

EDITORIAL

Get fit

Ketchikan gets a new start at least twice — maybe three times — a year.

The first comes on Jan. 1 with the beginning of a new year and untold resolutions to improve upon one's past behavior and habits. Many resolve to eat right and exercise — in other words, to get into better physical shape.

Some take to those resolutions like ink on paper and others barely begin before slipping back into old ways.

A few pick up in the spring and summer where they left off in January, committing to get outside and walk in the earlier mornings and later evenings; longer days make a difference, providing added light for outdoor undertakings. Again, success is a mixed bag.

But, then another fresh start comes in the fall, when the schedules of many in the community change with the start of the school year. For some, there's January, but for many, the year begins in September.

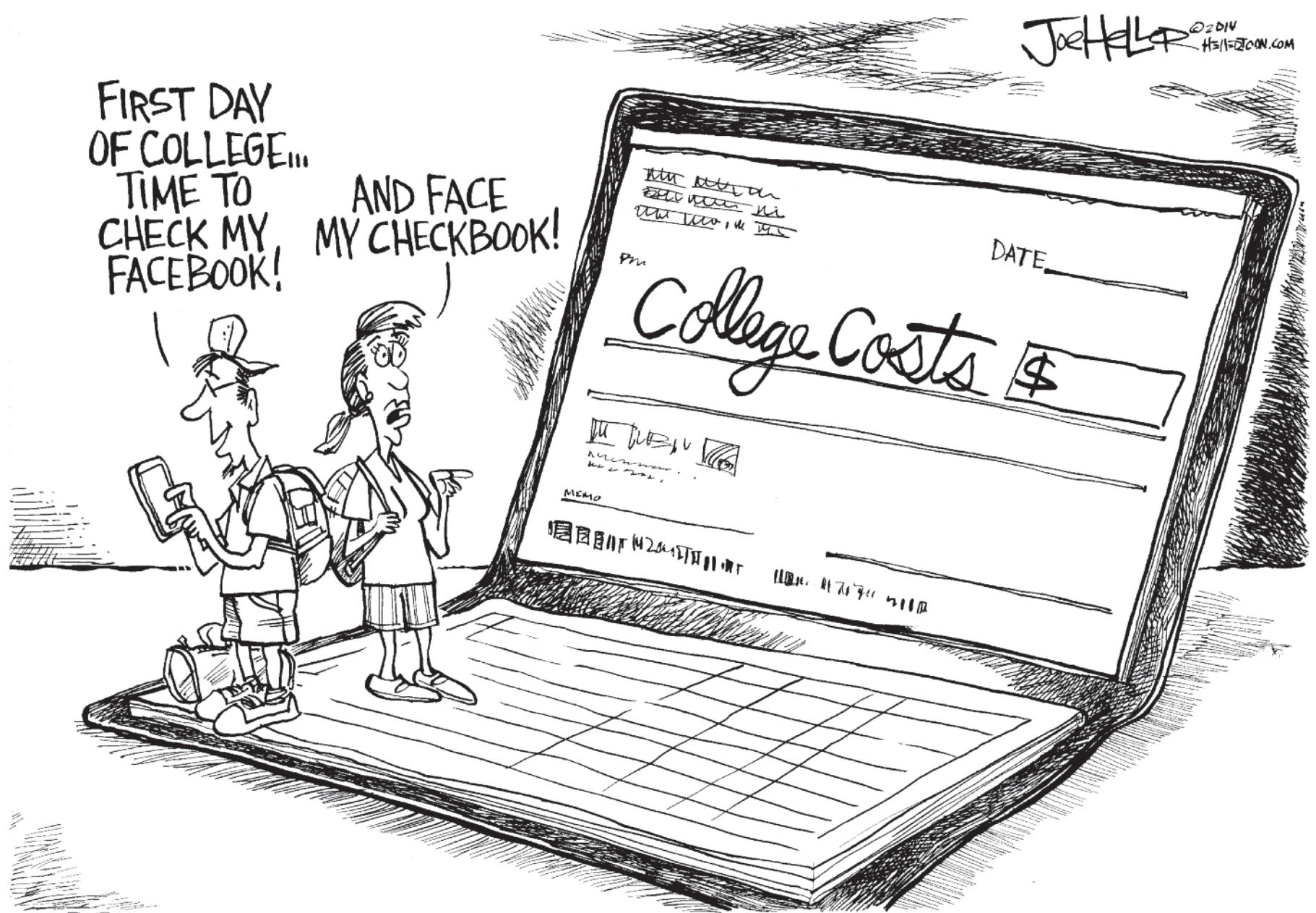
Whether one has children or not, the new school year's ripple affects all. It's another marker of the year.

As in January and the spring, fitness tends to be a focus in the fall. The schools begin their athletics. Ketchikan Gateway Borough Parks and Recreation starts offering a wide variety of fall events and opportunities, too.

The Rec Center provides pickleball, soccer, wallyball, zumba, running, rollerskating, dodge ball, martial arts, boxing, yoga, pilates, dancing, step and swimming. That's in addition to basketball, racquet sports, weightlifting and similar activities available year-round at the center. The list is long, but it isn't all inclusive.

Parks and Rec's fall schedule gives the community a third point in the year to think physical fitness. If January didn't work out; if the spring didn't work well, then the fall might be when to resolve to sign up and get physically fit.

The Rec Center can be found online under departments on the Ketchikan Gateway Borough website: www.kgbak.us. Look for an opportunity to exercise.



When mistakes become deadly

By EUGENE ROBINSON

WASHINGTON — To be young, male and black in America means not being allowed to make mistakes. Forgetting this, as we've seen so many times, can be fatal.

The case of Michael Brown, who was laid to rest Monday, is anomalous only in that it is so extreme: an unarmed black teenager riddled with bullets by a white police officer in a community plagued by racial tension.

African-Americans make up 67 percent of the population of Ferguson, Mo., but there are just four black officers on the 53-member police force — which responded to peaceful demonstrations by rolling out military-surplus armored vehicles and firing tear gas. It is easy to understand how Brown and his peers might see the police not as public servants but as troops in an army of occupation.

And yes, Brown made mistakes. He was walking in the middle of the street rather than on the sidewalk, according to witnesses, and he was carrying a box of cigars that he apparently took from a convenience store. Neither is a capital offense.

When Officer Darren Wilson stopped him, did Brown respond with puffed-up attitude? For a young black man, that is a transgression punishable by death.

Fatal encounters such as the one

between Brown and Wilson understandably draw the nation's attention. But such tragedies are just the visible manifestation of a much larger reality. Most if not all young men go through a period between adolescence and adulthood when

they are likely to engage in risky behavior of various kinds without fully grasping the consequences of their actions. If they are white — well, boys will be boys. But if they are black, they are treated as men and assumed to have malicious intent.

What else explains the shameful disparities in the application of justice? As I have pointed out before, blacks and whites are equally likely to smoke marijuana; if anything, blacks are slightly less likely to take up. Yet African-Americans — and Hispanics — are about four times more likely to be arrested on marijuana charges than whites.

To compound this inequality, studies also indicate that among people who are arrested for using or selling marijuana, black defendants are much more likely than white defendants to actually serve prison time.

For young white men, smoking a joint is no big deal. For young black men, it can ruin your life.

Similarly, blacks and whites are equally likely to use cocaine. But a person convicted of selling crack cocaine will serve a far longer prison term than one convicted of selling the same quantity of powder cocaine, even though these are just two forms of the same drug. Crack is the way cocaine is usually sold in the inner cities while powder is more popular in the suburbs — which is one big reason there are so many African-American and Hispanic men filling our prisons.

One arrest — even for a minor offense — can be enough to send a promising young life reeling in the wrong direction. Police officers understand this and exercise discretion. But evidence suggests they are much more willing to give young white men a break than young black or brown men.

Why would this be? In Ferguson, I would argue, one obvious factor is the near-total lack of diversity among police officers. What year is this, anyway?



EUGENE ROBINSON

But there is disparate treatment even in communities where the racial makeup of the police force more closely resembles that of the population. I believe the central problem is that a young black man who encounters a police officer is assumed to have done something wrong and to be capable of violence. These assumptions make the officer more prepared than he otherwise might be to use force — even deadly force.

The real tragedy is that racist assumptions are self-perpetuating and self-reinforcing. If young black men are treated unfairly by the justice system, they are indeed more likely to have arrest records — and, perhaps, to harbor resentment against police authority. They may indeed feel they have nothing to lose by exhibiting defiance. In some circumstances — and these may include the streets of Ferguson — they may feel that standing up to the police is a matter of self-respect.

Michael Brown had no police record. By all accounts, he had no history of violence. He had finished high school and was going to continue his education. All of this was hidden, apparently, by the color of his skin.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Wednesday, August 27, the 239th day of 2014. There are 126 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On August 27, 1964, President Lyndon Baines Johnson accepted his party's nomination for a term in his own right, telling the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, "Let us join together in giving every American the fullest life which he can hope for."

The Walt Disney movie musical fantasy "Mary Poppins," starring Julie Andrews and Dick Van Dyke, premiered at Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood. Comedian Gracie Allen, the wife of George Burns, died in Los Angeles.

On this date:

In 1776, the Battle of Long Island began during the Revolutionary War as British troops attacked American forces, who ended up being forced to retreat two days later.

In 1883, the island volcano Krakatoa erupted with a series of cataclysmic explosions; the resulting tidal waves in Indonesia's Sunda Strait claimed some 36,000 lives in Java and Sumatra.

In 1908, Lyndon Baines Johnson, the 36th president of the United States, was born near Stonewall, Texas.

In 1939, the first turbojet-powered aircraft, the Heinkel He 178, went on its first full-fledged test flight over Germany.

In 1949, a violent white mob prevented an outdoor concert headlined by Paul Robeson from taking place near Peekskill, New York. (The concert was held eight days later.)

In 1962, the United States launched the Mariner 2 space probe, which flew past Venus in December 1962.

In 1967, Brian Epstein, manager of The Beatles, was found dead in his London flat from an overdose of sleeping pills; he was 32.

In 1989, the first U.S. commercial satellite rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida — a Delta booster carrying a British communications satellite, the Marcopolo 1.

In 2008, Barack Obama was nominated for president by the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

Ten years ago: President George W.

Bush signed executive orders designed to strengthen the CIA director's power over the nation's intelligence agencies and create a national counterterrorism center.

Five years ago: Mourners filed past the closed casket of the late Sen. Edward Kennedy at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston.

One year ago: Maj. Nidal Hasan, the Army psychiatrist who'd fatally shot 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009, rested his case without presenting any evidence during his trial's penalty phase. (Hasan ended up being sentenced to death.)

Today's Birthdays: Author Dame Antonia Fraser is 82.

Actor Tommy Sands is 77. Bluegrass singer-musician J.D. Crowe is 77. Musician Daryl Dragon is 72. Actress Tuesday Weld is 71. Actor G.W. Bailey is 70. Rock singer-musician Tim Bogert is 70.

Actress Marianne Sagebrecht is 69. Country musician Jeff Cook is 65. Actor Paul Reubens is 62. Rock musician Alex Lifeson (Rush) is 61. Actor Peter Stormare is 61.

Actress Diana Scarwid is 59. Rock musician Glen Matlock (The Sex Pistols) is 58. Golfer Bernhard Langer is 57. Country singer Jeffrey Steele is 53. Gospel singer Yolanda Adams is 53. Country musician Matthew Basford (Yankee Grey) is 52. Writer-producer Dean Devlin is 52.

Rock musician Mike Johnson is 49. Rap musician Bobo (Cypress Hill) is 46. Country singer Colt Ford is 45. Actress Chandra Wilson is 45. Rock musician Tony Kanal (No Doubt) is 44.

Actress Sarah Chalke is 38. Actor RonReaco Lee is 38. Rapper Mase is 37. Actress-singer Demetria McKinney is 36. Actor Aaron Paul is 35. Rock musician Jon Siebels (Eve 6) is 35. Actor Shaun Weiss is 35. Contemporary Christian musician Megan Garrett (Casting Crowns) is 34. Actor Kyle Lowder is 34.

Actor Patrick J. Adams is 33. Singer Mario is 28. Actress Alexa Vega is 26.

Actress Savannah Paige Rae (TV: "Parenthood") is 11.

Thought for Today: "Reality can destroy the dream; why shouldn't the dream destroy reality?" — G.E. Moore, British philosopher (1873-1958).

A world-class education opportunity for Ketchikan

By SEAN PARNELL

Alaska's future hinges on our ability to offer a world-class education to every child in every corner of our state.

So last October, I announced the Alaska Digital Teaching Initiative to bring more of Alaska's best teachers to our children via video conference technology. In recognizing the need to give our young people better access to high-quality teachers and instruction, we made a commitment to go big into digital learning, so all of Alaska's children have access to a high-quality education.

As part of the Alaska Digital Teaching Initiative, the Department of Education and Early Development recently issued grants to four school districts across Alaska, providing funding for three years to strengthen digital teaching and learning.

More specifically, grant recipients were selected based on their ability to remove barriers, provide specific technology enhancements, and strengthen and enhance current technology-based instructional programs. In the end, it was about the best way to ensure Alaska's students benefit from increased opportunity, choice and access.

The four school districts that were selected include Kenai Peninsula Borough, Copper River, Ko-

POINT OF VIEW

diak Island Borough and Ketchikan Gateway Borough. By delivering high-quality, interactive courses to middle school and high school students, Alaska's students will benefit.

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, with its partner districts in Craig, Annette Island, Klawock, Hydaburg and Southeast Island school districts, is focused on achieving several goals with its grant funds: course, teacher, and financial assessment and accountability, and staff development.

The district will focus on these core areas by creating Alaska Digital Academies that give Alaska's students better access to quality teachers and courses. In the process, students will utilize the Alaska Performance Scholarship, as well as STEM and Career and Technical Education offerings.

Achieving our goal of a 90-percent statewide high school graduation rate by 2020 will require bringing Alaska's best teachers directly to as many students as possible.

Digital teaching will play a critical role in this area. For example, students in Ketchikan will be enrolled in online courses along with students from Annette Island, Craig and Klawock, learning together and interacting through a digital production studio located at Ketchikan High School.

As Alaska's economy continues to grow with new resource development projects being completed, such as a gasoline, well-prepared young Alaskans will be in high demand. In particular, students will need to be proficient in math and science, which is why the initiative prioritizes middle and high school math and science courses.

Without a doubt, when we provide students with better access to the best teachers, they have a better chance to succeed. And in the process, they become better prepared for life, while putting Alaska on a brighter path.

Our top priority is to ensure every Alaskan student has a world-class education and the opportunity to grow and prosper.

With the Alaska Digital Teaching Initiative, we are overcoming geographical barriers to ensure all Alaskan students have access to high-quality teachers.

Sean Parnell is governor of the State of Alaska

by Garry Trudeau

KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

©2014
(ISSN0274581X)
501 Dock St., P.O. Box 7900
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Email: kdn@kpnunet.net
Website: ketchikandailynews.com
A publication of Pioneer Printing Co., Inc.
Tena Williams and Lew Williams III, co-publishers

Periodicals postage paid at Ketchikan, Alaska. Published every day except Sundays and eight holidays: New Year's Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Member of The Associated Press. Periodical subscription rates payable in advance.

Local: 3 months—\$68; 6 months—\$92; one year—\$149.
Mail rates: 3 months—\$91; 6 months—\$132; one year—\$212.
Senior citizens—10 percent discount
Postmaster: Send address changes to Ketchikan Daily News, P.O. Box 7900, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

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