

Dying from emphysema, Jim Hamp issues warning about tobacco



Tobacco has taken its toll on Haines resident Jim Hamp. His wife and mother both died of tobacco-related cancers, and Hamp is dying from emphysema.

A longtime charter and commercial fisherman, Hamp, 68, now has to wear a nasal cannula (a plastic hose that pumps oxygen from a tank into his nose) and rarely has the energy to visit his boat. Some days he barely has the energy to reach across the kitchen table. After smoking for 50 years, Hamp said he'd trade all the pleasure he got from cigarettes for one more good day of breathing. Now that he's dying, Hamp wants to warn young smokers about what awaits them.

"Tobacco is just a matter of time. It doesn't matter who you are," Hamp said. "Why tempt how long? You're playing with your life."

Even though he sold cigarettes when he was growing up, Hamp said he didn't start smoking until after he went to college. He said both of his parents smoked and it was the accepted thing to do. When he was in the military, more than 200 of the 244 soldiers in his company smoked. Within a year of starting, Hamp said he was smoking 1 1/2 packs a day.

Hamp managed a marina in Michigan, then moved to Anchorage in 1980 after visiting a friend and settled in Haines in 1983. He said he was extremely active until his early 60s and working a 16-hour day was nothing.

But seven years ago, while pulling a shrimp pot, Hamp said he *"folded up."* He said it was like someone *"put a plastic bag over his mouth,"* he wasn't in pain but he couldn't get any air. *"It was like I'd been punched in the stomach, that's one way to describe it,"* he said.

Hamp said he was real close to respiratory arrest. When he went to the doctor, the tests found scar tissue from pneumonia and emphysema. He was told if he quit smoking, he might have four or five years left.

After several failed attempts at quitting on his own, Hamp called SEARHC Tobacco Health Educator Jane Weagant. She helped him cut down to a couple of cigarettes a day, but the addiction is too powerful for him to completely give up smoking.

"I know it's killing me, and it's shortening what life I have left. But it still is very difficult to quit," said Hamp, who hopes his story can help someone else quit or decide not to start smoking. *"If I had to do it over again I wouldn't start."* ❖

An important message from the President



Spring is approaching and this is the time when Alaskans think about getting back into the outdoors after being bundled up all winter.

Spring also is a time when increased physical activity can improve a person's physical and mental health. At SEARHC, we want people to take advantage of the great outdoors. It's why we live in Alaska, and getting outside is healthy.

But we do want you to be safe. That means wearing a life jacket when you go boating and wearing a helmet when you ride your bike. It also means filing a float plan or hiking plan with family or friends when you go on a trek.

The Alaska outdoors can be unforgiving at times, and accidents are one of the state's leading causes of death and injury. Taking a few moments for prevention can keep you alive and healthy. So let's have fun this spring; just remember to play safe.

Ken Brewer

SEARHC to run clinic at Mount Edgecumbe High School

Starting about the first of March, the health clinic at Mount Edgecumbe High School will be run by SEARHC.

"We're entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with Mount Edgecumbe High School to provide increased access to health care for the students," said Cindy Baldwin-Kitka, the HRSA Manager and Business Specialist for SEARHC Community Health Services.

She said the school and SEARHC have been talking for a couple of years. The Executive Management Team approved a pilot project that will be evaluated at the end of the school year.

"Without the teamwork of staff from the high school, Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and Community Health Services, this project would not happen," Baldwin-Kitka said. *"We all are very invested in making this pilot project work."*



Cindy Baldwin-Kitka, the HRSA Manager and Business Specialist for SEARHC Community Health Services, poses with the SEARHC mobile van.

Right now the high school has a temporary nurse on staff, and when SEARHC begins services it will add a mid-level provider and a patient access representative. The state-run boarding school started the year with 420 students (down to 350 in January), and the vast majority are Alaska Natives from small villages around the state. For now, SEARHC will park a mobile van on campus to serve as the clinic until a permanent clinic space can be built on campus.

"This is an awesome opportunity to work with the school," Baldwin-Kitka said. *"We'll be bringing the care to the students to ensure a continuity of care. We'll know the needs and be able to plan and coordinate with the other entities that provide services. We want to make sure the care doesn't stop here, and the kids continue to receive care when they go home."* ❖

David Edwards hired as SEARHC VP Finance/CFO

SEARHC is pleased to welcome David Edwards as the consortium's new Vice President of Finance/Chief Financial Officer. He will be based at SEARHC's Executive Offices in Juneau.

Edwards brings 24 years of experience in the health care industry to SEARHC. He holds a BS degree in Business Administration from Central Washington University (Ellensburg, Wash.). He plans to complete a Masters degree in Health Care Administration this summer with City University (Bellevue, Wash.).

Edwards started working for a small Seattle clinic in 1983, and as the clinic grew he eventually became its first director of finance. From 1990-92 he served as director of finance for Elder Health Northwest in Seattle, which is one of the leading adult day health care facilities in the country. He then moved to Spokane, Wash., in 1992 to work for the Heart Institute of Spokane, serving as CFO for seven years and Chief Operating Officer the last 3 1/2 years of his 11 there. Since 2004, Edwards has been a private health care consultant, working in management roles during the start-ups of a community health care center in Idaho and a hospital in Nigeria.



A former Alaskan, when he was growing up Edwards spent a couple of years in Anchorage and Fairbanks — and even a summer in Sitka — while his father worked as a general contractor.

"I'm excited to be back in Alaska," Edwards said. *"My family's never been here, and I'm excited for fishing season."*

While he doesn't work in direct patient care, Edwards said working in a health organization's support roles still can have major effect on a patient's health. For example, Edwards said those working in finance can make sure the resources are available to provide the best health care possible.

"It doesn't matter what role we have in health care, it's all about the patient," Edwards said. ❖

Mobile mammograms help women start a tradition of prevention

The SEARHC Breast and Cervical Health Program has announced the tentative Spring 2007 schedule for the mobile mammogram program.

The mobile mammography van will visit Kake, Haines, Angoon, Skagway and Yakutat this spring and early summer. In the late summer and fall, the van will visit Hoonah, Haines, Skagway, Prince of Wales Island and Metlakatla. The spring schedule is tentative, but hopefully will not change, program director Roz DeRensis said.

The van is scheduled to visit Kake on April 23-25, Haines on May 1-11, Angoon on May 21-23, Skagway on June 1-5 and Yakutat on June 13-18. To schedule an appointment, women should contact their local clinic.

"Each year, the mobile mammography unit serves Angoon, Kake, Haines, Skagway, Yakutat, Hoonah, Klawock, Craig and Metlakatla, providing mammograms for more than 550 women who might not otherwise receive this service," DeRensis said. *"Regular mammograms are an important part of being a healthy woman."*

The SEARHC Breast and Cervical Health Program provides free clinical breast exams and mammograms for all women ages 40-64 who meet income and insurance guidelines.

For more information, contact your local clinic, call 966-8782 in Sitka (or 1-888-388-8782, toll-free in Alaska), or send e-mail to askwh@searhc.org. ❖

SEARHC program helps Angoon open new fitness center

Angoon turned the page on a new chapter of wellness with the Jan. 22 grand opening of the Angoon Fitness Center, located at Angoon's Eli Katanook Memorial High School.

The center is the result of a partnership between the Chatham School District and the SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program. About 50-60 residents (more than 10 percent of the village's population) attended the event.

"We've been building this thing for six years at least," said Eli Katanook Memorial High School Teacher Jim Parkin, who coordinated the project with Head Teacher Ryan Dorsey *"It's done. It's a relief. Now all that needs to happen is for the equipment to be maintained and used."*

"The Angoon Fitness Center is a wonderful demonstration of organizations and people coming together to help a vision become reality..."



Angoon Eli Katanook High School Teacher Jim Parkin, center, and Harriet Silva, right, the Angoon Representative on the SEARHC Board of Directors, take test rides on two of the new stationary bicycles during January's grand opening of the Angoon Fitness Center.

Parkin said the school already had an older Universal weight system and a few dumbbells in a back room when the project started, and his students held yard sales and a food sale to raise money for some free weights and a kick bag. School officials and students put down rubberized floor tiles and used sledgehammers to knock down a wall to expand the room.

The SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program — which targets obesity, diabetes and asthma — then secured a one-time-only permission from the national Steps to a Healthier US program to use about \$20,000 of its grant money to buy more fitness equipment. That money helped buy a flatscreen TV for fitness videos, four treadmills, two crosstrainers, two upright bikes, two recumbent bikes, a stairclimber and a variety of dumbbells. Innofit Inc. of California added an extra stairclimber and a dumbbell rack to the order, and Alaska Marine Lines donated free shipping to get the equipment from Seattle to Juneau.

"The Angoon Fitness Center is a wonderful demonstration of organizations and people coming together to help a vision become reality," Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska Grant Manager Krisanne Rice said. *"The Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program is dedicated to helping people increase physical activity in their daily lives. All of us should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. The Angoon Fitness Center is but one way for Angoon residents to reach that goal."*

"A lot of families will use it," said Harriet Silva, the Angoon representative on SEARHC's Board of Directors. *"We're already fighting over the schedules, like when the men and women get their times."* ❁



Around the Consortium

Sitka

The Sitka Community Health and Wellness Fair takes place on Saturday, March 3, at Harrigan Centennial Hall. In addition to the usual health information booths, the event also features an outdoor and sports gear swap. Contact Amiee LeBlanc-Gloe at 966-8866.

The SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska sponsors the Second Annual Sitka Fun Fair on Saturday, April 21, at various times and locations around Sitka. The event allows residents to sample health and fitness offerings from various organizations around town, ending with a community dance at Mount Edgcombe High School. Contact Renae Mathson at 966-8797.

The SEARHC WISEWOMAN program hosts the Sitka Women's Walk and Triathlon at 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 28, at the Sheldon Jackson College Hames PE Center. The event features a 2.5-mile walk/run, a 4-mile

bike and a 500-meter swim, and women can do one, two or all three legs. Contact Martha Pearson at 966-8783.

Haines

The Haines Community Health Fair takes place from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 24, at Haines High School. Contact Pam Sloper at 766-6367.

Juneau

The Juneau Men's Health Forum takes place from 5-8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 4, at Centennial Hall. Event features a health and nutrition presentation, a colon and lung presentation and educational booths about men's health. Contact Cancer Connection, 796-CARE (796-2273).

The Alaska Health Fair takes place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, April 6-7, at Centennial Hall. Event features education booths and medical screenings. Contact 278-0234 (Anchorage), or go to <http://www.alaskahealthfair.org/index.cfm>.

Yakutat

The Yakutat Community Health Fair takes place from 7 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 14, at Yakutat High School. This event is sponsored by the Yakutat High School chapter of the National Honor Society.

Klawock

The Klawock Wellness Fair takes place from 1-6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17, at the Klawock School gym. The wellness fair includes screenings for blood pressure, glucose levels and cholesterol. Contact June May at 755-4959.

Klawock

The Klawock Wellness Fair takes place from 1-6 p.m. on Tuesday, April 17, at the Klawock School gym. The wellness fair includes screenings for blood pressure, glucose levels and cholesterol. Contact June May at 755-4959.

Hydaburg

The Hydaburg Community Health Fair takes place in the afternoon on Thursday, April 19, at the Hydaburg School small gym. The wellness fair includes screenings for blood pressure, glucose levels and cholesterol. Contact June May at 755-4959.

Craig

The SEARHC Breast and Cervical Health Program and WISEWOMAN Program are co-sponsoring the Ketchikan Theater Ballet in "An Evening of Dance," a performance to promote breast cancer awareness. The event starts at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 1, at Craig High School. Contact Gwen Hamilton at 755-4946. ❀

Patient Tip: An Alaska approach to eating more fruits and veggies

The benefits of eating fruits and veggies are many – they provide good supplies of key nutrients, reduce the risk for diabetes and prediabetes, lower cholesterol levels, help with weight loss and even help prevent some types of cancers. But when was the last time you saw an advertisement for an apple or carrot?

Eating five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables isn't that difficult. A serving can be a half-cup of cooked veggies, a cup of raw veggies, a quarter-cup of dried fruit (such as raisins) or a half-cup of 100-percent fruit juice. Alaskans can eat fresh, canned, frozen and harvested fruits and vegetables, they all count. Adding one or two extra servings a day provides major health benefits.

Here are some ways people in Southeast Alaska can eat more fruits and vegetables:

- ◆ **Keep a piece of fruit or a bag of carrots on your desk. That way when you need a quick snack you can eat something healthy instead of a candy bar, bag of potato chips or other unhealthy snack.**
- ◆ **Go berry-picking. Blueberries, yellow and red salmonberries, huckleberries and thimbleberries are among the many varieties of berries that grow wild in Southeast Alaska.**
- ◆ **Harvest local wild plants, such as seaweeds, beach asparagus, fiddlehead ferns, wild spinach and wild rhubarb. Many plants growing wild in Southeast are edible, and they are loaded with Vitamin C, Vitamin A, protein, calcium, iron, fiber, potassium and/or iodine, which are essential nutrients.**
- ◆ **Grow your own fruits and vegetables in your own or a community garden. Southeast gardens can produce lettuce, spinach, carrots, tomatoes and other popular vegetables, and there's nothing like the taste of something you grew yourself.** ❀