

Pearl Creek STEAM Night

The Pearl Creek STEAM Night was held again this year on Thursday, February 1. Design Alaska has participated with an infrared (IR) imaging demonstration for the past several Pearl Creek STEAM Nights. Taylor and Emory both have attended the STEAM night in the past as volunteers, and brought along an array of hot and cold items to display through IR imaging this year. As with previous years, the large IR camera was set up to display viewers enlarged on a TV. This year, the small point-and-shoot FLIR camera was brought to provide better access to the exhibit. Students and their families enjoyed seeing themselves in IR and learning more about the technology and how it can be used. Taylor Tharp from the structural department brought blocks of insulation and engineered joists as visual aids to explain IR imaging of common building materials. Many students particularly liked playing with snow in front of the camera, drawing with water, and cooling hands and faces to see the effect on screen. There were over 300 students and guests who came out on a 30 degree below zero night to take part in this event.



President's Corner

Office Language and Culture

We had an interesting observation today. In construction field crews, it isn't uncommon to hear 'bad language' used throughout the workday. Similarly, construction workers can be quite blunt when they deliver feedback. There is little beating about the bush if they don't like what is going on for quality or quantity of work. It seems to be part of the culture and relatively accepted part of day-to-day life.

In our professional office work, however, that same language would not be appropriate and would be quite offensive. Depending on the words used, it could even be grounds for possible disciplinary action. We have a different work culture that has different standards of acceptable behaviors.

Work culture can be quite different between industries and even company to company within the same industry. We have our own Design Alaska culture that influences our everyday work and interactions.

It is natural to see culture evolve over time, but it can be deliberately changed as well. A human resource trainer once shared that culture is the hardest thing to change and that it takes persistent effort and commitment by a group to make that change into its culture.

A good positive example I would like to share is the time for Production to prepare a package (X days). Many years ago we decided it was important to move our on-time delivery culture from the day of delivery to the client, to day of the delivery to Production. This was not easy, but we all worked at it together, and we could all see the results of work getting out the door on time, with production quality, and significantly less stress on everyone involved. This culture shift also led to Project Submittal Workup Sheets which is a good example of something that we are still working on.

Culture is everywhere and influences everything. If you have a positive example of culture being deliberately changed for the better, please share with me. If it is a great story, I will share in a future newsletter.

Chris Miller, PE

President, Design Alaska

2024 Ice Sculpture by Heather Brice



Welcome New Employees Tyson, Ronda, Katherine, Hazel, and Kate!



We're thrilled to introduce our newest team member, Ronda Elliott, who recently joined us as a Marketing Specialist. Ronda has a strong connection with Design Alaska, having collaborated with companies associated with us over the years. She always held Design Alaska in high regard and is excited to be part of our exceptional team.

Ronda is a proud 3rd generation Alaskan, growing up in Homer, Alaska. After extensive travels, she returned to Alaska 17 years ago and is delighted to contribute her skills to Design Alaska.

Ronda's fiancé, Tony, works in QC, electrical engineering, and construction, currently on an overseas assignment. They're set to tie the knot in April. Living with them is Ronda's daughter, her daughter's fiancé, and an adorable chocolate poodle with short legs due to dwarfism.

Ronda is a multifaceted individual with interests ranging from abstract painting, art using natural forms, and multi-medium methods to studying the impact of technology on the business landscape and societal changes. She's also passionate about geology. Ronda shares an equal passion for Italy's food, people, and views and Vienna, Austria's close connection to art and history (and the public transit isn't too shabby there, either!)

Welcome to the Team, Ronda!



Katherine East, fondly known as "Coffee Kat," recently joined the Design Alaska as a Marketing Specialist with a wealth of experience and a passion for marketing and communications. Having previously worked in event planning, Katherine decided to shift her professional focus back to marketing after graduating from the University of Kentucky in 2019 with a degree in Integrated Strategic Communication.

Katherine grew up in Russellville, Kentucky, on a farm with her grandparents, father, and older sister Sarah. As a child, she enjoyed playing the saxophone in a concert band, riding her bike, volunteering at the local library, and attending 4-H camp. Not many people know that Katherine has third-degree burns from a childhood incident involving a tablecloth and a kitchen table. Despite the scars, she still enjoys a cup of coffee every day. Currently residing in North Pole with her husband, Justin, who serves in the

Army, Katherine and Justin have been happily married for almost three years. While they don't have children, their goldendoodle, Hazel Mae, holds a special place in their hearts. Additionally, they have extended family in town, with a cousin working as a smoke jumper for the BLM.

Katherine's diverse range of hobbies includes watching classic movies on the TCM channel, antiques, hiking, camping, and playing the piano. She has a passion for collecting vintage postcards of places she dreams to travel to, as well as vintage dresses. Her attendance at the Antiques Roadshow hosted in Anchorage on July 11, 2023 showcases her appreciation for antiques and unique experiences. One of Katherine's life goals is to travel to Europe, fulfilling her desire for exploration and adventure.

Her top song from the Spotify 2023 report is "Nick of Time" by Lake Street Dive. Katherine's music tastes span classic rock, indie, classic country, and jazz. Her favorite movie is "Breakfast at Tiffany's," and she fondly remembers "The Magic School Bus" as her favorite childhood TV show. Her favorite meal is her grandmother's chicken and dumplings, a comforting and nostalgic dish.

Welcome to the Team, Katherine!

Welcome New Employees Tyson, Ronda, Katherine, Hazel, and Kate!



Hazel Kang, our new and dynamic Architectural Designer, hails from Seoul, South Korea. She's passionate about creating extraordinary spaces and sees Design Alaska as the perfect place to further her career. Her love for travel, drawing, and skiing reflects her adventurous spirit. Having moved to Alaska from Tennessee four years ago, Hazel is embracing the challenges of the cold climate.

She was drawn to architecture due to her fascination with the concept of creating something from nothing. Not everyone knows that her dream is to design and create her own building. Inspired by visionaries like Louis Kahn and Santiago Calatrava, Hazel brings a unique perspective to her work. Formerly a night owl, Hazel is transitioning to becoming a morning person since joining Design Alaska.

Welcome to the Team, Hazel!



Meet Kate VanDerZanden, our Interior Design/Architecture expert at Design Alaska. Originally from the asparagus capital of the world, Hart, Michigan, Kate brings a unique perspective shaped by her upbringing along the Lake Michigan lakeshore. As the eldest of three, Kate grew up in a family of mechanics, farmers, and contractors. She's a proud pet owner of Cora the tabby cat and two Great Pyrenees dogs, Ava and Buddy.

Kate has a unique hobby of collecting Wheat Back Pennies, which her grandpa also collects, and they remind her of him. Other interests include reading, hiking, and enjoying dad jokes. Fun fact: her middle name is inspired by her dad's favorite car, the Chevelle SS.

Dreaming of living anywhere in Europe, Kate loves exploring diverse cultures, especially through their food. A goal of hers is to enjoy a croissant at a French bakery. A night owl and a fan of "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," Kate's ideal meal is anything not Midwestern, one person can only handle so much dairy, meat, and casseroles. With seven years of bartending experience, and the ability to create a mean Old Fashioned, Kate adds a dash of creativity to her role at Design Alaska, making her a new and invaluable part of our team.

Welcome to the Team, Kate!



Tyson McDaniel recently joined our architecture team, enticed by the opportunity to collaborate with a dynamic group of architects and engineers all housed under one roof. What truly excited him was the opportunity to contribute to projects in unique locations like the North Pole. Originally from California, Tyson's early years were spent living in Germany, but he has lived in Oklahoma, Virginia, Colorado, Florida, and Washington.

Outside of work, Tyson is an avid enthusiast of outdoor adventure sports. Whether it's riding mountain bikes, motorcycles, surfboards, or snowboards, Tyson is always up for a challenge. He's also skilled in swing dancing and is a certified yoga teacher.

Tyson is a proud father to a 12-year-old competitive swimmer son and no pets, as he is allergic to dogs and cats. Nevertheless, he holds a desire to experience dog mushing someday. His favorite song is "Everything's Magic" by Angels and Airwaves, and his cinematic favorite is "The Fountain Head" (1949).

Welcome to the Team, Tyson!

Congratulations to the Ladines Family! Welcome Eli Austin Ladines,
born on January 8th, 2024
 Below features *“The Many Faces of Eli”*



Employee Question of the Month

What is something you recommend everyone try at least once?	
Emily Winfield	Poutine
Ronda Elliott	Experiencing different cultures by submersion. Travel for more than tourism, but enveloping the culture, language, and customs. It will change your entire perspective on life.
Katherine East	Parasailing.
Mary Sue Dates	Do something you would never consider doing in your everyday life, something unexpected and out of the ordinary. Challenge yourself to live and to step out of your comfort zone. Erase the box in which you live. Whatever you normally do, try something that is the exact opposite.
Blake Burley	Shopping at the Transfer Site! The pickled green beans leave a little to be desired, but the blueberries are great.
Shelby Devon	Cook something new, build that culinary arsenal.
Dantasia Baum	Answering an Employee Question of the Month.
Kayla Messina	Grilled watermelon on a burger... and oysters. But not together.



WELLNESS
by Design

Wellness

By Taylor Tharp



WELLNESS
by Design

Health benefits of a Sensory Deprivation Float Therapy

So many of us spend the majority of our time staring at screens and listening to music with little to no time spent without some form of sensory stimulation. For those of us who don't regularly take the time to sit with our own thoughts, the idea of doing an hour-long salt float in silence can be scary. As someone who recently did one for the first time, I'm here to tell you that it's worth trying.

The float tanks at Elevate Wellness Center have the option to have soft music playing or a light on during the float that you can control from inside the tank, it is fully adjustable to the settings that you are comfortable with. I thought that I was going to prefer having music on during the float, but I wanted to try the full experience of having the lights off and no sound, and I ended up thoroughly enjoying it. I don't think I have ever been in a place that was so dark and quiet and felt as safe.

Floating in the salt water just elevated the experience and allows you to relax physically as well as mentally. It really was a rejuvenating experience and I find myself wanting to go do it again. For the mental aspect, it can be a great place to work on your meditation practice, focus on positive affirmations, creatively think through engineering challenges, or even take the time to calmly reflect on your life and set goals for your future. The time is yours, so spend it focusing on what feels right to you and on what you need in that moment.



STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE 2024 WELLNESS CHALLENGE



Recycling - Waste Reduction Week

By Shelby Devon



We are excited to share that Green Star of Interior Alaska and Compost FBX are combining forces and gearing up for a new and inspiring week of community-driven activities focused on waste reduction and alternative waste streams. From March 4th to 9th, the **“Waste Reduction Week”** initiative aims to engage the community in impactful activities centered around waste reduction and alternative waste streams. The week will culminate with a **Sustainable Living Expo** on Saturday, March 9th at JP Jones Center from 12pm—5pm.

While Design Alaska already boasts a commendable recycling program, we believe that our responsibility extends beyond the workplace. That’s why we encourage each team member to actively take part in the waste reduction effort by using the [Fairbanks Community Waste Audit](#). This tool allows us to scrutinize our daily waste materials, identifying opportunities for improvement, and minimizing our environmental footprint.

Fairbanks offers Organic Waste Drop Off sites at The Hope House, Lloyd Jones Memorial Garden, and 1679 23rd Ave. Here, we can contribute to waste reduction by responsibly disposing of almost any organic material. Refer to the charts below for compost "Do's and Don'ts". Please note these drop-off locations do not accept donations during the winter months, with services resuming on April 1st.



We are not just employees; we are members of a community striving for positive change. By actively participating in Waste Reduction Week, we demonstrate our commitment to making Fairbanks a more sustainable place to live.



For detailed information and updates on Waste Reduction Week 2024, please visit www.compostfbx.com/waste-reduction-week-2024.

COMPOSTABLE GREENS

COMPOST PILES ARE USUALLY MADE WITH A RATIO OF 3 BROWNS TO 1 GREEN. "GREEN" MATERIALS ARE ORGANIC WASTE MATERIALS RICH IN NITROGEN. THEY BREAK DOWN QUICKLY AND GET THE COMPOST PILE HEATING UP. GREENS ARE MADE UP OF FOOD WASTE AND PLANT WASTE THAT RECENTLY DIED AND STILL HAS SOME GREEN COLORING LEFT IN IT. PLACE ALL GREEN MATERIALS IN THE GREEN - COLORED BIN.

FOOD SCRAPS (FRUITS, VEGGIES, ETC.)	COFFEE GROUNDS AND TEA LEAVES / BAGS	HOUSE PLANTS AND SPENT FLOWERS	GARDEN AND YARD WASTE
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------

WHAT TO AVOID

BONES, MEAT, DAIRY, AND OIL	TRASH (PRODUCE STICKERS, PACKAGING, ETC.)	ANIMAL WASTE (PET AND LIVESTOCK)	PLANTS TREATED WITH PESTICIDES AND WEEDS
-----------------------------	---	----------------------------------	--

TRY TO AVOID THROWING ANYTHING THAT WOULD CONTAMINATE THE PILE INTO THE DROP BIN. QUESTIONS? EMAIL COMPOSTFBX@GMAIL.COM OR CHECK OUT COMPOSTFBX.COM

COMPOSTABLE BROWNS

COMPOST PILES ARE USUALLY MADE WITH A RATIO OF 3 BROWNS TO 1 GREEN. "BROWN" MATERIALS ARE ORGANIC WASTE MATERIALS RICH IN CARBON. THEY BREAK DOWN SLOWLY AND BULK UP THE PILE TO INCREASE AERATION. BROWNS ARE MADE UP OF PAPER, CARDBOARD, AND PLANT WASTE THAT HAS BEEN DEAD FOR A WHILE AND IS USUALLY BROWN COLORED. PLACE ALL BROWN MATERIALS IN THE BROWN - COLORED BIN.

HAY, LEAVES, DRY STRAW, TWIGS, PINE NEEDLES	WOOD CHIPS, SAWDUST, WOOD ASH	PAPER PRODUCTS (NEWSPAPER, BROWN BAGS, PAPER TOWELS)	CARDBOARD (EGG CARTONS, BOXES, ETC)
---	-------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------

WHAT TO AVOID

GLASS, METAL, PLASTIC	PAINTED OR TREATED WOOD, PARTICLE BOARD	GLOSSY OR COATED PAPER PRODUCTS	DIRTY TAKEOUT CONTAINERS (EX. PIZZA BOX)
-----------------------	---	---------------------------------	--

TRY TO AVOID THROWING ANYTHING THAT WOULD CONTAMINATE THE PILE INTO THE DROP BIN. QUESTIONS? EMAIL COMPOSTFBX@GMAIL.COM OR CHECK OUT COMPOSTFBX.COM

March 2024 ~ Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Table Massages	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Birthday Cake	19	20 Table Massages	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Managers' Meeting	29	30
31						

March Birthdays

Jeff "Leo" Leonelli	March 3
Mary Sue Dates	March 7
Kyle Callegari	March 12
Ronda Elliott	March 12
Samuel Mitchell	March 21
Susan Walker	March 22
Chris Miller	March 27
Audrey Eikenberry	March 27



Design Alaska Anniversaries

Kym Pihlaja	23rd anniversary	March 1, 2001
Jeffrey "Leo" Leonelli	14th anniversary	March 22, 2010