

FOLLOWING THE FELLOWS

An update from the Last Frontier

Hello from far up North!

FEBRUARY 2018

Time flies and suddenly it's been four months since September when we all gathered in the 49th state! Many inches of snow and rain and family dinners later, we've realized that we owe our broader communities a hello and an update.

First of all, to all of you who have supported us, offered us copious salmon, joined us for dinner, and worried about our warmth—THANK YOU! This is a wonderful opportunity that wouldn't be possible without the people that dedicate so much time and care to make it what it is.

We hope that this newsletter will give you a little view into our life, and show you just a fraction of the beauty we see every day.



ANCHORAGE UPDATE

Quick stats

- # of moose butchered: 3
- # of podcasts AUFers were featured on: 2
- # of friends who slept on our couch: 9
- House song: *Tie between Dancing on My Own, Sorry Not Sorry, and Grigio Girls*
- House DJ: *Katie Scovic*

Where we are

The Anchorage fellows live in South Addition, a beautiful, family-oriented neighborhood that's a short walk from downtown and a stone's throw from Westchester Lagoon, where we've spent many afternoons ice skating this winter.

The fellowship kicked off at Manitoba Cabin (part of Sitka Fellow Nate's work!), back when our family was only 4. Since then we've expanded to welcome Katie Scovic and Veri di Suvero!



The view from Westchester Lagoon in September, when the "termination dust" was far above town.

Building our community

A favorite activity of the group has been family dinners—technically on Sunday, but usually multiple times a week we cook a communal feast, and often invite guests over to share. We've been honored to host so many interesting Anchorage figures including Mara Kimmel, the first lady of Anchorage, and Nat Herz, the journalist who holds Alaskan politics accountable, and a frequent Larry Persily who (among other things) is an Alaskan journalist and a former appointee of the Obama administration.

Since September, it's gotten a lot colder up here, though still a mild winter for Alaska. We've adopted many winter-sports, including cross-country skiing, hockey, and skating, and have added Yak-Traks to our runs.

In perhaps the most Alaskan adventure yet (pictured on the right), the fellows got to help butcher a moose. It was well-timed for when Sitka fellows Nat and Nate were visiting too! In typical Alaskan fashion, in exchange for our help we were sent home with a cooler full of goodies including frozen salmon and moose meat, which supplied many Sunday dinners.

What we're up to

One of the most exciting parts of this fellowship is that we each do different work with different organizations (except for Veri and Jenny-Marie who are lucky enough to share an office and a mentor). It's been a delight to share our experiences and learn as much from each other as we do individually. Katie works on affordable housing and a variety of policy issues, including improving Census data in Alaska, at the Cook Inlet Housing Authority. Allie works for Alaska Media LLC (you can read Allie's [number one top-read article](#) for a few days in the biggest Alaskan newspaper, the ADN), and consults on a variety of business ventures. Kelsey works for Salmon State on a range of environmental justice issues. Jenny-Marie and Veri work together at the Municipality on private-public investment, and individually on economic empowerment and language revitalization, respectively. (Check out Veri's recent compilation of the [Alaska Native Language Revitalization Digest!](#)) Ira staffs the Chief of Staff for the Governor, doing everything from research to staffing meetings to accompanying the governor's staff on frequent trips to Juneau for session. Additionally, we've had the chance to get involved in community projects: Ira has been busy fighting Prop 1 with Fair Anchorage, Katie volunteering for the local soup-kitchen, and Jenny-Marie and Kelsey volunteering to help prepare taxes in rural Alaska!

Have you heard?

Applications are coming in for the next round of fellows, and we're looking for next year's program home. Our spot on Virginia Court is too small for next year (and, if all works out, it might still be filled by the future alumnae). We're on the hunt for a house for 8 folks that's walking distance from downtown Anchorage and can be leased September-May! If you hear of anything, let us know!



Katie and Allie ran the local Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning!



Butchering a moose in true Alaskan fashion.



Fellows and friends at Kelsey's dance performance with Momentum Dance Collective!

SITKA UPDATE

Quick stats

- # of movie nights: 16 (*and counting*)
- # of times Calvin has made us crème brûlée: 2
- # of tsunami evacuations: 1
- Amount of communal rice purchased (so far): 150 pounds
- Highest price spotted for one avocado: \$9

Where we are

The Sitka fellows have spent the past four months in rainy but beautiful Sitka, home to just under 9,000 warm and welcoming residents. We live on Sheldon Jackson Campus, which, though lacking in strong WiFi, has a yoga studio, a gym where many fellows volunteer, easy trail access, and storage for our three canoes!



Featuring fellows in a canoe and a lovely snow-capped Mt. Edgecumbe in the background.

Building our community

In October, we participated in the lip sync competition at the Stardust Ball, which is Sitka's Halloween celebration and possibly its fanciest event of the year. After a week of learning and rehearsing choreography taught to us by SWF alum Cecilia, we performed "Wannabe" by the Spice Girls, and although we did not win the competition, we were strongly supported by the community. Even more tragic than losing is our lack of documentation from the evening.

We are blessed to have talented bakers among us, and some foragers too! Combined with the occasional salmon donation, we've been eating well, even if we don't eat avocados that often... We have communal dinner every week, but Thanksgiving stands out as our coziest and yummiest meal yet.

What we're up to

Caitlin tells stories about the Tongass Tiny Home, an itty-bitty residence built by students at Sitka High School from local, sustainable young-growth timber. Victor takes care of us with the maintenance crew at Sheldon Jackson, most notably installing our brand-new stove. Julia works for the Sitka School District and has been drafting testimony for education bills in the state legislature.



(Note that this photo does not include the eight (!) pies we had for dessert.)

Nate helps Alaska Huts develop plans for a new hut system in the Chugach and also works with Nat on the Trans-Alaska Trail project and other initiatives aiming to grow Alaska's outdoor recreation economy. Siraj supervises the youth group and produces media and communications content for Sitkans Against Family Violence, and does legal research for the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault. Emily develops laboratory curriculum for biology courses at the University of Alaska Southeast, tutors at Mt. Edgecumbe High School, and helps out in the UAS dive locker. Jackie builds interactive iBooks to expand distance vocational education opportunities with the University of Alaska Southeast Fisheries Technology program. Erin recently joined the fellows program and works with Outer Coast, for which she works on drafting and editing documents for the inaugural Summer Seminar and other projects that support the founding of the college.

Be sure to check out [14 Miles](#), a documentary series about Sitka that Jackie has been working on, and tune into [KCAW](#), the local radio station, where many fellows have been volunteering (and where Erin will soon be taking over the morning news!). There's not enough room to talk about all of our outdoor adventurers—we've got scuba divers, hikers, climbers, [bean farmers](#), and more.

Signing off

Thank you for reading! We can't wait to see what the coming months will bring, and we look forward to keeping you updated.

Love,
The Fellows

PS: If you're jealous, come visit!



Sitka fellows and Jesuit Volunteers after our January white elephant gift exchange!



Anchorage fellows after our Secret Santa gift exchange in December.