooth has a large kitchen and a busy front of house that leaves little time for overcomplicated elements.

“In a small cafe you can do a lot more things, versus this machine of a building where you have to make 500 of them a month,” Rose explained.

There’s a lot of critique that goes into creating specials, both before and after they go live, but Janicka and Rose each have their own ways of measuring the true success of a dish.

Janicka’s satisfaction comes from the initial tastings themselves. Seeing the reaction among the managers — and later, the staff — is the true sign of success.

“I know if [the tasters] feel like ‘Oh my god,’ and the staff are like ‘Oh shit, I can’t wait to eat this,’ then that’s going to translate to the people coming in,” Janicka said.

The process of creating specials at Bear Tooth is a long and tedious task that takes a month — sometimes more — of planning.

The customers of Bear Tooth, Rose said, demand consistency, but the change is one that Janicka considers positive. If you can figure out a way to create something that fits within the box, the results are a uniquely Bear Tooth experience.

“It’s that feeling like, ‘I’ve got a sick idea.’ You want to be able to share that.”

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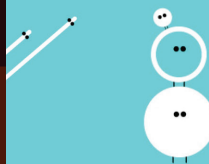
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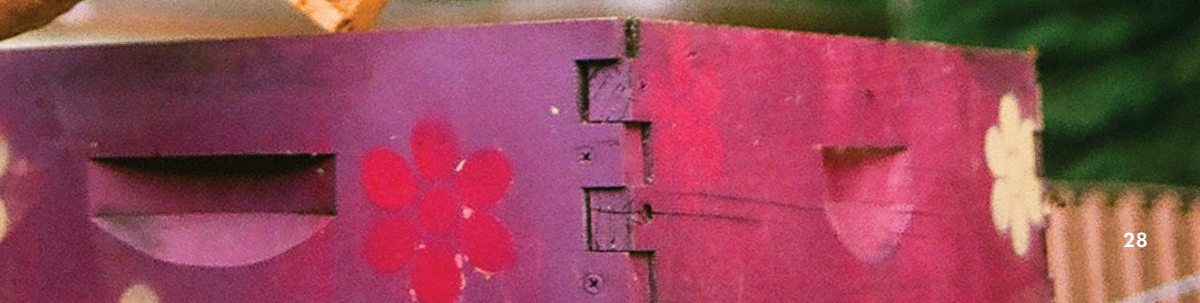
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WORDS AND PHOTOS
BY RYAN CHERNIKOFF



Spenard resident Terry Holtman has been keeping bees for over 20 years.

“It’s a hobby of love,” Terry said from the front porch of his Spenard home, surrounded by stacks of multi-colored wooden boxes containing thousands of European honey bees.

Holtman first became interested in beekeeping in Wisconsin before moving to Alaska in 1989 for work. It was around 1997 that his interest in beekeeping became a reality, but that reality wasn’t without it’s trials and learning experiences.

“The first hive I had died,” Holtman said. “Then, I got another hive, and that was semi-successful, the next year I got two hives, then four hives.”

Now, Holtman has 14 hives placed in various locations across Anchorage, including Rabbit Creek, Tudor and Minnesota, and two hives behind the Anchorage Baptist Temple in East Anchorage he calls “the baptist bees.” The honey-yield from the 14 hives he actively manages can range from seven gallons to 35 gallons, depending on the weather that season.

“Sunshine can make a big difference,” Holtman said.

Holtman enjoys passing on his knowledge of beekeeping.

“Maybe I can create a spark, an ‘ah-ha’ moment for them to go do their own bees,” he said.

One year when Holtman had amassed a total of 20 hives, he discovered that his operation had become a bit too much to tend to on his own. It was around that time that a coworker

expressed interest in learning beekeeping. Soon, word spread and more people began approaching Holtman wanting to learn about his hobby.

“People told me, ‘Wow, this is kind of cool,’” Holtman said.

Every spring, when Holtman receives his packages of bees, he has those interested in learning beekeeping install them. He said that having people help has motivated others to start beekeeping.

“It’s kind of like the running of the bulls, they want to install the package of bees to see what that’s like. The guy down the street has a couple of hives, and a few others have also been inspired [to keep bees],” Holtman said.

Holtman has received considerable attention in recent years for his contribution to beekeeping in Alaska. He says that one of the high points of his life was being featured in the “We Alaskans” section of the ADN in 2017.

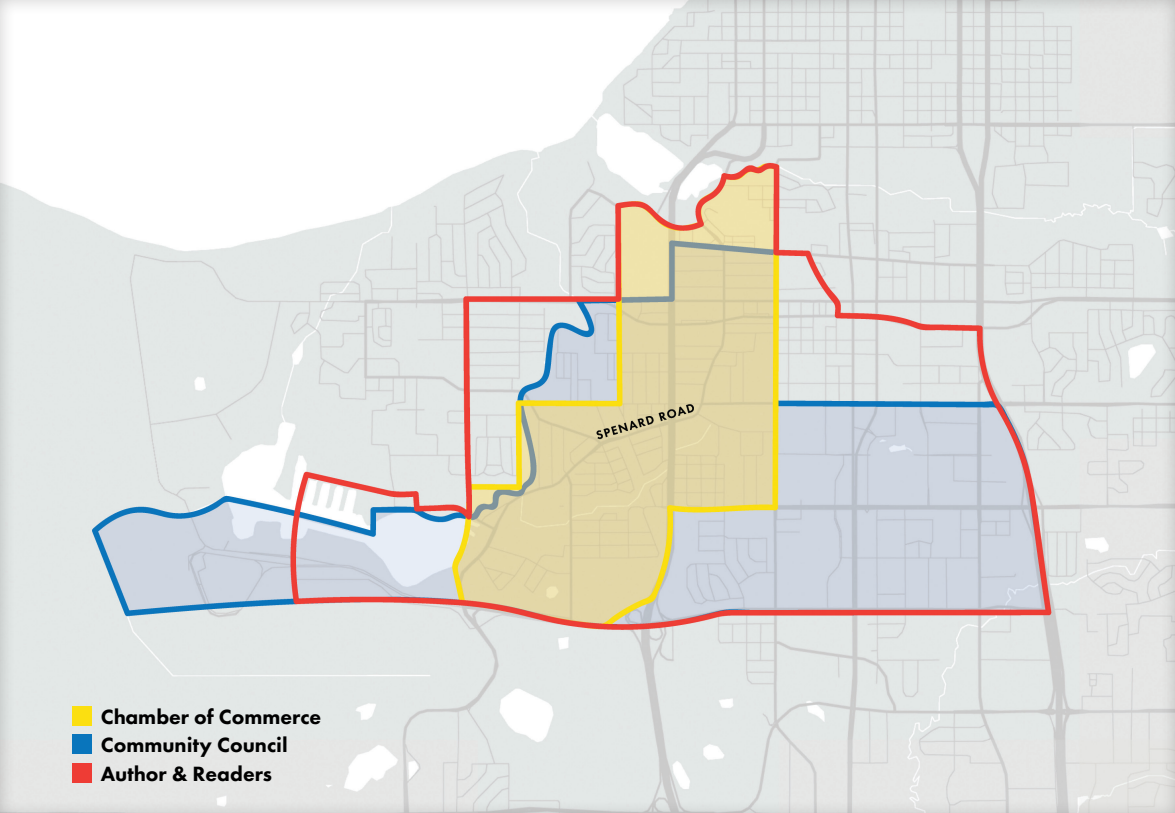
“I’m an Alaskan now,” Holtman said with a smile.

Despite all the attention Holtman has garnered over the years, he still speaks with a calm humility about his passion for beekeeping and the lessons he has learned from it.

“Bees are like people,” Holtman said. “Every hive has its own personality.”

Every Sunday, a group meets at Holtman’s house to assist in tending to the hives that are placed around Anchorage. Those interested in tagging along can reach Terry via his Facebook page: www.facebook.com/terryl.holtman.





WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

WORDS BY VICTORIA PETERSEN
ILLUSTRATION BY LEVI BROWN

Spenard is a part of my identity. My great-grandparents homesteaded near Romig Hill. My parents met at local watering hole, Chilkoot Charlies. I made my pilgrimage there 21 years later. I had my first kiss in the history section of Title Wave.

When I was born, I was brought to a home that sits on Garfield Street. I started Kindergarten at Northwood Elementary and when I lived with my grandma, we could sit on the deck and see the white windmill, standing as a beacon of our Spenardom.

I've never considered another Anchorage

neighborhood home, and I never would. However, the Federation of Community Councils might. Depending on who you talk to, my great-grandparents homestead, and the home my grandparents built sitting near the confluence of Spenard Road and Fireweed Lane, is not in the neighborhood of Spenard, but instead, North Star. A small community council area encompassing the neighborhood surrounding North Star Elementary.

"What do they know?" My grandma, Sylvia Butcher, asked after I told her we were apparently residents of North Star. "Those cheechakos can't tell me this isn't Spenard."

My neighborhood, my pride and my identity came into question when I wanted to join the Spenard Community Council. I wanted to work in an entity that was going to make where I live a better place. Elections were coming up and I had been encouraged to run. When I put my name in the hat for consideration, I was met with utter disappointment. Apparently my grandma's house, my residence, was less than a hundred feet out of bounds for the Spenard neighborhood.

I cried. Fireweed Lane: twenty-some odd feet of pavement was keeping me from the opportunity to make my home a more beautiful and safer place to live.

When I reached out to the manager of the [Federation of Community Councils](#), Mark Butler, said that why the borders were drawn the way they were is a bit unclear. The community councils were created in the 70s when the Anchorage Borough and the City merged into the Anchorage Municipality, with four original neighborhoods, Fairview, Mountain View, Government Hill and South Addition. The community councils were created so every neighborhood would have an entity to give guidance to the Anchorage Assembly and the mayor on issues at the time.

"The boundaries of Spenard are fuzzy," Butler said. "The boundary used to go all the way to Old Seward Highway, where Sears Mall now is. Midtown as a community council did not exist."

Butler said it wasn't until the 80s when the term Midtown was formally used, it was just considered Spenard. In recent times, Butler said Midtown Community Council has had difficulty maintaining members. A primarily business district, few people actually live within the Midtown Community Council borders. Butler said a push to merge Midtown with North Star and Spenard was recently shut down by the Anchorage Assembly, who has the authority to manipulate community council borders.

Butler lives near Chester Creek, which he calls Lower Spenard. He noted that there's pockets of land that are inexplicably a part of one neighborhood, but officially are a part of

another. Spenardigan, for example, is a grey area between Spenard and Turnagain.

Now, this arbitrary border means nothing to me. Anyone who knows me, who knows Spenard, knows that Bosco's, Franz Bakery and all the homes down the north end of Spenard Road, where it meets with Hillcrest Drive, are a part of the neighborhood.

Spenard isn't a neighborhood made up of arbitrary borders. It's a feeling and a sense of place. For **me**, there are neighborhoods within the Spenard neighborhood. They have their own personalities and geographical characteristics. Deep Spenard comprises of the neighborhood of the Barbara Park Valley, the Heights is where my grandma calls home. The presidents neighborhood, where my mom grew up on Lincoln Avenue, is the area of Spenard where the streets are all named after, you guessed it, presidents. There's new Spenard and there's old Spenard. These days, it seems you'd be hard-pressed to find the two mix. I'd like to see biker gangs and prostitutes, whose birth certificates say 'Spenard,' drinking soju cocktails off 27th Avenue or sipping on \$9 fresh-pressed juice, while they peruse kayaks and hammocks at REI after brunch at Middleway. But, maybe you would. Spenard surprises you like that.

We asked our [readers on Facebook](#) where they drew the line of Spenard's borders.

Andrea Redeker said she thinks the Spenard borders are north of International Airport Road, and Tudor Road, east of Wisconsin Street, west of Arctic Boulevard and south of Hillcrest Drive.

Joe Lisool says the east and south side of Wisconsin Street, south of Fireweed Lane, west of Arctic Boulevard and north of Tudor Road. Scott Woodham said he mostly agreed, but that he'd add it all the way to International Airport Road to include Lake Hood.

Local agencies have similar maps. The Spenard [Chamber of Commerce](#) has a map of their boundaries on their website, along with a guide saying where the boundaries generally are.



YAK & YETI TURNS 10

WORDS BY ROB LEFEBVRE
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

The best word, perhaps, for Spenard's own Yak and Yeti Himalayan Restaurant, is adventurous.

The tiny box of a restaurant sits right on Spenard Road, two doors down from Pho Lena and Frigid North and right across the street from the newly revamped Carousel Lounge. It's painted a deep red and has a warm, friendly atmosphere with casual chairs and tables, the latter set with functional plates and metal water glasses. It feels comforting, like sitting at the little table outside your grandmother's kitchen.

Meeting the owners, Lobsang Dorjee and Suzanne Hull, is an adventure, too. This is their first restaurant, which opened in 2008.

Intrepid customers will find a host of foods from Dorjee's country of origin, Tibet. The menu is compact, but full of delicious tastes that represent Indian and Tibetan foods.

"We want to have well-traveled, adventurous eaters," Hull said. "It's not your typical fare."

Dorjee grew up making food in a small town outside of Darjeeling, India.

"My brothers would tease me for cooking," he said. "I would also sneak down to the town and buy Indian food when my mom would make a home-cooked Tibetan meal."

He went to school for programming at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and eventually moved to Seattle. Four days after he accepted a job in Alaska and moved back to Anchorage, he met Hull at a party.

"There was a familiar, comfortable connection from the beginning," Hull said.

The couple has three children — ages 22, 14, and 13 — the eldest grew up helping in the restaurant, and still does.

Yak and Yeti's main restaurant sits in the same building that housed The Noodle House before. It was a mess, Dorjee says, and almost everything had to be repaired or replaced, from the carpets to the kitchen appliances, to the ceilings and frozen pipes.

"Opening a restaurant was hard," Hull said "We lived and breathed it every day."

You can find a tasty, stir-fried spicy pork dish called kalimpong shapta from Tibet as well as a Nepalese pokhara lamb sekhwa, which is marinated shrimp cooked tandoori style. Chicken tikka masala is a customer favorite, as are the Tibetan dumplings, or momos. The spicy goat curry is another of Dorjee's signature dishes, with tender meat served on-bone and smothered in a spicy curry sauce.

Then there's the Naan bread, an Indian food staple that the restaurant makes traditionally, in a hot, round Tandoori oven.

"It's not easy," Hull said. "Lobsang still has scars on his forearms from making it over the years, and I have lost my eyebrows and lashes from it, too."

In 2012, the couple expanded and opened the Yak and Yeti Cafe next to Title Wave Books. Formerly Marty's Bagel Shop, the cafe offers a smaller selection of its unique dishes in an easy grab-and-go form.





The rice bowl offers one, two or three different items for the same affordable \$10, including palak paneer, a vegetarian dish that consists of spinach and homemade cheese cubes.

The first few years of running Yak and Yeti were great, Hull said, and it afforded her to be able to quit her job as an English teacher at Dimond High School and focus on the restaurant full-time. Lobsang did the same, no longer having to stay at his desk job in IT.

The last few years, however, have not been as kind. Dorjee blames the economy for fewer customers.

“The cafe rent almost doubled,” Dorjee said. “We need to try new ideas to keep going.”

The couple ended lunch service at the main

location in Spenard, then moved to a three-day-a-week dinner model. The iconic cafe rice bowls have gone from three differently-priced options to a single option.

Hull has gotten her real estate license; Dorjee may need to take a second job, as well.

Still, the duo loves Spenard.

“Even though it’s an out-of-the-way location,” Hull said. “Spenard is a nice, safe place.”

Yak and Yeti is delightfully different and tasty for a wide variety of palates. Make time for an adventure to Yak and Yeti on Spenard Road for dinner, or the cafe when you want a delicious lunch. Hull and Dorjee will thank you, their employees will thank you and your stomach will, too.





GRASSROOTS

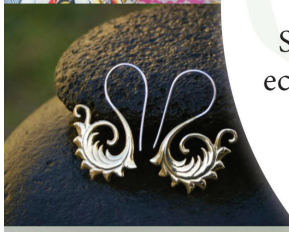
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Faces of Spenard: Dia

WORDS BY AMMON SWENSON
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM





Dia Matteson was 14 years old when she started working at the Anchorage House of Harley-Davidson in Spenard. When her dad sold her the business in 2012, along with dealerships in Wasilla and Soldotna, Matteson was 25, making her the youngest Harley-Davidson franchise owner in the world.

While it might seem like the business was handed to her on a chrome platter, Matteson had been preparing for the job since she was a kid.

When she says she grew up in the shop, Matteson means it. They lived upstairs. An office replaced their living room and her old bedroom window looks out from where pre-owned bikes are displayed now.

Barry, Matteson's dad, owned the business for almost 40 years. They've had locations on Spenard since the 70s including one in the Chilkoot Charlie's building. He moved into the current location across from Gwennie's in the 80s. When Barry bought the entire building, he turned the upstairs into a bed and breakfast called Hog Heaven. Matteson's mom and older sister would help clean up the rooms.

"[W]e didn't make breakfast for people, but we had a coupon that said, 'Here's your bed. Get your own damn

breakfast,' and they would go to Gwennie's," Matteson said.

She eventually started working in the clothing department and got her motorcycle license at 16. Matteson had already spent her childhood regularly riding with her dad on trips around the Lower 48. By her senior year of high school, she only had one class and spent the rest of her time working.

"I loved being around bikes and I liked the people," she said. "I definitely just felt it was my spot."

Matteson worked through different departments and learned the business from the ground up while going to the University of Alaska Anchorage. She eventually earned an M.B.A., but it wasn't pressure from her dad that drove her.

"I've always been a pretty self-motivated, driven person, so it wasn't like I had to have this carrot, but I would say, honestly, it's the community and the people that I worked with," Matteson said.

While taking over the shop might have raised eyebrows from some old-timers, Matteson said being a woman hasn't factored into how she's gotten to where she is today. There was no glass ceiling and her dad was supportive. She has the same challenges as anyone else running a

business.

"People that are assholes will be assholes regardless of who they're being an asshole to," she said.

When an issue does come up, though, Matteson tries to face it head on.

"I just look at everything as a challenge," she said. "If I have people who don't like me, I'm like, 'I'm gonna make you love me.'"

Since taking over, Matteson has launched a riding academy, which she sees as a major part of future business. She's not looking to reinvent the shop; she wants to keep the store's unique Alaska vibe and community mindset.

Matteson and her dad still ride together whenever they can. They stay in town or do longer road trips like the upcoming Harley-Davidson "Ride Home" where they'll head to the company's headquarters in Milwaukee to celebrate its 115th anniversary this August.

With her drive and focus, it's difficult to imagine Matteson doing anything else. She's tailor-made for what she does and wouldn't have it any other way.

"I have zero regrets. I love what I do," Matteson said.



Back in my day...

Pat Fullerton and myself led the Doo Dah Parade each year. Me and my lovely wife, Judith, were owners of Frigid North Company who also supported the parade each year by blowing up and passing out approximately 1,000 helium filled balloons. The Doo Dah Parade was a non-motorized parade from the West High School parking lot to Northern Lights Boulevard, followed by a kid-friendly street fair in the Chilkoote Charlie's parking lot. The participants of the parade entered with a goal of frivolity to entertain the roughly 4,000 kids and their parents who lined the street.

WORDS AND PHOTO
BY TOM MCGRATH

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