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**SPENARDIAN**



ISSUE 06

**DECEMBER 2019**



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**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



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# *In the beginning: Center Bowl*

WORDS BY VICTORIA PETERSEN  
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM

Center Bowl has been a source of entertainment for Anchorage for over 60 years. Not much has changed at the bowling alley. The classic aesthetic has remained after all these years. Old photos of the bowling alley found on their website show a scene generations of Anchorage residents instantly recognize.

Mike Boots remembers growing up in the alley on the weekends.

“We grew up there on Saturdays in the 60s and 70s. My brother Pat has worked there for many, many years. When

he’s not working, he’s bowling.”

The bowling alley is even immortalized in song. Spenard’s own Quinn Christopherson, who won National Public Radio’s Tiny Desk Concert Series earlier this year, performed his song “Glenn” at the NPR office in Washington D.C.

“Driving through Spenard, to the bowling alley. He got me my own ball and matching shoes. I was a real bad sport. I never liked to lose. But he kept showing up and teaching me the rules.”





1

Center Bowl

2

3

Center Bowl

4

5







# A note from the Editor

**WORDS BY VICTORIA PETERSEN  
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM**

When I created The Spenardian in a UAA classroom in 2016, I never would have imagined it would bring me to where we are today: six beautiful print magazines highlighting the neighborhood I've come to love so dearly.

I created this space as an opportunity for myself to grow as a writer, editor and general content creator. In 2016, this publication began as an ugly bright yellow website and a dozen or so stories.

Then, in 2017, a group of UAA and The Northern Light alumni decided to bet on me and this idea.

These magazines, our website, our social media presence would be nothing today if weren't for the hard work and dedication of Sam Davenport, Levi Brown, Young Kim and later on Yoshina Okamoto.

They brought my vision and even more to life and I don't know how I'll ever be able to properly thank them for it.

From the beginning, I wanted The Spenardian to be a place where anyone and everyone can share their stories. From people who were just passing through, to old-timers who have 'Spenard' proudly printed on their birth certificates. While I think I could have filled these pages with stories of my own and the stories of those around me, I wanted The Spenardian and this space to be for others. I hope in these six issues we've been able to raise the voices of other Spenardians.

The last couple of years have been busy and rough. While working on The Spenardian I've been working as a full-time reporter on the Kenai Peninsula and part-time on a national journalism fellowship project focused on rural education in Alaska. The rest of our team has since graduated college and pursued projects and employment of their own, all while putting together these magazines.

This may be the last print issue for now, but The Spenardian and our team aren't going anywhere. After a much-needed break in the new year, we'll work toward a new project and iteration of The Spenardian that continues our mission of sharing and raising the voices of all Spenardians.

# AFTERSHOCK ESPRESSO: A COFFEEHOUSE FOR A 'ONE OF A KIND' NEIGHBORHOOD

WORDS BY RYAN CHERNIKOFF  
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

Nestled between 32nd Avenue and 33rd Avenue on one of the busiest stretches of Minnesota Boulevard lies Aftershock Espresso, one of Spenard's most coveted coffee shops and daytime lounges.

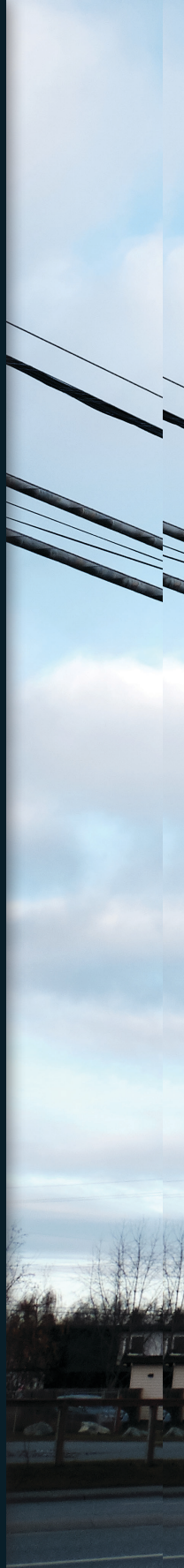
From the outside, Aftershock Espresso may seem like just another one of the many drive-through coffee stands scattered throughout Anchorage. But upon setting foot inside the shop, one may find themselves pleasantly surprised by the spacious dine-in area complete with tables, lounge chairs and plant-adorned windows.

A small fireplace sits in the corner of Aftershock's lounge area, providing extra warmth to customers on chilly mornings. Many of Aftershock's furnishings are hand-made by crafty employees. Their DIY motif, combined with a small staff of friendly and well-trained

baristas, makes the lounge just tempting enough to make a person want to stay awhile.

On a typical morning, one might find a line of morning commuters waiting in their cars for their daily coffee fix. It's October, and the Aftershock crew is dressed in Halloween costumes ranging from cats to Star Wars characters. They are working at a feverish pace to get food and drink orders ready as quickly as possible, only stopping the flow to walk outside to serve drive-through customers in line.

Aftershock regulars are scattered around the lounge, discussing current events, reading or gazing through the wall of south-facing windows in quiet contemplation. Rosie Klouda, the owner of Aftershock Espresso, and the rest of her crew are on a first-name basis with most customers.



**ESPRESSO**



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“What sets us apart is our friendly attitudes and relationships with our customers,” Klouda said. “We get to know you and your favorite things, and always try to make sure you leave Aftershock with a smile and a tasty drink.”

Klouda didn’t think she would be a small-business owner this early in her life. After working as a barista for 10 years, the opportunity to become the new owner presented itself.

“I couldn’t pass it up,” Klouda said.

Klouda says the building Aftershock Espresso sits in has been around since the 40s and has seen many incarnations over the years.

“I’ve been an employee since 2013 when Trina Pomeroy was the owner,” Klouda said. “She was also a barista working at the shop when she purchased it. The name Aftershock Espresso came from Trina... I kept the name, as it is quite relevant, especially in the last year.”

The building has survived both the 1969 and 2018 earthquakes.

“I was at the shop the day of the (2018) earthquake, only lost a few bottles of syrup. We got lucky,” Klouda said.

Aftershock Espresso offers a variety of sometimes CBD-infused coffee, tea and food items, as well as some not-so-common in-house concoctions, including “Goldenmilk” — a mixture of turmeric, cinnamon and honey — which touts anti-inflammatory and digestive benefits. They also serve “The Cure,” a tea and cayenne pepper fueled elixir designed to help with nasty cold symptoms.

As for the future, Klouda plans to keep growing Aftershock’s customer base and continue to be a presence at community events and festivals. Klouda hopes to start a barista-training program one day.

“Spensard has its own cast of characters and people that make this area one of a kind,” Klouda says.

Aftershock Espresso, is open 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday and is located at 1510 West 32nd Ave.



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# A Spenard walking tale: September 22, 2019

WORDS AND PHOTO BY  
DARCY STEIN

My husband and I share one car. While you may have all just gasped aloud — Anchorage being the driving city it is — this actually works for us. As us Spenardians know, one of the many perks of our cool, quirky hood is location, location, location. The places we frequent the most are relatively close by and coupled with the occasional Uber or Lyft ride, it all works out okay in the end. Also... one car payment, a decreased carbon footprint and sometimes you actually work up quite a sweat walking. Win, win and winning some more.

So now that you know all that, let's get down to it.

It's September 22 at 3:48 p.m. I'm walking from Anchorage Yoga back to the very small, yet adorable house my husband and I rent in the Woodland Park pocket of Spenard. I turn onto 36th Avenue, going towards Minnesota from Arctic with a London Fog in hand, giant gold wireless Beats headphones around my neck just waiting to be switched on. Before I can press the play button, I immediately noticed a very small, turquoise-esque compact car barreling down the road towards the light on 36th and Arctic. I swear I can hear music, even though the car is nowhere yet near me.

As the car comes closer towards 36th, the picture begins to become a little clearer. There's a young girl driving, belting out what I can only make out as Beyonce lyrics, in the most epically loud manner. All of her windows are down, and she is going to town on the song. She flies by on the left of me and all I can do is yell after her:

"GET IT GIRL!!!"

I smile, hit play on my Pandora, and continue on my way. Now I'm crossing Cope Street when all of a sudden I hear some gravel shuffling behind me. I turn around to see a dark-colored Civic-type car and a dude in the driver's seat. His window is rolled down and his mouth is moving, so I lift the right headphone away from my ear.

"Need a ride?" he asks.

Certainly, this has got to be a joke. Do guys really just pull up to women walking down the street and ask if they need a ride? Does this guy think I'm a prostitute? Do prostitutes wear wireless headphones? All of these questions going through my head at once. Instead of verbally responding, all I can do is start laughing. I turn back around, put my right headphones back on, and resume my listening pleasure.

I continue walking towards 36th. A few moments later, I hear another noise. The jangle of keys landing on the pavement.

A mysterious set of what I can only guess is storage locker keys land to the left of my feet. I can't be sure if a car just recently passed me and in a passionate rage, discarded them out of the window, or Civic dude was pissed I rejected his bizarre offer, or what.

Regardless, here are these keys laid out in front of me. I'm reminded of this Jonathan Safran Foer novel I read years ago. He finds this key and unravels a whole mysterious adventure. So I pick them up to examine them a little more closely. I notice the keychain says Sara Lee, and I'm like, the crappy bread brand? Oh hell nah. I immediately drop them back on the ground. I remember I'm in Spenard, and not in New York City, where the novel takes place, and that these keys probably go to Best Storage West.

I roll my eyes and continue on my way, but not before snapping a photo of said keys as proof that this was probably one of the most interesting walks I've had in a while.



Containers

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# From cart to storefront

WORDS BY MACKENZIE POPE  
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

Blue Market AK is a new business in Spenard, but the values and the people behind it have been here for years. If you frequented the Spenard Farmers Market, you might have seen the custom-made Little Blue Market cart stocked with bulk goods, low-waste alternatives and friendly advice. The two ladies offering advice on how to make less waste are Jen and Jess, residents of the neighborhood. As of November, their wares can be found in the old French Oven Bakery storefront.

This endeavor is marked at every step by enthusiastic community support; this can be seen through a volunteer architect helping them redesign the space, friends and family helping clean and paint, or the more than \$31,000 raised in support for their cause. The third member of their enterprise, Loren, is the zero-waste consultant of the business and was instrumental in introducing Jen and Jess when they embarked on this endeavor in March 2019.

Exuding energy and excitement, Jen and Jess are fully ready to welcome you even if you're new to low-waste living.

"We're really excited to give people the opportunity to be conscious about what they touch and make shopping an exercise in mindfulness," the women said.

They are ready to give back to the community as much as they've been

given, starting with the 1% Giving Back Program. Through this initiative, Blue Market AK shares 1% of their profits with a local partner organization, starting with Friends of Fish Creek and Alaska Marine Conservation Council.

Jen and Jess are driven by the desire to make a low-waste lifestyle change convenient for shoppers, clearly expressed by the way they're designing their store and shopping experience. Blue Market AK encourages customers to contribute unused containers or bring in what you already have to fill with bulk dish soap, shampoo and lotion.

On display are clearly communicated stories of their own flubs — when products come shipped in plastic — and hurdles — when you picked the slow barge to save on carbon footprint but four weeks turned to eight — on their zero-waste journey right alongside locally made soaps.

Because of the focus on community, contribution and communication, there is no need to worry about shame or intimidation when you transition to low-waste alternatives. Jen encourages shoppers to start with reusable bags, paper towels or dish and laundry soap.

"I think people should start with things they're not passionate about and could easily find a low-waste alternative to test out," Jen said.



One challenge of amassing a diverse set of options for Blue Market AK is the limits on what is made locally and what can be; however, opening this store creates a market for local makers to jump in where they couldn't before.

Blue Market will be stocked with at least one third locally made or grown products and they'd love for that proportion to be higher. Jess is excited about what Blue Market AK can offer to local producers.

"For some people, our space allows them to have a stable endpoint where there wasn't one before — like with a beeswax

wrap producer from Palmer who can now expand, knowing there are shelves for their products," Jen said.

Jen says they are particularly interested in talking with local farmers, sewers, wood-workers and potters.

Spensardians can ask about memberships, give feedback on what they'd like to see stocked and, most importantly, have patience as they roll out new features. Jen and Jess anticipate this venture will grow and evolve step-by-step and they invite everyone to be a part of this community.

Phase two kicked off the first Saturday of November, featuring unpackaged household and personal care essentials. Even on a sunny Saturday, the store was crowded with people excited about this new business model.

Blue Market AK will be open three days a week until Christmas, then closing in January to build out the food component of the store. You can expect to see their official grand opening as a full service unpackaged refillery grocery market in early 2020.



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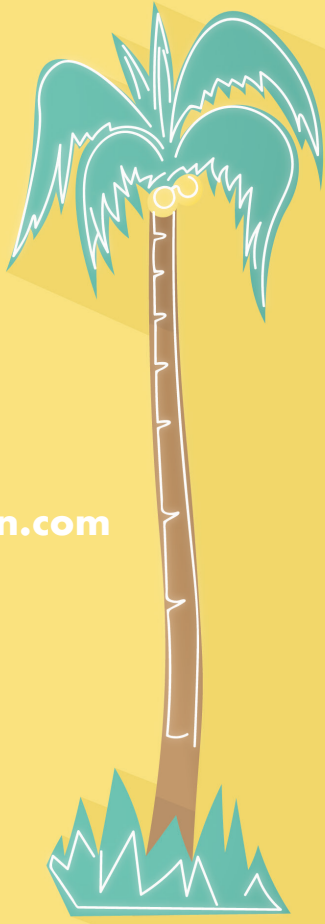
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# ‘THIS COULD ONLY HAPPEN IN SPENARD’

WORDS BY ABIGAIL SLATER  
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

For residents of Spenard, the Thursday Food Truck Carnival has become such a large part of the neighborhood’s landscape, it’s easy to forget there was a time when the parking lot beside Koot’s was completely devoid of cupcakes, burgers and families.

Darrin Huycke didn’t plan on becoming the ring-leader of the Spenard Food Truck Carnival. He was working with clubs around town booking bands when the job came to him. But food trucks in Anchorage were young, and there were not many outlets for them to find a large audience. By banding together in one location, the trucks could pool their fanbase and resources. The only problem: Who was to manage it?

Huycke says that there was concern about the possibility of a food truck owner running things, as it could present a conflict of interest.

“They wanted someone who wasn’t another food truck owner,” he says.

Huycke loved food, and his experiences with bands prepared him for the monumental task of bringing everyone together.

“I view the Carnival as a concert, and every food truck is like a band,” he said.

His background meant that the Carnival often got live music acts and other entertainment, which helped it stand out from other similar ventures that had been happening nationwide.





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Lara Stone, the operator of the Babycakes food truck, has been one of the longest vendors of the Carnival. Over the past six years, she has witnessed these changes in real-time.

“Every year, more and more people frequent the market,” Stone says. “Our food truck scene has also exploded over the last few years with the addition of many new and exciting food truck options with more popping up every year.”

When asked what makes Spenard’s food truck carnival so unique, Stone adds that “the market is set in the heart of a neighborhood teeming with life and character.”

“There’s a lot of support from the local community and between the vendors, which makes it a truly unique food truck experience,” she said.

While many things have grown and changed over the years, Huycke says that one key element has always been maintaining the location.

“We’ve tried to replicate this in other places,” Huycke said. “And it’s never had the same success that it had there...This could only happen in Spenard. I mean, you’ve got a family event with kids happening in a bar parking lot. That’s crazy.”

Other changes outside of Huycke’s control, such as the abnormal heatwave that Anchorage experienced this year, haven’t been able to undo the work they’ve put in. In spite of outside forces, the crowds just keep coming in bigger numbers every year.

When the season ends each October, Huycke doesn’t hang up his hat. New food trucks, some of whom may be struggling to find their audience, often find new homes with his aid. Tiki Pete’s, a new barbecue food truck with a killer Crabby Patty, now resides comfortably outside of Koot’s five days a week. You can find it, and other Carnival frequenters, keeping the Anchorage food scene alive all year long.



# My Great Uncle Joe Spenard: Before and after Anchorage

WORDS AND PHOTOS COURTESY  
OF MONIQUE SPENARD

*This is the second part of the "We'll Have a Parade" article in Issue 5.*

By the age of 21, Joe Spenard was living in Montreal, Quebec working as an electrician. He was living in a large boarding house and he had already been working there for 12 months.

He crossed over to the United States in July of 1901 via the Canadian Pacific Railway train where he arrived at New York Central. He ultimately made his way to the State of Washington where he married Edith Edna Llewellyn on April 28, 1906, in Aberdeen, Washington. He was 27 years old and she was 26. According to their marriage certificate, he was living in Aberdeen, Washington and she in Parlier, California. His occupation was Tallyman and she was a Milliner.

According to Linda Martin,

Early Settlers of Ottawa, Ontario. The Spenard Family, 2018 "Joe was already in Valdez, Alaska working for the Alaska Securities Company by 1908. There is documentation for February 1908 that his brother, Ernest, was joining him at Valdez."

I recently found a photograph on the Internet entitled "Joe and his bears watching for the boat, Valdez, Alaska." I must admit that I was very surprised to see this – "His Bears!!" There must be a story there!

While in Valdez, Joe applied for his American citizenship and filled out the Declaration of Intention. His first application was canceled by the court because he was unable to secure a witness to attest that he had been known for five years. He later reapplied when this was no longer an issue and was granted citizenship of the United States

on January 4, 1913.

When Joe and Edith left Anchorage for California in late 1918 because of Joe's broken leg and a heart issue, they intended to return but never did. The reason is unknown. On his WWI registration card dated December 12, 1918, they were living in San Francisco, California, he was a ship fitter employed by the Union Iron Works.

By consulting U.S. voter registrations, federal censuses and city directories, I determined that they moved to Sacramento, where he held various occupations. He worked at Rosenthal's Department Store as a salesman, clerk and ultimately as a department manager. He then was a hardware merchant and, until his death, the proprietor of a retail housewares store.



Joe died on August 8, 1934 in Sacramento, California at the age of 55. The cause of his death was acute dilation of the heart and other contributory causes were chronic interstitial nephritis. He was buried August 10, 1934 at the Masonic Lawn Cemetery in Sacramento.

On January 8, 1935, a newspaper article appeared in The Ottawa Journal on Joseph's death: "Dies in Alaska – Alfred Spenard, of the C.N.R. local staff, has just received news of the death at Sacramento, Cal., of his brother, Joseph A. Spenard. Formerly of Valdez, Alaska, he was among the early settlers at Anchorage and Lake Spenard. The latter lake was named for him. He left Anchorage about 16 years ago. Mr. Spenard was born in Ottawa in 1879.

In addition to his brother here he is survived by his widow living in Sacramento."

The newspaper obviously got California and Alaska mixed up!

Edith remained in Sacramento until 1949 when she moved to Fresno, California, closer to where she was born and where some of her relatives were still living. She died on October 16, 1959 at the age of 79 at the Stockton State Hospital.

Joe's father, Alexandre Spénard, was known to be quite handsome and was of comfortable means. For 20 years he was the owner of a tinsmith and plumbing supplies store in Ottawa, Canada, and in that capacity built up a large circle of friends

and acquaintances, by whom he was held in high esteem. After giving up his business, he entered the Civil Service of Canada. Around 1896, he was appointed roof inspector for the Canadian parliament buildings with the Department of Public Works in Ottawa. The roofs of the Canadian parliament buildings are made of copper and Alexandre's experience as a tinsmith was very valuable for overseeing the maintenance and repairs of the roofs.

Joe's 12 siblings were all born in Ottawa: Alexandre (the son), Séphora, Arthur, Joseph (Alaska Joe), Laurence, Philippe, Ernest, Alfred, Fernando, Blanche, Rodolphe and Adélar — my grandfather.



Alexandre (same name as the father). He lived in Montreal, Canada from 1904 to 1910 where he owned his own business of European novelties. He moved out west to the province of Manitoba around 1912 where he remained until his death in 1967 at the age of 92. He had been a Ford salesman, a city councilor and a real estate agent.



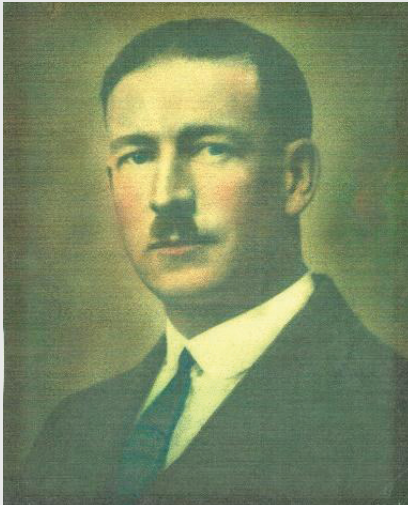
The tall woman is Joe's sister Blanche. The children are Joe's two nieces Liliane and Fleurette and a nephew. Fleurette is still living. The couple on the right are my grandfather and my grandmother.

About 1906, Ernest went to Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. From Seattle he went to Valdez, Alaska where Joe was working. His name is on a manifest of alien passengers applying for admission to the United States in February 1908 at the port of Sumas, Washington. He later returned to Canada.





The lady dressed in black is Joe's sister Séphora. She stands between my grandfather and my grandmother. This picture was taken in Royal Oak, Michigan where my grandparents lived for a few years and Séphora lived with them. But, as my grandmother was too lonesome for her relatives, the family returned to Canada and, in 1932, abandoned its residency status.



A young Adélard.



Adélard, circa 1957, in his Royal Canadian Mounted Police uniform.

I hope that this short article will be helpful to Spenardians who did not have much information about Joe Spenard's Canadian roots nor about what happened to him after he and Edith left Alaska.

I am very grateful to my cousin's wife, Linda Martin, whose many years of dedication and research into the Spénard family has enabled me to use much of her material for this second article.

# The Dog Mama

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# New art decorates Spenard Road

WORDS BY JOEY CARREON  
PHOTOS BY YOUNG KIM

You may have noticed along Spenard Road near Benson Boulevard, a bronze raven perched atop a SPAM can, or a pair of eyes' piercing gaze.

Enter "SPEN," and "The Eyes of Spenard," two art pieces that sprung up in Spenard this fall.

SPEN is a giant, steel SPAM can whose logo is stylized to read "SPENard," an homage to the classic can of spiced ham we all know and love. A raven sits atop the steel SPAM can which is nestled on a Greco-Roman column with a raven perched on top. The piece was created by local artist John Coyne.

Born in Fairbanks, Coyne returned to Alaska in 2011 after living all across the country. Since moving back home, he's produced multiple large-scale sculptures in the state, like a 50-foot-long aluminum wall-sculpture in Nome and bronze orcas at Juneau's Douglas Fish and Game building. The inspiration for SPEN emerged through his idea of creating a humorous piece while dabbling within the pop-art genre.

"I think pop-art, at it's best, pokes fun at something and also celebrates it," Coyne said.

SPEN was commissioned by the Municipality of Anchorage's 1% for Art program, who also chose the location for the structure. The same program recently commissioned another piece on Spenard that was finished this February.

Coyne says "SPEN" took about a year to complete before officially finishing on Sept. 13. The SPAM can is made of stainless steel, which Coyne had to teach himself how to weld for the project. A welding shop in Palmer helped Coyne with the SPAM can's signature, rounded edges. Coyne then welded the sculpture's infrastructure, applied sign-painters paint and clear coat and mounted the can to the Greco-Roman column.

"One of the reasons I'm really happy with the outcome of this project is that it essentially is exactly what I proposed," Coyne said. "Usually with bigger installations — especially with three-dimensional art — you kinda come close. But this was exactly what I proposed. I'd like to say that I even improved on the initial design."

The idea to construct the project came about when deconstructing the word "Spenard," Coyne said.



“I like the design of the SPAM can and I can take the word ‘SPAM’ from ‘Spenard,’” Coyne said. “It’s highly recognizable, so anyone looking at it will immediately think ‘SPAM.’ It’s a play on the word and it’s kind of poking a little fun at Spenard.”

Despite producing a piece that pokes fun at the neighborhood, the

amount of time and work dedicated to the project is a testament to how he feels about the neighborhood, Coyne said.

“Everyone that I’ve met that I consider a friend, people that I work with, and my partner — hopefully she’ll marry me one day — I’ve met everyone in Spenard,” Coyne said.





Much like Coyne, James Temte and Michael Conti hold Spenard in high regard. Recently, the two completed “The Eyes of Spenard,” located where the Paradise Inn once stood.

Temte, a local artist and Alaska Pacific University’s program manager, has always been eager to jump on the chance to work with Conti, an Anchorage photographer. When Paradise Inn property owner Cindy Berger contacted Temte to work on the wall, he took the opportunity head-on.

The mural features a pair of eyes whose soft gaze is unmistakably recognizable thanks to its 50-foot-long stature. Finished on Sept. 22, the eyes depicted on the mural belong to Christina Adams, a student Conti photographed in 2012 when he taught photography at UAA.

Temte digitally scaled several of Conti’s photos to the size of the wall to test mock-ups, but kept coming back to the seven-year-old portrait of Adams which Conti never had a plan for — a portrait whose eyes, Temte said, “asks questions and has answers, all at once.”

The Paradise Inn has been known as a “seedy place” for “drugs, human trafficking and prostitution,” Conti said — with the Inn’s closure being caused by its former owner selling meth to an FBI informant in 2014.

Conti believes the mural’s eyes “keep an eye on the space” and shed light on both its dark past and those affected by it.

“[Adams] is a Tlingit woman, and a lot of the human trafficking tends

to involve women of color, so we wanted to push back against that and shed light on that history,” Conti says. “There was some relationship there that kind of made sense to us.”

From the conception of the mural to completion, the entire process took roughly a month, but putting up the mural only took a weekend. Intending to highlight the texture of the wall behind the mural, Conti and Temte wheat-pasted just under 100 panels onto the wall with a waterproof polymer. On the left side of the mural, select panels were left off to create somewhat of a pixelated gradient.

“Partway through the process, James [Temte] was like, ‘Let’s see what happens if we leave some panels out and we can always put them back in later,’” Conti said. “So we just started to pixelate it in the way that you see now. Rather than paint over it, we decided to just let the wall tell the story in addition to the mural.”

Down the road, neighbors will spot “Sequel K’eldzeets,” which means “dance with me” in Athabascan, a piece by Alaska artist Tammy Holland that features three Alaska Native dancers made from recycled materials from all over Alaska — such as rocks from Fairbanks and metal from a building that was recently torn down at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

With the native dancers, the duo’s mural and Coyne’s “SPEN” popping up in the neighborhood this fall, Coyne believes Spenard’s art scene is on the come up.

# 3300 Spen

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY  
ANNIE ZAK

That December, our little hands  
freezing in the drafty bar.  
The neon “SPENARD” sign hung  
on the wall, glowing, partly broken.  
A dim booth, we drank beer, silly  
Christmas sweaters all around us.

Some band took the stage. They wore  
sunglasses at night in Alaska  
winter, so of course we all laughed.  
The music started. Little red guitar.  
For just that evening, it seemed  
like the world might survive.

What I remember most  
is the women, loving each other  
electric, dancing front row glory,  
sending each other into deep dips,  
twirls, fingers in each others’ hair  
as the songs went blissfully on.

Months passed. Snow and ice  
came and went in little flurries, brief  
days of optimism wedged in between.  
We listened to the songs over and over  
again. We made each other important  
playlists. We lived in wool socks.

One night near 36th Avenue, at  
a place we call church, red stage lights  
made holy silhouettes of the band.  
We watched the guitarist’s hands flying  
magical down the electric neck.  
Wishing we were good at anything,

we smiled, felt golden, pressed our  
palms to our hearts. Facing the altar,  
we mouthed every word. (Wait — this is  
important. This is my favorite part.)



# *ard Rd.*



Two Decembers later, the cold bar  
has a different name, but it's still here,  
feels like it always will be — much like  
your parents, or yourself at age 22 —  
across from our favorite pho spot.  
We drive that winding Anchorage road,

park in the lot, flock inside, sip  
kombucha, hug. I see you at the show,  
because everyone in town is there,  
all happy glitter and winter coats.  
We scream and scream and scream.  
Little red guitar. This is my favorite part.

# A WALK DOWN FIREWEED LANE

WORDS BY SAM DAVENPORT  
PHOTO COURTESY OF LYNN BRAUTIGAM BOOTS



Growing up in the town of Spenard was much different than growing up in the neighborhood today. Lynn Brautigam Boots would know — she was born in Spenard when the state was still a territory.

As a child, Boots and her family would pick berries where Replacement Glass on Fireweed now stands. Across from West High School, children would play with a rope tow on a ski hill. Before Westches-

ter Lagoon was constructed, she and her friends would run out across the mudflats.

Holy Rosary Academy used to house Maxine's Beauty Salon. The Alyeska Candy Kitchen lived in the small strip mall where Enlighten and So Thai are today. Caribou Wards had the first escalator in the Northern Lights Center. There were small log cabins all down Spenard Road back then.

“In those days, in the 60s, snow machines — as long as they weren’t on the road — were legal... I remember getting caught in the Inlet,” Boots laughed.

Boots grew up working at her parents’ store, the Little Cuties Shop, which started out of the basement of their home. In 1962, they built out a storefront and expanded into the back of the house before changing the name to Junior Towne, a Spenard staple that provided young Alaskans with clothing options for 55 years. Their storefront was located across from what is now Holy Rosary Academy on the west end of Fireweed.

From winter clothing to cribs and car seats and socks, Junior Towne had everything a growing family might need. Around 1970, Boots says she and her family moved out of the back of the store, providing more space for their products.

“A lot of people remember the dresses and the suits because they were special,” Boots said. “We carried a brand called Martha’s Miniatures and I still hear people say, ‘Oh, do you remember the little bell?’”

Junior Towne was a family operation — one that Boots has been part of since she was a young child.

“A number of my friends laugh because [in order] to watch Saturday morning cartoons, we had to make bows,” Boots said. “We had a bow machine which was a hand-crank thing. If we wanted to watch cartoons, we had to make bows while we were doing it. That started when we were 4 or 5 [years old].”

Oftentimes, Boots’ mother, Esther Brautigam, would help fashion shows alongside charitable organizations to highlight their new additions to the storefront. Boots said they participated in them, usu-

ally with a dress shop like the Hat Box or the Smart Shop.

“In those things when my mother had it, fashion shows were a big deal,” Boots said. “I remember modeling and a lot of my friends and my brother’s friends, too — were nabbed. Of course, the people who did the fashion shows always had their kids in it, too.”

Boots took over the business after her mother’s death in 1986 and ran it for 32 years before deciding to retire. Two of their employees had been with her for 25 years, both of whom wanted to retire. The electrical in the building needed to be updated and they were due for a remodel.

Junior Towne was known for big, elaborate window displays. When she decided to retire, the window display paid homage to her mother and family, with clothing Boots wore as a child and items her own sons wore.

Boots had buyers interested in purchasing the store, but she wanted to go out on her own terms.

“We kind of went out on top, which was wonderful,” Boots said. “I never found somebody who I thought would continue the family tradition.”

Retirement has treated Boots and her husband well. They have been on a number of motorcycle tours around the world, from Australia to Morocco and Japan. It’s allowed her to spend more time with her grandchildren, and the opportunity to volunteer.

“I used to roll my eyes when people would come in the store and say, ‘I don’t know how I had time to work,’ and now I understand,” Boots said.

# CHARLOU: AN AWAKENING OF TASTE BUDS IN HISTORIC PLACES

WORDS BY AUDRI PLEAS  
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM

Splashed in tropical colors, 3300 Spenard Road is the home of coastal-inspired restaurant Charlou. The vision of La Bodega owner Pamela Hatzis and Charlou Co-founder and General Manager Nikole Gordon, the restaurant has been open since May 2019.

For some in the community, the historic address will feel like a second home. Residents familiar with the evolution of Spenard will recall the building as Taproot's second incarnation or the Fly By Night Club. More recently, the space housed the popular collaborative pop-up effort between La Bodega and McCarthy food truck-turned-restaurant The Potato, La Potato.

That was an idea that never went away, Moore says.

"Charlou has been in our hearts for a long while. The need for La Bodega to have a tasting space was the largest spark," Moore said.

Patrons can expect to have access to a curated drink selection curated by their sister store La Bodega that harmonizes with Charlou's menu.

The name of the restaurant also

holds a special place in the owner's soul. Charlou, a blend of each of their grandmother's name, is a tribute to their humanity, maternal spirit and traditions passed down to them.

"The name itself incorporates our grandmothers. Char — comes from Charlotte, and Lou — Gisela Louise. Our menu represents our grandmothers by making everything from scratch, supporting local vendors, and putting love into every meal. Not to mention accommodating individual allergies and preference with care and excitement," Moore said.

In the next year, Charlou intends to expand their hours to provide brunch and lunch service in addition to hosting a diverse and dynamic event schedule. Moore also acknowledged they are preparing an upcoming menu relaunch that they are excited to present to the community soon.

"We want you to feel like you are coming home when you walk into Charlou. We believe food is a universal language that creates a welcoming atmosphere when done with love," Moore said.



CHARLOU  
COASTAL-INSPIRED CUISINE

# SPENARD: YOUNG AT HEART

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY  
MIZELLE MAYO

When I was growing up in Spenard, I remember moving to a new neighborhood a few minutes away from my grandma and grandpa's house. It was new and exciting because it felt like the next chapter of my life: moving into a different part of Spenard led me to new friends and new experiences.

I still live in the exact same house on the exact same street. I watched the neighborhood grow and change. More often, I have noticed the abundance of families and the growth of liveliness in the neighborhood.

I had the chance to return to my childhood grade school, Northwood Elementary School and Willow Crest Elementary School to learn more about the youth that are bringing our neighborhood alive.

I went to Northwood Elementary School with nostalgic feelings as I walked those halls to music, art and to lunch and recess. The only thing different was that I was an adult, and the students were all so tiny yet so intrigued by everything.

I met three enthusiastic kindergarteners that could not stay still in their chairs. They were curious and charismatic, and wanted to tell me anything and everything. Xander Calbeck moved to Alaska from Texas. He misses

the hot weather and the outdoor swimming pools, but he likes living in Spenard because of the cul de sac he has on his street.

"My neighborhood has a circle, and I love it because my house is there and I get to circle around until I get dizzy," he said.

Dakota Richardson and Savannah Seegers have lived in Spenard since they were born. They enjoy school — especially drawing and math.

Fidgety as they were, these students were ready to take on the next grade with full force and lead their lives with curiosity.

Making my way to Willow Crest Elementary School, the halls were filled with students' artwork displayed in front of nearly every classroom. The halls were filled with students chattering as they went from the music and art rooms to their respected classrooms. I was able to meet eight students, ranging from nine to 12 years old.

All coming from different backgrounds and walks of life, I was humbled to hear these students talk about their lives and how they have intertwined in Spenard.









Benjamin Martinez, Lexus and Loreign Camantigue, Sceanna Nelson, Lincoln Robertson, Francheska Devillena and Destin Prehn talked to me about what it's like living in the curviest road in Anchorage.

Martinez, Devillena, Prehn and Robertson lived in the neighborhood most of their lives while Lexus and Loreign Camantigue migrated from the Philippines two years ago. Sceanna moved from Muldoon to Spenard about a year or two ago.

"I like this school because of the staff members. Even though I came from another country, they all treat us equally. They won't treat you rude even though you speak another language. They treat you equally," Loreign said.

Sceanna also felt like she was welcomed into the neighborhood through school as well. "At this school, it doesn't matter what color

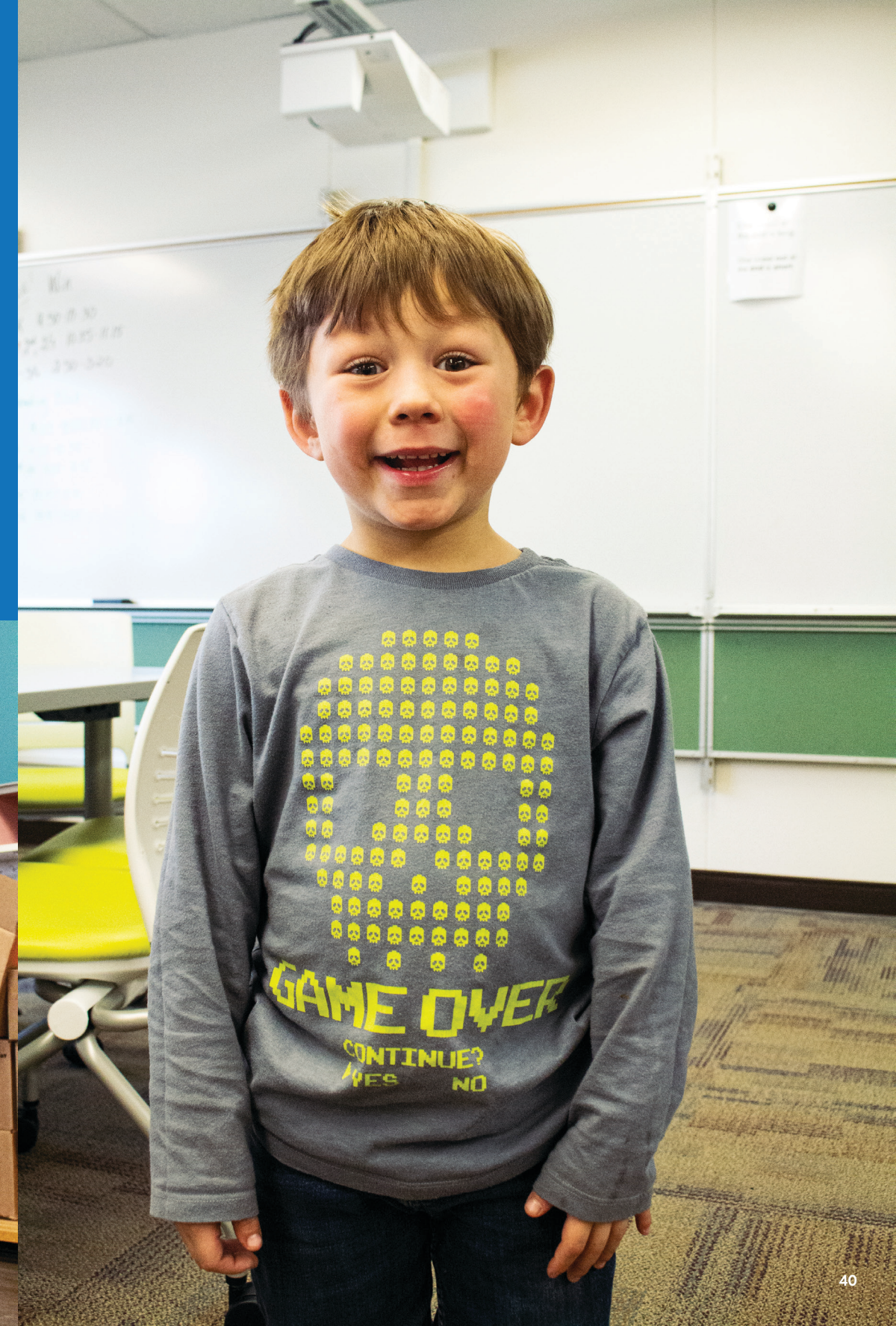
you are because, at my old school where I lived, they bullied at me for what color...We treat each other [in] a kind way," Sceanna said.

Through school, all seven of them connected by playing basketball and calling each other to hang out at the playground at Willow Crest Elementary or Pop Carr Park.

"What I like is that some people live nearby — if like, you want to go play with your friends, you can just come here and play on the playground, basketball, whatever you want to do," Benjamin said.

After talking to each one of these bright young students from both schools, I felt humbled to know that Spenard has bright young children that will grow up to be fulfilled adults. I felt that same spark of life I had felt growing up in Spenard come to life.





# SPENARD'S VERY OWN HOUSE OF WAX

WORDS BY ZAKIYA MCCUMMINGS  
PHOTO BY YOUNG KIM

Spenard is home to several small art studios, but none of them are quite like Spenard Art Studio. Started by co-collaborators Cheryl Lyon and Gayla Ranf, the studio is unique in its focus on encaustic, or beeswax art.

Lyon and Ranf opened the

art space in July, and since then they've been offering beginning lessons for encaustic as well as a selection of specialty classes.

The pair met a decade ago, but it wasn't until some mutual friends noticed that they were both looking to open up a shop dedicated

to teaching that the pair became business partners. Lyon and Ranf sat down with *The Spenardian* to talk about their individual journeys into art, and how their paths crossed to create a working art studio for the neighborhood.





*Tell me about your artistic journeys and how you found your medium.*

CL: I come from a long line of artists in my family. And so at a young age, I always knew I wanted to be a working artist. When I graduated from high school I did go to college, and for a long time oil painting was my medium. Then I got into encaustics around ten years ago. I'm back to oils as well, but I still work in encaustic as my main medium.

GR: I have always been very playful in the art world and experimented with lots of different mediums. I actually was a decorative painter for awhile before I found encaustics, and that was probably about 10-11 years ago. In fact, Cheryl and I came upon it close to the same time by the same woman who brought it to Alaska, Sheary Clough Suiter. When I had my first class on encaustic I was just in love and was sold. I closed my decorative paint-

ing business and moved on.

*How did you two come to meet each other? How did your relationship develop to what is now a business partnership?*

CL: We met in Sherry's class years ago. I don't know how much longer [Gayla took classes], but we met in a class and we sort of slowly became friends. We belong to an international artist association, which has morphed into Alaska Wax. I think we were both sort of wanting to teach. I was looking for like-minded artists that wanted to open up a working studio and then teach encaustic and searched out one of our fellow friends, and she told me that Gayla wanted to teach.

GR: We were talking in our Alaska Wax group, just some different members, and another member that said, "Hey, you know, you two are talking about doing the same thing." And so, Cheryl said, "Well, let's get

together and talk." So we're the ones that sort of made that happen for each other.

*What makes Spenard Art Studio unique is that you practice encaustic, or beeswax art. What is encaustic art? Is it just painting? Is it sculpting?*

CL: All of the above. Encaustic painting is a very ancient medium and it's just really had a resurgence in the last 20-30 years or so. Right now what we really focus on is working on wood panels — art that you can then hang on the wall — so it's painting as if you would paint with oil or acrylic. Although it also lends itself very well to sculpture if you wanted to do something 3D. It really can go on any porous surface. I think it's a great medium because not everybody wants to be working artists; maybe they just want a craft. So they can take it any direction that they want to take it in.



GR: And it's such an immediate medium. You can just keep going with it; there's not a lot of having to pre-plan a whole bunch of stuff and make sure things dry in between. It's one of those that you can just dive in and spend two hours, play, have a great time, and actually walk away with something and be done with it if you want. Or, go back and revisit it and keep going with it.

CL: It's a very forgiving medium. If you don't like it, you can just go over it.

*Once you decided that you wanted to start a business, did you always know you wanted to open the studio in Spenard?*

CL: Well, we both grew up

on the west side. I grew up in Turnagain; I live down the West High hill by the lagoon. I wanted a place that was going to be in my home. I wanted to be able to walk there with my dog; I wanted my dog to hang out. I wanted my kids to come visit. I wanted to be on the west side in the area that I was most comfortable with.

GR: I was also raised on the west side and it is home. We really enjoy the area. It's funky and fun and has a little bit of everything.

CL: I love it that there's so many places in Anchorage where you can have this beautiful house, or you can have this trailer. It's just so Anchorage.

*What types of classes are you offering? Do you teach classes for any other mediums?*

GR: The way that the studio has manifested is primarily an encaustic studio. We really put a lot of time and effort into making it a premiere encaustic studio because it's best to have very good ventilation, and you need a pretty big power load sometimes, depending on how much it is for teaching, [as well as] being able to have all that equipment. So it turned out to be a really beautiful space and a great location for teaching. We envision as we're getting started and getting rolling here, really showing the community what encaustic painting is.



But also, not just encaustic painting: art in general. We really want to promote bringing art to the community and sharing creativity and curiosity, and having it be a very uplifting place for people to come. Even if they don't want to paint with beeswax for forever, just come and have an experience. One of our goals is to really provide that for people.

*How do you decide on your class schedule? What are you currently offering?*

GR: We're really finding our niche right now and

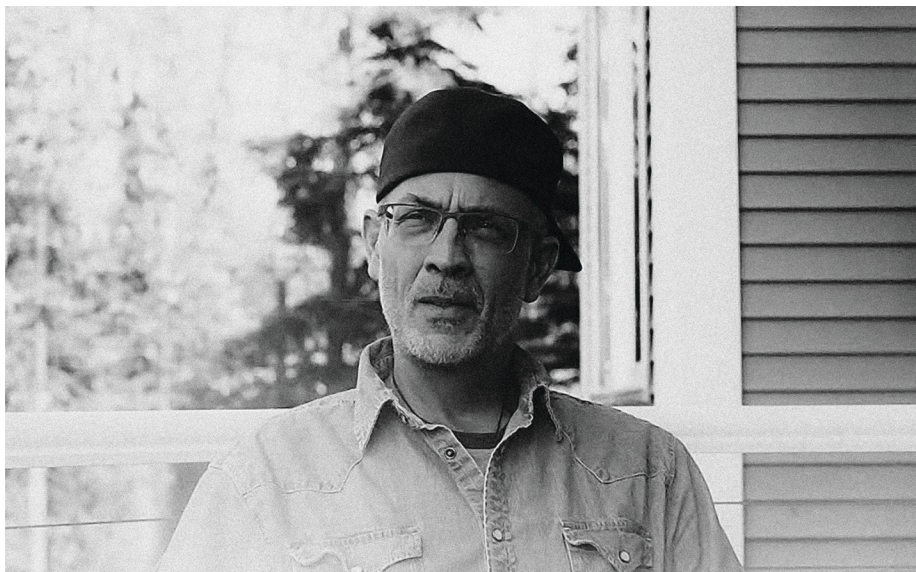
seeing what people are wanting and needing as far as timeframe. We're very open to feedback on that front, as well. For right now we're both offering quite a few beginning classes because we want to get a good base of people that have the basics before we jump into too many of the next levels, and then we'll be offering encaustic II. We have a lot of specialty classes; Cheryl has a wonderful sunflower class that she gives, it's pretty very popular so far. I'll be adding some college classes in and we'll just see as we go what the need is and the desire and we'll morph and

add some of our own specialty classes in there.

Spenard Art Studio is located at 2263 Spenard Road. To host a team building event, birthday, or sign up for a class visit [spenardartstudio.com](http://spenardartstudio.com). Spenard Art Studio is on Facebook and Instagram (@spenardartstudio).

To see Cheryl and Gayla's personal artwork, visit [cheryllyon.com](http://cheryllyon.com) and [gayladesigns.com](http://gayladesigns.com).





## FACES OF SPENARD: TOMMY

WORDS AND PHOTO BY  
DARCY STEIN

If you are carnivorously inclined, then you've probably tried, or at least heard of, Tommy's Burger Stop. Located in the heart of Spenard at 1106 W. 29th Place, this iconic burger haven has become Anchorage's favorite local spot for burgers. If you don't believe me, get on the Google machine and do some research of your own. Tommy's has taken home first place in the Anchorage Press Picks "best burger" category for many years in a row, most recently in 2019.

So you might know Tommy's Burger Stop, but do you know Tommy Persons, the mastermind behind the curtain? Humble and unassuming, Tommy puts

quality, customer service and a memorable experience at the heart of his business model.

Every morning, someone from Tommy's Burger Stop handpicks the best, freshest produce available, as opposed to relying on wholesalers to make weekly deliveries. And this system just works for them; they have limited storage space. Lucky for us consumers who cringe at the thought of our food sitting in a cooler somewhere for weeks, the burger stop moves through their products daily. And the following day, they get up and do it all over again.

Back to Persons, who has been a chef for decades and currently lives in Spenard with two of the cutest chihuahuas imaginable. His culinary career began right after high school at the Girdwood restaurant his parents purchased in 1979. You may have heard of it, a little cajun place called The Double Musky Inn.

Persons cooked there for five years before venturing out to write his own story, cooking in different places such as Lake Tahoe and St. Thomas. He eventually moved back to Alaska and worked at Orso and Organic Oasis before purchasing the Burger Stop in 2002. This was a highly sought after acquisition — in addition to the restaurant, there's also a fully functioning apartment right above it — but Persons got to it first.

The first thing to go was most of the menu and the newest addition was

Person's high standards when choosing products. Persons is proud to offer his diners high-quality beef from New Zealand which is grass-fed and hormone-free.

"We don't try to be the cheapest," Persons says. "We just try to be the best."

So what's with the Po Boys, slices of pie in the fridge and the rest of the cajun vibes, you ask? Persons and his family are from Bogalusa, Louisiana. They relocated to Alaska in the mid '70s, bringing their southern roots along with them. You may have noticed the Mardi Gras decor and local art throughout the small, yet poignant space of the Burger Stop. The combination of this "colorful corner" of Spenard, as Persons puts it, and a little cajun flare certainly makes for a memorably tasty dining experience.





## Back in my day...

WORDS & PHOTO BY  
DAVID FREEMAN

These photos were taken in 1968 by David Freeman, who recalls another adventure from the year the photo was taken.

“It was the summer of 1968 and my buddies Pete, Rick and I were watching a half-naked Jane Fonda float through space. We could hardly believe the ticket guy at the Denali Theater let us in to see *Barbarella*. Here we were, three 12-year-olds on our first incursion into “R” territory and there was no way we were going to tell our parents.

We couldn’t stop punching each other in the shoulder. Emboldened by our experience we later made the journey from our homes in Windemere and saw *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*. Sex and violence — what more could a kid wish for?

My life-long affair with the movies — and Jane and Clint — began that summer. The old Denali Theater is now called the Bear Tooth Theater Pub.

Thanks to the Bear Tooth guys, 50 years later I still sit in that same darkened theater and watch new movies. But I’ll never forget the old ones — and that kid that eventually became me.”



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