

Wellness Amid the COVID-19 Virus

Even amid the COVID-19 virus, employees have found ways to keep our corporate culture alive and well. For the month of March, employees participated in the water challenge—Water You Waiting For? Employees learned about the importance of drinking water and the many benefits it has on us both physically and mentally.

For the month of May, employees are participating in the 100 Miles in May Challenge. One thing is for sure—Design Alaska has some pretty competitive employees. Just when you think you're at the top of the leaderboard, someone else sneaks in there and passes you up. Right now we have four employees who have already reached their 100 mile goal. Employees here in Fairbanks, some of our remote employees, and even employee spouses have found different ways to stay active. Activities include playing with kids, stacking firewood, martial arts, lifting weights, disc golf, rowing, home construction, spinning, jumping on a trampoline, walking, playing soccer, biking, yardwork, running, backpacking, and fishing. No matter the activity, employees are finding ways to stay active. So if you're looking for someone and you can't get in touch with them, they are probably out there racking up time and miles so they can become the new leader. Below is the current leaderboard for the top fourteen participants and their total miles. Stay Tuned: Final results will be included in the June newsletter.

Wellness by Design's 100 Miles in May Challenge Leaderboard

1. Aaron Wilbur	113.7	8. Mary Sue Dates	76
2. Samuel Mitchell	109.3	9. Angie Schmidt	67.8
3. Jack Wilbur	107.9	10. Cutter Degerlund	59.7
4. Marina Jones	100.1	11. Ally Mitchell	56.8
5. Chris Miller	86.9	12. Eliza Cink	55.1
6. Bekah Olson	80.1	13. Leif Olson	54.1
7. Elizabeth Johnston	79	14. Kym Pihlaja	49.1

President's Corner

People, Phone, Paper

Although these are strange times, I reflect on how we communicate throughout our day with clients, coworkers, and in meetings and thought I would share a little wisdom from a project manager who has been in the industry many years. Whether you are talking in person, on the phone or video call, or even in writing such as paper, email or chat messenger, you are continuously communicating throughout your day so it is important to make sure you keep your communication in order by priority while keeping a high standard of professionalism.

The highest priority in communication is the in-person interactions. Don't let the ringing phone, text message, or ding email distract you from the immediate in-person conversation you are having. There is so much to learn by engaging with other people if you are present in the conversation. Silence the phone and ignore the other things. The one exception I can think of is when you are expecting a call or another visitor. If you let the person you are visiting with know that you are expecting an interruption, or you need to leave for a scheduled phone call, it will be a much more respectful conversation when you have to stop. Another example of "People first" is during meetings. Please work to be engaged in the meeting and don't do 'something else' that is unrelated to the meeting. If you find you are not needed, ask to leave the meeting, or at least work on something related to the meeting to stay engaged. Don't engage in a text message conversation in the meeting. Leave the room if absolutely necessary. Respect those who are in the meeting.

Talking on the phone, computer, or video is second. These are still very human interactions and need your attention. Don't try to read email, sort papers, or chat with other people while you are on the phone. Concentrate and make it an effective phone call and really connect with others. This is especially important as many of our interactions are now through this form of communication as we find ourselves in continued remote work.

Paper (email, chat, text, etc.) is last. This communication does not require immediate attention. You can respond after you are done with the in-person and phone communication. You can even read email at the end of the day when the phone dies down if necessary. Emails can consume you, but don't fall in the trap of trying to read email and pay attention to a meeting. Of course there are always some meetings where you are not needed or you are just listening for a relevant portion. I understand the desire to multi-task, but I have frequently missed the reason I was on the call because I was engaged in reading an email. It is unprofessional to not pay attention and need information repeated because you were doing other things.

Let me know if you have other thoughts on communication. Continue to try and remember to work to put communication in priority order: People, Phones, Paper and you will be a successful communicator.

~Chris Miller, P.E.



Design Alaska will be
closed on Monday, May 25th
in observance of Memorial Day.
Have a fun and safe holiday weekend.

New Employees Join the Team

Grant Olson (Landscape Architecture Intern) applied for the position at Design Alaska because of his strong interest in Landscape. After working for a contractor where his passion for the creation of landscapes that improve the livability of northern cities was developed, he sought out Design Alaska because of the opportunities to learn and grow professionally while following his passions.

Although Grant has spent most of his life in Alaska, he was born in New Mexico before coming to Fairbanks when he was 2. After attending Monroe Catholic School, he headed back to Albuquerque for his undergraduate from the University of New Mexico where he recently completed his undergraduate degree this semester.

Grant is a seasoned road tripper who has driven from Fairbanks to Albuquerque 4 times! Despite the fact that mornings don't bother him, Grant does consider himself more of a night person. He enjoys Alaskan summer nights. His ideal meal is pasta, and his favorite is seafood fettucine. Grant's favorite movie is Rudy and he used to love watching Wheel of Fortune with his dad while growing up. One of his life goals is to travel the world and see iconic historical sites like the pyramids in Egypt and the Roman ruins. We are happy to have Grant join the team.

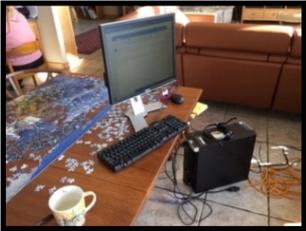
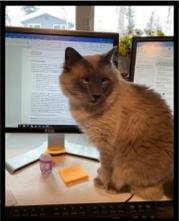


Daniel Dougherty (Mechanical) is not only a lifelong Alaskan, but he was born at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital and has lived his whole life in the same house in the hills of Goldstream. When asked why he applied for a position at Design Alaska, he said, "I wanted to stay in Fairbanks for the foreseeable future and I had heard good things about working for Design Alaska." Daniel says if he were to live anywhere else, it would probably be California, despite the politics and cost of living.

Daniel enjoys downhill mountain biking in the summer, and skiing and snowboarding in the winter. He likes to exercise whenever he gets the chance, normally weight lifting. Aside from outdoor sports, Daniel also plays the piano a lot. On average, he plays 40 minutes to an hour daily, and his favorite song to play on the piano is an old hymn "It Is Well With My Soul" by Horatio G. Spafford. Daniel is a Christian, and he attends and serves at Bible Baptist Church in town.

Daniel doesn't consider himself more of a morning or night person, instead he tends to keep to himself in the mornings and in the evenings enjoys being with other people. His ideal meal is a gourmet burger and on his list of countries to visit is Malawi, Africa, China, India, Russia, and England. We are happy to have Daniel join the team.

Employee Question of the Month

<p>What does quarantine/working from home look like for you? Feel free to share your experiences or share photos of your workstation or pictures with your family.</p>	
<p>Lyle Axelarris</p>	<p>Living in metro Detroit, we are in a hot spot, so we've been hunkered down for almost a month now. Our kids' school started preparing for the digital conversion in early March, so their schooling has been fairly seamless (much to their chagrin). We bought a basketball hoop and a second fridge as soon as things started to get serious here. Really glad we did! Basketball is helping the kids stay active and sane, and now we can stock up at the store (and expose ourselves) just once per week thanks to the extra fridge capacity. I'm getting "home" in time for dinner more often, so we've been having a lot more family time in the evenings - playing card games and watching movies during dinner. Hunt for Red October and Jojo Rabbit have topped the list so far. Here's a picture of my workspace.</p> 
<p>Mary Sue Dates</p>	<p>Pro's: Microsoft teams has worked out great for Accounting. Fewer interruptions. Encourages communication. As a true introvert, this has worked great for me.</p> <p>Con's: Wait time for materials printed at work. Living alone and no pets can be a bit of a challenge. Home internet slower than office and inability to print at home.</p>
<p>Marina Jones</p>	<p>Feels like the movie the Shining a little bit...because I am still at the office, all the lights are off, doors are locked, and the only people I see are the same three or four every day. If I look like Bill Murray from Zombieland when everyone comes back, I might take a day off.</p> 
<p>Robin Rader</p>	<p>Generally speaking work at home is slower. Yet it seems to work. I really miss everyone else at work, especially if I have a problem with the computer.</p> 
<p>John Rowe</p>	<p>Not a fan at all. Here is my remote work station in our guest room.</p> 
<p>Sabrina Davis</p>	<p>My not so helpful co-worker</p> 
<p>Blake Burley</p>	<p>Not my doing, these are right up the street from my house, but one of the funniest things I have seen as a result of COVID... "SNOVID-19"</p> 

Employee Question of the Month

Question of the Month Continued....

<p>Pat Brandon</p>	<p>The first picture is of me and my coworkers (Peat and Paisley) watching the nightly Governor’s press conference, they’re less interested in what’s on the screen and more so that it’s dinnertime! They’re typically uninterested in my work and are slightly annoyed with my all-day presence in their house 😊</p> <p>The second photo is my home workspace. On clear days I’m treated to a nice view of Mt. Deborah, Hess, and Hayes in the Alaska Range.</p>	 
<p>Florian Kienle</p>	<p>“Just another day at the office”</p>	
<p>Don Hopkins</p>	<p>Here is a photo of my home workspace with computers and monitors from my work office. This space was to be a shared space with all the family, but I have sorta taken it over. The towel at the right is for when our cat Cosmos visits, about every day and takes a nap. Sometimes she walks in front to get some attention. The computer on the right is our home iMac computer which was not really adequate for off-site work, but does have an internal camera and microphone and does MS Teams nicely. As for working at home, mostly the same as at the office since spent many days at work with nose to the grindstone, like all good electrical engineers. I do miss the speedy network fiber connections to Alasconnect at the office which my ACS DSL line cannot compare (7 Mb Download - 1 Mb Upload). Uploads of even moderately big files are painful, but don’t have any data limits so guess that is a plus. Sometimes in the day when working on ACAD drawings especially seems like I have lost all control and enter the Twilight Zone which is a long Waiting Period where things either stop or are so screwy are unusable. Like ghosts in the machine. Often I try to simply move an object, then lose the cursor on the screen and the object seems to have a mind of its own and never sure where it will land. Then when it does, again need to herd it back into place. Argh! Then like someone turned on a switch, everything is OK. Not sure who is to blame, so I’m going with Covid-19 Gremlins who are not only trying to physically infect us, but are having a go at infecting our computers as well. After all Covid-19 is a Virus! Anyway past COB today, although harder to tell day to day. Hmm what day is it, Yup Thursday.</p> <p>PS: Remember all those Dystopian Movies we all loved to watch. Seems now like some of them are not so farfetched after all.</p>	
<p>Marilyn Fye</p>	<p>It has been working very well. I have a desk with two monitors near the kitchen. Nice sunshine comes in a south facing window and I enjoy playing frisbee with my dog at lunch.</p>	 

May 2020 ~ Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	8
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day— Design Alaska Closed	26	27	28 Managers' Meeting	29	30
31						

Design Alaska Anniversaries

Bob Gras	34th Anniversary	April 14, 1986	Bill Guevremont	2nd Anniversary	April 16, 2018
James Bartlett	24th Anniversary	April 19, 1996	Blake Burley	2nd Anniversary	April 09, 201
Don Hopkins	17th Anniversary	April 14, 2003	Aaron Wilbur	1st Anniversary	April 10, 2019
Jack Wilbur	45 th Anniversary	May 19, 1975	Pat Brandon	7 th Anniversary	May 6, 2013
Marilyn Fye	19 th Anniversary	May 21, 2001	Matt Krueger	5 th Anniversary	May 18, 2015
Cutter Degerlund	16 th Anniversary	May 10, 2004	Josh Clifton	2 nd Anniversary	May 7, 2018
Jeff Putnam	12 th Anniversary	May 1, 2008	Samuel Mitchell	2 nd Anniversary	May 7, 2018
Marcus Curley	11 th Anniversary	May 11, 2009	Benjamin Mildon	1 st Anniversary	May 13, 2019
John Rowe	10 th Anniversary	May 23, 2010	Taylor Tharp	1 st Anniversary	May 13, 2019

April/May Birthdays

Jennifer Davis	April 3	Leah Monego	May 8	Marilyn Fye	May 28
Aaron Wilbur	April 14	Brittany Green	May 23	Eric Gabrielson	May 29
Leif Olson	May 3	Marina Jones	May 28	Daniel Dougherty	May 29