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# Senior Voice

Senior Voice is published by Older Persons Action Group, Inc.



# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons Action Group, Inc. Free

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

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Master gardener Jan Hart-Dinneen's tulip bulbs are highlighted by the sun at the height of their bloom in her Anchorage garden in June a few summers ago. "This was a year when most of my bulbs produced blooms, and the moose somehow passed my garden by," she said. Blossoms and colors will be welcome following this year's late, cool spring. Michael Dinneen photo for Senior Voice



2023 National Mature Media Awards Winner





# University offers new certification program for guardianship

By AMANDA BIGGS

For Senior Voice

The University of Alaska Department of Human Services is excited to announce a new program that is targeted to those interested in working as guardians for adults who require support in making decisions. The Guardianship Occupational Endorsement Certificate (OEC) will be developed and offered in collaboration with the Alaska Office of Public Advocacy. The Office of Public Advocacy provides guardianship to adults throughout the state of Alaska. The Public Guardian section of OPA is charged with providing

**The Guardianship Occupational Endorsement Certificate hopes to train individuals interested in working with elders and vulnerable adults, either as private professional guardians or as public guardians with the Office of Public Advocacy. Additionally, the courses will include content relevant to those who wish to work as care managers, care coordinators, case managers and other similar positions.**

guardianship and conservatorship services to Alaskans who do not have family members or friends who are able to serve, and who do not have the financial ability to hire a private professional guardian. Alaska does not have a current training program for guardians, and does

not have enough individuals to serve as private professional guardians or as public guardians. Newly hired guardians at the Office of Public Advocacy require extensive training before they are able to take on a caseload.

The new Guardianship Occupational Endorsement

Certificate hopes to train individuals interested in working with elders and vulnerable adults either as private professional guardians or as public guardians with the Office of Public Advocacy. Additionally, the courses will include content relevant to those who wish to work as care managers, care coordinators, case managers and other similar positions.

The first two courses will begin in the fall semester of 2024, and the second two courses in the program will be offered in spring of 2025. The final course, offered in the summer of 2025, will include a practicum experience. We hope to continue

to offer the courses on a continual basis. The courses will provide extensive content about guardianship and conservatorship, community resources, benefit programs, establishing trusts and other conservatorship accounts, ethical considerations, and more. If interested, register now at UAA. For more information, contact Amanda Biggs at abiggs@alaska.edu.

Amanda Biggs is an instructor at University of Alaska Anchorage. She has a Master's degree in Social Work and has worked as a care coordinator, outreach specialist, education specialist and court visitor. She is a board member of Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

# How seniors fared in the 2024 legislative session

By MARGE STONEKING

AARP Alaska

The 33rd Alaska Legislature concluded its two-year session on May 15.

The legislature set out to prioritize energy and education policy in 2024, and those issues did take much of the session's focus, political will, and compromise, in addition to the usual budget process.

AARP Alaska's 2024 legislative advocacy pushed for policies and funding that support aging in place, financial security, and improved access to healthcare. We saw major successes in our work to restore and expand funding for critical programs serving older Alaskans, with additional victories in our efforts to increase access to healthcare and address food insecurity. We built support around our efforts to pass retirement readiness legislation and will continue advocacy on those priorities in the coming session.

## Community-based grants for services

With support from the AGE Net senior services provider network and the Alaska Commission on Aging, AARP successfully advocated to increase state funding for Senior and Disabilities Community Grants. Grants to nonprofit organizations fund supportive services for elders such as meals on wheels, congregate meals, transportation, light housekeeping, chore services, health promotion, adult day programs, and education and respite for family caregivers. The FY25 Governor's Budget had a \$2.7 million cut to the Senior Community Grants due to expiring federal funds that would have resulted in older Alaskans losing services critical to remaining independent at home.

With our backing, the legislature added back \$1.5 million for senior community grants and \$1.5 million for adult day services grants, resulting

in a combined \$3 million in support for senior services, which is an increase of \$300,000, necessary to help meet the growing senior population. We also supported an increase in provider reimbursement rates for Personal Care Services that resulted in \$5 million in combined state and federal funding to raise wages and reduce the in-home services workforce crisis.

## Senior housing; Long-Term Care Ombudsman; Senior Benefits program

The legislature also included a funding increase for two new staff positions in the Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman Office. The additional staff will advocate for and ensure the safe care of vulnerable seniors in long-term care facilities. The increase is necessary to meet growth in the number of facilities and corresponding need for Ombudsman visits.

The state Capital Budget

includes \$3 million for the Senior Housing Development Fund managed by Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, which is an increase of \$1.25 million after at least a decade of flat funding. The Fund provides grants, federal tax credits, and federal zero-interest loans to municipalities and non-profits to build affordable rental housing for low to moderate income seniors and funds accessibility modifications so seniors can remain independent in their homes.

AARP Alaska also prevailed on the critical exten-

sion of the Senior Benefits Program, slated to sunset this year and not included in the governor's budget. The Senior Benefits Program pays cash assistance to low-income Alaskans age 65 and older who are not in Pioneer Homes or other institutional care. Benefit eligibility is tied to the Alaska Federal Poverty Guidelines. In 2022, the program served 9,000 seniors at an average of 75 years old with the oldest participant age 104. In the final hours of the

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## OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

### Mission statement:

"To work statewide to improve the quality of life for all Alaskans through education, advocacy and collaboration."

### Vision statement:

"Promote choice and well being for seniors through legacy and leadership."



OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

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# Program offers housing assistance in Mat-Su

By **RANDI PERLMAN**

For Senior Voice

The twists and turns of everyday life can sometimes take a toll on families and individuals residing in the Mat-Su Valley, unexpectedly and through no fault of their own. Just paying the bills to keep utilities on and prevent eviction can become a serious challenge at times. But there is a program in the Valley that can provide financial housing assistance during those low times.

Since 2012, the primary purpose of Valley Charities,

Inc. (VCI's) Housing Assistance Program (HAP) has been to help folks remain in housing. In other words, to prevent homelessness. This program led to an awareness of grants that would help people re-enter from situations such as incarceration, as well as grants to help families transition slowly into sustainable, independent housing arrangements.

Valley Charities, Inc. provides financial/rent assistance to individuals and families that meet the required grant criteria. Details on eligibility can be

found on the website, [www.valleycharities.org](http://www.valleycharities.org), or by calling 907-354-4660. A short voice message from the caller briefly explaining their basic need—eviction prevention, behind on utility bills or rent payments, or something else—is then screened by VCI's case worker. Most grants funnel in from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), so income requirements are part of the screening process. Applicants at 30% of the median household income (which is considered below the poverty level), depend-



**Adam Pollock is the case manager for Valley Charities' Housing Assistance Program.**

*Photo courtesy VCI*

ing on how many people are in the family, may then be eligible for assistance with their utility bills,

first month's rent getting into a new home, or other benefits.

HAP does not provide housing. The program does provide financial assistance to help folks get over the immediate 'bump in the road' and get back on a sustainable path on their own. The HAP case manager is a strong information resource and referral advocate for all sorts of helpful governmental programs and partnerships and can point folks in the right direction for help with a

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## Health information: Reliable, free, easy to understand

By **LAWRENCE D. WEISS**

For Senior Voice

Would you go to your doctor to find out why the brakes on your car are making so much noise? Would you go to your friendly neighborhood mechanic for diagnosis and treatment of a serious heart problem? I'll just crawl out on a limb here and say, "probably not." And that begs the question, "why not?"

Really. Why wouldn't you see a doctor about your

**Every day millions of people cruise the internet looking for health care information and advice, and they find it. But who is on the other side of that website pushing those ideas? Is it health care providers and scientists with decades of training and experience? Or is it a guy who dropped out of school and decided to make a fast buck promoting wacky health ideas that would be right at home in the National Enquirer?**

car problems? Because smart as your doctor is, he or she has little if any training or experience

fixing cars. Same for the mechanic. Great with cars. Doesn't know squat about heart problems. Seems like

common sense.

Yet every day millions of people cruise the internet looking for health care information and advice, and they find it. But who is on the other side of that website pushing those ideas? Is it health care providers and scientists with decades of training and experience? Or is it a guy who dropped out of school and decided to make a fast buck promoting wacky health ideas that would be right at home in the National Enquirer?

Typically, we don't know and can't know.

Good news! This is a problem with a solution. There are websites on the internet supported by health care organizations with national and international reputations. At those sites you can be certain that the health information you get comes from trained and experienced health care professionals. True, they probably don't know

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## Ensuring health care for veterans exposed to PFAS

By **JONATHAN SHARP**

*Environmental Litigation Group, PC*

More than 10 percent of Alaska's adult population are military veterans, many of whom live with a military service-related disability due to toxic exposure, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). However, the Dept. of Veterans Affairs does not recognize a disease developed during service on a military site

with known PFAS contamination as a presumptively service-related disability. The VET PFAS ACT of July 2023 aims to assure medical care to ill veterans and their dependents exposed to PFAS by sparing them from unnecessary bureaucratic hassles.

### The "forever chemicals"

PFAS are toxic substances found in various consumer and industrial

products, such as aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), a firefighting foam designed in 1967 to prevent flammable liquid fires. PFAS's widespread occurrence, persistence in the environment, and association with severe diseases and many types of cancers have made it one of the most feared chemicals of the past decade.

Because AFFF contains high levels of PFAS, military firefighters and veterans who have been regularly working with it are the most vulnerable group to the threats of the "forever chemicals." Numerous medical studies demonstrate that years of exposure leads to cancers. For example, a recent study focusing on U.S. Air Force Servicemen found a connection between PFAS levels in their bodies and

testicular cancer.

However, everyone stationed at a military installation where large quantities of AFFF were released into the soil and groundwater ended up consuming contaminated drinking water, and thus, many got sick.

Alaska has at least nine military bases where worryingly high levels of PFAS, exceeding the safe exposure limit of 4 parts per trillion, were detected. Among those bases are Galena Air Force Base (257,710 ppt), Eareckson AFB (10,320 ppt), King Salmon (96,340 ppt), and Eielson AFB (334,200 ppt).

### Veterans deserve more care

All veterans filing a military base toxic exposure claim need to prove with medical evidence that their

condition evolved during the years they served. However, in many cases, such evidence is impossible to get. Even with medical papers, the application is a lengthy bureaucratic procedure, and not all PFAS-related illnesses are considered for disability payments.

If voted to become law, the VET PFAS Act would not only assure that veterans receive the medical care they so much deserve but also bring justice to victims of irresponsible policy management and unethical commercial practices.

*Jonathan Sharp is the Chief Financial Officer at the Environmental Litigation Group, PC. The law firm, headquartered in Birmingham, AL, assists civilian and military firefighters exposed to toxic chemicals.*

### Send us your letters

Send letters to the editor to Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., #106, Anchorage AK 99503. Maximum length is 250 words. Senior Voice reserves the right to edit for content and length. Space may be made available for longer opinion piece essays up to 400 words. Contact the managing editor at [editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com) to discuss this. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.





# More couples are living apart together

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice



**No matter what the current statistics are regarding the number of people living apart from their partner, social scientists say the phenomenon is growing. And for some very good reasons.**

**Q:** My neighbor and their spouse reside in separate homes. This is the third couple I have heard of living this way. Why do some people choose to live apart?

**A:** Living Apart Together (LAT) is a modern relationship arrangement where couples choose to remain in separate residences while maintaining a committed romantic relationship. This phenomenon has been gaining popularity, challenging traditional notions of cohabitation and partnership. Let us explore the concept of LAT couples, examine the reasons behind this trend, and consider the benefits and challenges that come with it.

LAT couples are individuals who prioritize their individual autonomy and independence while also valuing their romantic relationship. They choose to live apart for various

reasons, such as career commitments, educational pursuits, or lifestyle and sleep schedules. Despite not sharing a physical living space, LAT couples are emotionally connected and committed to each other, often spending quality time together on weekends or during scheduled visits.

While it's hard to know how many people are in LAT relationships, it is estimated that about 10 percent of adults in Western Europe, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia live apart from their romantic partners. Britain may have

the highest population, with nearly a quarter of people statistically defined as "single" who actually have a romantic partner that lives elsewhere.

No matter what the current statistics are regarding the number of people living apart from their partner, social scientists say the LAT phenomenon is growing. And for some very good reasons.

One of the main trends behind the rise of LAT couples is the changing societal norms and expectations regarding relationships. In today's fast-paced world, individuals are prioritizing their personal goals and ambitions, often requiring them to live in different locations for work or education. Additionally, with the

increasing acceptance of diverse relationship structures, couples feel more empowered to define their own terms of commitment.

Boomer women have been on the forefront of restructuring gendered family life, and often lead living apart together relationships. When residing separately from a romantic partner, women avoid the sex-based caretaking and housekeeping they often are expected to do. LAT is especially attractive if a woman typically lived with male partners before and was the main family manager as well.

Moreover, LAT relationships offer unique benefits that may not be present in traditional cohabiting arrangements. For instance,

couples have the freedom to maintain their individual routines and habits without compromising on their personal space. This can lead to a greater sense of independence and self-fulfillment, ultimately enhancing the quality of the relationship. Additionally, living apart can help prevent the monotony and complacency that sometimes arises in long-term cohabiting relationships, as couples are more intentional about spending quality time together.

However, living apart also presents its own set of challenges. Distance can create logistical issues, such as coordinating schedules or situational misunderstandings. It is crucial to support each others' goals and be flexible and adaptable. Additionally, the lack of daily physical presence can sometimes lead to feelings of loneliness or disconnect.

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# Osteoporosis: Underdiagnosed in men

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER

For Senior Voice

Osteoporosis is more common in women than in men, so it is often thought of as a women's disease. Subsequently, it is underdiagnosed and under-treated in men, especially men age 65 and older, who are at risk for developing osteoporosis. In addition, the number of fractures caused by fragile bones in men has increased in recent years.

A fracture after age 50 is an important signal that a person may have osteoporosis. Unfortunately, men are less likely than women to be evaluated for osteoporosis after a fracture. Men also are less likely to get osteoporosis treatment.

"Although women are at greater risk, men get osteoporosis too. In fact, up to one in four men over age

**Men older than 50 are more likely to break a bone due to osteoporosis than they are to get prostate cancer.**

50 will break a bone due to osteoporosis," said Carina May, who is with the Bone Health and Osteoporosis Foundation in Arlington, Virginia. "Approximately two million American men already have osteoporosis. About 12 million more are at risk."

## Increased risks

Osteoporosis develops because bone mineral density and bone mass decrease or the quality or structure of bone changes. This can lead to a decrease in bone strength that can increase the risk of fractures. These fractures can occur in any bone. However, they are most common in bones of the hip, vertebrae in the spine, and wrist.

Bone is made up of living tissue that is constantly changing, with older bone being broken down and new bone formed in its place. This is called remodeling. Almost all bone in adults is remodeled every 10 years. Bone mass is lost when there is an imbalance between bone breakdown and bone formation. That imbalance occurs with aging and other conditions.

Bone mass is gained during growth and typically peaks in one's 20s. Peak bone mass is generally higher in men than in women. Having lower bone density and bone strength is a major risk factor for fracture in both men and women.

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# Avoiding, treating a repetitive strain injury

By DR. EMILY KANE

For Senior Voice

**Q:** I work at a keyboard and my wrists get really sore. What can I do to prevent damaging my hands and wrists? I can't quit my job.

**A:** Repetitive strain injury from computer work is a widespread problem in this age of electronic communication. You may touch keys up to 200,000 times a day



—the equivalent of your fingers walking 10 miles.

Holding your wrists, hands and back straight while keyboard walking is crucial to ongoing comfort and prevention of strains and pains. When you work with straight wrists and fingers, the nerves, muscles and tendons involved in this complex maneuvering can stay relaxed and comfortable. A straight wrist is a level, flat wrist. This position keeps excess pressure off muscles, tendons and

nerves in your wrists and hands.

Make sure your keyboard is set up just slightly higher than elbow level to prevent the wrists from flexing, extending or twisting unnecessarily. The ideal position for the back includes sitting straight in your chair, muscles relaxed, with your

body tilted slightly back. If you lean your body forward (flexing) or too far backward (extending), or if you slouch, your wrists and hands adapt by becoming flexed or extended too. This means that the nerves, muscles, and tendons that

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# Making health care decisions in advance

Also: Medicare coverage for daily activities; spotting billing errors

By SEAN McPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

This month's article begins with a recommendation to prepare documentation of your personal



desires as related to your medical situation and fu-

ture health care needs. These can help convey your intentions should you not be able to voice them yourself. Next, a reminder that Medicare only provides coverage for services and equipment deemed medically necessary – you might find yourself in need of additional help with activities in your daily life. Finally, a mention regarding how hospice care provides end of life care with dignity

and respect; unfortunately, some care providers abuse the system, hurting all of us who depend on Medicare. When you have questions about any of these topics, please call upon our certified counselors of the Medicare Information Office.

## Prepare documents for your future health care needs

Many people assume that their family mem-

bers would automatically be able to make decisions about medical treatments if they were to become incapacitated. This is where legal rules overlap with medical care. In some cases, the health care provider in charge of your care will make decisions unless you have appointed someone as your legal representative. If the decision falls to your

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## OTT-LITE Lamp

Assistive Gizmo of the Month



Photo courtesy ATLA

Assistive Technology of Alaska

Ott-Lite table and desk lamps are designed specifically to bring natural daylight lighting indoors to help the user see details clearly and colors accurately. Ott-Lites can benefit individuals who need assistance seeing books, recipes, prescription bottles, crafts, puzzles, electronics, jewelry and more. There are Ott-Lite lamps that can be placed on desks or on the floor with high con-

trast clocks on their face, USB ports for charging electronics, magnifiers attached, or adjustable device holders.

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 [www.atlaak.org](http://www.atlaak.org) or call 907-563-2599.





## Hearing and cognitive testing



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

This article I am going to get a little personal. My father and his brother, my uncle, both passed away with dementia. I have been learning and keeping my brain active to keep the dementia at bay. In a study done on nuns that donated their brains to science, researchers found they all had dementia in their brain, but none of them showed signs of dementia. Keep your brains active and keep learning.

I learned that if we catch dementia soon enough, sometimes there are things we can do in our life or medically to help keep it at bay. Hearing aids are a treatment

for dementia. The more I learned about that the more I thought I needed to do more for my patients. I became certified as a Dementia Practitioner and I am learning all I can about dementia to help others.

I have a machine for cognitive screening that will help you understand how you are processing information, organizing your thoughts and remembering things. It takes five to 10 minutes and we can go over the results immediately. The sooner we know something is not quite right the sooner you can get the help that you need. This is something that I am passionate about and hope to help as many people as possible keep dementia out of their life.

Call Accurate Hearing at 907-644-6004 to set up your cognitive screening and hearing test.

*Donna R DeMarco, AAS, CDP, BC-HIS, Tinnitus Care Provider, Holding a Certificate from the International Hearing Society.*

**Accurate Hearing Systems**  
DONNA R. DEMARCO, AAS, BC-HIS LLC  
*Your hearing care provider...*

### ADVERTISEMENT

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*

family, they may not all agree on the best course of action. For these reasons, it is important to have a plan to avoid disagreements around treatment issues and ensure your wishes are honored if you are incapacitated. Here are different types of documents that can help you prepare for your future health care needs:

▶ A **health care proxy** is a document that names someone you trust as your proxy, or agent, to express your wishes and make health care decisions for you if you are unable to speak for yourself.

▶ A **living will** is a written record of the type of medical care you would want in specified circumstances.

▶ An **advance directive** often refers to a combination of the living will and health care proxy documents. If you have an advance directive, be sure to give those documents to the hospital when admitted.

▶ A **power of attorney** is a document that names someone you trust as your agent to make property, financial and other legal decisions on your behalf.

You do not need a lawyer to fill-out these documents, however an attorney can guide you through the completion of these documents, especially if you anticipate potential disagreements between family members. Consider contacting the Alaska Legal Services Corporation, at the phone numbers listed here in the Senior Voice (see the ad on the left).

The most important thing is to consider your health care decisions; the

next most important thing is to share your decisions with those you love. Discuss and share the contents of these health care documents with trusted individuals including family members, health care providers, and anyone else you feel should know.

### Differentiate between activities for daily living and medical needs

One of the most challenging things for Medicare enrollees (and family members) to realize is that Medicare generally does not pay for the additional assistance you may need after experiencing a debilitating medical condition or illness. This assistance is also known as one's basic activities for daily living (ADLs), which may occur at home, or in a temporary assisted living residence, or in a long-term care facility. Medicare will pay up to 80 percent of the cost of necessary medical services, supplies and equipment; Medicare will not pay for additional assistance beyond these needs. A full understanding of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, but recognizing the difference between medical coverage and assisted living care is an important step to plan and prepare for future needs.

### Recognize potential hospice billing errors or abuse

When a person is faced with a terminal diagnosis, it can be hard to make decisions about end-of-life care. The hospice program enables people to die with dignity and respect, while supporting their need for end-of-life care. However, hospice fraud and abuse can lead to patient harm,

premature death, and big profits for dishonest individuals taking advantage of people and hospice.

Hospice fraud and abuse can occur when Medicare is falsely billed for any level of hospice care. It might occur if you are falsely certified as being terminally ill to be enrolled in hospice or if you are enrolled in hospice without your or your family's permission. If you are eligible for hospice care, you could still experience fraud, errors or abuse if your plan of care is not being followed.

You can help stop hospice fraud by making sure a trusted doctor has assessed your condition and certified that you are terminally ill. Second, be wary of deals that seem too good to be true. Finally, report any potential fraudulent, erroneous or abusive hospice care coverage to our certified counselors at the Medicare Information Office.

If you find yourself overwhelmed by any Medicare issue (or if you would just like to ask some questions), 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.*

## Free Legal Services for Seniors!



Alaska Legal Services Corporation provides legal assistance for seniors\* (60 and older) with housing, government benefits, wills, healthcare, and more!

### Call your local ALSC office to learn more:

- Anchorage..... 272-9431 or (888) 478-2572
- Utqiagvik..... 855-8998 or (855) 755-8998
- Bethel..... 543-2237 or (800) 478-2230
- Dillingham..... 842-1425 or (888) 391-1475
- Fairbanks..... 452-5181 or (800) 478-5401
- Juneau..... 586-6425 or (800) 789-6426
- Kenai..... 395-0352 or (855) 395-0352
- Ketchikan..... 225-6420 or (877) 525-6420
- Kotzebue..... 442-3500 or (800) 622-9797
- Nome..... 443-2230 or (888) 495-6663
- Palmer..... 746-4636 or (855) 996-4636

Additional information is available at:  
[www.alsc-law.org](http://www.alsc-law.org)

\*Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Preference for seniors in social and economic need.

## 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.

# Senior Voice

### is on Facebook!



Search for "Senior Voice Alaska" then click on over!





# Key screenings for improved men's health

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

June is Men's Health Month, a time to raise awareness about the unique health issues men face and to encourage early detection, treatment and prevention.

Alaska Health Fair offers a variety of blood screenings that can provide valuable information about your health. Take your blood test results to your doctor.

**Comprehensive Blood Chemistry panel.** This test measures various components of your blood, providing insight into your kidney, liver, as well as glucose, electrolyte and lipid levels.

**Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test.** Beginning at about age 45, all men should talk to their doctor about screening for prostate cancer. If you are Black or have a family history of prostate or other cancers, you may be at higher risk and should talk to your doctor beginning at age 40. This test measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland, to help detect potential issues like prostate cancer or an enlarged prostate.

**Testosterone Level test.** Testosterone is a vital hormone for men, responsible for regulating bone density, muscle mass and mental well-being. Insufficient

testosterone levels may result in symptoms such as fatigue, depression and diminished sexual drive. Alaska Health Fair encourages individuals to consult with their healthcare providers to determine whether this test is necessary and to discuss the results. This personalized approach ensures that each man receives the appropriate care and guidance for his unique health needs.

**Vitamin D test.** Vitamin D is necessary for healthy bones, and a deficiency can result in bone pain, muscle weakness and increased risk of fractures.

**Hemoglobin A1C test.** This test measures your average blood sugar levels over the past two to three months, helping to identify potential risks for diabetes or pre-diabetes.

**Blood pressure screening** is an important test offered by Alaska Health Fair. Nearly half of adults in the U.S. have hypertension or are taking medication for hypertension. A greater percentage of men (50%) have hypertension than women (44%).

Although spring health fairs have come to an end, AHF will be back with more health fairs beginning in August. To be notified when our new schedule is published, sign up for the newsletter on [www.alaskahealthfair.org](http://www.alaskahealthfair.org).

## Alaska Men's Run – a valuable resource for all Alaskans

Alaska Health Fair is proud of its long-standing partnership with the Alaska Men's Run, an organization that has been making a significant impact on men's health in our community for over 30 years. This collaboration has enabled us to provide free prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests at all of our health fairs, while supplies last. The Alaska Men's Run is an annual event held in Anchorage, which aims to raise awareness and funds for men's health issues, primarily prostate and testicular cancer. Established in 1989, the run has grown to become a significant force in the battle against these cancers. The event features a 5-mile run, as well as a 2-mile walk, allowing participants of all fitness levels to join in and show their support. This year's run is on Sept. 21, and we encourage you to visit their website today for further information, [alaskamen-run.com](http://alaskamen-run.com).

In addition to raising

awareness and funds, Alaska Men's Run provides financial assistance to men in Alaska who are dealing with prostate or testicular cancer. This support can help cover expenses related to treatment, travel and other necessities, easing the burden on those affected by these conditions.

Through the partnership between Alaska Health Fair and the Alaska Men's Run, free PSA tests have been made available to men attending Alaska Health Fair health fairs. This collaboration has allowed countless men to access this essential screening at no cost, potentially saving lives by enabling early detection and intervention.

PSA testing is crucial because early detection of prostate cancer increases the chances of successful treatment. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men in the United States, and early detection can help reduce the risk of severe health complications and improve survival rates. Metastatic prostate cancer is currently incurable.

## Another successful season

Finally, we would like to congratulate our volunteers, partners, and clients with the end of the 44th spring health fair season. This spring, Alaska Health Fair, Inc., a nonprofit focusing on health education and affordable blood screenings since 1980, delivered dozens of health fairs and thousands of affordable blood draws in all corners of the state. Our health fairs would not be possible without the help of 250+ volunteers and 150+ local partners, including nonprofits, businesses, and government organizations, that donated their time to make health fairs a resounding success.

We appreciate the thousands of people who attended the health fairs and those who brought their friends and family to these events. You are the reason we exist. By participating in health fairs, you are taking charge of your health, learning about important health topics, and taking advantage of preventative screenings—all things vital for staying in optimal health. We thank all of you.

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# Effects of jobs and attitudes on memory and aging

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

## Preventing memory loss on a daily basis

When it comes to your brain, use it or lose it. The harder your brain works at your job, the less likely you may be to have memory and thinking problems later in life, according to a new study published in the journal *Neurology*. The study does not prove that stimulating work prevents mild cognitive impairment (MCI). It only shows an association.

“We examined the demands of various jobs and found that cognitive stimulation at work during different stages in life, during your 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s, was linked to a reduced risk of mild cognitive impairment after the age of 70,” said study author Dr. Trine Holt Edwin with Oslo University Hospital in Norway. “Our findings highlight the value of having a job that requires more complex thinking as a way to possibly maintain memory and thinking in old age.”

The study looked at 7,000 people and 305 occupations in Norway. Researchers measured the degree of cognitive stimulation that participants experienced while on the job. They measured the degree of routine manual, routine cognitive, non-routine analytical, and non-routine interpersonal tasks, which are skill sets that different jobs demand.

Routine manual tasks demand speed, control over equipment, and often involve repetitive motions, typical of factory work. Routine cognitive tasks demand precision and accuracy of repetitive tasks, such as in bookkeeping and filing.

Non-routine analytical tasks refer to activities that involve analyzing information, engaging in creative thinking and interpreting information for others. Non-routine interpersonal tasks refer to establishing



and maintaining personal relationships, motivating others and coaching. Non-routine cognitive jobs include public relations and computer programming.

Researchers divided participants into four groups based on the degree of cognitive stimulation that they experienced in their jobs. The most common job for the group with the highest cognitive demands was teaching. The most common jobs for the group with the lowest cognitive demands were mail carriers and custodians.

After age 70, participants completed memory and thinking tests to assess whether they had MCI. Of those with the lowest cognitive demands, 42% were diagnosed with MCI. Of those with the highest cognitive demands, 27% were diagnosed with it. After adjustment for age, sex, education, income and lifestyle factors, the group with the lowest cognitive demands at work had a 66% higher risk of MCI compared to the group with the highest cognitive demands at work.

## Old age is not what it used to be

Middle-aged and older adults believe that old age begins later in life than their peers did decades ago, according to a study published by the American Psychological Association.

“Life expectancy has increased, which might contribute to a later perceived onset of old age. Also, some aspects of health have improved over time, so that people of a certain age who

next page please



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# Aging

from page 8

were regarded as old in the past may no longer be considered old nowadays,” said study author Markus Wettstein with Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany.

Wettstein, along with colleagues at Stanford University, the University of Luxembourg and the University of Greifswald, Germany, examined data from 14,056 participants in the German Ageing Survey, a longitudinal study that includes people living in Germany born between 1911 and 1974. Participants responded to survey questions up to eight times over 25 years (1996–2021) when they were between 40 and 100 years old. Additional participants (40 to 85 years old) were recruited throughout the study period as later generations entered midlife and old age. Among the many questions survey participants answered was, “At what age would you describe

someone as old?”

The researchers found that compared with the earliest-born participants, later-born participants reported a later perceived onset of old age. For example, when participants born in 1911 were 65 years old, they set the beginning of old age at age 71. In contrast, participants born in 1956 said old age begins at age 74, on average, when they were 65.

However, the researchers also found that the trend toward a later perceived onset of old age has slowed in recent years. “The trend toward postponing old age is not linear and might not necessarily continue in the future,” said Wettstein.

The researchers looked at how individual participants’ perceptions of old age changed as they got older. They found that as individuals aged, their perception of the onset of old age was pushed further out. At age 64, the average participant said old age started at 74.7. At age 74, they said old age started at 76.8. On average, the perceived onset of old age

increased by about one year for every four to five years of actual aging.

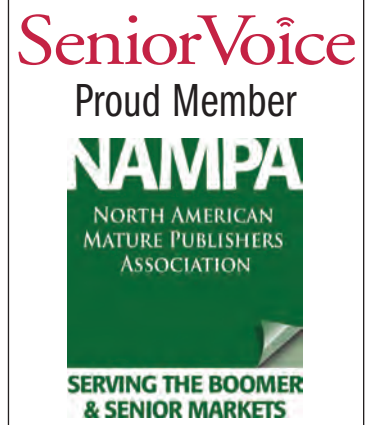
Finally, the researchers examined how individual characteristics such as gender and health status contributed to differences in perceived onset of old age. They found that women, on average, said that old age started two years later than men, and that the difference between men and women had increased over time. They also found that people who reported being more lonely, in worse health, and feeling older said old age began earlier,

on average, than those who were less lonely, in better health, and felt younger.

The results may have implications for when and how people prepare for their own aging, as well as how people think about older adults in general.

“It is unclear to what extent the trend towards postponing old age reflects a trend towards more positive views on older people and aging, or rather the opposite. Perhaps, the onset of old age is postponed because people consider being old to be an undesirable state,” Wettstein said.

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](mailto:medicalminutes@gmail.com).





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# Free resources, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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

**June 4, Tyotkas Elder Center**, 10:30 a.m.

**June 7, Soldotna Senior Center**, 1 to 2 p.m.

**June 18, Kenai Senior Center**, with guest speaker, Louise Heite from MA Speech Pathology, 1 to 2 p.m.

**June 20, Sterling Senior Center**, 1 to 2 p.m.

**June 27, Nikiski Senior Center**, 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 the May meetings schedule or other information, or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Kebschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654 or email [kpfcsp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org](mailto:kpfcsp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org).

The **Homer** caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth

Thursday of each month (June 13 and 27), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

**Kodiak Senior Center** hosts the caregiver support group on the third Thursday of each month (June 20) at 1 p.m. Call for information, 907-486-6181.

## Around the state

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meetings around the state, including Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau/Southeast, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Wil-

low. 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 (June 6) 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. June's topic is "Better Sleep...Zzzz." So grab a cup of coffee or tea and join in. Enrollment in Alaska VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is not required to participate in the call. For information, call 907-375-2606.

# Guide your caregiving into a journey of hope

By **DANI KEBSCHULL**

*Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program*

*"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow." – Albert Einstein*

That seems like such a simple quote, not much to it, but for family caregivers it can mean a lot. There can be moments, or even days, when a caregiver may feel hopeless—like nothing will ever change for the better.

Our sense of identity can get confused. "Who am I if I am no longer connected to the things that gave me purpose and joy?" Our future feels uncertain. Rather than feel hopeful, we feel hopeless. We wonder, "how long will this be my life?" The question provokes fear—it could be many years—and shame, often disguised as guilt: "My freedom requires that my family member will no longer be here."

The feeling that we are no longer in control of our life, of our future, is distressing. Layered into those

worries are the worries about our family member.

Having hope is vital to our emotional well-being, but when caregiving becomes the predominant focus of your thoughts, it can feel like your purpose, your reason for being, along with your future, has been hijacked and put on hold. Hope feels elusive. You can feel like you are a hostage to caregiving or to your family member's choices. Your family member may not recognize the level of care provided and insist that they can get by just fine on their own.

It helps to understand what hope is and what it isn't. Hope is not passive, wishful thinking, or optimism. Rather, hope is proactive and involves planning. Hope can be felt like an emotion and be the motivator that helps you locate the path that leads to light.

Feeling hopeful is a component of resilience, which is the ability to cope with challenges, recover quickly and grow in the process. Resilience is a

crucial defense to caregiver burnout. While negative thoughts and uncomfortable emotions work to fuel a negative feedback loop, hope and resilience work together in a positive feedback loop. So, how can we feel hopeful when we are caught in the negative cycle and feel as if we have

little control over our circumstances?

Look for opportunities to be kind and gentle with yourself each day. A few minutes of stillness and deep breathing can transform the moment from noise to silence and peace, the path to kindness. The brief release of external

worries and stress can allow your internal calm to surface. These moments of calm and compassion are empowering. They connect us to hope and give us the confidence to continue navigating the challenges of caring for ourselves while caring for our family member.



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# Health

continued from page 3

much about car repair, but they have spent much of their lives learning about medicine and providing health care.

**Mayo Clinic** Mayo Clinic is the largest integrated not-for-profit medical group practice in the world. Mayo has more No. 1 rankings than any other hospital in the nation according to U.S. News & World Report. It is my first stop when I am looking for medical and health care info.

Grab your computer, open your browser, and go to [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org). Click on the “Health Library” menu at the top. That’s where you start exploring “Diseases and Conditions,” “Symptoms,” “Drugs and Supplements,” “Healthy Lifestyle,” and more. Poke around to your heart’s content.

**MedlinePlus** MedlinePlus is an online health information resource for patients and their families and friends. MedlinePlus

is a service of the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the world’s largest medical library, which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The organization’s mission is to present high-quality, relevant health and wellness information that is trusted, easy to understand and free of advertising, in both English and Spanish. Anywhere, anytime, on any device—for free. Use your computer browser to visit [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov).

**Alaska Medical Library** Achy and scratchy eyeballs because you are spending too much time searching for stuff on the computer? How about talking with a real person at the Alaska Medical Library, located inside the UAA Consortium Library. Wander around and scope out the Natural Medicines database, the Arctic Health database, and more. Call 1-888-997-7878 and talk to a real person to answer questions about available resources. After your eyeballs are rested, access the online resources hosted by the Li-

brary at [consortiumlibrary.org/aml](http://consortiumlibrary.org/aml). There is a simple one-time registration process, but then their world is yours.

**Healthline** Healthline is a private for-profit health information business. They do have advertisements, but they also have a reputation for a wide variety of reliable health care information. Their material is easy to read and engaging, like magazine articles.

“Healthline covers all facets of physical and mental health openly and objectively because we’re here for the whole person—for your whole life. And because people come to us with unique challenges,

we listen closely and put empathy first across our organization. We hope you tap into all Healthline’s resources—from our health and wellness library and newsletters to our apps, podcasts and communities.” Visit online at [healthline.com](http://healthline.com).

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** During the last few years the CDC was a victim of mean-spirited political attacks targeting its national and international credibility. The fact is that the CDC remains to this day the international gold standard resource for public health research and education. And you have

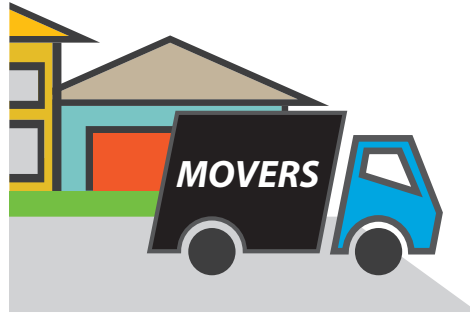
full access to it.

Visit the CDC at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov). At the top of the home page click on “Health Topics” for comprehensive information on diseases and conditions, healthy living, workplace safety, environmental health, injury, violence and safety, global health, and more. Planning international travel? Click on “Travelers’ Health” at the top of the home page. Travel safely.

Do your best to stay healthy.

*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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# First-aid basics: Knowing how to treat minor injuries

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice



As the weather warms up and people become more active, keeping first aid in front of our minds is important. Whether you are enjoying a hike, playing sports, or working in the garden, accidents can happen when you least expect them. By knowing basic first aid, you can treat common injuries and prevent more serious complications.

One of the most common injuries during outdoor activities is falls. If you or someone you know experiences a fall, remember to stay calm. Check for any signs of injury such as head trauma, loss of consciousness, or severe pain. If the person is unable to move or has neck or back pain, do not

attempt to move them. Call for emergency medical help immediately. For minor falls resulting in scrapes or bruises, clean the affected area with warm water and gentle soap, apply antibiotic ointment, and cover with a sterile bandage. If the scrape looks large or deep, it may need medical attention to prevent infection.

Burns can happen during warm weather activities like grilling or camping. If you

experience a minor burn, run cool (not cold) water over the affected area for 10 to 15 minutes. This helps to reduce pain and prevent further damage to the skin. Avoid applying ice, butter or ointments, as these can worsen the burn. Do not submerge the burn into water, let the water flow. Cover the burn with a sterile, non-stick gauze pad and secure it with a bandage, but leave the bandage loose. If the burn is severe, blistering, or larger than your palm, seek medical care.

Cuts and scrapes are often part of daily life, especially during outdoor pursuits. To treat a minor cut, first clean the wound with warm water and gentle soap. If bleeding persists, apply firm pressure to the cut with a clean cloth or gauze pad for 10 to 15 minutes. Once the bleeding has stopped, apply an antibiotic ointment, and cover the wound with a sterile adhesive bandage or gauze pad. Watch for signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or discharge, and go to a doctor if these symptoms occur. For deep cuts or wounds that will not stop

bleeding, visit the hospital or call an ambulance.

Insect bites and stings are another common concern during warm weather months. If a bee or wasp stings you, remove the stinger using a straight-edged object like a credit card. Wash the area with soap and water and apply a cold compress to reduce swelling and pain. Watch for signs of illness, such as fever or rash, in the following days. If you experience symptoms of an allergic reaction such as difficulty breathing, swollen tongue, or hives, call 9-1-1 or get to the closest emergency room.

Be prepared! Create a well-stocked first-aid kit for your home and outdoor activities. Your kit should include sterile gauze pads and adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, antibiotic ointment, antiseptic wipes, scissors and tweezers, instant cold packs, non-latex gloves, oral thermometer, insect sting relief pads, aloe vera gel for sunburns, and a first-aid manual.

Keep your first-aid kit in a designated spot and check it monthly to replace

any expired or used items. When outside, have a more compact first-aid kit to put into your pocket or a bag.

Maintain a safe environment during your activities. Wear appropriate gear like properly fitted shoes. Stay hydrated, use sunscreen, and take breaks in shaded areas to prevent heat exhaustion. Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards, such as uneven terrain or wildlife. If you have any pre-existing medical conditions, consult with your doctor before embarking on new physical activities.

You can be safe with planning, and safer with equipment and supplies. The value of outside time cannot be overstated, and you need to do everything you can to maximize your summer. Let's stay safe and healthy together.

*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.*

## 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 June 12, hosted by Baxter Senior Living.

Call Older Persons Action Group, Inc. at 907-276-1059 for location information and to RSVP for this event, or for more information on future events and to be added to our e-mail reminder list.

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# Housing

continued from page 3

wide range of needs.

Valley Charities, Inc. has established a great relationship with AHFC over time by demonstrating its ability to provide funding responsibly, which has put VCI in a position to take on additional grants and projects, even assisting people statewide. As another offshoot of the program, VCI began helping with prisoner re-entry. The

history and importance of VCI's Re-Entry Assistance Program is closely tied to the Housing Assistance Program and will be the topic of a future article in this publication.

## Partnering, processing and referrals for results

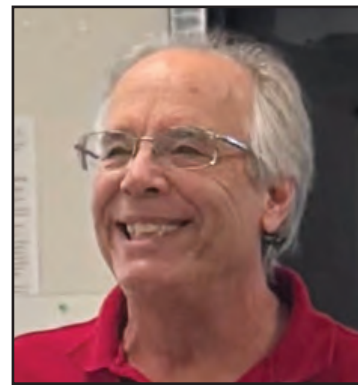
Adam Pollock is VCI's case manager for HAP. He has been on board for many years and has a wealth of knowledge and experience to help answer any questions applicants may have. Pollock has worked hard

over the years to streamline the process of applying for assistance with three main concepts:

- ▶ Partnering with six other nonprofit agencies in the Mat-Su, each with different specialties, services, and expertise, and in different locations, in order to cover residents across the entire Valley, from Chickaloon and Sutton on one end through Trapper Creek on the other. These partner agencies are Family Promise Mat-Su, Blood & Fire Ministries, Daybreak, Inc., Salvation Army, Alaska Family Services, and MY House.

- ▶ Initial screenings to determine eligibility are done over the phone, avoiding the necessity of an extra trip to complete preliminary paperwork. When eligibility has been confirmed, an in-person appointment can be made with full knowledge of additional documents needed. This procedure achieves greater convenience and efficiency for all involved.

- ▶ Application completion is done in-person at the



Dave Rose, coordinator for Mat-Su Coalition on Housing and Homelessness.

Photo courtesy VCI

office of the participating agency, where experienced case workers provide individualized help with appropriate terminology on the required forms.

Over the years, Dave Rose, former Mat-Su Coalition on Housing and Homelessness coordinator, and Adam Pollock, an army veteran, have established an excellent relationship with local property managers and landlords, a critical piece of the puzzle in the success of this program. It brings forth an element of trust, cooperation and communication needed to

work through the details of each individual circumstance and situation.

If the applicant does not qualify for the program, the folks at HAP do all they can to assist in problem-solving or identifying other agencies and resources that may be beneficial to the client's specific needs, and which they may not even be aware of. In addition to the six specific partner agencies mentioned above, other informal program partners include veterans programs, public assistance, senior programs, churches, and many others. This enables what is known as a 'warm handoff', where one agency can see a need they may not be able to fill but can refer a client to a partner agency that can do so.

Randi Perlman is the interim executive director for Valley Charities, Inc. a non-profit organization that has been serving the Mat-Su Borough for over 60 years. For more information, visit [www.valleycharities.org](http://www.valleycharities.org) or call 907-376-5740.

# Apart

continued from page 4

Utilizing technology to stay connected can bridge the physical distance. Using video calls, messaging apps, shared calendars, or social media to share moments and make future plans helps each other stay updated. It is essential for success that LAT couples establish clear communication channels to maintain trust and lessen the gap created by physical distance.

In conclusion, the concept of Living Apart Together challenges traditional notions of romantic relationships and offers a unique approach to love and commitment. While it may not be suitable for everyone, LAT relationships can provide individuals with the space and freedom

to nurture their individual growth while also fostering a deep emotional connection with their partner. By understanding the reasons behind this trend and navigating the challenges that come with it, LAT couples can create a fulfilling and sustainable relationship that works for them.

## Additional resources

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3091814/>

<https://www.marriage.com/advice/relationship/pros-and-cons-of-long-distance-relationships/>

<https://www.findlaw.com/legalblogs/law-and-life/how-to-live-apart-together-and-avoid-legal-hurdles/>

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, CLIPP is a health and wellness professional coach practicing in Anchorage. If you have questions write to her at [info@karencasanovas.com](mailto:info@karencasanovas.com).



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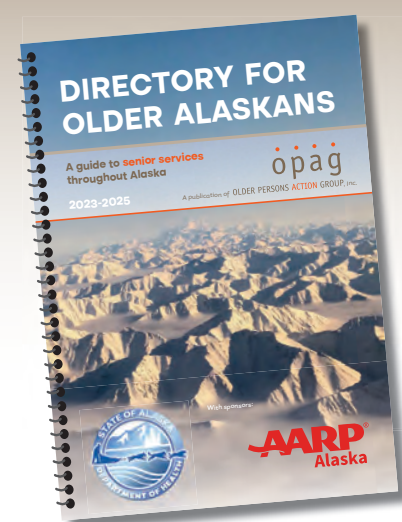
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# Black History is Alaska History

## Two historians highlight Black lives in the state

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**  
For Senior Voice

Two white guys have written a book, “Black Lives in Alaska.” We are glad they stepped up.

Ian Hartman, associate professor and department chair at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Department of History, and

David Reamer, well-known historian, especially to readers of his column the Anchorage Daily News column “Histories of Alaska,” both say they published the stories because of “the absence of material on this subject.”

“This book has its roots in the Anchorage centennial publication, ‘Imagining Anchorage’ (Univ. of Alaska Press, 2017),” said Hartman. “Jim Barnett and I edited that volume, but I also authored an included chapter on civil rights in Anchorage.

“David Reamer’s research was instrumental to that chapter. In fact, we had so much material that we decided to keep going. I

also published a book with the National Park Service on the topic a couple of years later, in 2019. The “Black Lives in Alaska” book represents a culmination of over seven years of research and expanding on a project that just seemed to grow and grow.”

### Small in numbers but great in impact

Asked if there was any one person who had the most impact on civil rights in Alaska, Reamer replied, “As in race relations? There hasn’t been one individual I would singularly credit with improving race relations.

“It was, is, and almost certainly will always be an ongoing struggle. Rather than one person providing even something as relatively simple as a foundation, I see it more as the efforts building upon each other, each brave activist adding a brick to the structure of a more equal Alaska.”

And Hartman agreed, “It’s impossible to boil it down to a single per-

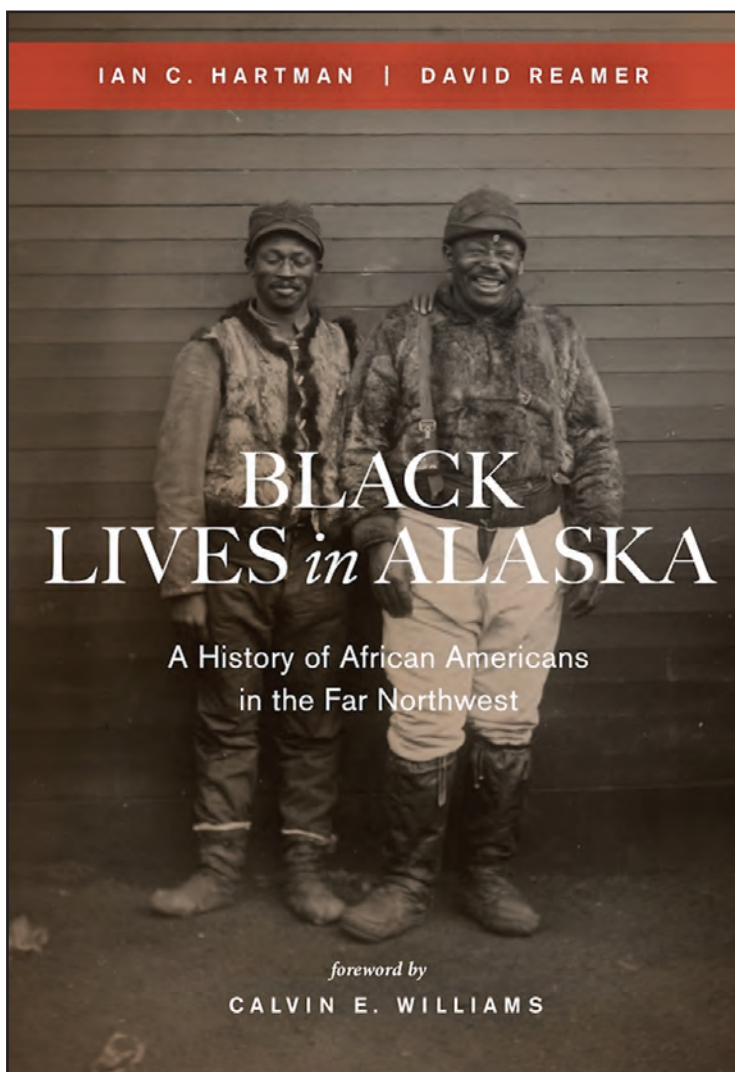


Photo courtesy of University of Washington Press

son. The book has tried to highlight many people, a community in fact.

“While Alaska’s Black community has never been a particularly high per-

centage of total Alaskans, they have exceeded beyond what their numbers might suggest. Black Alaskans have been leaders in state and local government, education, business, the military, law and much else.”

### Lives deserving of recognition

Is there one person that deserves a book of their own?

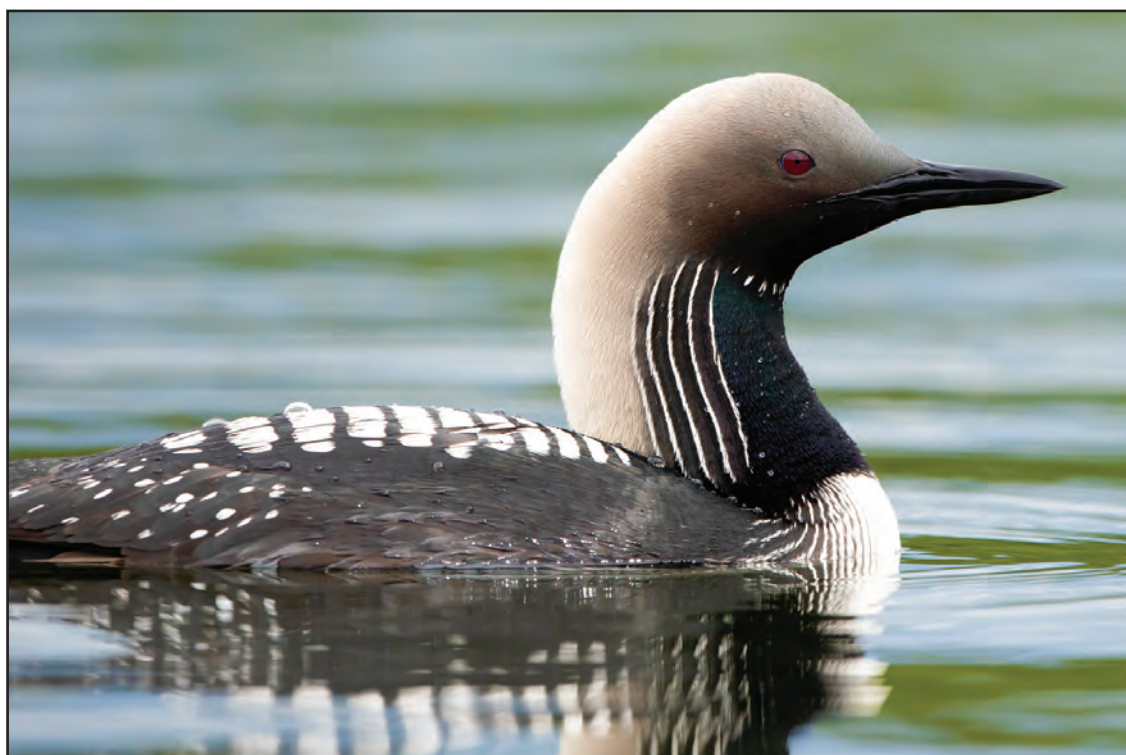
“There is one person from that book that I think deserves more, extended attention, it is journalist Herbert Frisby,” said Reamer. “Based out of Baltimore, Frisby was simply enamored with Alaska and visited several times, beginning during World War II as an embedded journalist, including as perhaps the first civilian to travel the Alaska Highway. He wrote extensively and repeatedly about Alaska for the Baltimore Afro American, and he is the most important source on Black history in 1940s Alaska.”

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# Lead tackle is killing Alaska’s wild birds, and only anglers can save them

By **J.K. Ullrich**  
For Senior Voice

The loon drifts in lethargic circles, its white-colored neck drooping into the water. Fish dart below, but the bird cannot eat. Paralysis spreads from its broad webbed feet to the lungs that once sustained five-minute dives. As its organs shut down, the loon will slowly suffocate or starve. Every year, an estimated 16 million birds suffer this torturous death from lead poisoning. Accidental ingestion of lead fishing tackle causes up to half of all adult loon deaths. But with a few small choices, anglers can help save the wildlife that share our waterways.



A Pacific loon, photographed in Anchorage. Even a small lead fishing sinker will kill a loon within two to four weeks.

Lisa Hupp/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service photo

Alaska has a lot to protect as the only place in North America that all five

loon species call home. Awkward on land, they become feathered torpedoes

underwater, hunting prey by sight. Loons may consume fish with tackle still

attached, or swallow lost sinkers instead of pebbles as digestive aids. “They

are extremely susceptible to lead toxicity due to their feeding behavior,” says Dr. Karen Higgs, a veterinarian with the Bird Treatment and Learning Center in Anchorage. Even a small sinker will kill a loon within two to four weeks. Since loons reproduce slowly, losing adult birds can affect the entire population. A study of New Hampshire’s loons found that lead tackle reduced the state’s loon population by 43% across a 23-year period.

Other species also suffer from lead in the environment. Tundra Swans have developed lead toxicosis after foraging in contaminated mud, while raptors get exposed through lead-laden prey. Half of all Bald and Golden Eagles in the United States have lead poisoning, according to a study published in 2022.

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# Maintaining prized garden cart becomes a saga



The author's old garden cart holds washed carrots during harvest, September 2019.

Maraley McMichael photo

**By MARALEY MCMICHAEL**  
Senior Voice Correspondent

In the early 2000s when my husband, Gary, and I lived in Slana, we would take turns going to Anchorage in the summer to buy groceries and other supplies. One of us always stayed home to mind our bed and breakfast business and the generator. Gary returned one trip with a surprise gift for me—a shiny yellow metal garden cart. Although I was delighted with his thoughtfulness, I wasn't excited about the color. I must have made some comment, because the next thing I knew, he'd painted it green. What a guy!

For the next 20 years, I loved that cart. I used it to haul plants, soil, sand, pea gravel, large pieces of wood, brush, cement pavers, lumber, deck furniture, whatever. It was also a useful potting "bench" and every fall it was especially handy for working with my carrot harvest.

Fast forward to spring 2021. I went to get my cart from winter storage under the carport and noticed it had two flat tires. I wanted to take it out into the cul-de-sac (which I do every spring) to haul home the sand and fine gravel spread on icy winter roads. Using a push broom, I sweep the asphalt, making piles. Then I shovel the sand into a tub on my cart and haul it home to help areas of my landscape. Otherwise, the street sweeper machines

come along and sweep it all into the ditch by the sides of the road. I aired up the flat tires, but they wouldn't hold air long enough for me to get a load of sand home.

Not wanting to miss the opportunity, I went to get my second choice (my wheelbarrow) only to find it also had a flat tire and wouldn't hold air. I went into the house and asked Gary for advice. He always took care of these things in the past, but after breaking his hip, he could no longer do the physical stuff. We decided it was time for some new garden cart tires. I removed the wheelbarrow tire and one tire from the cart and took them to Alaska Industrial Hardware. They didn't have any tires to fit my cart, but the guy showed me options for wheelbarrows. In an effort to simplify my life, I decided to spend additional money for a tubeless tire for the wheelbarrow.

Then I took the garden cart tire to my favorite tire business in Wasilla and said I wanted four new similar tires. Learning they would have to be ordered and the price was more than the garden cart I'd just seen at AIH (same tried and true design as mine), I decided it was time for a new cart and backtracked to AIH. Gary was quite surprised when I came home with a new cart, rather than new tires. Then the "fun" of assembling began. No instructions—just an illustrated diagram with lines and

arrows between individual parts and the main frame. Gary could have assembled it in a fraction of the time it took me.

By this time, I'd missed out on the road sand, but was just in time for the annual picking up of litter in my subdivision. After enjoying my new cart all summer, I parked it under

page 16 please

## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Fairbanks' annual Senior Recognition Day event in early May drew hundreds of attendees from the area, and was piggybacked on a second-day by the 50+ Art and Science of Aging Summit at the Carlson Center. More than 40 vendors were on hand to provide information and resources. The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner published an overview, noting the event has become the largest seniors gathering in the state. Here is the list of this year's recognition honorees: Lifetime Fitness, **Teresa Thomas** and **Joseph Nash**; Honored Caregiver, **Laura Saunders**; Outstanding Senior Volunteers, **Sarah McConnell**, **Anne Johnson**, **Cora Williams**, **Mary Ann Nickles**. The oldest seniors honored at the event were **Louis Thompson**, 109, and **Roger Therrien**, 106. Congratulations everyone, including the organizers ... **Wasilla Area Seniors Inc.**'s **Miles for Meals Fun Run** event takes place Saturday, June 22, where you can Run, Walk or Roll at your own pace. Register at 9 a.m., Run begins at 10. Wasilla Senior Center is located at 1301 S. Century Circle. This is a great opportunity to gather family and friends to support programs that serve seniors. If you are unable to make it on the day of the event, you may participate at anytime, anywhere, between June 1 and June 22 virtually. Make a video, take a selfie, or stop by the senior center and they'll take your photo and place it under the "Finish Line" banner. Registration is \$30. For more information, call or email 907-206-8800 or heathers@alaskaseniors.com. To register, visit the website at [www.wasillaseniors.com](http://www.wasillaseniors.com) ... **Moose Lodge 306** in **North Pole** hosts **bingo** every Tuesday night,

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# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

*continued from page 15*

6:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 per game. Free tacos for players! Call **Santa's Senior Center** for more information, 907-488-4663 ... **Kodiak Senior Center** will host a **ballpark picnic**, June 7 at noon. Wear your favorite baseball jersey. Call for details, 907-486-6181 ... Also in **Kodiak**, representatives from **Alaska Legal Services** will be at the senior center on the second Monday of each month (June 10), from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., offering one on one services on a first come, first served basis. They can start wills, Miller Trusts or guardianships, start and execute powers of attorney and advanced health care directives, collect info and signed authorizations to appeal delay of public benefits, as well as other legal services. For more information, call the senior center, 907-486-6181 ... **Valdez Senior Center, Inc.** has a new executive director, **Allie Steed**, who returned to Valdez after college and spent the last year working as the director of the **Sound Wellness and Alliance Network**, as noted in the senior center's May newsletter. Stop by and say hello ... Enjoy bicycling Anchorage's trails this summer with friendly company: **Anchorage Senior Activity Center's "Senior Streakers Bike Group"** meets each Wednesday at the center, 11:30 a.m., for a group ride. And don't worry, the group describes themselves as "a biking club with their clothes on". Contact volunteer **James Vorderstrasse** for more information, 907-770-2000.

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

# Cart

*continued from page 15*

the carport for the winter. That January we had an unusual weather event and the two back tires became frozen in a water puddle. When the spring thaw arrived, I quickly saw that the rubber on those two back tires had deep cracks. The inner tubes wouldn't hold air, so I ordered four new inner tubes. Late in the summer, a friend dropped by and installed them for me, so I was able to use the cart the last part of the season. Before winter, I placed it on 4x4 inch wooden blocks under the carport, but (of course) no water puddles developed.

The next spring (2023) all four tires were flat and I again ordered four more inner tubes, but I had other more important priorities and they never got installed. I grumbled through a whole summer of having no garden cart and when spring 2024 arrived, I was absolutely determined to get it up and running. Since the tubeless wheelbarrow tire had worked out so well, I decided to purchase tubeless garden cart tires from Amazon. I did the research



*The car is loaded for the second time to take everything, including three sets of tires, to another tire business for more advice in April 2024.*

*Maraley McMichael photos*

and ordered size 13x5.00-6 tires—the exact numbers printed on the tires that came with my cart. They arrived while the ground was still covered with winter snow.

A couple of weeks later, I set about to put the new tires on my cart. It didn't take long to realize I had a problem. Even after removing the "spacer" on the axle, there was not enough axle sticking out to secure the nut. Perhaps it had to do with the tubeless feature. I asked my neighbor to come check to see if I was overlooking something. Another neighbor saw my garage door open and he stopped by. Neither of the men could figure out a solution, so I decided to load the whole mess into my car and take it to my favorite tire business the next day for their advice.

I will spare you most of the frustrating details of the next week. It involved returning the first set and after more careful research, ordering a second set, with inner tubes, only to find they also would not fit. Desperate, I dug out my old cart from the equipment graveyard behind Gary's shop to see if I could rob the two best tires from that and combine them with the two best tires from my new cart. In the process, I realized

that the tire width of the second set was exactly the same as the tire width of the old tires on my old cart.

A solution came to me. What about putting the new tires on the old cart? The old cart had sat out in all kinds of weather for three years. The paint was peeling down to the yellow in some places and the white tire rims were rusty. I could hardly contemplate it, but I was desperate. I assembled one tire, but used the bolts and nuts from the new cart because the bolts were longer. Then, before going any further, I took the whole mess, including three sets of tires, to a different tire business for a second opinion. When he confirmed I was headed in the right direction, I assembled the remaining three tires and attached them to my old cart.

After two weeks of hassle and delay, on Saturday, April 27, I finally had a working garden cart. Although it was too late for getting the road sand, I promptly used it for two other jobs. And, I was very thankful that the old cart was still available to be resurrected.

*Maraley McMichael is a life-long Alaskan currently residing in Palmer. Email her at maraleymcmichael@gmail.com.*



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*Problem solved by putting new tires on the 23-year-old cart (left), April 27, 2024.*





# Under construction

*For just a little bit longer*



Fairbanks Senior Center's reception area, pictured here in April, gets a serious remodel makeover, with removal of 1980s-era wallpaper and installation of new enhanced lighting, new flooring and paint and a new reception desk. The center's renovation project started in August 2023, and will include a 3,700 square foot expansion. Closed to the public due to COVID in March 2020, the center has undergone upgrades and expansion and will finally reopen this summer. An open house celebration, with a ribbon cutting, live music, food and other festivities, is scheduled for June 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lunch will be served at noon. For more information, call 907-452-1735.

Photo courtesy Fairbanks Senior Center

# Recognizing service to seniors



Congratulations to Jim Bailey, here displaying his award plaque for the 2024 Ron Hammett Award for Community Service. He was presented the award at the Older Americans Month Kick-Off Event, May 1 at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. The award recognizes people whose work and dedication has benefited seniors in the Anchorage area. Jim's resume is long, being actively involved in many initiatives and workgroups to enhance the voice and safety of seniors, from playing an integral role in the AARP initiative to establish Anchorage as an Age Friendly city, to chairing the municipal Senior Advisory Commission and working as the Older Persons Action Group, Inc. executive director. He currently works on the Providence Patient and Family Advisory Council.

Photo courtesy Jim Bailey

# Calendar of Events

**June 4 Valdez** Crochet Club meets Tuesdays, noon to 1 p.m., at Providence Valdez Counseling Center. All experience levels welcome. Materials provided, or bring your own. Free and open to the public. 907-835-2838.

**June 4 Anchorage** "Lunch on the Lawn" kicks off at Anchorage Museum and continues through the summer. Enjoy free live music each Tuesday, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the lawn outside the museum. There will be food trucks, family-friendly games, and other all-age activities, including crochet circles (bring your projects). For more details, visit anchagemuseum.org/programs, and click "Special Events".

**June 5-8 Juneau** Celebration 2024. Biennial cultural event brings together thousands of Southeast Alaska Natives and others from around the region for dancing, art, food, storytelling, juried film festival, Native Artist Market, processions and much more. This year's theme: "Together We Live In Balance". Schedule, fares and other information at sealaskaheritage.org.

**June 7-9 Palmer** Colony Days. Family-friendly community festival with parade, local food and craft vendors, comical bed races, rhubarb recipe contest, much more. Full schedule online at palmerchamber.org/colonydays.

**June 8 Soldotna** Kenai River Fair at Soldotna Creek Park. Informational booths showcasing conservation efforts and local projects, food booths, more. This is a newly madeover event replacing the long-running Kenai River Festival. Kenaiwatershed.org

**June 14 Nationwide** Flag Day

**June 14-15 North Pole** Santa's Senior Center Rummage Sale, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. Also, Trunk Sale in the parking lot on Saturday, June 15, 9 to 4 p.m. 907-488-4663

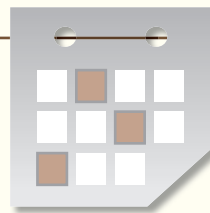
**June 16 Nationwide** Father's Day

**June 21 Kodiak** Kodiak Senior Citizens, Inc. annual meeting lunch, noon at Kodiak Senior Center. 907-486-6181

**June 21 Northern Hemisphere** Summer Solstice

**June 21-22 Anchorage** Bishop's Attic Annual Solstice Clearance Sale, 1100 Gambell Street in front parking lot. Clothing, household goods, books, games, much more, with many items priced at \$1. Hours: Noon to 5 p.m. on June 21, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on June 22. 907-279-6328.

**June 22 Fairbanks** 43rd Midnight Sun Festival, downtown Fairbanks. Twelve hours of live performances, food and vendor booths, much more. midnightsun-festivalfairbanks.com/



## Send us your calendar items

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# Mulcahy, aka Mr. Baseball, comes to town

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

The infant town of Anchorage, only a few years old, had always been interested in America's favorite pastime when William F. Mulcahy, later known as "Mr. Baseball," blew into the lusty, young railroad town in 1922. Everyone turned out to watch the games played evenings after supper and weekends. As far back as 1916, Anchorage had a regulation baseball diamond, built by the Bridge Engineers, located in what was known as Recreation Park in the railroad yards north of Ship Creek.

A press box, with private telephone communication to the newspaper office, provided avid fans with a play-by-play account of the games. And competition was keen, not only in Anchorage, but also with nearby communities like Knik and Seward. Fans who loved the game traveled by boat to Kern Creek, and then pumped themselves to Seward by handcars to catch a glimpse of the action.

For a short time, baseball was eclipsed by the clouds of World War I when Anchorage lost most of its able-bodied men. Seventy-five percent of the town's male population was eligible for the draft.

The town did rally enough fellows for a special benefit game in 1918, however. The game between the Elks and the Masons turned out a little lopsided, with the Masons taking it 19-9, but the townspeople had a great time and netted \$57.60 for the Red Cross effort (more than \$1,100 in 2023 dollars).

When the war ended, Anchorage's fortune took an upward turn. Ample funds were available, for the first time since building of the railroad started, and construction went full steam ahead.

In September 1922, Mulcahy hired on from the New York, New Heaven, and Hartford Railway to take the position of Station Auditor Assistant - he retired as General Auditor. Before that he had never traveled farther from his native Connecticut than Boston or New York to watch the Yankees and Red Sox play ball.

The new land must have seemed strange and different from his former home. The days were getting short and cold in September and the winter nights long and dark. But sitting around the bunkhouse at night, he found the talk was all about the previous season's baseball games, and predictions were rife about what the next summer would bring.

Mulcahy, who loved baseball, began to feel that maybe Alaska wasn't so strange and different after all.



Railroad workers enjoy a game of baseball on a roughed-out ball field in Ship Creek's tent city on July 4, 1915. Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, General Photograph File, AMRC-b79-1-83

In 1923, Mulcahy became president of the baseball league, as well as its treasurer, secretary, groundskeeper, and ticket seller. He traveled to Fairbanks with an

all-star team to play in the Midnite Sun Celebration, and told his wife, Gertrude, his team "was phenomenal."

During those first 10 years that

Mulcahy ran the league, the Moose Lodge and the railroad sponsored teams; a team with real uniforms

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### Drink Up

#### Across

- 1 River to the Rio Grande
- 6 Shows curiosity
- 10 Brandy flavor
- 14 Stern with a bow
- 15 Trot or canter
- 16 Eyebrow shape
- 17 Strong espresso
- 19 Poor, as excuses go
- 20 Trial lawyer's advice
- 21 Neither's partner
- 22 Summer cooler
- 24 \_\_\_ gestae
- 25 Salami choice
- 27 Russian saint
- 30 Catchall abbr.
- 32 Guanaco's cousin
- 36 Tequila and triple sec drink
- 38 Corporate department
- 39 Dutch commune
- 40 CPO's group
- 41 Sundial number
- 43 Shack
- 44 They have teeth
- 46 Soft drink mixer
- 49 Pays to play
- 50 Roulette bet
- 51 Cold war initials
- 52 Scatterbrained
- 54 Eur. land
- 56 Bath alternative
- 59 Zeta follower
- 60 Journey segment
- 63 She had a "Tootsie" role
- 64 It's made of pomes
- 68 Farsi-speaking land

#### Down

- 1 Photos
- 2 Son of Rebekah
- 3 Eatery
- 4 LummoX
- 5 Happening place
- 6 Seaweed substance
- 7 Didn't straphang
- 8 Ditty bag
- 9 Oktoberfest souvenir
- 10 Draft choice
- 11 The "E" in Q.E.D.
- 12 Highest point
- 13 Cassowary's cousin
- 18 Also-rans
- 23 Sheep dog
- 24 Dust remover
- 25 Roscoe
- 26 "Seinfeld" role
- 27 Watch word?
- 28 Weighed down
- 29 Terrific
- 31 Subdued colors
- 33 Turkish generals
- 34 Manhandles
- 35 Modify
- 37 Cape York Peninsula denizen
- 42 Set aflame
- 45 Médoc or Merlot
- 47 Old World vine
- 48 Parisian way
- 53 Vestige
- 55 Indian prince
- 56 Paint can direction
- 57 Medal recipient
- 58 Spoken
- 59 Joie de vivre
- 60 Neeson of "Nell"
- 61 Like raw silk
- 62 Rubies and sapphires
- 65 Like some answers
- 66 Country club figure
- 67 Eskimo knife

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Crossword answers on page 26





# Paula Poundstone loves to work an audience

By **NICK THOMAS**

*Tinseltown Talks*

As Paula Poundstone continues her 2024 U.S. tour, audiences can be assured of an evening of hilarity as the comedian launches into a string of humorous stories typical of most observational stand-up comics. But at some point into her routine, the sharp-witted Poundstone will seamlessly morph into her trademark banter with audience members—a part of the show fans have come to expect and adore. It's a style that evolved out of necessity.

"I've been doing stand-up for over 40 years, but have a terrible memory," said Poundstone by phone from Florida recently, while preparing for an evening event. "I started out doing the five-minute open mic thing and spent years trying to memorize an act. Then I just began talking with the audience. My first thought was that it might be a liability, but one night I realized it was kind of the heart and soul of the whole show. Now it's my favorite part of the evening."

How she selects audience members to engage varies from venue to venue as the blinding house lights will often obscure distant individual faces. Sometimes she'll spot a guest arriving late, or perhaps

someone getting up to leave temporarily, while others grab her attention by yelling out answers to her rhetorical questions—and Poundstone pounces.

"I'll often start with the time-honored question of asking what they do for a living," she explained. "In this way, little biographies of audience members come up and I use that to set my sails. Their profession might remind me of a piece of material I have stored away in my mind and I'll run with it."

A memorable interaction occurred in 2006 during a show recorded for the Bravo cable network. About a half-hour into her performance, Poundstone began questioning an engaged couple who revealed the woman worked for an insurance company and the man was in banking. A seemingly innocuous inquiry about who proposed to whom brought a response from the gentleman, "What kind of a question is that?" prompting immediate gasps from the audience—an opening for the comedian to fire off her frequently heard laugh-inducing response to the crowd's reaction: "I'll handle it."

And she did, brilliantly, with lightning-fast improvisational skills during a sidesplitting six-minute interaction with the pair.

"People still come up to



*Paula Poundstone has been doing stand-up comedy for over 40 years. Improvised banter with attendees has become one of her trademarks.*

*Photo courtesy Michael Schwartz*

me and ask about that one and to this day I wonder whatever happened to the couple and if they did get married," said Poundstone. "And every now and then, someone will ask me if it's all planned—that the people somehow know they will be picked. That always makes me laugh and my response is how would that even be possible? It would

require a lot of effort and I wouldn't even know how to begin. This is why my shows are never exactly the same wherever I go."

Like many entertainers with a busy tour schedule, Poundstone has little time for sightseeing (see [www.paulapoundstone.com](http://www.paulapoundstone.com) for cities and tour dates).

"I don't get a chance to look around much since the

touring only allows me to fly in for a show and then I'm off again," she says. "But I still think it's the best job in the world."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and writes features, columns, and interviews for newspapers and magazines around the country. See [www.getnickt.org](http://www.getnickt.org).

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# Birds

continued from page 14

Bird TLC has successfully treated several eagles with chelation, which scrubs lead from the blood. But early intervention is key, and by the time most birds show symptoms, they are beyond the reach of help—sometimes literally. Loons seldom come ashore and evade humans in the water. Dr. Higgs recalls two cases where afflicted loons could not be captured until the lakes froze, and it was too late to save them.

Birds are not the only animals vulnerable to toxic fishing gear: it's hazardous to humans, too. Thir-

ty-eight cases reported to U.S. poison control centers in 2016 concerned children ingesting lead fishing tackle. Just handling sinkers deposits lead on the skin, a quarter of which can be transferred from the hands to the mouth. Melting lead for homemade fishing gear can also result in significant lead exposure. Accumulation of lead in the body causes chronic health issues such as brain damage, kidney failure, and reproductive problems.

An easy way to remove lead from bodies is to remove it from tackle boxes. That's the goal of Loons, Lines, and Lead, a conservation partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bird

Treatment and Learning Center, the Anchorage Waterways Council, Alaska Conservation Foundation, and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. „As part of its initiative, the group gives out non-toxic sinkers made from steel, tin, glass, and tungsten. Although few retailers currently stock these alternatives, anglers' requests will demonstrate consumer demand.

“Just by making a simple choice, you're preventing the needless death of loons, eagles, and other birds,” says Tamara Zeller, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist who supports the effort.

Even non-toxic tackle can harm wildlife if anglers leave behind their

lines. Entangled birds may drown, starve, or die of injuries. Proper line disposal prevents these tragedies. Loons, Lines, and Lead has sponsored nearly 30 monofilament collection bins at popular fishing spots across Anchorage, with more on the way this summer. The group also hosts community programs that teach young Alaskans about responsible fishing, preserving traditions and the environment.

Responsible fishing lets Alaskans protect their natural heritage even when the government fails to do so. Six states within the Common Loon's breeding range have banned or restricted the use of lead tackle, but Alaska is not among them.

“We've taken lead out of gas, out of paint,” says Zeller. “Why are we throwing it in our waterways?”

With better options available, we don't have to. Anglers' choices can keep both bobbers and birds afloat on the lakes of the Last Frontier.

Bird Treatment and Learning Center, whose mission is to care and advocate for Alaska's wild birds, is proud to partner in the Loons, Lines, and Lead outreach campaign. Learn more about this initiative here: <https://lovealoon.org/>

*J.K. Ullrich is a freelance science writer and author. She volunteers at the Bird Treatment and Learning Center in Anchorage.*

# Legislature

continued from page 2

session, the legislature passed the original House bill language with a 10-year sunset provision as an amendment to another bill (SB 147) with the Senate concurring.

## New Medicaid waiver demonstration project

AARP Alaska also saw wins on several programs that support seniors' access to health services, including HB344, a bill authorizing a Medicaid 1115 demonstration project waiver for health-related social needs. The waiver can pay for unmet medically necessary nutrition, housing, or transportation expenses on a time-limited basis for Medicaid eligible enrollees.

How Alaska will shape the program will emerge over the next year or more,

though the Dept. of Health has indicated that it will focus on Medicaid enrollees who frequently need emergency room services and have specific chronic conditions with modifiable nutritional or housing needs. Each of the 16 states who have approved this new Medicaid waiver option have taken different localized approaches to address their state's emergency room high-utilizer populations.

## Expanded eligibility for SNAP

Legislation to implement Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) for Alaska's Supplemental Nutrition Aid Program (SNAP) was amended into HB344 in the final hours of the session. Broad-based categorical eligibility is proven to increase senior participation in the program because of the removal of the asset test, as seniors are more likely

to have both low-income streams requiring food assistance and disqualifying assets such as homes and savings. BBCE also allows the state to phase down benefits for working families as their income rises, providing food assistance up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

## More health care workers

We saw partial success in our work to increase the pool of qualified health-care providers in Alaska. Though the legislature did not pass AARP priority bill HB149 - the Nurse Licensure Compact - they did pass legislation to join interstate compacts for Physical Therapy and Audiology and Speech Pathology. Joining these compacts allows licensed practitioners in member states to practice in Alaska, alleviating the healthcare workforce shortage that impedes Alaskans' access

to quality care. These mark the first multi-state healthcare compacts Alaska has joined, which address barriers to care for our aging population and mitigate the state's healthcare workforce shortage.

## Retirement and pensions

In AARP's multi-year retirement readiness legislation campaign, we saw momentum build toward passage of a modest public employee pension plan and a state-managed workplace retirement savings plan. Our work on those priorities will continue into the next legislative session. Retirement readiness is good for Alaska and good for Alaskans. With robust

savings and retirement options in both the public and private sectors, we can have a thriving small business climate and reliable public services that keep generations of Alaskans in the last frontier.

AARP will host Senate President Gary Stevens and Speaker of the House Cathy Tilton on Wednesday June 5 at 1 p.m. to debrief the 2024 legislative session in a telephone townhall that will be livestreamed on AARP Alaska's Facebook page.

AARP Alaska's full and final 33rd Alaska Legislature Wrap-Up Report will be available in June at [aarp.org/ak](http://aarp.org/ak).

*Marge Stoneking has served as Advocacy Director for AARP Alaska since 2020.*

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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.

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# Keep Social Security strong for future generations

By TERESA HOLT

AARP Alaska

Social Security plays a crucial role in supporting retirees and ensuring financial stability for many Alaskans. One in seven Alaska residents (107,982 people) receive the Social Security benefits they've earned through a lifetime of hard work. These guaranteed payments remain stable throughout retirement, unlike investments tied to the stock market or employer-based decisions. These funds are a primary income source for most retirees and inject more than \$1.7 billion into the state's economy every year.

In Alaska, the average monthly payment for re-

**Nearly 30,000 Alaska residents (32% of Alaskans 65 and older) depend on Social Security for at least half of their income. Eleven thousand Alaskans (12% of Alaskans age 65 and older) rely on Social Security for at least 90% of their income.**

tired workers is \$1,485. Nearly 30,000 Alaska residents (32% of Alaskans 65 and older) depend on Social Security for at least half of their income. Eleven thousand Alaskans (12% of Alaskans age 65 and older) rely on Social Security for at least 90% of their income. These payments are calculated based on your highest 35 years of earnings and the age when you (or your dependent) start collecting Social Security.

The largest group of recipients in Alaska are the 79,077 retired workers, who account for 73% of all Social Security recipients in the state. Alaska also has 11,362 residents who receive Social Security disability income. An additional 17,543 family members receive Social Security income based on the earnings of a deceased beneficiary.

Social Security plays a vital role in our state's economy, adding \$1.7 billion annually. This substantial sum is spent on essentials like groceries, gas and property taxes. Social Security payments also play a major role in reducing poverty. Between 2018 and 2020, Social Security lifted 23,000 Alaskans age 65 or older out of poverty. In fact, without Social Security, 29.4 percent of the state's residents 65 or older

would be living below the poverty line.

With all these benefits, why are people concerned about Social Security? Unless there are changes in the law, the Social Security trust funds will be depleted by 2035. Social Security benefits would be reduced by 20%. This situation highlights the importance of addressing Social Security's financial sustainability to ensure that future generations receive the benefits they deserve.

Social Security's projected shortfall arises from several factors including:

- ▶ The Baby Boomer generation is retiring, leading to a significant increase in the number of people receiving Social Security benefits. This demographic shift puts pressure on the system.
- ▶ People are living longer, which means they receive Social Security benefits for a more extended period. While this is positive in terms of longevity, it also strains the program financially.
- ▶ There has been a decline in birth rates, resulting in

fewer workers paying into the Social Security system. With fewer contributors, sustaining the program becomes challenging.

The responsibility for fixing Social Security's financial challenges primarily lies with the U.S. Congress. Legislative action is critical to ensure the program's stability and protect it for future generations. Public support for Social Security is overwhelming. According to an AARP survey conducted in 2020, 90% of Democrats, Republicans and Independents expressed their support for the program.

It's essential for each of us to communicate with our members of Congress, urging them to address Social Security's financial issues. For more articles and information about Social Security and potential reforms, you can visit <https://www.aarp.org/retirement/social-security/info-2022/benefits-current-status-future-stability.html> or search "AARP preserving Social Security for future generations."

*Teresa Holt is the AARP Alaska state director.*

## Social Security's commitment to the LGBTQI+ community

Social Security Administration

June is Pride Month. It's a time to acknowledge the LGBTQI+ community and also celebrate diversity, love, and respect. On June 26, 2015, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, holding that same-sex couples have a constitutional right to marry in all states.

We recognize same-sex marriages in all states, as well as some nonmarital legal relationships (such as some civil unions and domestic partnerships). This recognition is important to determine entitlement to benefits.

Here are a few things you should know about our benefits for same-sex couples:

▶ **Marital status is important**—A member of a same-sex couple may be entitled to benefits when a spouse receives retirement or disability, or dies. We also consider marital status when we determine eligibility and payment amount for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

▶ **What type of benefits**

**you can receive**—Social Security taxes pay for 3 kinds of benefits: retirement, disability, and survivors. If you're entitled to benefits, your spouse and eligible family members may receive benefits, too.

▶ **When you apply for benefits is important**—If you're married or have entered a nonmarital legal relationship, we encourage you to apply right away, even if you're not sure you're eligible. Applying now may protect you against the loss of any potential benefits.

▶ **Report life changes right away**—You should let us know if you move, marry, separate, divorce, enter into (or leave) a nonmarital legal relationship, or become the parent of a child. Let us know if you change your name. You should report changes as soon as possible so benefits are paid correctly.

For more information, please visit our website for same-sex couples at [www.ssa.gov/people/lgbtq](http://www.ssa.gov/people/lgbtq). You can also read our publication *What Same-Sex Couples Need to Know* at [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10014.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10014.pdf).



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# Mr. Monk and the survivorship clause

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice



I love the old detective show “Monk”. The comedy/drama/mystery still delights me when I see it on the back channels, and Tony Shalhoub gave the defective detective just the right dose of humanity and humor. I always wait in eager anticipation for the “here’s what happened” moment at the end.

One particular episode, titled “Mr. Monk Is At Your Service,” featured an estate planning twist. A wealthy couple each had children from prior marriages, a son in his case and two daughters in hers. They had separate wills which each left everything to the spouse, but if the spouse did not survive left it to their own specific children. In other words, her will said everything goes to my husband first, but if he doesn't survive it goes to my daughters; and his said everything goes to my wife first, but if she doesn't survive, to my son.

The son finds his father in the garage, dead of a heart attack. He quickly lures his stepmother out of the house and into the car, hits her on the head

with a rock to kill her, and then stages an accident so it will appear she died by being thrown from the car. Next he calls 911, mimicking his father's voice, to report the accident and then pretends to have a heart attack while making the phone call. He drags his father's body out and sets it up by the accident scene. On first impression, it appears that the wife died in the accident, and the husband had a heart attack a short while later while calling it in. Of course, Adrian Monk notices the little things which show that this was no accident.

Why would the son have bothered to add the extra details to make it appear his father survived the accident, when he had actually died a short while earlier? After all, his father died of a heart attack, there was

no foul play at that point. Ah, but if the wife survived the husband, then under the husband's will all of their wealth was going to the wife, and then through her will to her daughters. But if the husband survived the wife, it all went to him, and then to his son on his death. The son gets nothing if his father died first, but gets everything if the wife died first.

In the episode, they mention the wills the couple left behind, but the same thing could happen if there were no wills. Under the laws of most states, if a person dies “intestate” (meaning without a will) all or most of the estate will go to the surviving spouse. And if there is no surviving spouse, it goes to the surviving children of the deceased. “Children” generally does not include stepchildren.

In real life, sometimes there are weeks' long trials, with testimony by accident reconstruction experts, about whether one person died a millisecond before the other in a car or plane crash. To avoid that kind of issue, Alaska has a statute

which says that a person is not considered to have survived the other person, unless they survive by at least 120 hours (which is five days).

Is that enough? Back in the day, a respirator required a nurse to stand there squeezing a rubber bladder to keep the patient breathing. Five days used to be a long time to be on life support. But today, with modern medical technology, five days isn't very long; at that point they may still be trying to see if the survivor of an accident is going to make it.

And that is why, when I draft a will or living trust, I always include a survivorship clause. Typically, unless my client wants a different number, I say that a person has to survive by at least 30 days, and if not they are treated as if they died before. Some clients even choose a longer period, although if you make it too long, it can hold up the ultimate distribution of the estate.

Once in a while I see a document which says something like “If I die under circumstances in which

it is difficult to tell which of us died first, then the other person is not treated as having survived me”. I have a real problem with that. I'm a lawyer, and I read the Alaska Supreme Court decisions each week. One of the most common reasons for a judge to have a decision reversed on appeal is that the judge should have first held a trial or hearing to determine the facts. So you can imagine an Alaska judge saying “But Counselor, how do I know for sure that it would be difficult to tell which of them died first, until I hold a trial? Now, when should we have you exchange witness lists?”

So don't use vague language, pick a number of days and stick with it. After all, 30 days after the accident, they weren't ready to distribute assets anyway.

*Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. 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. Otherwise, your gift might instead be a curse.*

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# Child-proofing, cleaning and sturdy cases for smartphones

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

*Bob's Tech Talk*

**Q.** How can I let my grandchildren play with my smartphone safely?

**A.** Modern smartphones and tablets made by Apple and Android have built-in parental controls. These controls are often activated on devices issued in schools, and they typically require some work to set up on your own.

To get started, open the Settings app on iPhone and tap Screen Time. On Android tap Settings -> Family -> Parental Controls. Each of those menus leads to a series of controls.

The controls fall into general categories, such as time limits, access to specific apps, internet access, and the ability to purchase items. This is one reason why it's hard to generalize, each device has different options that can be tailored for different ages.

Here are a few things to keep in mind. Parental controls are a tool that can help, but they do not replace parental oversight. The controls generally limit what the user can do, although sometimes they can be bypassed by clever users.

If you use parental controls, you can make it easier to hand your phone or tablet over to someone else. It just takes some patience learning how everything works.

**Q.** What case would you recommend for a handheld

device that a child would use?

**A.** Few places are more dangerous to electronics than a busy classroom. I asked the educators in my family what kind of cases they see on devices in the classroom, and the overwhelming answer was something made by Otterbox.

I have used Otterbox cases myself, especially in the early years when the idea of carrying around a thousand-dollar piece of glass seemed insane. There are different models with increasing levels of protection. The most rugged lineups such as the Defender Series look like they are ready for anything.

Your needs will depend on your child of course. Too much of a case can be a burden in everyday use. And while it may be inconvenient, one option is to switch to the Otterbox whenever you hand over the device.

Some cases are designed with handles that little hands can grip. Those are especially useful on phones and tablets.

Compared to similar cases I've seen, Otterbox products tend to be more expensive than other brands. However, Otterbox has a long-established reputation for quality, which is another reason I recommend them. Considering the cost of a repair or replacement, a good case

is inexpensive insurance.

**Q.** What is the best way to clean a smartphone?

**A.** Above all remember two things: use as little liquid as possible and only use a clean lint-free soft cloth. Paper towel, eyeglass wipes, and sponges are a bad idea. In fact anything else, sold as a cleaner or not, is best avoided.

Unless the device is very dirty, a clean cloth is all you need. The best cloths are large enough to use many times between trips through the laundry. Mine are about a square foot, and work well on smartphone and tablets. I get mine in an auto parts store, although sometimes they appear on Amazon. ([www.amazon.com/dp/B08Y57DMLF/](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B08Y57DMLF/)). A flat finish is preferable.

Many cloths sold as "micro-fiber" have a pronounced texture, which can work, but the best choice is cloth with very flat, tight woven threads. It will lift finger grease off the glass, and wipe fingerprints off the case with just a little pressure. Once the device is clean, switch to an unused part of the cloth for a final polish.

## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

**A Visual Library of Camera Techniques**  
Level up your skills beyond zoom with this collection that shows how different camera motions can inform storytelling.  
[eyecannndy.com](http://eyecannndy.com)

**Asteroids**  
A simulation to throw asteroids at earth and see the havoc it would unleash.  
[neal.fun/asteroid-launcher/](http://neal.fun/asteroid-launcher/)

**Apollo 11**  
Every summer my thoughts return to the sights, sounds, and stories as they were recorded in 1969.  
[apolloinrealtime.org/11/](http://apolloinrealtime.org/11/)

If the cloth alone is not enough, it's time to try liquid. Use it very sparingly. The more you apply, the harder it is to remove. Water is a great solvent, and can work wonders with the right technique. Just dip your finger in water and gently rub it on stubborn spots.

If you prefer something designed for high-quality optical glass, I use Zeiss brand cleaning fluid. ([www.amazon.com/Zeiss-](http://www.amazon.com/Zeiss-)

[Lens-Care-Pack-Microfiber/dp/B00GPVQVCO](http://Lens-Care-Pack-Microfiber/dp/B00GPVQVCO)). The main advantage of the Zeiss cleaner over water is that it is slightly easier to remove.

After 15 years of trying every cleaning method available, I always return to the basics: the right cloth and as little liquid as necessary.

*Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at [techtalk@bobdel.com](mailto:techtalk@bobdel.com).*

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# Exploring Peru and Machu Picchu

## Trip of a lifetime continues for Alaska couple

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

For Senior Voice

Part two in a four-part series.

As senior citizens, we initially worried our dream trip to Peru and Machu Picchu might be too demanding. Don, 80, and I, 72, weren't couch potatoes, but we weren't marathon runners, either.

We had never used Smithsonian Journeys and Audley Travel before, and although the itinerary promised we would be met by a private driver and English-speaking guide at every stop, we couldn't help but wonder "what if...."

After our plane landed in Lima on December 20, our anxiety melted away when we saw a smiling Peruvian holding a sign: 'Donald and Laurel Bill.' Our driver grabbed our bags, handed us bottles of water, and 30 minutes later dropped us at a restored historic mansion in the bohemian Barranco district.

### Lima: A delight for the senses

The garden view from the open windows in our room was amazing, but I worried mosquitoes would find their way in. However, the innkeeper explained there are no mosquitos in Lima – probably because it doesn't rain there. The tropical desert metropolis gets moisture from a mist they call "garua."



Our first stop in Peru included a visit to the Basilica of San Francisco, the building on the left behind Don, in the historic center of Lima. Built in the mid-1540s, it's become famous for the underground catacombs that house thousands of the city's deceased citizens.

Laurel Bill photos

For the next two days, we explored the city of 11 million people – who have learned how to turn two-lane highways into five-lane speedways with cars, buses, moto-taxis, motorbikes, and pedestrians all thinking they have the right of way. We visited a few museums and saw mummies, incredible gold pieces and pre-Inca pottery.

We toured the Basilica of San Francisco, adorned with intricate baroque embellishments. After descending into the cata-

combs below, we learned the macabre yet fascinating history of Lima's underground burial chambers where thousands of bones lay at rest.

The ruins of Huaca Pucallana, an awe-inspiring pre-Columbian adobe and clay pyramid dated between 200 and 700 AD, was fascinating. Located in the heart of the city, archaeologists still are excavating the site and we saw holes where some of the mummies on display in museums had been found.

A culinary excursion

topped off our time in the Peruvian capital. We tried treats like shrimp ceviche, lomo saltado, aji de gallina, and of course, Pisco sour. People from both Peru and Chile claim the alcoholic beverage as their national drink and kept trying to make us say their Pisco

sours were the best.

### Cusco and Sacred Valley: Andean culture thrives

We landed in Cusco on Dec. 24 and were greeted by crisp mountain air and

next page please



The catacombs under the Basilica of San Francisco served as the old cemetery during Spanish colonial times. It's estimated they once housed the remains of about 70,000 people.



Colorfully clad Andean dancers entertain those riding the Vistadome train between Ollantaytambo and Agra Calientes, also called Machu Picchu Village. The costumes and masks represent good and evil traits of the Andean people who live in the Sacred Valley, according to our guide.





## Exploring

from page 24

vibrant Andean culture at 11,000 feet above sea level. Our hotel, the Palacio Del Inka, was built on the foundations of the Aclla Huasi (home of the chosen virgins of the Incas). Original Inca stone walls lined the lobby.

To help acclimate to the high altitude, we slowly walked along narrow cobblestone streets near our hotel. We soon were among throngs of people who had come down from the mountains to check out the brightly colored alpaca-wool shawls and blankets, silver jewelry, ceramics, and other items stocked in stores on this busiest shopping day of the year.

We spent the next day resting, adjusting to low oxygen levels, and enjoying Christmas dinner in the hotel restaurant. The feast included grilled alpaca, a traditional Peruvian dish.

The next morning, we drove to the ruins at Ollantaytambo. Despite the altitude, we found the pace of exploration manageable with our patient guide. He gave us plenty of opportunities to catch our breath as we climbed more than 200 stone steps in varying heights. Once we made it to the top, the view from the sun temple was stunning. The Incas never

completed construction of this ceremonial center because Spaniards invaded the country in the 1500s.

We spent two days exploring the Sacred Valley and looked forward to recuperating at the Sol Y Luna near Urubamba each evening. We thoroughly enjoyed our casita, the resort's gardens, and its horse shows. When the manager learned Don was a birder, he ordered a taxi to take us to a private home where hummingbirds often showed up. In less than an hour, Don saw eight new species to add to his life list.

### Machu Picchu: A dream comes true

The day before we left for Machu Picchu, we toured Maras and were fascinated by the ancient salt mines with 7,000 terraced ponds shimmering in the Andean sun. The 900-year history and significance of salt mining in the region came alive as we wandered through this unique landscape. We also stopped at Moray to see its mysterious deep circular terraces. Ancients planted different crops at each level to see what new things might grow at various depths and temperatures.

Finally, our pilgrimage to the legendary Machu Picchu began with a two-hour train ride from Ollantaytambo to Agua Calientes. Lush jungle scenery,



*Machu Picchu, tucked away in the rocky countryside northwest of Cusco, was abandoned in the mid-1500s after Spanish invaders swarmed into Peru. Its existence remained a secret until American archaeologist Hiram Bingham stumbled upon it in 1911. Scholars believe it served as a royal estate or sacred religious site for Inca leaders. It encompasses about five miles and features more than 3,000 stone steps that link many levels.*

Laurel Bill photos

Inca ruins, and a rushing river accompanied us along the way. Excitement filled the train, too, when colorfully costumed and masked Peruvians danced their way through our car as a band played traditional music.

Once at Agua Calientes, we headed to Hotel Inkaterra Machu Picchu to drop off our luggage. As we approached the lobby, a bright-red Andean cock-of-the-rock flew across our path as if to celebrate our 50-year-quest to see one of the seven wonders

of the modern world.

We then took a short bus ride up a mountain and climbed more uneven stone steps along a switchback path. Suddenly, the breathtaking panorama of the ancient hidden city spread out below us – a sight that will forever be etched in our memories.

As we made our way through the intricate stone structures and terraced hillsides where llamas grazed, our guide again showed patience with our slow progress. He was so

pleased that we appreciated his heritage and were struck by the sheer grandeur of the ancient citadel.

Our 10-day journey through Lima, Cusco, the Sacred Valley, and Machu Picchu was not without its challenges. Sometimes we struggled for air at high altitudes and often needed to rest during hikes among ruins. But we found age was no barrier to experiencing the magic of this incredible country and looked forward to our next stop: The Galapagos Islands.



*Navigating the stone steps at the Inca ruins of Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley proved challenging. Many rest stops helped us climb more than 200 uneven stairs to reach the breathtaking views at the top, where we saw huge blocks of pinkish granite rocks laying in positions that suggested they were ready to be erected. However, work on this Inca site was disrupted by attacks from the Spaniards in the 1500s and never completed.*





# Osteoporosis

continued from page 5

“Men older than 50 are more likely to break a bone due to osteoporosis than they are to get prostate cancer. Each year, about 80,000 men will break a hip,” said May. “Men are more likely than women to die within a year after breaking a hip. This is due to problems related to the break.”

In men, risk factors for osteoporosis include chronic diseases such as diabetes or rheumatoid arthritis and regular use of certain medications, such as glucocorticoids.

“Many of the risk factors that put women at risk for osteoporosis apply to men as well. For example, a family history, use of steroid medications, sedentary lifestyle, smoking, and excessive alcohol consumption,” said May. “Low testosterone levels can elevate the risk in men and evidence also suggests that low estrogen levels in men can lead to bone loss.”

### Testing and diagnosis

The most common test used to measure bone mineral density and diagnose osteoporosis is a central dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA or DEXA). DXA uses a small amount of x-ray to measure how

much calcium and other minerals are in a specific area of your bone.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends annual DXA testing in women by age 65. But the Task Force says that not enough evidence is available to recommend routine DXA testing in men.

If you are 50 or older, your bone mineral density test result will be a T-score. A T-score is the difference between your bone mineral density and the average bone mineral density of a healthy young adult. A T-score less than -2.5 is usually considered to indicate osteoporosis.

Your doctor might use the Fracture Risk Assessment Tool (FRAX) along with the T-score to estimate your risk for fracture. This score uses your age, sex, medical history, country and other factors.

Worldwide, it is estimated that one in five men over the age of 50 will

experience an osteoporotic fracture in their remaining lifetime, and the number of hip fractures in men is expected to rise by approximately 310% between 1990 and 2050.

The European Society for Clinical and Economic Aspects of Osteoporosis, Osteoarthritis and Musculoskeletal Diseases (ESCEO) just recently issued GRADE-assessed recommendations for the diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of osteoporosis in men. The Working Group recommendations cover approaches to fracture risk assessment in men, including appropriate interpretation of bone densitometry and absolute fracture risk.

Trabecular bone score, used with bone mineral density and FRAX probability, provides useful information for fracture risk assessment in men. All men with a prior fragility fracture should be con-

sidered for treatment with anti-osteoporosis medications. The anti-osteoporosis treatment regimen in men should be adapted to an individual’s baseline fracture risk.

“Some of the most important things people can do to protect their bone health are to get enough calcium and vitamin D and eat a well-balanced diet, engage in regular exercise that is weight-bearing and muscle strengthening, avoid smoking, and limit alcohol intake,” said May.

The guidelines state that men 65 and older should be screened to make sure they have adequate levels of vitamin D and calcium. Oral bisphosphonates (alendronate or risedronate) are first-line treatments for men at a high risk of fracture. Denosumab or zoledronate are considered second-line treatments for men at a high risk of fracture.

# Baseball

continued from page 18

was sponsored by a prominent plumbing concern. The uniforms, donated by various merchants, had the names of the donors blazoned across their backs, making the players walking advertisements.

In 1947, Mulcahy was named Alaska’s first National Baseball Congress Commissioner, which was the beginning of a program that later carried the Anchorage’s Glacier Pilots and Bucs to several national championships.

The selfless Irishman was surprised when it was announced in 1951 that the new baseball field at Seventh Avenue and C Street was to bear his name. Considered one of Anchorage’s “Grand Old

Men,” the community wanted to honor the man who, for so many years, stood for baseball in Anchorage. With seating for 750, Mulcahy Stadium held nearly half again as many as the earlier facility. A new stadium, completed in time for the 1964 season, also was given his name.

The Mulcahys returned to Connecticut in 1953, where “Mr. Baseball” organized a Golden Age Club and a Retired Men’s Club. He died at the age of 68 on New Year’s Day 1965.

*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.*

# Video assistance with Social Security questions

### Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration partners with locations throughout Alaska to offer a secure video service option. Video service is a convenient and no-cost way for people to talk directly to a Social Security employee through a secure computer link that includes two-way video and sound.

The video service locations are available at:

- ▶ In **Nome**, Norton Sound Health Corporation, located at 1000 Greg Kruschek Ave. Video service is available for walk-ins on

a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

▶ **Kenai Senior Center**, 361 Senior Court. Video service is available for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the first and third Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

▶ **Kodiak Job Center**, 211 Mission Road, Suite 103. Video service is available here for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

The agency strongly encourages people who can

to use its online services at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), call on the phone, or use the video service option when possible. These service options can save people a long trip to a busy office.

Most Social Security services are available to the public online and with a my Social Security account, or by telephone. And most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office.

### Crossword answers from page 18

P	E	C	O	S		A	S	K	S		P	E	A	R
I	S	A	A	C		G	A	I	T		A	R	C	H
C	A	F	F	E	L	A	T	T	E		L	A	M	E
S	U	E		N	O	R			I	C	E	T	E	A
		R	E	S		G	E	N	O	A				
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M	A	R	G	A	R	I	T	A		L	E	G	A	L
E	D	E		U	S	N		I	I	I		H	U	T
G	E	A	R	S		G	I	N	G	E	R	A	L	E
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T	E	R	I		A	P	P	L	E	J	U	I	C	E
I	R	A	N		C	A	R	A		A	L	A	R	M
R	O	L	E		E	T	O	N		H	U	M	U	S



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## Injury

continued from page 5

support your wrists and hands become tense and strained.

Sit up straight, facing the computer monitor straight on. The top of the screen should be about eye level. Hold your head at a slight downward tilt to avoid straining muscles in your neck and shoulders. Touch the keys lightly. Keep your feet flat and pointed toward the workstation. This may mean placing a flat prop under your feet. Adjust your chair height and seat back so that you can touch the keyboard with straight wrists and hands.

A wrist rest, like a small rolled-up towel, can help support your wrists and keep them straight. A lower back pad or pillow may help you sit up straight. A copy stand should be the same height as the screen so you don't have to strain your neck to read what you're typing. A telephone headset will help to keep your head upright and your body straight. Never hold the telephone handset by pressing it against your ear with your shoulder. The mouse pad, if you use one, should allow the mouse to float friction-free over it, requiring little effort.

At any moment during the day, when convenient, stretch your fingers out widely away from the palms five to 10 times. Also, rotate your wrists gently

first in one direction, then the other, and then shake your hands out by letting them dangle from the wrists. Shake your hands first up and down, then sideways.

You can also prevent build-up of tension in the upper body by reaching your arms strongly overhead for five seconds, then lower and relax. Repeat five times. Next, roll your shoulders in a wide circular motion, forward five times then back five times. Get up and walk around whenever possible, and shift your gaze to a far focus – such as out the window – at least one time during an hour of working close to the screen.

If you can, program your computer to beep at you at least once hourly as a reminder to take a stretch and re-focusing break. One of my favorite “head” relaxing exercises is to mouth the vowel sounds with greatly exaggerated facial gestures. A-E-I-O-U. On the “U” scrunch up your whole face toward the tip of your nose. This can be especially entertaining performed in a group.

When you're at home, try to avoid repeating the same movements you use at work. Exercise aerobically by walking or swimming. Play ball. If these suggestions don't help your wrist pain, please see your doctor for further evaluation and treatment.

*Emily Kane is a naturopathic doctor based in Juneau. Contact her online at <http://www.dremilykane.com>.*

## History

continued from page 14

“There are several people who deserve their own biographies,” said Hartman. “I'd single out Zula Swanson and M. Ashley Dickerson as two women who've had an extraordinary impact on Anchorage, albeit for different reasons. You'll need to read the book to learn more about these two amazing women, but suffice to say that there's much more to say about them than what is in the book.”

Hartman has no plans to write more books about Black Alaskans.

“I've greatly enjoyed this project and have found

it to be the most intellectually rewarding book that I've had the fortune to work on, but I'd love to see others pick up where this project has left off.

“As I often remind people, the subtitle of the book is ‘A History of African Americans in the Far Northwest.’

The emphasis should be understood that this is “A” history – not “The” History of African Americans in the Far Northwest. I've always believed that there's so much left to say about the topic, and this is far from the final word. I very much hope and expect others will continue the research and write their own histories and contribute even more to our understanding of this important topic.”



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