



# Hunter Information & Training Program News

Fall 2021

## Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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### DID YOU KNOW?

There were over 8.4 million new firearm owners in 2020 which accounted for 40% of all firearm purchases.



July Hunter Ed class in Golovin

As I write this newsletter, it's a balmy -5°F outside, which is cold for Anchorage. As always, summer and fall, flew by and I'm definitely not ready for winter yet. But as always, the year marches on and so do certification classes.

First, I'd like to thank **Jim Plosay of Juneau, Larry Boyle of Anchorage, and Rich Graham of Wasilla** for playing an instrumental role on the HIT Program Steering Group for the past two years. They gave great feedback on a variety of certification course topics, helped rewrite the instructor policy manuals, and represented the instructors in their region well. The years of teaching experience, expertise, and enthusiasm they brought to the Steering Group greatly assisted the HIT Program in ensuring well thought out course offerings.

Next, I'd like to encourage everyone to think about their co-instructors and who should be recognized with a **2021 Instructor of the Year Award**. Every year the HIT Program recognizes volunteer instructors who have made significant contributions to the HIT Program. We want to recognize those instructors who have gone above and beyond to advance the cause of safe and ethical hunting.

The nomination form has been emailed to each instructor and an electronic copy is available online at [www.huntereducation.alaska.gov](http://www.huntereducation.alaska.gov) (located on the Volunteer Instructors page). Please take the time to nominate one of your co-instructors who has given extraordinary service to the HIT Program.

Awards are given out for the following categories:

- **Hunter Education**
- **Bowhunter Education**
- **Muzzleloader Education**
- **Crossbow Education**
- **Rural Instructor**
- **Lifetime Achievement**
- **Outstanding Educator of the Year**
- **Apprentice Instructor**

Feel free to contact HIT Program staff for teaching statistics and contact information. Try to gather information about your nominee from their co-instructors, significant others, and friends. **Nominations must be postmarked by January 15, 2022** which gives you plenty of time to help ensure a fellow instructor is recognized for their dedication and willingness to share their passion with others.

Finally, as we approach the holidays and 2022, the HIT Program Staff wishes you and your family a wonderful, relaxing holiday season and a happy new year!



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## Maria Bakic-Southcentral Region Coordinator



I am very excited to introduce myself as your new Southcentral Region Coordinator for the HIT Program. I have spent the past 22 years working as a speech-language pathologist, primarily in

healthcare settings. While this career was rewarding in more ways than one, I felt called to serve the community in a new role.

Growing up on the East Coast, my family was always involved in outdoor activities such as camping, biking, boating and fishing, but we did not do any hunting. I attended The College of New Jersey and obtained my Bachelor's degree, and then earned my Master's Degree at the University of Northern Colorado. I came to



Alaska in January of 1999 for a grad school internship. This 4-month assignment was life changing, and I fell in love with Alaska and made it my home. My firearms and hunting journey began with a hunter education class offered through the ADF&G Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) program. This course piqued my interest in hunting and shooting sports. Through the BOW program, I made many friends and connections which eventually led to my first successful caribou hunt. I have continued to hunt and have harvested large and small game in Alaska, and I am looking forward to my first elk hunt in the lower 48 later this year. I became a Hunter Education instructor for ADF&G in 2018. I enjoyed teaching these classes, as I felt it was important to give back to a program that changed my life so much for the better! I pursued additional firearms training and have obtained certifications from the NRA for Rifle Instruction,

## Home Firearm Safety, and Range Safety Officer.



I live in Anchorage with my husband, Nick, and our two German Shepherd dogs, Yukon and Scout. We enjoy fly fishing, hiking, camping, gardening, snowmachining, hunting, and spending time at our cabin in Sterling.

I look forward to getting to know all of you and working with you to ensure the continued growth and success of the HIT Program! Providing instruction in safe firearms handling, ethical hunting, and conservation is imperative to ensure that the next generation of hunters is safe and responsible. I am honored to be a part of this organization!

## Welcome to New Steering Group Members

The HIT Program's Steering Group has proven to be a great advisory resource in advancing HIT Program goals and objectives. Please join us in welcoming the newest members who will serve a two-year term.



### Joe Brewer of Homer

I have been an avid hunter and trapper all my life. I started out hunting and trapping rabbits and quail and pheasants. Then later began to hunt both turkey

and whitetail. After moving to Alaska in 2012 my hunting experiences have expanded to include moose, caribou, and bear. In addition I have become very involved with salmon fishing. My wife and I continue to hunt and fish together annually.

I have taught hunter ed for about six years now and have taught in rural villages as well as my local community and assisted other places throughout the state as well. I pursued certification in each discipline offered as instructor to make the training more accessible in my area.

[IHEA Instructor Resource Site](http://www.ihea-usa.org/special-offers-for-instructors/)

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[HIT Program Site](http://www.huntereducation.alaska.gov)

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I am a former Pastor, adjunct college teacher, and retired Msgt from the Air Force. I have many friends in both commercial fishing and charter fishing and nearly all my friends sport fish and hunt. The result is I am constantly made aware of concerns from all three groups that may need to be addressed in some way.

People ask why I am involved? The answer is simple. The biggest threat to the privilege of hunting and fishing is unethical and illegal practices in the field. So teaching ethical safe and responsible hunting is my way of insuring that those privileges are there for my grandchildren.

## Ellen Hannan of Craig



I am looking forward to representing Southeast on the Steering Committee. Please email, call, or talk to me about any ideas or concerns. I have experienced many areas of the State and I am always excited to get outdoors daily. Bear hunting is a relatively new pursuit of mine and a way to beat the COVID blues.

## Jeremy Lemons of Ninilchik

Jeremy has been a hunter education and bowhunter education instructor for the past two years teaching classes in Anchorage, Kenai, and the Homer areas. He recently retired from the Air Force and the Alaska Air National Guard where he spent the last 22 years. He has extensive experience as an Air Force instructor, facilitator and has built and managed training programs for small and large groups. He is also an ATV Safety Institute Instructor and Kenai Peninsula Borough School District volunteer. Jeremy and his family moved back to Alaska with the military in 2014 and have made our amazing state their



forever home. His favorite part of instructing is meeting the incredible people that call Alaska home and teaching them safety skills to partake in our amazing outdoor sports.

## Martha Peck of Anchorage



Martha has been a hunter education instructor and a Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) instructor since 2014. She was also a Steering Group member from 2016-2018. She has lived, worked, and hunted in Alaska since 1981, and her knowledge of our wildlife resources and curriculum development make her an invaluable resource to the

HIT Program.

## Ted Sandhofer of Petersburg



Ted has been teaching for the HIT Program for about ten years and teaches hunter and bowhunter education classes. He was born and raised in Alaska and is an avid hunter and fisherman. He has worked for the US

Forest Service for over 30 years and plans on retiring at the end of this year. He enjoys teaching young kids about hunting ethics and the joy of being in the woods. Southeast Alaska can be unforgiving for those unprepared and he loves passing on information about survival and proper hunt planning. He was a member of the Steering Committee in the past and looks forward to helping the team update the hunter education lesson plan. He lives in Petersburg with his wife Marsha and they have raised a couple boys in this beautiful town. He appreciates all the volunteer instructors in the state who give their time and energy to this important program.

## HIT Program Steering Group

Cordell Gray (Interior) [cords180@yahoo.com](mailto:cords180@yahoo.com)

Andy Finke (Rural) [bdaf49@gmail.com](mailto:bdaf49@gmail.com)

Joe Brewer (SC) [jabinalaska@gmail.com](mailto:jabinalaska@gmail.com)

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Ted Sandhofer (SE) [cedarpond@gci.net](mailto:cedarpond@gci.net)

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## Instructor Notes

### Above & Beyond Recipients

We'd like to recognize the following instructors for going "above and beyond".

#### **Jacques Kosto (Kenai)**

Jacques is a jack of all trades instructor for the HIT Program. This fall he taught 1 crossbow ed, 1 muzzleloader ed, 2 bowhunter ed, and 2 hunter ed classes to certify 61 students.



#### **John Ringstad (Fairbanks)**

John has been an instructor since 2012. This past year he's stepped in to help when additional instructors are needed to teach a hunter ed class. He helped certify 69 students in five classes.

#### **Ryan Scott (Juneau)**

Ryan has stayed busy helping with 1 Becoming an Outdoors Woman hunter ed class, 2 school hunter ed classes, and 2 public hunter ed classes. These classes certified 63 students.

#### **Joedy Wake (Anchorage)**

Joedy taught two bowhunter ed, one hunter ed, and one muzzleloader ed class this quarter, and is signed up to teach the last two bowhunter ed classes of the year. He also coached a youth shotgun league team which met weekly at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park for 8 weeks this fall.

### Welcome to Our New Volunteer Instructors

We wish to extend a warm welcome to all new volunteer instructors who have joined us since the publication of our last newsletter. Congratulations and welcome aboard!

#### **Hunter Education:**

Anchorage: Timothy Booth, Paul Keller, John Toomer

Fairbanks: Mike Silva

Palmer: Tim Wolff, Jeff McPhetridge

Nome: Sarah Liben

North Pole: Keith Webb

Tok: Brent Jamison

Wasilla: Andrew Schultz

#### **Bowhunter Education:**

Anchorage: Maria Bakic

Wasilla: Cody Akers, Vince Farrenkopf

### HIT Staff

#### Contact Information

#### Anchorage:

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Katelyn Zonneville  
267-2534

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267-2187

#### Fairbanks:

Tom Halverson 459-7211

#### Juneau:

Daniel Gutierrez  
465-4345



**Wasilla Middle School  
7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders after  
completing their  
hunter ed field day**