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Senior Voice

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Senior Voice

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 48, Number 1 January 2025

Good luck and good health

Hoppin' John is a popular New Year tradition and for many the only time they'll eat black-eyed peas in a given year. But beans' humble profile belies their powerhouse nutritional status, packed with fiber, protein and important antioxidants. Learn more about putting legumes into your diet, including an Alaskan dietitian's family recipe, on page 5.

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2024 National Mature Media Awards Winner

Alaska's prisons aren't keeping up with senior inmates.
– page 3

Finding computer tech help online.
– page 21

Klawock Elder Mentor volunteer Evelyn Williams.
– page 14

Eating disorders aren't just for the young.
– page 5





From coins to credit cards

Accommodating Alaskans who won't go digital

By **MARTY LANGE**

Alaska Commission on Aging

Martha woke up early, feeling the familiar ache in her hip as she swung her legs over the side of the bed. She rubbed the sore spot, a reminder of her 75 years on this earth. Despite the discomfort, she was determined to get her laundry done today.

As she entered the laundry room, she was greeted by a technician tinkering with the washing machines. Martha's eyes widened as she saw the coin boxes being removed, replaced by sleek credit card readers.

"What am I supposed to do?" Martha asked the technician, concerned.

The technician, a young man with a friendly face, looked up from his work. "I'm sorry, ma'am, but I'm

just doing the work order I was given. The complex is switching to credit card-only payment. Have you ever thought about getting a credit card?"

Martha shook her head. "I don't need one. I've always used coins for my laundry. I pay for things with cash."

The technicians shrugged. "I understand, ma'am. But it's the way things are going now. Maybe you can talk to the complex management about it?"

Since her hip was aching, she called the doctor's office. A cheerful voice answered on the other end. "Hello, this is Dr. Smith's office. How can I help you?"

"Hi, I need to make an appointment." Martha said, expecting a simple response.

But instead, the receptionist said, "I'm sorry,

ma'am, but you'll have to create an account online and make your appointment there. We don't do appointments over the phone anymore. I'm sorry, ma'am. It's our new policy. Maybe you can ask a family member or friend to help you set up an account online?"

Martha felt a surge of frustration and helplessness. It seemed like the world was moving too fast for her, and she was being left behind. She ended the call, feeling uncertain about what to do next.

In Alaska, many people still live in a cash-only economy. Many seniors do not use computers, smartphones, or tablets and are not connected to the internet. To someone who has grown up in the digital age, this may seem like a rare phenomenon,

but it is the daily reality for many Alaskan seniors and elders.

One example that highlights this issue is the growing trend of laundromats converting to credit-card only payment systems. While this may seem like a convenient and modern solution for many, it effectively takes away the ability of these seniors to use the facilities. They may have to pay for a cab to the nearest laundromat and struggle with their laundry in the process.

Another example is in the healthcare system. Many doctors' offices require patients to schedule appointments online and complete pre-appointment paperwork electronically. While this may seem like a convenient and efficient system for many, it can be a significant barrier for seniors who do not have access to the internet or are not comfortable using digital technology. They may have to rely on a family

member or friend to schedule the appointment for them, which can be a challenge, especially if they live in a rural area with limited access to transportation.

It is essential that policymakers and businesses take into account the needs of senior Alaskans who live in a cash-only economy and who may choose not to adopt digital technologies. By not being in a hurry to phase out payment options, such as cash or check, and by continuing to offer traditional methods for scheduling appointments and completing paperwork, businesses can ensure that their services are accessible to all members of the community. There will come a day when digital methods are universally adopted by all ages, but in the meantime the needs of Alaska's seniors and elders who won't make that transition must be accommodated.

Marty Lange is the Program Coordinator for the Alaska Commission on Aging.

Lotto Alaska a blessing to local nonprofit

By **VICKI MOYLE**

Nenana-Tortella Council on Aging

By now most people are aware that we have a lottery in Alaska. However, I don't think that people are aware of how it functions and of the benefits it provides to local nonprofit agencies of Alaska. The income from Lotto Alaska goes to support nonprofit agencies and we at Nenana Senior Center count ourselves as blessed to have received help from the lotto at the beginning of September.

We are a rural nonprofit, 501.c3 senior center and have been incorporated since 1978. We have seen years when the budget went a long way in meeting the needs of those we serve. We have also seen years where

it is a constant struggle simply to provide any essential services. Our last most current fiscal year has seen a significant budget reduction. It is only with a diversity of funding sources that we can continue providing nutrition, transportation and support services to people in and surrounding our community.

Being rural, it is important that we have reliable transportation to procure supplies from Fairbanks, an approximate hour drive from our center. The vehicle we had was a 2017 GMC truck and it had over 230,000 miles of use and beginning to have mechanical problems, most importantly with the transmission. Since the vehicle was also used to transport clients for med-

ical appointments, it was even more important that it was dependable, reliable and most importantly safe when seniors/elders were in transit.

I reached out to Lotto Alaska and was contacted by Dave Lambert and his crew. After completing the required application, we began the search for a replacement vehicle. That in and of itself was nothing less than a difficult process. There was a limited selection of new four-wheel drive trucks in Fairbanks. Plus, meeting all the requirements from the dealership to hold a vehicle was an additional barrier. Needless to say, Mr Lambert and his crew went above and beyond to help us "jump through the hoops" in order to get a new agency truck.

Our agency contributed \$10,000 from our gaming income, and with the additional financial contribution from Lotto Alaska, we were able to replace the agency truck. For the help, NTCA is very grateful. We wanted to let others know what a wonderful support program that Lotto Alaska is for the local non-profit agencies. When you purchase your lotto numbers

for a chance to win a big money prize, I just want you to know that you are already a winner. A winner in that you are helping your friends and neighbors who utilize any services that non-profit agencies provide.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Lotto Alaska!

Vickie Moyle
Nenana Tortella Council on Aging, INC

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'Huge problems' for seniors in state's prisons

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS

For Senior Voice

Megan Edge is ACLU Prison Project Director. Earlier in her career she worked at the Alaska Dept. of Corrections. This is part of a longer interview with Edge conducted by Lawrence D. Weiss.



ACLU Prison Project Director Megan Edge, left says that Alaska's prisons 'are not built to support people that have a lot of the complicated health issues that seniors tend to develop. There's no place for people with Alzheimer's and dementia to be safe without going to solitary confinement.'

Photo courtesy Megan Edge

What are some of the key issues regarding seniors in the Alaska prison system?

There's more than 400 people over the age of 60 that are incarcerated in our jails and prisons on any given day. They are one of the most vulnerable prison populations and also one of the most expensive populations. It is a growing demographic. Our prison-

ers are aging rapidly.

This is a huge, huge problem within our prison system. Quite honestly, our prisons are not built to be hospitals. They're not built to be senior centers, they're not built to really be therapeutic or a humane space

for anybody, but especially seniors, and the result of that is really devastating.

We do have systems that we could be releasing people, but we're not really using them. We have medical parole, we have geriatric parole, but very few

people apply for them, and the people who do apply for them are not granted. In one case a couple years ago, they finally did grant somebody medical parole, but they wouldn't let him get out for I think it was close to seven months, and he actually died before he was able to get out.

So it's quite devastating. One thing that I think is really important to understand about this population of people is most people do not start committing crimes when they're 60 years old. They've been serving decades in incarceration. There should be opportunities to review their sentence because the

treatment that they get while they're incarcerated is quite appalling.

Our prisons are not built to support people that have a lot of the complicated health issues that seniors tend to develop. There's no place for people with Alzheimer's and dementia to be safe without going to solitary confinement. I knew one man who was in solitary confinement with dementia for months and months and months before he finally was released. That time in solitary confinement was extremely detrimental to his health and caused him to

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Gift cards: Shopper's delight or criminal's playground?

By TERESA HOLT

AARP Alaska

Gift cards have become a staple in the world of modern shopping. But before you grab one from that colorful kiosk, you should be aware of the potential pitfalls. While gift card sales skyrocketed from \$130 billion in 2015 to \$173 billion in 2021, they have also become a popular target for criminals as they can buy them anonymously and redeem them remotely. Researchers estimate that \$40 to \$50 billion is stolen through gift card scams

each year.

There are two typical scams involving gift cards: cards purchased that have a zero balance and gift card payment scams.

Zero value on the card

A zero-balance gift card scam is when you buy a gift card, only to find out later it has no value left on it. Crooks tamper with cards on store shelves, steal the numbers on the back, and drain the cash loaded on them. According to a 2022 AARP survey, one in four adults has given or received a gift card that turned out

to have no value. Protect yourself by purchasing gift cards online directly from the issuing business, carefully examining cards at the store for signs of tampering and buying cards from

stores that keep gift cards behind the counter or at the checkout.

Gift card as payment?

Criminals have devised another sneaky tactic:

tricking people into purchasing gift cards as a form of payment. Imagine you get an email saying you won a million dollars in

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Corrections

The December 2024 story about indoor walking around the state omitted a few details: The Dome in Anchorage offers free walking for all seniors on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. No membership required. Call for details, 907-770-3663.

In Seward, The Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC) offers a free indoor walking hour for seniors in its gym, Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to noon. Phone: 907-224-4054. Email: sportsandrec@cityofseward.net.

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Transform languishing into flourishing

A guide for better living

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice



Q: People talk about improving their lives each year, but where do I begin?

A: With a new year upon us, many individuals want to hit the reset button or find a new direction in their lives. But starting that journey can be tough, especially in a world that ties well-being to happiness and success. Many adults end up stuck in languishing—caught in a space where they aren't completely satisfied, but aren't really unhappy either. The great news is that this feeling of

stagnation can be transformed into a vibrant state of flourishing, filled with resilience and purpose. Dr. Martin Seligman's PERMA model provides a valuable framework for this transformation, encompassing five essential

elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Here are easy, actionable steps to guide you through this methodology.

Self-reflection

The first step to flourishing is self-reflection. Assess your overall wellness and identify any feelings of dissatisfaction. Consider recent life changes such as retirement, loss of a loved one, divorce, job layoff or relocation, reflecting on past behaviors and outcomes that have brought you here.

Engaging in practices like journaling or quiet contemplation can help explore your emotions

and recognize patterns contributing to your current state. Documenting both negative and positive thoughts provides a comprehensive view of your emotional landscape. This exercise aims to promote sustainable forward-moving progress rather than to criticize past decisions.

Determining your values

After self-reflection, the next step is to clarify your values, which guide your actions and decisions. Consider what matters most to you, such as family, health, creativity or community service. By identifying these priorities, you can align your daily activities with what brings

you genuine satisfaction. If you're feeling unfulfilled, take this time to reconnect with what brings you joy. Each crossroads you encounter is a turning point to redefine your values and recognize what is truly important to you.

Rewriting goals

With a clear understanding of your values, you can rewrite your goals to reflect these priorities. Traditional goal-setting often emphasizes external markers of success, such as financial achievements. For flourishing, goals should connect to your personal beliefs and values. Focus on achieving goals

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Prison

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deteriorate faster, we believe, than he would have had he not been in solitary confinement.

And it's the same with other medical issues. While they have been incarcerated they have not received any preventative care. They're not doing regular cancer screenings, regular medical checkups. They're really not doing that. You have to navigate a very bureaucratic, complicated process to even ask to seek medical treatment, and it takes months.

The Dept. of Corrections does not often follow their own policies and procedures on those issues, but because there's no preventative care, by the time somebody reaches 60 years old they often have a myriad of medical issues that could have been prevented had they been able to access medical care before 60. And when they get to that point, they've escalated far enough where Dept. of Corrections then has to address it. But at that point for many people it's too late. It's a matter of trying to keep them comfortable—like whatever that means in a carceral setting.

I don't understand what the resistance is to using these provisions to release

seniors from prison, particularly if it would save the state money.

I completely agree. We are involved in an effort right now to reform the parole board to make it a more meaningful opportunity for people to go home. The parole board should not have sentencing authority but they do, and so it's a really common reason that people are getting denied discretionary parole. It doesn't matter how well you did in prison, how good your disciplinary record looked, it doesn't matter what your reentry plan looks like. [The Board argues that] there's no way to bring someone back to life. There's no way to undo a harm that you committed when you were 20 years old, and so it's sort of this impossible measure for this population of people.

I truly don't understand the resistance of doing this because it costs a lot of money. End of life care costs a ridiculous amount of money. If you could reduce the older population, the state would no longer have to carry that burden. Some of the time when people can't get out, it's really wild to see because this person is in a wheelchair. He is blind. He has a son that's willing to care for him during the last years of his life. What is he going to do in our community that's going to create harm?

I'm assuming we can

anticipate that the over-60 demographic will grow in the future.

Yeah, it has been on an upward trajectory for the last few years. They went in at 16 and 17 years old, and they went into the system during the war on drugs and the super-predator [a now-debunked theory about violent youth] era

going in the 80s and 90s. The whiplash from that super predator era is very clear. In our prison system we have groups of seniors that grew up in the system, and unless things change, that will likely also be their coffin.

Note: For more information see: <https://www.acluak.org/en/our-work/>

[aclu-alaska-prison-project](https://www.aclu-alaska-prison-project.org/). This interview was conducted Dec. 5, 2024. It has been edited for length and clarity.

Lawrence D. Weiss is a UAA Professor of Public Health, Emeritus, creator of the UAA Master of Public Health program, and author of several books and numerous articles.

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Beans bring good things into your life

By **LESLIE SHALLCROSS**

For Senior Voice

Few could say that they do not have memories of meals and specific foods—flavors, aromas, textures, conversations, family recipes, comforting familiar rituals and celebrations. Food is a connection to the past, to our families, identity and culture. In the expression “as American as apple pie,” most of us understand the reference to patriotic values and our identity and most of us have a memory of making and eating a perfect apple pie. Legumes may not have risen to this type of distinction with less positive attributes suggested by the word “bean” but nearly every part of the country

and the world has a culture-defining legume dish. Perhaps your family still maintains the strong New England tradition of Saturday night “Boston” Baked Beans or eating black-eyed peas on New Year’s Day?

So many varieties and benefits

Whether your family’s food culture included legumes or not, many older Americans remember the awareness raised by Francis Moore Lappe’s book, “Diet for a Small Planet”. If you didn’t lean into vegetarianism at the time, new



Courtesy Leslie Shallcross

encouragement for using legumes is on the way. The issues of providing enough nutritious food for the world without a heavy toll on the environment and the potential disease prevention benefits of plant

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Panasonic KX-TGM450S Amplified Phone

Assistive Gizmo of the Month



Assistive
Technology of
Alaska

Amplified phones help those with hearing loss to understand phone conversations better. Each amplified phone will have its own level of amplification, tone control options, caller ID settings, and more. The Panasonic KX-TGM450S can increase up to 50dB amplification, has an

amplified answering machine, an extra loud ringer, a talking caller ID, and six levels of tone control. This is a cordless landline phone and can connect with up to six handsets; however, there are also corded amplified phones that have many of the same features.

This column is brought to you by ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska), a nonprofit, statewide resource. ATLA does not endorse this product but shares information on the types of assistive technology that may benefit Alaskans. For more information or to arrange a free demonstration, visit <http://www.atlaak.org> or call 907-563-2599.

Eating disorders and older adults

By **JENNY LOUDON**

For Senior Voice

When we think about eating disorders, the image that often comes to mind is of a teenager or young adult struggling with body image who looks extraordinarily thin. However, eating disorders don’t discriminate by age or body size. In fact, research shows that approximately 13% of women over age 50 are living with an eating disorder. Yet, the misconception that these conditions are exclusive to adolescents contributes to stigma—leaving many older adults suffering in silence.

Whether it’s anorexia, bulimia or binge eating, eating disorders have serious consequences for people of all ages. For older adults, the stakes are even higher.

The risks can be especially high at this time of year when many people make New Year’s resolutions centered on healthy eating or weight loss. These can unintentionally trigger or exacerbate eating disorders by fostering an unhealthy preoccupation with food, body image or restrictive behaviors.

A silent epidemic in older adults

Eating disorders can

develop at any stage of life, but they often go unrecognized in older adults. Times of transition such as menopause, retirement, divorce, or the loss of a loved one can leave individuals vulnerable. These life changes can lead to feelings of loss or struggles with self-worth, which can trigger or exacerbate disordered eating patterns.

Our youth-obsessed culture further compounds the issue. The pressure to

maintain a youthful appearance can lead some older adults to adopt extreme measures, such as dangerous dieting, excessive exercise or other behaviors aimed at achieving unrealistic body standards. This is especially concerning because the aging body is less resilient to the physical toll that eating disorders take.

Health risks of eating disorders in aging bodies

Eating disorders, whether it’s anorexia, bulimia or binge eating, have serious consequences for people of all ages. For older adults,

the stakes are even higher. Malnutrition, for instance, can accelerate bone density loss, leading to fractures and osteoporosis. Dehydration and electrolyte imbalances can strain the heart, increase the risk of arrhythmias, and exacerbate existing cardiovascular conditions.

Additionally, older adults often have underlying health issues such as diabetes, hypertension or arthritis. Eating disorders can worsen these conditions, complicate treatment, and hinder recovery. In severe cases, disordered eating can lead to organ failure and even death. These risks under

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Coverage options for when Medicare falls short

By **SEAN McPHILAMY**

Alaska Medicare
Information Office

Medicare coverage is good, but it is not all-inclusive. There are many things that Medicare does not cover. For example, Medicare does not cover most dental, vision and hearing care, including hearing aids. Nor does it cover most non-emergency transportation or care



outside of our country. Even when Medicare covers

your care, there may be costs left to you, like copays and coinsurances—these costs can add up. An example, for an outpatient visit to a physician who accepts the assigned billing rates under Medicare, you will be responsible for twenty percent of the cost. Today I will discuss ways to add on to your Medicare to help you manage the cost of these types of care.

Consider Medicare Supplemental Insurance (Medigap)

Medicare Supplement Insurance is also known as Medigap coverage, which is a health insurance policy sold by a private insurance company offering standardized benefits to work with Original Medicare (your inpatient and outpatient medical coverage). If you have a Medigap, it pays part of, most or all

the remaining cost after Original Medicare pays first. Medigaps may cover deductibles, coinsurance and copayments. Medigaps may also cover health care costs that Medicare does not cover at all, such as a portion of the cost of emergency care when travelling outside of our United States.

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page 6 please



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Your balance system



By **DONNA R. DEMARCO**
Accurate Hearing Systems

Often taken for granted, good balance is necessary to perform daily activities.

Vestibular organs—the paired set of tiny sensory organs right near the cochlea—are key to maintaining balance. They are filled with fluid called endolymph that moves when your head moves.

Combined with information from eyes, nerves and muscles, these hairs send signals to the brain when the body's position is changing. The brain takes in all this information & coordinates the body to respond so a fall does not occur.

Balance issues arise when something interrupts this coordinated process. It's not uncommon for vestibular

organs to be the culprit. Aging alone results in natural endolymph fluid loss as well as the sensitivity loss in your inner ear hairs. But illness, infections and head trauma can also cause equilibrium disorders and dizziness.

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo is also common along with Meniere's disease. Hearing loss can also impair balance when your brain is thinking more of hearing than walking.

Balance problems can occur at any age and balance-related falls account for more than half of accidental deaths for people 65 and older, and over 300,000 hip fractures a year. That's why we recommend taking your hearing health seriously—with proper diagnosis and therapeutic exercises, most balance issues can be managed.

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Alaska law permits a hearing aid dealer who is not a licensed physician or a licensed audiologist to test hearing only for the purpose of selling or leasing hearing aids; the tests given by a hearing aid dealer are not to be used to diagnose the cause of the hearing impairment.

Medicare

continued from page 5

office, the State of Alaska's Division of Insurance annually publishes a Consumer Guide, which you may find online at <https://health.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/medicare/medicaresup.aspx>. Or our office can provide a printed copy. This booklet helps to provide an overview and a comparison between plans as offered by the companies approved to offer these plans to Alaskans.

Here in Alaska, you may purchase a Medigap policy from an insurance company at any time of the year, however, during the first six months after your Part B (outpatient) coverage begins, you have a guarantee right to purchase a policy without any disqualifying medical conditions. There also may be special conditions or periods during which you may also qualify for this guarantee right, as explained in the Consumer Guide. After narrowing down the choices for a Medigap policy which meets your needs and your budget, you should contact the insurance company directly to enroll.

You may also be able to obtain "standalone" insurance policies which offer dental, hearing or vision plans. Alternatively, your provider may offer a lower cost, discount option if you pay by cash.

Other options to consider

Once enrolled into Medicare, there may be other options to consider. For individuals with low income and few assets, the State of Alaska manages our Medicaid program, which in Alaska also is known as DenaliCare. Recognized as the "payer of last resort", Medicaid may cover dental, vision, hearing, long-term care and/or transportation services. You can also find low-cost care for services not covered by Medicare, in places known as Federally Qualified Health Centers, such as the Sunshine Community Health Center in the upper Matanuska Valley, or Community Health Centers, such as the Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center.

You may also be able to obtain "standalone" insurance policies which offer dental, hearing or vision plans. Alternatively, your provider may offer a lower cost, discount option if you pay by cash. You might also contact local medical facilities to ask if they offer dental clinics, how you can become a patient there, which

services they offer and at what cost, and if payment plans are available. Other options exist. An example in obtaining low-cost care is offered at the dental clinic in the University of Alaska Anchorage. Students work with patients under the supervision of experienced, licensed providers.

To discuss any Medicare bill payment concerns, or to ask any questions regarding your specific situation, please contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680. Our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program.

If you are part of an agency or organization that assists seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

Sean McPhilamy is a volunteer and Certified Medicare Counselor for the Alaska Medicare Information Office.

Medicare counseling by phone

By **LEE CORAY-LUDDEN**
For Senior Voice

I am a Certified Medicare Counselor working under SHIP. My office is

in the Soldotna Senior Center, but I serve the state via phone. If you are local, I can help you as a walk-in. I am here Mondays

through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon. Call with your Medicare questions, 907-262-2322.



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Health fairs and affordable blood tests are back

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. (AHF) is excited to announce the return of our health fairs and affordable blood tests. The schedule will be published on www.alaskahealthfair.org around the first week of January. You are welcome to make your appointment online or walk in at any of our events. Please consider signing up for our electronic newsletter to be notified of important updates, resources, and more.

We hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and are ready to prioritize your health in the new year. This season, we will add new blood tests to our selection of essential screenings: Mercury and Lead.

For those who may not know us, AHF is a non-profit dedicated to promoting health, wellness and early screenings across the state since 1980. Health fairs are free community events that showcase local wellness and safety resources and

feature affordable comprehensive blood tests. AHF works with the leading national laboratory used by local hospitals and health care providers to bring you high-quality blood screenings at nonprofit pricing!

Affordable blood tests available at all events

Our Comprehensive Blood Chemistry Screen has 27 panels covering infection, anemia, liver disease, clotting ability, kidney and adrenal function, liver function, bone

disease, tissue disease or damage, heart function, liver function, muscle function, coronary heart disease and more, for \$45.

Some of our other screenings include Thyroid (\$40), Prostate disease (\$25), vitamin D (\$55), A1C diabetes (\$25), blood Typing (\$25).

Additional tests and details are on our website, www.alaskahealthfair.org.

Getting involved

We invite all Alaskans to join us once again as

volunteers or health educators this coming season. Nonprofits, businesses and other agencies are provided with complimentary exhibitor space to educate on important health and safety topics while fostering community connections.

For individuals seeking volunteer opportunities, we offer a diverse range of medical and non-medical tasks both at the fairs and in our offices. Visit our website and click on

page 20 please

Disorders

continued from page 5

score the importance of identifying and addressing eating disorders as soon as possible.

Breaking down stigma and seeking help

One of the biggest barriers to treatment for older adults is stigma. Many feel ashamed to admit they're struggling, thinking, "Shouldn't I have grown out of this?" But eating disorders are not a "phase." They are complex mental health conditions that require compassion and treatment at any age.

Some healthcare providers may play a role in perpetuating this oversight. Symptoms of eating disorders

such as weight loss, fatigue or gastrointestinal distress are often misattributed to "normal" aging or other medical conditions. Educating both providers and the public is key to ensuring older adults receive proper diagnosis and care.

Recognizing the warning signs

Being aware of the signs of an eating disorder can make a significant difference. Here are some red flags to watch for:

- ▶ Significant changes in weight (up or down)
- ▶ Preoccupation with food, weight or body image
- ▶ Skipping meals or avoiding eating in social settings
- ▶ Excessive exercise or an unusual focus on fitness
- ▶ Gastrointestinal complaints without a clear medical cause

▶ Withdrawal from social activities or changes in mood

▶ If you notice these behaviors in yourself or a loved one, it's crucial to seek help. Recovery is possible at all ages.

Steps toward healing

Treatment for eating disorders typically involves a multidisciplinary approach, including medical care, nutritional counseling and mental health therapy. The Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance (AKEDA) is available to answer ques-

tions, provide resources, and help people find treatment resources that can help move the eating disorder to the rearview mirror. The organization hosts Alaska-based support groups for individuals and family members. Nobody should have to walk this journey alone.



In addition, the AKEDA website lists providers statewide, including doctors, therapists and dietitians who work with clients with this illness.

People can recover from eating disorders at any age

or stage of illness. Reaching out for help is the first step towards healing. If you or someone you know is struggling, reach out to a health care provider or contact AKEDA for help. It's never too late to experience the peace of recovery.

Contact the Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance at www.akeatingdisordersalliance.org, call 907-308-8400 or email info@akeatingdisordersalliance.org.


Jenny Loudon is the co-founder and board chair of the Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance.

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program at APIA has partnered with several non-profits to meet community needs by encouraging and supporting volunteerism for people ages 55 years and older in the Anchorage and Mat-Su region. We are currently looking for elders to volunteer at the following sites (but not limited to): Alaska Regional Hospital, Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home, Alaska Veterans Museum, Anchorage Loussac Library, Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Catholic Social Services, Downtown Hope Center, Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, Prestige Care and Rehabilitation Center, Primrose Retirement Communities, Wasilla Area Seniors Inc.

If you are interested please contact:

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 RSVP Coordinator
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 Or directly (907) 222-4276
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Promising treatments for back pain, long COVID

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

New approach to lower back pain

Lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS) is a common cause of lower back pain in a large number of older adults. Now, a study out of the University of Florida is showing that a minimally invasive procedure, known as mild®, provides pain relief and improved physical function for at least a year in adults suffering from lower back pain.

The study followed 136 men and women between the ages of 16 and 89 who underwent the mild® procedure. It is designed to reduce pressure on the spine by removing part of a thickened ligament. Unlike traditional spinal surgery, mild® doesn't require general anesthesia, large incisions, or extended recovery time, making it a safer option for many older patients.

Patient-reported pain levels dropped dramatically within the first month after the procedure. Although the pain relief lessened over time, the 12-month follow-up still showed marked improvement compared to baseline levels. In addition, more than 65% of patients reported better physical function throughout the study, with no decrease in mobility or quality of life.

These findings could be significant for older adults suffering from lumbar stenosis, as the procedure could provide meaningful relief without the risks associated with traditional surgery. The study showed that the procedure improved pain and function over the long term, improving an individual's quality of life.

Electrical nerve stimulation may help with long COVID pain

Adults who are suffering from Long COVID pain and fatigue may greatly benefit from a wearable TENS system. This simple device appears to offer immediate, on-demand relief. Researchers at UCLA teamed



up with colleagues at Baylor College of Medicine in Texas and investigated whether a wearable Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) device, which uses low-voltage electrical currents to reduce pain, could prevent fatigue and mobility issues.

Long COVID is a complex and lingering condition following COVID-19 recovery. It affects approximately 1 in 13 adults in the U.S. Symptoms such as widespread pain, fatigue and muscle weakness often continue to disrupt daily activities, including walking and basic tasks.

"While this study focused on managing pain and fatigue caused by long COVID, it may also have potential applications for addressing similar symptoms in individuals with other respiratory diseases, those who have experienced extended ICU stays and developed post-hospitalization weaknesses, and conditions involving chronic fatigue and pain, such as fibromyalgia or chemotherapy-related side effects," Bijan Najafi, MD, who is the research director of the Center for Advanced Surgical and Interventional Technology at UCLA Health in California.

In the study, 25 participants with chronic musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and gait difficulties were assigned either a high-dose (active) TENS device or a low-dose (placebo) device. Both groups used the TENS device for three to five hours daily over a four-week period. Researchers measured participants' pain levels, fatigue and walking performance before and after the study.

next page please



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Free support, resources for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program will hold the following caregiver support group meetings in January. Meeting format is open discussion unless otherwise noted.

Jan. 2 Tyotkas Elder Center (in Kenai) support meeting, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Jan. 3 Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

Jan. 16 Sterling Senior Center support meeting, 1 to 2 p.m.

Jan. 28 Nikiski Senior Center support meeting, 1 to 2 p.m.

Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. For information or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Kebschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654 or email kpfcsp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org.

Kodiak Senior Center hosts the caregiver support group on the third Thursday of each month (Jan. 16) at 1 p.m. Call for information, 907-486-6181.

Around the state

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meet-

ings around the state, including Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau/Southeast, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Willow. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details.

ARA also hosts a statewide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 1 to 2 p.m. For information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Senior and Caregiver Resource Center is available. Call Jennifer Garrison at 866-746-6177.

The national Alzheimer's Association operates a 24-hour help line for caregivers, staffed by specialists and Masters-level clinicians, at 800-272-3900.

Online caregiver support for Alaska veterans

The Alaska VA Caregiver Wellness Cafe is held monthly on the first Thursday (Jan. 2) from 1 to 2 p.m. via the Teams software and is an informal virtual place to engage with other caregivers while learning about topics beneficial to your role as a caregiver. Enrollment in Alaska VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is not required to participate in the call. For information, call 907-375-2606.

Transform

continued from page 4

that enhance your well-being, such as rekindling hobbies or strengthening relationships. Start by writing down two to five simple, value-driven goals.

Commitment to change

Diligence is essential in the journey from languishing to flourishing. Commitment to change means setting goals and taking meaningful actions to achieve them. Embrace the necessity of stepping outside your comfort zone. Commitment can take on many forms, such as establishing routines, seeking new experiences, or enhancing social connections. If you want to change your circumstances, you must be willing to adopt new behaviors. This dedication to self-awareness fosters a sense of purpose and conscious choice.

Adopting a growth mindset

Embracing a growth mindset, as popularized by psychologist Carol Dweck, can be transformative. This mindset encourages the

Putting it all together using the PERMA model:

- Belief**—I am more optimistic when around other people. (*Positive Emotion*)
- Value**—Cultivating friendships is vital to me. (*Engagement*)
- Goal**—Seeing my friends frequently gives me a feeling of belonging. (*Relationships*)
- Action**—Every Wednesday I meet up with my friends. (*Meaning*)
- Outcome**—I have created long-lasting, meaningful bonds with others. (*Accomplishment*)

belief that you can develop can be transformative. This persistence. By viewing challenges as opportunities for expansion, you can enhance your confidence and adaptability, paving the way for continuous learning and exploration.

Enlisting help from a coach or mentor

Finally, consider enlisting a coach or mentor for invaluable support on your journey to flourishing. They can offer insights, accountability and encouragement, helping you navigate personal development. Coaches facilitate goal-setting, provide constructive feedback, and inspire you to push beyond perceived limitations.

Conclusion

Transforming from languishing to flourishing is a multifaceted process that requires self-reflection, value determination, goal rewriting, commitment, a growth mindset, and mentorship. Embrace the power of Seligman's PERMA model to craft a life that feels both settled and inspired. By focusing on positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, you can transform your years into a vibrant chapter of well-being. You've got this!

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, CLIPP is a health and wellness professional coach practicing in Anchorage. If you have questions write to her at info@karencasnovas.com.

COVID

from page 8

The study revealed that the high-dose TENS group experienced notable improvements in pain relief (26.1% more relief compared to placebo) and walking ability (8% during fast walking). One factor in the study's success was likely the high rate of daily device usage. The wearable nature of the TENS device

allowed participants to use it seamlessly throughout the day, without disrupting their routines.

"This wearable TENS system offered immediate, on-demand relief from pain and fatigue, making it easy to integrate into daily activities," said Dr. Najafi.

This study provides some hope for finding an effective, non-invasive solution

for managing lingering COVID-19 symptoms that continue to affect millions. "But our sample size was limited, so further research is needed to confirm these findings," said Dr. Najafi.

John Schieszer is an award-winning national journalist and radio and podcast broadcaster of The Medical Minute. He can be reached at medicalminutes@gmail.com.



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You may be eligible for one or more of the following programs:

- **Medicare Part D Extra Help/Low Income Subsidy (LIS)** - pays for Part D plan premiums, reduces drug co-pays and eliminates the Donut-Hole
- **Medicare Savings Program (MSP)** - pays Medicare premiums
- **Medicaid** - serves as a supplement to Medicare, pays deductibles and co-pays.
- **SNAP** - Alaska's Food Stamp Program
- **LIHEAP** - Heating assistance
- **Senior Benefit** - receive cash from the State of Alaska
- Additional programs may be available.



Building better balance has big payoffs

By **BECKY DAVIS**
For Senior Voice

When we think about having good balance, it's often in terms of body stability, of being able to stand on tip-toe or on one foot without falling over. In fact, you may have heard about a recent study that associates the ability to balance on one foot for at least 10 seconds with improved odds for a longer life span. But having good balance isn't just about being able to stand on one leg; it's about being able to move better and finding a balance of activities that helps us do that.

Here are some ways to improve your balancing skills.

Do cardio

Participating in cardio activities not only improves your heart and lung capacity, but contributes to better gait, weight control, motor control and self-confidence, all of which impact and strengthen your balance. In fact, the most basic cardio activity, walking, is also the number one functional balance activity because every single leg swing requires balancing on one leg. Same for dancing, or walking up or down stairs, playing tennis or pickleball. Do what you like, but participating in a variety and trying new activities will especially help

you maintain and improve your balance.

Strength train

Strength training will definitely help improve balance because stronger muscles can react faster.

Research shows that people who regularly strength train fall less often than those who don't, and if they do fall, they fall less acutely. Lower body and core exercises are particularly important.

Exercises might include:

Squats: from standing position, bend hips and knees and sit back as if you're going to sit down

Single-leg squats: squat on one leg with smaller range of motion

Reverse lunges: from a standing position, step one leg back into a lunge, alternating sides

Planks: lie face down; lift body onto forearms and knees or forearms and toes; hold for 30 seconds

Work on your flexibility

Limited range of motion (ROM) is a contributing factor to poor balance, so flexibility training will increase ROM and mobility. Taking yoga, tai chi or Pilates will offer gradual, consistent balance exercises. Stretches you can do at home might include:

▶ Stand feet hip-width apart and reach both arms up overhead; slightly lean



Research shows that people who regularly strength train fall less often than those who don't, and if they do fall, they fall less acutely.

istock.com

back

▶ Stand gripping the back of a chair with one hand; with the other grab one leg up behind you

▶ Sit on the floor with legs straight out in front of you; lean forward and try to reach your toes

Find a community

Doing physical activities with others helps you be consistent, makes you feel more confident and of course makes the activity more fun, and all of these things positively impact your functional balance. Walking and talking, for example, is a great functional exercise because

you're multi-tasking.

Practice balance

Of course, specifically practicing balance exercises will improve your ability to do them.

▶ Try standing on one foot while working in the kitchen or brushing your teeth

▶ Walk heel to toe around the house

▶ Practice walking on your tip-toes and stepping over objects (watch out, Fido!)

▶ Practice side-to-side movements, such as step touches or small squats

▶ Stand on one leg and tap the other foot in a clock-work pattern

these activities every day. In fact, it's better to mix things up. Aim for:

Cardio: mostly every day, for at least 30 minutes

Strength training: two to three times per week; 2-4 sets of 10-15 repetitions

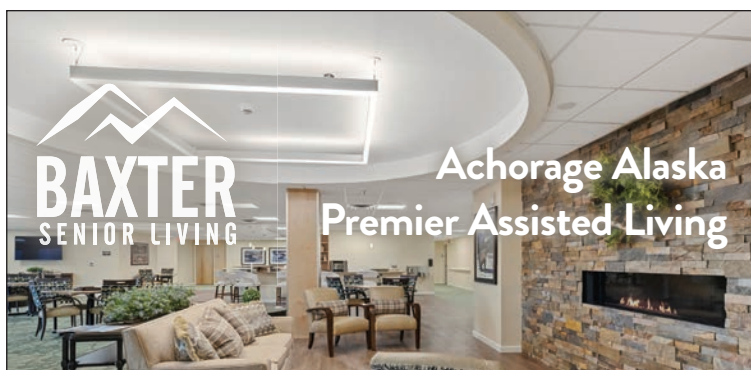
Flexibility training: mostly every day; especially after a workout or activity

As for socializing and practicing body balance exercises? The more the better.

Whether you take a group class or do your own workouts, try doing all of the activities listed above on a regular basis for a couple of months. Then come March, try the one-legged challenge and see where you're at. I'm betting it'll be more than 10 seconds.

Having good balance is so much more than being able to stand on one leg. It's about creating various challenges for movement and creating a good balance of activities and finding some fun and friendship while you're at it.

Becky Davis is the Group Fitness Manager at The Alaska Club overseeing instructors and classes in Anchorage, Eagle River and Wasilla.



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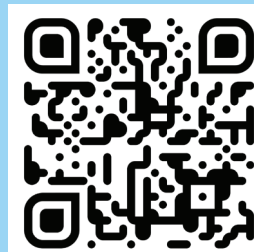
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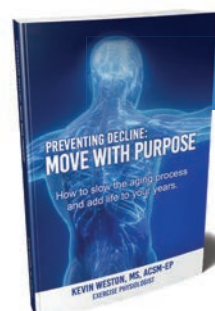
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Presented by:

Kevin Weston, MS, ACSM-EP
Author and Exercise Physiologist
Wellness Specialist at Preventing Decline

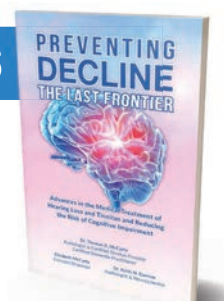


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Rightsizing instead of downsizing



By **ALLANA LUMBARD**

Downsizing Alaska

When it comes to transitioning to a new home, downsizing isn't always about moving to the smallest space possible—it's about finding the right space for your lifestyle and needs. Rightsizing focuses on creating a living environment that supports your priorities, whether that means simplifying your home, moving closer to loved ones, or designing for future accessibility.

Start by considering what truly matters. Do you need room to host family gatherings or space for hobbies? Is being near family, friends or medical care a priority? A right-sized home should align with how you live now and how you envision the future.

Design is equally important. Many seniors

benefit from single-level living, wider doorways and accessible bathrooms. These features can make daily tasks easier and provide peace of mind for years to come.

Rightsizing can also mean evaluating location. Moving closer to family or into a community with social and recreational opportunities can enhance your quality of life. A well-chosen neighborhood can be just as valuable as the home itself.

Finally, take inventory of your belongings and decide what fits your new vision. Letting go of what you no longer need allows you to focus on what brings you joy and functionality.

Rightsizing isn't about compromise—it's about living intentionally. By choosing a home that fits your goals and values, you're setting the stage for a simpler, more fulfilling life.

Interested in more learning opportunities? We host a monthly educational opportunity with both in-person and Zoom options. Call/email for info.

Allana Lumbar is a downsizing expert and real estate agent affiliated with Real Broker Wasilla.



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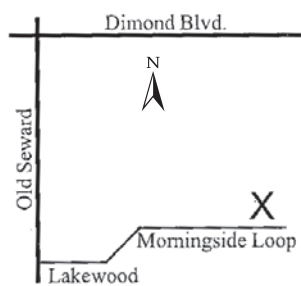
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Staying safe when the lights go out

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice

The power can go out any time, leaving us in the dark and potentially vulnerable. While outages are usually just an inconvenience, being prepared can help keep you safe and comfortable until the electricity returns.

Get ready for power outages by keeping important items where you can easily find them. Your emergency kit should have three main things: flashlights with fresh batteries, a radio that works on batteries, and enough bottled water. Keep everything in a drawer or cabinet near where you usually sit this way you won't have to hunt for things in the dark. Change the batteries twice a year so your items will work when you really need them.

If you use medical devices that need electricity, it's important to have a plan in case the power goes out. Talk to your doctor about what you should do if the power is out for a long time. Buy a small generator to help keep your devices running. Make sure you know how to use the generator safely. Never use a generator inside your house or in a garage that's attached to your house, because this can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

When your lights go out, look outside to see if your

Put a thermometer in your fridge to check if your food is still safe to eat. If the temperature goes above 40°F, the food might not be safe anymore.

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neighbors' homes are dark too. If your neighbors still have power but you don't, check your circuit breaker box it might just be a problem in your house. If everyone's power is out, call the power company to let them know. Most power companies now have phone systems that can tell you when they expect to fix the problem and turn the power back on.

During a power outage, keep your fridge and freezer doors closed as much as possible. If you don't open it, your fridge will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will stay cold even longer, up to two days. Put a thermometer in your fridge to check if your food is still safe to eat. If the temperature goes above 40°F, the food might not be safe anymore.

In the winter, preserve heat by closing off rooms

you're not using and putting towels under doors to block drafts. Wear layers of clothing and use extra blankets instead of unsafe heating methods like gas stoves.

Keep a corded telephone at home. These phones can work during power outages because they get power from the phone lines, not your house's electricity. Also, try to keep your cell phone charged. Have a car charger or backup battery pack ready in case you need it when the power goes out.

Most importantly, stay calm when the power goes out. Most blackouts don't last long. Keep busy by reading books, playing cards or finding fun things to do that don't need electricity. Don't forget to check on your neighbors, especially people who live alone or need extra help. When neighbors help each other, it makes tough times much easier for everyone.

Christian M. Hartley is a 40-year Alaska resident with over 25 years of public safety and public service experience. He is the City of Houston Fire Chief and serves on many local and state workgroups, boards and commissions related to safety. He lives in Big Lake with his wife of 20 years and their three teenage sons.



Faster Social Security claims processing for early-onset Alzheimer's

Social Security Administration

Today, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease. It is a brain condition that causes problems with memory, thinking, and behavior. Since the onset of Alzheimer's can occur in younger people before they retire, it may affect their ability to work as the

disease progresses.

Our benefits and services are especially vital to people with early-onset Alzheimer's who are unable to work and may have no other source of income. They may want to apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Our Compassionate Allowances program provides faster processing of disability

claims for people with early-onset Alzheimer's disease and several other neurodegenerative (brain degenerative) disorders.

More than a decade ago, Social Security added early-onset Alzheimer's disease to our Compassionate Allowances program. You can learn more about our Compassionate Allowances program at www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances.



Medicaid long term services and supports: The basics

By **KARA THRASHER-LIVINGSTON** and **KAT SOWA-LAPINSKAS**

For Senior Voice

Ever wonder how to get help with daily living tasks or skills through the Alaska Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver (HCBW) or Personal Care Services (PCS)?

To get help from the Waiver program or Personal Care Services, first you need to have Medicaid. Medicaid is health insurance for people with low income. People get Medicaid by applying for it with the Division of Public Assistance. Medicaid pays for medical care. It can also pay for help with everyday living and activities, like a Personal Care Assistant (PCA).

To get Medicaid, adults need to have income below a certain limit. A child with a disability might qualify, whether or not their family is eligible for Medicaid. People who have disabili-

ties may become eligible for Long-Term Care Medicaid even if their income is too high for regular Medicaid.

Eligibility for Long-Term Care Medicaid

When someone with a disability needs help with daily living, they might need reminders or help to do everyday tasks. They may need the same kind of help as people in nursing homes. They might need similar help to people with developmental disabilities living in care facilities. The person must have medical records that show the disability and health conditions.

You may qualify for Personal Care Services or the Waiver if you need someone to help hands-on with everyday activities. Here are some examples:

- ▶ Getting out of bed, turning while in bed, bathing and showering
- ▶ Preparing meals and help to eat them
- ▶ Using the toilet, includ-

ing changing briefs/pull-ups and cleaning up.

- ▶ Help doing household tasks like laundry and washing dishes
- ▶ Moving about from room to room at home and help with going places in the community.
- ▶ Help with taking medicine and limited everyday medical needs.

People with intellectual and developmental disability may qualify if the disability started before the person turned 22. A medical expert must write the diagnosis. Examples: Autism, seizures, cerebral palsy, and others. A person with a developmental disability may think, act, or communicate very differently than others their age without a disability. They could need special help to learn everyday life skills and safety skills and lots of reminders or someone to help them every day. The person likely learns very differently than people without a disability and will

probably need this kind of help for their whole life.

Where to start getting help in Alaska?

The Aging and Disability Resource Centers and Developmental Disabilities Resource Connections programs can help. They cover every region of Alaska. They can help you understand what you need, show you what choices are available and help you apply for Medicaid or get help to apply. For more information call the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) toll free number, 1-855-565-2017.

What is a care coordinator? What do they do?

When you connect with the ADRC, you may learn that you likely qualify for the Medicaid Waiver. If you do, the ADRC will give you a list of care coordinators to select from. Care coordinators help people get services at home or in

the community. They also help with medical, social, educational and other services that aren't paid for by Medicaid.

Care coordinators help people through a process led by the person receiving the help and their chosen team. They assist with completing and submitting applications for services at home or in the community. Once someone is eligible, care coordinators help the person set goals, plan services and pick service providers. They help create the first support plan and review and update it each year. They stay in contact with the person by visiting them and holding meetings about services.

Care coordinators do not do the following: fill out Medicaid applications, take people to do errands or shopping, schedule transportation or other services for the client. They do not accompany clients on

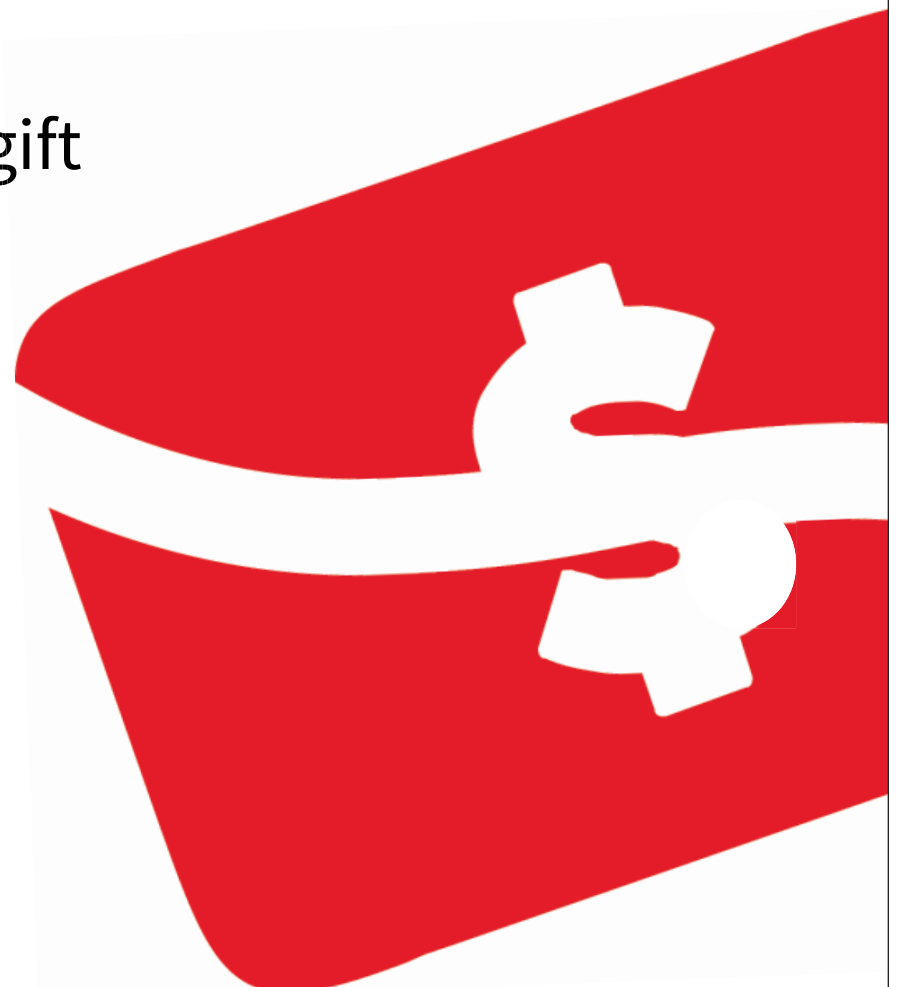
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Klawock Elder Mentor remembers growing up in Utqiagvik

AmeriCorps Seniors Program

RurAL CAP's AmeriCorps Seniors Program includes the Elder Mentor and Senior Companion Programs, which provide volunteer opportunities for people age 55 and better. RurAL CAP, short for Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc., partners with schools, Head Start, local governments, and health agencies to set up volunteer host sites. Volunteers get training, sup-



port and a small stipend as a thank-you for their time and dedication. This

Evelyn Williams is a RurAL CAP Elder Mentor volunteer in Klawock. Photo courtesy RurAL CAP

article features Evelyn, an Elder Mentor volunteer in Klawock.

Evelyn: Growing Up in Utqiagvik

Evelyn Williams, known as Ayalhuq, shows the true spirit of the AmeriCorps Seniors Program through her service as an Elder Mentor.

"Hello! I'm Evelyn Hopson Williams, also known as Ayalhuq. I am named after my mother's best friend's mother; I later learned it means 'she's out of here' or 'traveling' in Yupik, which fits me well because I have always loved to travel."

Evelyn's journey began in the close-knit town of Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), where she cultivated deep-rooted values of community, resilience and cultural heritage. Child-

hood memories of playing on the beach, enduring fierce blizzards to walk to school, and using seal oil candles for light are vivid reminders of the strength she gained growing up. Whaling season, with its rich celebrations and the much-anticipated Nalukataq (blanket toss), left a profound impact on Evelyn, reinforcing her understanding of the power of community, connection

next page please

Alaska trucking tales from the '40s

Part one of two

As told to MARALEY McMICHAEL

Senior Voice Correspondent

Editor's note: Al Clayton, who died in 2008, recounted his Alaskan truck driving experiences to his daughter, Maraley McMichael, in 2005. She has written and submitted the story in two parts.



Al Clayton
Courtesy Maraley McMichael

In November 1946, I was working at the Seward power plant when I received a phone call. My mother was dying in Dillon, Montana. After packing some clothes in a suitcase, I took a taxicab to the airport and flew from Seward to Anchorage on Christensen Airways. Once in Anchorage, I booked a flight to Fairbanks on Star Airways. At the Fairbanks airport I got a flight to Edmonton on Canadian Pacific Airways. The last leg of my journey was over 600 miles from Edmonton, Alberta to Dillon, Montana, by bus. Arriving in Dillon, I found my mother still alive, but breathing her last.

After the funeral was over I had some of her personal belongings to bring back to Alaska and an idea struck me. I could buy a vehicle and drive back home, up the Alcan Highway. After finding no pickups available to purchase, I learned it was possible to pay \$3,050 for a Diamond T flatbed chassis in Belgrade, Montana. I made the purchase, drove it to Idaho Falls, and had an 8 by 16 foot flatbed with side panels built for it. They built it tight enough to haul grain, with 5-foot sides and an end gate.

By chance, while I was back in Dillon, I ran into Frank Wine who ran the

After the funeral was

page 16 please



Buck Buchanan with his new Dodge Power Wagon.



David Rosenthal

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Al Clayton's 1.5-ton Diamond T truck.



Elder

from page 14

and shared traditions.

“Whaling is a highlight each year as it is today, marked by celebrations when the captain’s house flew a flag of success. It is an exciting and joyous event and much anticipated. Each family sat with their own utensils and bags and brought chairs, enjoying the community feast.”

A key value she holds close is captured in the Iñupiaq word “Illa”, which means “you’re a piece of me, and I’m a piece of you.”

“I recently became an amau (great-grandmother), carrying forward these connections. My role on the Elders and Youth Council for First Alaskans offered engagement with communities statewide, learning and listening to both elders and youth.”

This belief has been the foundation of Evelyn’s service, as she has dedicated herself to nurturing the younger generation and uplifting those around her.

Now an amau, she serves not only as a mentor but as a cultural bearer who imparts the knowledge and traditions of her people.

Weaving positive stories

Evelyn’s volunteer experience at the Clare Swan Early Learning Center last year and now at Klawock Elementary and Head Start, beautifully showcases her unwavering dedication to creating a meaningful and lasting impact within communities. She read and sang to children, weaving positive stories and nurturing an environment of joy and belonging. Growing up speaking Iñupiaq and navigating the challenges of colonization profoundly shaped her passion for ensuring that every child feels valued, heard and understood. She strives to be a constant, supportive presence, using storytelling, songs and one-on-one interactions to inspire children to embrace their heritage and develop a strong belief in themselves.

Volunteers like Evelyn

embody the essence of service, reminding us that it is not solely about aiding others—it is about building a legacy of compassion, connection and cultural continuity that reverberates through generations.

By sharing stories, forming connections and offering unwavering support, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers strengthen the fabric of their communities, ensuring traditions are honored and new generations feel valued and empowered.

Get involved

On Jan. 24, from 1 to 4 p.m., RurAL CAP will host a January dance and craft event at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. This event is open to all and there will be opportunities to talk about the program as well as complete an application. Food and drink will be provided for what is sure to be a fun event.

To learn more about the event and our program you can call us at 907-717-7932 or visit www.eldermentor.org.

Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Valdez Senior Center’s board of directors meets Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 1:30 p.m. Public welcome. Call 907-835-5032 ... **Older Persons Action Group, Inc.** welcomes new board members **Carol Allen** and **Yvette Tousignant**, both from **Anchorage**, who joined the board at OPAG’s annual meeting in November. Yvette comes with a background in education and is currently the education director for **Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska**. Carol is a licensed CPA with a career in business and accounting. She will take over OPAG board treasurer duties from **Joan Haig** and board member **Amanda Biggs** takes over board secretary duties from **Yvonne Chase**. Thank you to board members **Dylan Webb** (president), **Gail Opalinski** (vice president), **Eileen Hosey**, **Leonard T. Kelley** (emeritus), **Sharon White-Wheeler** (emeritus) and all the others who have done so much for OPAG over the years ... Looking for a new year activity? Chess is an age-old favorite for all ages and **Kenai Community Library** hosts **chess open hour** on Wednesdays, 4 to 5 p.m. All levels welcome, board provided. Call 907-283-8207 ... Are you a **member** of a **senior center**? Are you sure? Some centers base membership on the calendar year, meaning renewal comes around in January, so please check and confirm. Your participation and support keeps their vital programs going.

Rambles is compiled from senior center newsletters, websites and reader tips from around the state. Email your Rambles items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.



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Diamond T at the Slims River, Mile 1,059.8 Alcan Highway. (It is not listed in the current Milepost travel guide.)
Courtesy Maraley McMichael

Trucking

continued from page 14

Seward Sawmill out at Bear Lake. Since there was a shipping strike going on, he and I figured we could purchase a load of food, haul it back to Alaska, and make some money in the process. We bought a ton of great northern beans, 1,400 pounds of ham, and 150 pounds of sweet cream butter right out of a creamery in Butte. With the food, the household furniture, and the rest of my other's stuff, I had a full load.

I arrived at U.S. Customs at Sweet Grass, Montana near the end of December. However, the Canadian Customs at Coots, Alberta,

would not let me travel on Sunday, so I had to sit around for a whole day. The next day, Dec. 31, 1946, I crossed the border and drove 500 miles. All the way to Edmonton, where the temperature had dropped to around zero degrees.

A day later, in Athabaska, it was minus-45 F and it took me two hours to warm up the truck for travel. I had to warm the engine, the transmission, and the rear end. As the day wore on, due to a warm front, the temperature rose to minus-10 F. About this time I met a fellow named Buck Buchanan driving a new Dodge Power Wagon. He thought it would be nice if we traveled together up the Alcan and I agreed it was a good idea. Buck was pulling an empty trailer, so at night we rolled out our mattresses and sleeping bag and slept on its floor. There was no heat, of course.

We couldn't make more than about 250 miles a day, with different things slowing us down. Some of the big grades were icy because of the warmer weather. On one particular grade, I didn't make it to the top. When I started sliding backward, I tapped the brakes and steered, going back down the hill until I hit a gravel spot. After recovering my shaky nerves, I took a better run at the hill and made it the second time.

It took us about five days of traveling to get to Whitehorse, where it started getting much colder again. I remember driving one particular starry night, when the moonlight was so bright I could look off and see the mountains, which I judged to be 100 miles in the distance.

At the Canadian/Alaskan border, there was no customs station, so we

drove another 90 miles to Tok before checking in. The fellow at the American Customs wanted me to unload my truck so they could check the contents. It was minus-45 F. I didn't offer to start unloading and they didn't seem too ambitious to do it. They looked over my manifest and soon took my word for it. The next day Buck and I went our separate ways. He headed for Fairbanks, while I started for Anchorage.

Going through Indian River between Tok and Chistochina, about a quarter mile of the roadway was flooded with water running over the highway. I didn't know if I would make it, but hoped for the best and sure enough made it through that overflow. I stopped at Harry and Gladys Heinz's store in Glennallen. Gladys hadn't seen me around before and asked suspiciously, "who are you?" I'll never forget the tone of voice she questioned me with.

It was minus-30 F when I arrived in Anchorage on Jan. 10. I stayed in a rental house I had built in 1940. Every morning I warmed up the truck and went out to sell my load of goods. Unfortunately for me, the shipping strike was over by this time and most of the merchants in town would only take a bag or two of the beans, saying that was all they could buy because their main shipment would be arriving anytime. I sold the butter for the same price I bought it for in Montana, and eventually got rid of all the ham and most of the beans. I told Frank Wine, "Well, we got our money back is all. Here is a check for what you put in."

Maraley McMichael is a lifelong Alaskan now residing in Palmer. Email her at maraleymcmichael@gmail.com.

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'Take charge' at Fairbanks ADRC events

Senior Voice Staff

This coming year, the Fairbanks Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will offer "Take Charge Tuesdays," free monthly workshops on a variety of topics, starting with "Power of Attorney Documents: Who Needs One, Why They Matter, and What They Mean," on Jan. 14. They will be held at the Fairbanks Senior Center, 1424 Moore Street,

from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Other topics in coming months will discuss advance care directives, assisted living, estate planning, behavioral health, hospice, how to manage benefits applications, and more.

Organizers are working on a virtual option for people who can't make it to the event itself.

Call for more information, call Sean Mackey, 907-888-5992.

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and

free, the event begins at 8 a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast provided. The next date is Jan. 8, hosted by Opportunities for Lifelong Education (OLE).

Call Older Persons Action Group, Inc. at 907-276-1059 for location information and to be added to our e-mail reminder list.

Calendar of Events

Jan. 7 Worldwide Christmas (Orthodox)

Jan. 11 Anchorage 10th Annual Diversity Awareness Day Community Health Fair at Loussac Library, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Organized by the Polynesian Assoc. of Alaska and Alaska Literacy Program. Free health services, resource information, more.

Jan. 14 Anchorage Age Smart forum at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Alaskan artist Perry Eaton will present on sculpture art, specifically the Alutiiq masks he creates. Refreshments provided. Free. 907-770-2000

Jan. 15 Homer Homer Senior Center board meeting, 1:30 p.m. In person and via Zoom. 907-235-7655

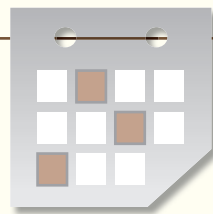
Jan. 20 Nationwide Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 21 Juneau Legislative session begins. Information at the Alaska State Legislature website, <https://akleg.gov>.

Jan. 22 Anchorage Health Fair at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 1300 E. 19th Ave., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free and open to all, cosponsored by Anchorage Health Dept. 907-770-2000

Jan. 25-Feb. 1. Cordova 2025 Cordova Ice Worm Festival. Cake competition, Tail Hunt, survival suit races, fireworks, Iceworm parade, Pioneer Ice Cream Feed, much more. www.icewormfestival.com for events schedule.

Jan. 30 Palmer Mat-Su Transportation Fair at Palmer Fairgrounds Raven Hall, 3 to 7 p.m. Free admission. Learn about road, rail, pedestrian, air and safety projects and programs near you. Curb-to-curb Valley Transit rides available, call 907-864-5000 one to two weeks in advance to reserve seat. www.mat-su-transportation-fair.com

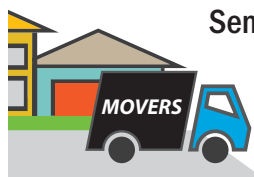


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 editor@seniorvoicealaska.com
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“Hostess of Fairbanks” leaves lasting legacy

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

Known as the “Hostess of Fairbanks,” Eva McGown dedicated her life to helping newcomers find shelter when housing shortages were the order of the day – particularly during World War II. Her empathy may have been due to her firsthand knowledge about the hardships and loneliness travelers faced on their quest to reach Alaska.

Born Eva Montgomery in Northern Ireland in 1883, she had been communicating via letters with New York born Arthur Louis McGown, part-owner of the Model Café in the Golden Heart City. She left her job as a choir director in Belfast to marry McGown, who was 10 years her senior.

The determined Irish woman left her homeland 111 years ago this month and endured a transatlantic crossing to New York, on what she later described as “a filthy ship,” rode a train to Seattle, sailed by steamer to Valdez, and then traveled via horse-drawn sleighs and sleds pulled by dog teams to reach her goal. The 31-year-old later said she was treated with respect by the “rough and tough men on the trail” who provided her with hot bricks for her feet and wrapped her in furs.

Five weeks later, she arrived in Fairbanks on February 26, 1914. She married Arthur that evening. She later told Reader’s Digest she wondered if she was “dreaming awake. Where am I? And what am I doing? It was so different from my little green island home.”

But she had no doubts about her decision to travel 4,000 miles to be with her new husband.

“I loved him well,” she said. “For him, I left all I had known.”

The happy marriage was short lived, however, as doctors diagnosed her husband with bone cancer after five years. He became an invalid until his death in 1930.

Struggling financially, the widow paid the bills by selling the café and taking odd jobs. To cope with her loneliness, she comforted other lonely women, visited patients in the hospital, and played the organ at St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church. Soon she became involved in most aspects of Fairbanks’ social life.

When the influx of soldiers, Alaska highway workers, and all their families flooded into the territory during World War II, the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce hired her at \$75 per month (almost \$1,700 in 2025 dollars) to run a housing office to find temporary quarters for them.

Eva was the right person for

the job. Her friendly and outgoing manner evolved into a one-woman housing and greeting service that found temporary beds in churches, theaters and even the local prison. She was recognized in 1953 when territorial governor B. Frank Heintzleman proclaimed her honorary hostess for all of Alaska. It’s estimated that she helped more than 50,000 people, including students and visitors, with a kind word, sound advice, a job tip, or small loans from her own pocket. She frequently was spotted at community events, weddings and funerals and was a tireless servant for her adopted home.

Tragically, Eva lost her life at age 88 when she and three others died in a fire at the Nordale Hotel in 1972, a few months after the University of Alaska Fairbanks had dedicated a music room to honor her and her love of music.

She is buried in Clay Street Cemetery next to her beloved Arthur.

But her legacy lives on in Fairbanks. A stained-glass window made from more than 500 pieces showing Eva playing the organ for the choir graces St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church. The cabin she and Arthur shared now is a part of Pioneer Park. And a street near the Noel Wien Library bears her name.

This column features tidbits found while researching Alaska’s colorful past for Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com.



Irish-born Eva McGown was known throughout Alaska as the “Hostess of Fairbanks.” University of Alaska Fairbanks

Body Parts

Across

- 1 Domino of song
- 5 Tried to keep one’s seat
- 10 Contemptible one
- 14 Fortuneteller’s opening
- 15 Expunge
- 16 Old Icelandic literary work
- 17 “Nana” star Anna
- 18 Perspicacity
- 19 Census data
- 20 Like some team members, possibly
- 22 Nick’s cousin
- 23 Follower’s suffix
- 24 Kind of partner
- 26 Small soft perfume bag
- 30 Wolf, for one
- 35 Lily family member
- 36 Charles Lamb’s pen name

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- 38 Sad song
- 39 Start of a cheer
- 40 River feature
- 42 No-win situations?
- 43 Six-time U.S. Open champ
- 45 Crystal ball user
- 46 Fencing sword
- 47 Watchmen
- 49 Collar
- 51 Malaysian export
- 52 Air hero
- 53 Frosh, next year
- 56 Lawyer
- 63 State confidently
- 64 Rubber hub
- 65 “Shucks!”
- 66 Detective Wolfe
- 67 “If I Had a Hammer” singer Lopez
- 68 Cheery tune
- 69 Chow
- 70 Alleviated
- 71 Its motto is “Lux et veritas”
- 8 Small foxlike animal of South Africa
- 9 Tease
- 10 Maitre d’hotel
- 11 Just beat
- 12 Garden with a snake
- 13 Endure
- 21 Bakery offering
- 25 Elaborate
- 26 Stat for a reliever
- 27 Still in play
- 28 Group of witches
- 29 Matinee idol
- 30 Stacks
- 31 Part of A.P.R.
- 32 Balderdash
- 33 Curved moldings
- 34 Change, as a clock
- 37 ___-majesté
- 41 Scorpion, e.g.
- 44 Prefix with angle
- 48 Yardbird
- 50 Gym unit
- 52 Make amends
- 53 Warbled
- 54 Walkie-talkie word
- 55 El Misti’s locale
- 57 Gumbo pods
- 58 “Mitla Pass” author
- 59 Without purpose
- 60 Orchid genus
- 61 Summon
- 62 Novel conclusion?

Crossword answers on page 23



Book outlines career of character actor H.M. Wynant

By **NICK THOMAS**

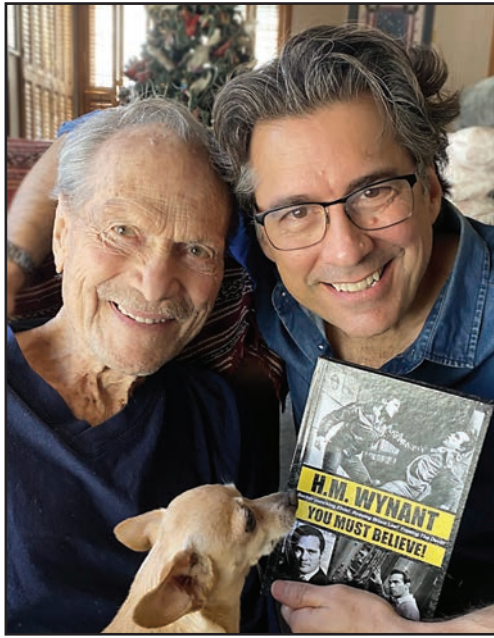
Tinseltown Talks

As one of the last prolific character actors who launched their film and television careers in the 1950s—and subsequently spanning eight decades with hundreds of roles—it's no surprise that H.M. Wynant didn't have instant recall when interviewed by author Steven Peros for his new book, "H.M. Wynant – You Must Believe!"

"I was kind of amazed—he wanted to do a book about me?" said Wynant from his home in Los Angeles. "But Steven did his research and dropped clues about my previous roles and all of a sudden a lot of the past came back, which was kind of wonderful. I would film a television episode over a few days, then literally forget about it – just erase it – and move on to the next project. So there are some shows I just don't have any memory about."

Nevertheless, the book is full of entertaining anecdotes shared with the author.

"It's basically an authorized biography with HM contributing quotes as well as photos from his personal collection," explained Peros from Los Angeles, who's also a playwright, screenwriter and director (see www.stevenperos.com). "I've known HM for 30 years since I cast him



H. M. Wynant at age 97 with Steven Peros, the author of the new biography, "You Must Believe".

Provided by Steven Peros

in a play. He appeared in so many iconic TV shows just in the 1960s."

A sampling of Wynant's credits for that decade includes Batman, Perry Mason, Get Smart, Mission: Impossible, The Man from U.N.C.L.E., Ironside, and westerns such as Wagon Train, Cheyenne, Tales of Wells Fargo, The Wild Wild West, and The Virginian.

"I did everything that was available then, and think I did some of my best work during that period," said Wynant. "It was my favorite decade."

For many series, Wynant appeared in multiple episodes usually portraying different characters including ten episodes of Perry Mason where he was cast as

a "prosecutor, defendant, murder victim, witness and murderer."

"He's the only actor in the history of that long-running show to play such a variety of characters in different episodes," said Peros.

It's a testament to Wynant's talent and commitment to his craft that he could quickly adapt to new characters as a supporting actor. While he also worked in

movies with classic film legends including Katharine Hepburn, Laurence Olivier, Clark Gable and Rod Steiger, Wynant was satisfied to be largely cast in supporting roles.

"I never wanted to be the big star, but did consider myself a good actor and just as important to the story as anyone," he said.

He took the lead role in one of the most beloved series of the era, The Twilight Zone. The 1960 epi-

sode, "The Howling Man," is often listed among fan favorites.

Wynant's character is coerced into releasing a man imprisoned in a monastery who turns out to be the devil. Speaking anxiously to the camera during the opening scene, his character warns them "You must believe," a phrase lifted for Peros's book title. Wynant laughed heartily when asked why the episode is still rated so favorably with Twilight Zone fans.

"Honestly, I really don't know," he admitted. "But it was beautifully written, beautifully directed and, of course, beautifully cast! They were all good episodes—it was a tremendous show."

Born in Detroit in 1927 as Hyman Weiner, and later going by Haim, he was a poor student and hung out in a pool room as an underage teen.

"When the cops raided the place, I would be hidden in the toilet," recalled Wynant. "One day I picked up a Shakespeare book and for some reason developed an affinity for it."

Wanting to act, dance and play music – he played the trumpet in the symphony orchestra in Detroit—at age 19, a one-way train ticket took Wynant to New York. Focusing on acting, numerous theatrical and early East Coast live television roles followed, before heading west in 1956 to Hollywood. After a name change to H.M. Wynant and his first appearance in film ("Run of the Arrow") the following year, Wynant never looked back.

With television exploding in popularity in the 50s, Wynant was quick to recognize its value for an actor although major movie stars initially scoffed at the new mass media format.

"I didn't look down on television at all," he said. "I accepted it, loved it, and it's been good to me. I accomplished everything I wanted and have no regrets. But after eight decades, I do miss acting a lot."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and has written features, columns, and interviews for many newspapers and magazines. See www.getnickt.org.

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The far-away storm that strikes fear

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice



Let us imagine I am a local TV weatherman, and in the promos leading up to tonight's newscast, I say "A massive storm is about to hit Alaska!" But then, when it comes to the actual newscast, I admit that the storm, while massive, will only be reaching the most westerly of the Aleutian Islands, not coming anywhere near most of the state. You would probably be more than a bit annoyed with me for wasting your time.

But on the other hand, let us say that word had gotten out that there was a massive storm coming, and people were panicking, buying everything on the shelves at the grocery stores and closing work and schools early. In that case, you probably wouldn't mind me leading off with

the news that the massive storm is not coming anywhere near us. Although you would probably expect the wording of the promo to be different.

I say this to explain why I am about to tell you about a tax which the vast majority of you will never have to pay. I have had quite a few people come to me lately, concerned because they have heard that the federal estate tax is going to become a huge issue, though the vast majority of them will never have to

I have had quite a few people come to me lately, concerned because they have heard that the federal estate tax is going to become a huge issue, though the vast majority of them will never have to pay federal estate tax.

pay federal estate tax.

First of all, the federal estate tax is indeed a "massive storm" in the sense that it is a 40% tax. That is, obviously, a huge portion of an estate. However, it only applies to estates that are over a certain "exclusion amount". The exclusion amount is what is about to change.

Or might change.

Let me back up. Seven years ago, Congress passed a law which doubled the exclusion amount. The amount to be excluded had been set at \$5 million, with an automatic inflation adjustment each year. Doubling it meant the first \$10 million was excluded, and with the inflation adjustment, for this coming year (2025) the first \$14 million is excluded. So far, so good.

But they didn't quite have the votes to make it a permanent increase. The U.S. Senate has an odd rule

that unless they have a filibuster-proof majority (60 out of 100 senators) any tax bill has to be temporary, and that is defined as no more than eight years. That temporary increase expires at the very end of 2025.

So, on January 1, 2026, assuming nothing else happens between now and then, only the first \$7 million is excluded from estate tax.

Given the results of the recent election, there is a very good chance Congress will extend that temporary law for another eight years, or perhaps even make it permanent. There is no guarantee, obviously, especially with the small majority in the House which might make it difficult for them to function. But with the White House, the Senate and the House in the hands of the party which passed the increase seven years ago, if I was a betting

man I would put my money on it being extended.

On top of that, there are a number of things that can be done to effectively increase that exclusion even further. Amounts which are given to proper charitable organizations don't count in the estate tax. Annual gifts don't count as long as it is no more than \$19,000 from any one person to any one other person.

And most importantly, a married couple can easily double the exclusion amount, by filing an estate tax return after the first spouse dies. So, for a married couple, it could still be a \$14 million exclusion.

Yes, this could be a big deal, but only for a very small number of people, and not for another year, and only if Congress doesn't reach an agreement. For about 99% of us, don't worry, be happy. The storm is not going to hit you.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning attorney. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. Film at Eleven.

Fairs

continued from page 7

Volunteer or Exhibit in the site menu to learn more. Alternatively, contact us for assistance.

By supporting health fairs, you not only contribute to the well-being of local communities, but you also help yourself. Volunteering has been proven to enhance

mental health, lower the risk of heart disease, and even extend life expectancy. It's an excellent opportunity to build social connections and make a positive impact on your community. We have orientation events coming up for prospective volunteers; visit our website for more information.

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Apple help, computer tutors, Android phone picks

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Bob's Tech Talk

Q. I would like to find someone to tutor me on how to get the most out of my new Mac laptop. I'm looking for classes, coaching or any other suggestions you can offer.

A. This is a great question, and the answer depends somewhat on your location so I will start there. But there is also a wealth of online options as well.

There once was a thriving network of Apple User Groups spread across the world where volunteers would gather regularly to share information. These can be great places to find tutors or information about your local Mac community. Although many of these groups have disbanded or moved online, it is still worth searching places like [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) to see if there is one in your area.

Another source of information can be local Mac dealers. These are rare also, but a quick search online for "Macintosh dealer <city name>" may turn up something. Even if the store is focused on repair, they often know who is who in the local community and can point you in the right direction. This strategy may work at a local Apple retail store as well, depending on the knowledge of the person you happen to ask.

There is an army of active and retired Mac users on social media. I would look into Mastodon (mastodon.social) or Instagram ([instagram.com](https://www.instagram.com)). You can find people on these services via the Web, but you will need to open an account on each service to contact them directly.

Finding a community online is similar to a snowball rolling downhill. It may take a while to get started, but after you find a name or two it will be easy to use those contacts to find more people. This approach depends on making good use of search queries.

Podcasts are another onramp for making contact with experienced Mac users. My advice would be to listen to a few episodes of "Upgrade" or "Mac Power Users" on [relay.fm](https://www.relay.fm).

Finding a community online is similar to a snowball rolling downhill. It may take a while to get started, but after you find a name or two it will be easy to use those contacts to find more people.

They offer a paid tier that gives you access to a Discord chat server, which will make you part of a very large tech-focused community.

The back episodes of podcasts available online are a treasure trove of information. Add the podcast title (such as "Mac Power Users podcast" or "Connected podcast") to a search query along with a subject you are interested in (like "photo editing").

One of the best online publications for Mac information is MacStories ([macstories.net](https://www.macstories.net)). It has plenty of free information but it also offers a paid tier with access to a Discord chat server.

Lastly, you asked specifically about one-on-one tutors. See the next question for more.

The Mac community is extremely welcoming, and it will not take long for you to find people who are happy to help you. In effect, the old network of Apple User Groups has moved online and it is bigger and better than ever.

Q. Is there a place where I can find tutors online to help me with my computer?

A. Wyzant ([wyzant.com](https://www.wyzant.com)) offers a pay-by-the-hour student/tutor matching service. The key skill to finding the best person to help you is writing a good search query.

For Mac make sure the query includes "macOS," which is the formal name for the Mac operating system.

For Windows, use "Microsoft Windows."

To either of these terms, add more specific words like "beginner," "photo editing," "writing," etc.

Q. What are your current picks for the best Android smartphones?

A. If by "best" you mean best overall performance regardless of price, the key component is the processor. The specific models I'd consider first are the Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra and the Google Pixel 8 Pro, which both boast a Snap-

dragon 8 Gen 2.

However, given the premium prices, I would only choose one of these if my needs demanded the most powerful technology available to evaluate advanced features like AI. The best value options are the Galaxy A15 5G and the Pixel 8A.

Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at techtalk@bobdel.com.

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

Tech That Matters

Beebom lists cool and interesting websites to help you kill time. [beebom.com](https://www.beebom.com)

Tech Podcast Network

This podcast collection offers a diverse range of tech-related and creativity-focused podcasts, catering to users of all skill levels. [relay.fm](https://www.relay.fm)

Discover Drawing

A community for cartoonists to share their illustrations, often featuring humorous content. [doodleaddicts.com](https://www.doodleaddicts.com)



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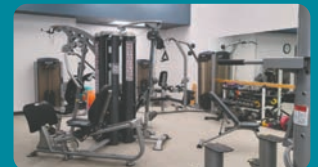
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Tourists overrun cities and towns worldwide

Alaskan residents try to rethink the industry

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

I once heard a man of Irish descent exclaim after his visit to Ireland, “The beer was warm!”

To travel and expect everywhere else to be like America makes no sense. Why not stay home?

And for those working in the tourism industry all over the world, the masses of the traveling public have become a nightmare.

‘Please stay home’

Last year, Santorini, Greece, became the most over-touristed destination in Europe with 3.5 million visitors jammed into an island of 15,500.

Venice, Italy, instituted a 5 Euro entrance fee (\$5.60), much like Alaska’s cruise ship head tax.

Amsterdam, one of the most visited cities in Europe, raised its visitor tax, limited cruise ships docking in the city center, and will not allow any new hotels. It’s also restricted marijuana smoking in public.

Many other cities are cracking down on the visitor numbers.

Juneau tries to limit cruise ships

This October, in response to ever-growing numbers of tourists crowd-



A cruise ship dwarfs the town of Sitka.

Dimitra Lavrakas photo

ing the city in the summer, residents voted on a Saturday ban on cruise ships so they could take a breath and access downtown without crowds.

It failed.

The proposition on the ballot, Ship-Free Saturday, was defeated by 2,379 votes, or 4,196 to 6,575.

In Skagway, 2023 numbers hit an all-time high of over 1.7 million people. This in a town four streets wide and 23 streets long and with a population of 1,222. Luckily, the White Pass &

Yukon Route Railway and tour buses take many out of town.

But visitors, while pesky, do contribute mightily to the state’s economy.

For 2024, the total visitor volume of 2.65 million represents a 20 percent increase from the pre-COVID total of 2.21 million in summer 2019.

The increase is largely attributable to a 29 percent growth in cruise passenger volume. Air visitors grew by 8 percent while highway/ferry visitors fell by

15 percent over the same time period.

The share of cruise passengers grew from 60 to 65 percent, while the share of air visitors fell from 36 percent to 32 percent, and the share of highway/ferry visitors fell from 4 percent to 3 percent.

Alaska’s visitor industry contributes more than \$126 million in state revenues and \$88 million in municipal revenues, according to the Resource Development Council of Alaska.

How not to be a rude American

Like the man who visited Ireland, it would serve you well to learn about your destination.

For instance, if you travel with a Road Scholar tour, they list a number of books to read to familiarize you with the places’ history, culture and traditions. If not, your librarian would have suggestions or just use Google to find the information.

Learn a few words to grease your way to a better experience.

And granted, some customs might not be to your liking, like in Greece, where a line at a store means nothing. Versus England, where a queue is inviolate. You’ll be shunned if you jump it.

Hand gestures are also important. The V sign is a hand gesture where the index and middle fingers are raised and parted to make a V shape while the other fingers are clenched. It was used as a victory sign in World War II in Britain. But when displayed with the palm inward toward the person whose hand it is, it becomes an offensive gesture like showing the middle finger.

For Alaskans who vacation in Hawaii, it really breaks the ice to commiserate with people in a state that has year-round tourism. They really appreciate that, as they will you.

Gift cards

continued from page 3

a sweepstakes and all you have to do is buy gift cards to “pay fees (or taxes)” to claim your prize. According to the survey respondents, the sweepstakes scenario was the most common tactic, constituting about 15% of gift card payment scams. Next most popular was being asked to pay in advance for a service or product (12%) or help a friend or colleague in need (12%) and lastly, to pay someone’s phone or utility bill (10%). Protect yourself by knowing that if someone asks you to pay

for something with a gift card, it is a scam.

Beware impostors

These fraudsters also impersonate friends, co-workers, or even religious leaders to gain your trust. For example, you might receive an email from your “minister” asking you to help others in need by purchasing gift cards and emailing them photos of the front and back of the cards. If someone you know asks you to purchase gift cards for a good cause, call them to be sure it is not an email from a scammer.

If you encounter a gift card scam, call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360

(4 a.m. to 4 p.m. Alaska time, Monday-Friday). They can guide you on what to do next and how to avoid future scams. Report losses to your local police and insist they take your report. Persistence can help in recouping losses if the criminals are caught.

You should also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission online or by calling 877-382-4357, or with the FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center. Staying alert and informed can help you navigate the gift card minefield safely.

Happy shopping! And remember, if you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Teresa Holt is the AARP Alaska state director.

Medicaid

continued from page 13

medical appointments or arrange care outside of the Waiver or Personal Care Services. They cannot do things that are a conflict of interest.

If you have questions or would like to find out if you qualify, start by calling the Aging and Disability Resource Center, statewide toll-free number 1-855-565-2017.

Want to connect with the Senior and Disabilities Training team? Join us on Zoom for family and individual office hours the first and third Monday of each month, noon to 1 p.m. For information and the Zoom link, email SDSTraining@alaska.gov or call 907-269-3685.

Kara Thrasher-Livingston is a Training Unit Manager and Kat Sowa-Lapinskas a Care Coordinator Liaison for the Alaska Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.

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Beans

continued from page 5

based-diets have become the renewed targets of world-wide agricultural and health research. Our current dietary recommendation for best health for seniors is to include at least 1 ½ to 2 cups of legumes per week. Because legumes provide high quality protein along with excellent levels of other nutrients not found in animal protein sources, seniors who include legumes on a regular basis have higher diet quality. Don't worry about combining the beans with complementary foods at the same meal; as long as you get the amino acids needed to boost the legume protein at some time during the day, this will be sufficient.

The word "legume" sometimes causes confusion because it encompasses the plants of fresh and dried beans, peas, lentils, chickpeas, soybeans and peanuts – all in the botanical family Leguminosae. However, in the U.S., the common use of the term refers to the dried, edible seeds of the plant such as split peas, black, pinto, navy or kidney beans, lentils, dried lima or fava beans, black-eyed peas, chickpeas, etc.

Feeling 'windy'?

Before we go any further in this discussion, let's get the unspoken out in the open eating legumes, even when we enjoy them, may cause some unpleasant digestive experiences. A



Kidney, pinto, black beans, chickpeas, lima beans – canned beans cook fast and produce less gas.

Courtesy Leslie Shallcross

polite Victorian-era expression referred to this as "windiness". It seems that the phenomenon has occurred for as long as people have been eating legumes with Romans, Sumerians and, of course, Shakespeare making jokes, ascribing it unfavorable mystical qualities and even depicting farts in paintings.

For the modern legume eater there are some ways to reduce the windiness and abdominal discomfort. Normal bacterial fermentation and some of the other carbohydrates in the digestive system of legume fiber is responsible for the gas.

- ▶ Cooking beans with herbs borrowed from Mexican and Indian cuisine, epazote or asafetida, will break down some of the gas producing fiber.
- ▶ Rehydrating beans with lots of water, using a long soaking method and pouring out the soaking water before the final cooking stage will remove fermentable carbohydrates
- ▶ Choosing lentils and

Leslie's Dried Lima Bean Casserole

1. Rehydrate about 1 ½ cups of dried large lima beans, starting by covering with about 5 cups of water bringing them just to boiling for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and let them stand covered for 4 to 24 hours (to maximize fart prevention, you can drain and recover with hot water a second time). Beans will expand to about 2 ½ to 3 times the original volume.
2. Drain and rinse the beans again and add to a large pot covered with 4 to 5 inches of water or chicken broth. Salt the water (helps to soften the beans) and bring just to boiling (not rolling). Let the beans cook gently until very soft—the goal is thoroughly and evenly soft, and this is best accomplished with slow cooking. Drain when tender.
3. While the beans are cooking, make a concentrated tomato sauce starting by sautéing 1 large, sliced onion and 3 to 4 sliced garlic cloves until very tender. Add 4 to 5 grated (this is the latest culinary trend) Roma tomatoes and let them cook with the onion/garlic mix until the liquid is reduced. Add about 2 cups of prepared tomato sauce and a couple teaspoons of dry or 1 tablespoon fresh thyme (oregano, herb de province, or basil could be substituted) and salt and pepper as desired. Carefully allow this to reduce a bit to make a nice bold tomato sauce. Totally optional: about ½ pound browned sausage pieces could be added if desired.
4. Oil a casserole dish and place the cooked drained beans in the dish and cover with the sauce, mixing gently to coat the beans. Place in a 350 F oven for about 30 minutes until it is hot.



split peas and legumes that you respond well to

- ▶ Using canned beans the high temperature canning process helps break down fiber
- ▶ Start eating very small amounts of beans to increase your tolerance for fiber
- ▶ Use a gas reducing enzyme like Beano

Thinking about my own connection to the past

and family culture, I am grateful that I grew up with legumes. My parents probably used these to stretch a tight budget but they also believed that we should learn to eat everything and exposed us to as much as they could afford. As I learned to like legumes, I enjoyed split pea and ham, classic lentil and navy bean soups, chili with kidney beans, and dried lima bean casserole. No else in my

family seems to remember the lima bean casserole but I recreated a recipe to share for your own household legume culture. Eating beans may be "as American as apple pie".

Leslie Shallcross is a registered dietitian and professor of Extension, Health, Home and Family Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Extension.

Crossword answers from page 18

F	A	T	S		R	E	R	A	N		H	E	E	L
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