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Senior Voice

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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 48, Number 3 March 2025

Senior Voice feedback:
Fill out our survey on page 21.

Velda Geller, Kenai's public service champion. - page 16

Music streaming?
Give me my records, cassettes and CDs. - page 14

Preparedness for volcano emergencies. - page 12

Longtime Senior Voice editor says farewell. - page 2

Ercil Griffith and Jeffery Smith take the dancefloor after being crowned princess and prince at last year's Anchorage Senior Activity Center senior prom. The event returns this year on March 19, with a St. Patrick's Day theme, "Shake Your Shamrocks!" Along with the pageantry, door prizes, professional photography and live DJ for dancing, enjoy a corned beef and cabbage meal. Tickets are \$10 for members, \$15 nonmembers. Purchase at the center or call 907-770-2044.

Photo courtesy Ondago Photography





A farewell to Senior Voice

By DAVID WASHBURN

Senior Voice Editor



When I first started at Senior Voice, I asked my boss how long she'd worked here. She sighed, "Thirteen years."

That was thirty-one years ago.

I was straight out of college, coming from a news editor position at UAA's student newspaper, and in my early 30s. Senior issues were not something I was familiar with. But soon I was neck-deep writing about hospital Certificates of Need, Medicaid spend-down tactics, municipal senior property tax exemptions and other dense but important topics.

One of my recollections from those early days is a conversation with the then-director of the Di-

vision of Senior Services, who I was interviewing every month it seemed for yet another complicated story, often calling back to confirm a detail. She was always patient and helpful. One day she asked, "Have you ever heard of Napoleon's Idiot?" I had not. She explained that Napoleon famously kept a low-rank soldier on hand who Napoleon would rehearse his speeches or instructions

to. The idea was that if the Idiot understood the instructions, the rest of his officers and troops would as well. "You can be my Napoleon's Idiot!" I don't think it was intended as an insult, nor did I take it that way, and still smile when I think about it. I can argue that my whole tenure has been in this role, striving to grasp details and make them understandable to readers. Fortunately, I've had the help of fantastic writers and contributors all along the way.

I like to say I've "aged into my beat". What used to be issues I wrote about from a distance—health, finance, housing, transportation—are now immediate, impacting my friends, family and myself.

And Alaska too is aging. Much has changed since the

early 1990s, when seniors made up a smaller part of the state population. It seemed like the only stories that made mainstream headlines were when there was an investigation of a nursing home. Today, the "silver tsunami" is in full effect and the audience for mainstream news, print in particular, is mostly seniors. Senior Voice has survived while the print news industry overall has declined and that's because of the habits and loyalty of our subscribers and readers and people seeking information to help them. And it's also because of grant funding, mostly from federal block grants, without which Senior Voice likely would have shut down long ago. And we cannot overlook the vital support of our advertisers, many of whom have advertised for years.

For some time I've been

building a list of people to thank before leaving Senior Voice, but I've changed my mind. There are just too many. Many have passed away. I don't want to overlook anyone. Fellow staff, readers, contributors, supervisors, business partners, the many people doing great work in the senior services realm. Fantastic people.

But I do want to thank the Older Persons Action Group, Inc. executive directors and board members who over the years have been so generous and supportive, both to me and the organization itself. I wish them the best as they carry the mission forward. And thank you to my wife and sons, who tolerated my long deadline hours, helped with mailouts and other projects.

Time to send this edition to the printer and turn a new page.

The case for standard time year round

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Switching permanently to either standard time or daylight saving time would disadvantage either early risers or night owls, according to experts. The current system provides each group with benefits for half the year. Now, the Coalition for Permanent Standard Time is calling for change. The group contends abolishing seasonal time changes and adopting permanent standard time, follows science and prioritizes public health, safety and efficiency.

A survey by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) found that half (50%) of Americans support legislation to eliminate seasonal time changes, while only one-fourth (26%) are opposed. Currently, more than 60%

of countries around the world follow standard time all year. Most of the United States shifts between standard time and daylight saving time each year.

"The switch to daylight saving time in the spring may seem harmless, but the reality is far more complicated," said Jay Pea, co-chair of the coalition and president of Save Standard Time. "It disrupts our body clocks, affects our sleep quality and increases risk of avoidable health and safety incidents, such as motor vehicle accidents, cardiovascular events, and even workplace errors in the days following the time change. Adopting permanent standard time, on the other hand, offers a better solution for year-round well-being."

Data shows that the sudden change from standard time to daylight saving

time in March is associated with significant public health and safety risks. Some studies suggest that the body clock does not adjust to daylight saving time even after a few months.

Why standard time may be the healthier choice

Standard time aligns more closely with our body's natural circadian rhythms, which regulate sleep-wake cycles. It offers more sunlight in the morning, helping people wake up and feel more alert, while the evenings gradually become dark earlier, signaling to our bodies that it's time to wind down. This natural alignment supports more restful and consistent sleep.

During daylight saving time, we tend to go to bed and fall asleep later at night, resulting in sleep loss. The spring and fall

time changes also can disrupt our sleep schedule and have a negative effect on the quality of our sleep. The daylight saving time changes can be especially problematic for any populations that already experience chronic insufficient sleep or other sleep difficulties. Populations at greatest risk include teenagers, who tend to experience chronic sleep restriction during the school week, and night shift workers,

who often struggle to sleep well during daytime hours.

The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that there are marked increases in heart attacks and strokes in the days following this time change every year. A study in Michigan found that hospital admissions across the state increased by 24% for heart attacks on the Monday following the switch to daylight saving time. In a

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Mission statement:

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AARP Alaska 2025 legislative priorities

By **MARGE STONEKING**

AARP Alaska

The concerns we hear about from older Americans and older Alaskans and see in poll results most frequently are worries about retirement income, support for family caregivers, and programs for aging independently at home. AARP Alaska's top priorities focus on policies that address these concerns.

Retirement income security

Retirement readiness is good for Alaska and good for Alaskans. Protecting Social Security is a top priority at the federal level, but Social Security is not enough to live on. Increased savings and ac-

cess to benefits empower more older Alaskans to become retirement-ready, allowing them to choose how they live as they age, reducing reliance on public assistance, and improving recruitment and retention for Alaska employers.

For public employees, retirement readiness means a modest pension to recognize public service and compensate for lower pay. Without one, Alaska can't compete with private sector employers or other states who all offer public pensions. That's why AARP supports a bill to offer a modest pension benefit for all state and local public employees.

In the private sector, retirement readiness requires a savings option for

all employees and business owners. Without access to a retirement savings plan at work, nearly all workers fail to save. That's the reality for almost half of Alaska's private sector employees.

The Alaska Work and Save bill would create a public-private retirement savings partnership for Alaska workers who lack a workplace retirement program. Across political parties, seven in ten Alaska small businesses support a public-private retirement savings option. Most small business owners agree that state legislators should support a bill to make it easier for small business owners to access a retirement savings option for their employees and

themselves.

Supporting family caregivers

But not all work is paid, and family caregivers need support, too. Alaska's 94,000 family caregivers struggle with access to financial support and respite services. Two-thirds (69%) of Alaska residents age 45 and older are either currently providing care or have provided care in the past to an adult relative or friend. And seven in ten (72%) Alaska residents age 45 and older who are not currently family caregivers think it is at least somewhat likely they will provide this type of care in the future.

At the federal level, AARP is asking members of Congress to support a

family caregiver tax credit to reduce the financial burden of caregiving for a loved one.

At the state level, AARP Alaska is advocating for a 15% increase in funding for senior community grants, which fund supportive services like meals on wheels, congregate meals, transportation, light housekeeping, chore services, health promotion, adult day programs, and education and respite for family caregivers.

Senior Community Grant Services provide the lowest level of service and cost on the State of Alaska's Senior Services Continuum of Care, keeping costs to the State low while giving the

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Anchorage sales tax: There are better ideas

By **LAWRENCE D. WEISS**

For Senior Voice

Here is a true story. The recorder was on. One day, during the reign of Anchorage Mayor Daniel Sullivan (2009 – 2015, not to be confused with current Senator Dan Sullivan), I was interviewing the mayor for a local newsletter. We were up in his eighth floor office that had a spectacular view of downtown through a number of floor-to-ceiling windows. I asked him for his comment about a University of Alaska study which found that, for several decades, the percentage of business contributions to property taxes had been steadily falling, and the percentage of residential contributions had been steadily rising.

The mayor was standing at the time in front of one of the huge windows looking over downtown. In response to my question,

he gave a lengthy response, eventually raised his arm and swept it across the panorama of multi-story buildings crowding the view and said, "That's one of the things we've been working on. We want to get commercial properties assessed near their full value, just like residential property is."

Did he ever do that? I don't think so. Has any Anchorage mayor ever seen to it that commercial properties were "assessed near their full value, just like residential property is"? There again, I don't think so. So, before we institute a sales tax in Anchorage that will raise prices for families that are already stretched, why don't we ensure that commercial property owners pay their fair share?

Let's take a look at some actual facts about the proposed property tax for Anchorage. Two studies

emerged out of UAA in the waning months of 2024. From a big-picture perspective, they are more or less in agreement, so I'll focus on the one that I think is a bit more direct.

"Effects on Households of a Proposed Anchorage Municipal Sales Tax," was sponsored by the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation but was actually researched and written by faculty and staff at The UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research.

Importantly, the researchers note that, "A coalition of Anchorage business leaders has proposed a sales tax for the Municipality of Anchorage." In my view this helps to understand why a business-friendly regressive sales tax was chosen as the revenue-raising method of choice in the first place.

The study emphasizes this critical fact: "Sales taxes are widely regarded as regressive, meaning that tax payments represent a smaller fraction of income as income increases." In other words, \$1,000 a year, for example, of extra sales taxes will hit the minimum-wage family way harder than a doctor or commercial real estate owner.

"The Anchorage sales tax as proposed contains

a number of exemptions from taxation that aim to reduce the impact on low- and middle-income households. Proposed exemptions include food at home, housing rent, childcare, medical care, motor fuels, financial transactions, and resale items." So a sales tax is inherently unfair, but making it a little less unfair is supposed to make families with ever tighter budgets feel better?

And there's more: "...the distribution of the projected 20% reduction in property tax offsets to owners is highly regressive for households in the lowest 30% of the income scale." Not only will thousands of Anchorage families pay an unfairly high proportion of sales taxes, they'll get less property tax relief from it. Moreover, "Most likely, renters would see little if any benefit."

Is there a better, fairer way to raise revenue? A quick review of the literature does reveal some ways. Here are a few of these ideas:

- ▶ implement a system where property tax rates increase with the value of the property to ensure that wealthier property owners pay a fairer share of taxes
- ▶ "homestead exemptions" reduce the tax burden on homes in which the

owner lives, while housing investors and speculators pay a higher property tax rate.

- ▶ adequate local corporate income taxes can generate revenue from businesses operating within the municipality—structured so that there are higher rates for larger, more profitable corporations

- ▶ Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are legally binding contracts between community organizations and developers that ensure community benefits in exchange for project support—such as agreements that include funding for affordable housing and infrastructure improvements—all without broad-based tax increases

In sum, from my point of view the question should not be, "How do we use regressive sales taxes to raise revenue?" The question should be, "How do we increase revenue and community benefits in an equitable manner?" The first approach harms families. The second builds communities.

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.

Send us your letters

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Time

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separate study, researchers in Finland found that the overall rate of ischemic stroke was 8% higher during the first two days after a daylight saving time transition. In general, more serious heart attacks occur on Mondays than on any other day of the week, making the day after the time change even more worrisome.

“We don’t really know exactly why there is an increase in heart attacks and strokes during the change to daylight saving time. It’s likely connected with the disruption to the body’s internal clock, or its circadian rhythm,” said Dr. Maria Delgado-Lelievre, who is with the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine in Florida.

Light and darkness are the most powerful timing cues for alertness and sleepiness in the human body. We are more alert in the daytime when there is bright sunlight, and we are sleepier at night when there is darkness. Our daily sleep/wake rhythm closely follows the 24-hour light/dark cycle.

“We know that the amount and the quality of sleep a person gets at any time of the year is essential to good health,” said Dr. Delgado-Lelievre. “In addition to increasing the risk for cardiovascular conditions like heart attack and stroke, lack of sleep may also put people at risk of things like depression, cognitive decline and obesity.”

Economic impacts

The American Medical Association (AMA) supports ending daylight saving time and moving permanently to standard time. Virginia Tech economics expert Jadrian Wooten says the retail industry still seems to be the biggest advocate for daylight saving time.

“They argue that extended evening daylight encourages people to shop after work and boosts foot traffic. These benefits may not be as significant as they once were. With the increase in online shopping, extended daylight hours may not drive the same level of spending as they did in the past,” said Wooten.

Studies suggest that the energy saving benefit of daylight saving time is just a fraction of a percent. Wooten said given the disruptions to sleep patterns, health concerns, and even traffic accidents that come with the time change, many would argue that the energy savings simply aren’t enough to justify it anymore.

“People generally largely vote in favor of not changing clocks,” said Wooten. “I’d argue that the most compelling economic justification may actually lie in its mental health benefits from maintaining more ‘average’ sunrise and sunset times across the year. These benefits are less obvious than traditional metrics like spending, but they’re significant.”

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.

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 March 12, hosted by Ophthalmic Associates.

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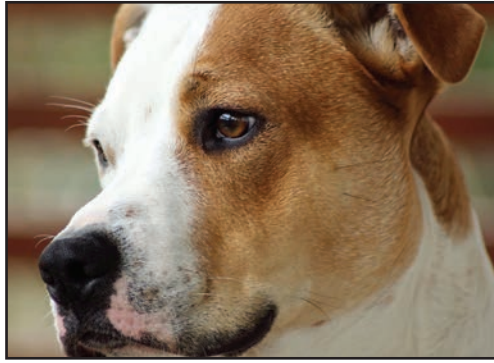
Service dogs can help seniors with disabilities

By **JIM MILLER**

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: What can you tell me about service dogs for seniors with disabilities? My 67-year-old father has chronic arthritis and Parkinson's disease, and I'm wondering if an assistance dog could help make his life a little easier. —*Dog Loving Leah*

Dear Leah: For people with disabilities and even medical conditions, service dogs can be fantastic help, not to mention they provide great companionship



© Jen Cooper | Dreamstime.com

and an invaluable sense of security. But be aware that service dogs can be very expensive to purchase and the waiting list to get one can be long. Here's what you should know.

While most people are familiar with guide dogs that help people who are blind or visually impaired, there are also a variety of assistance dogs trained to help people with physical disabilities, hearing loss and various medical conditions.

Unlike most pets, assistance dogs are highly trained canine specialists

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TV Soundbox

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Assistive Technology of Alaska



This portable, lightweight TV amplifier connects to your TV, allowing sound to project wherever you place the speaker. Simply install the receiver base to your TV with included optical and analog cables. Place the receiver on the base for charging, and when you're ready to use it, the receiver has a convenient handle so you can carry it with you, even to another room. Use for up to eight hours before

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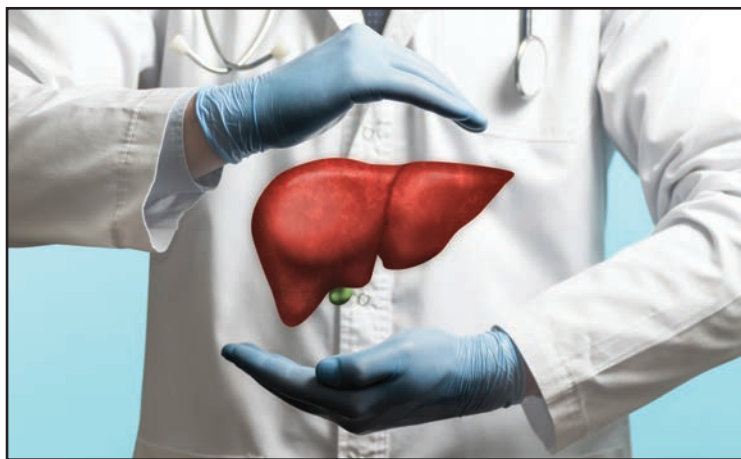
Liver Health 101: Protecting your body's unsung hero

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

The liver is one of the most vital organs in the human body, playing a crucial role in our overall health. Despite its importance, many people are unaware of the liver's functions and how to properly maintain its health. In this article, we'll explore the significance of the liver, common liver issues in the United States, and how you can minimize your risk of developing these problems.

The liver is essential

The liver is responsible for over 500 essential functions. It acts as a detoxification powerhouse, removing toxins and harmful substances



© Anton Skavronskiy | Dreamstime.com

from the bloodstream. This process ensures that our bodies are free from impurities that could otherwise cause significant harm. Additionally, the liver plays a pivotal role in metabolism by converting food into energy and breaking down fats, which is essential

for maintaining a healthy weight and overall energy levels.

The liver also produces essential proteins necessary for blood clotting and immune system support. These proteins help our bodies heal from injuries and fight off infections

more effectively. Furthermore, the liver stores vital vitamins and minerals such as iron and Vitamin A, ensuring that our bodies have the nutrients needed to function optimally. Lastly, it produces bile, a substance necessary for digestion and absorption of fats.

Conditions that impact liver health

Given these responsibilities, maintaining liver health is vital to our overall well-being. Unfortunately, there are several common liver issues in the United States that can significantly impact our health. Viral hepatitis is a significant concern, with several types that can cause inflamma-

tion and damage to the liver. These include hepatitis A (typically transmitted through contaminated food or water), hepatitis B (spread through blood and bodily fluids), hepatitis C (primarily transmitted through blood), hepatitis D (which only occurs alongside Hepatitis B), and hepatitis E (often found in areas with poor sanitation).

Fatty liver disease is another prevalent issue, characterized by excessive fat accumulation in the liver. This condition is often associated with obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol levels. Cirrhosis, which involves scarring of the liver tissue, can result

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Medicare delayed-enrollment and income adjustments

By **SEAN McPHILAMY**

Alaska Medicare Information Office

Our Congress wrote legislation which was intended to reinforce the opportunity to enroll into Medicare when first eligible (if a delayed enrollment, such as when you are covered by your employer's healthcare plan). This was done by adding a ten percent (10%) additional amount to the Part B monthly premium, for each 12-month period without fully enrolled Medicare coverage. Also,



for individuals and couples filing jointly who may have greater annual modified adjusted gross incomes, an Income-Related Monthly Adjusted Amount (IRMAA)

may be assessed. The Social Security Administration determines the additional IRMAA amount once the Internal Revenue Service provides prior-year federal income tax information. The good news is that for both premium-related situations, you can (and should) appeal if appropriate.

Part B late enrollment penalty (LEP)

For each 12-month period you delay enrollment in Medicare Part B (the healthcare coverage for outpatient care), you will

owe a 10% Part B premium penalty—unless you have insurance based on your or your spouse's current work or are eligible for a Medicare Savings Program. In most cases, you will have to pay that penalty every month for as long as you have Medicare. However, if you are enrolled in Medicare because of a disability and currently pay premium penalties, once you turn 65, you will no longer have to pay the premium penalty. Everyone has a right to file an appeal with the Social Security Administration

regarding their Late Enrollment Penalty. To appeal, follow the directions on the letter informing you about the penalty. You can appeal to remove the penalty if you think you were continuously covered by Part B or job-based insurance. You can also appeal to lower the penalty amount if you think it was calculated incorrectly. Unfortunately, being unaware of the requirement to enroll in Part B is unlikely to be a successful argument for an appeal.

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ADVERTISEMENT

Hearing loss affects family members, too



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

One common reason people with hearing loss put off getting help is the misperception that it only affects them. They're the ones who can't hear, so if it's not a problem for them, it shouldn't be a problem for others.

Physically, the inability to hear warning sounds or the voices of those who depend on the individual with hearing loss could potentially put lives in danger. Even emotionally, the impact can resonate throughout family and social circles—from frustration with repeating things over and over, to sadness at seeing a loved one isolate themselves from the people and activities they enjoy.

“Please turn down the TV!”

Stories of family members putting up with televisions turned too loud, and colleagues or service workers feeling insulted when their questions or attempts at conversation go “ignored” are almost cliché by now — as well as loved ones feeling slighted by what they perceive to be “selective hearing.” We even heard one story where the young daughter of a woman with hearing loss misinterpreted her mother’s lack of response to her questions as lack of love instead.

Don't put off getting help any longer

Hearing loss should not negatively affect you or those you care about most. Accurate Hearing offers free hearing tests. We ensure every patient gets the right hearing aids to best meet their hearing loss, lifestyle and budget needs. Request an appointment by calling 907-644-6004.

Donna R. DeMarco, AAS, CDP, BC-HIS, Tinnitus Care Provider holding a certificate from the International Hearing Society.



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

Part D late enrollment penalty (LEP)

For each month you delay enrollment in Medicare Part D (the healthcare insurance for your prescription drug plan), you will owe a one percent (1%) Part D LEP, unless you:

- ▶ have other creditable coverage, meaning coverage that is as good or better than the basic Part D benefit;
- ▶ qualify for the Extra Help program as determined by the Social Security Administration; or,
- ▶ prove that you received inadequate information about whether your drug coverage was creditable.

Note that the Part D penalty is calculated using this year’s national base beneficiary premium, which is about \$36 per month. Your penalty will not decrease if you enroll in a Part D plan with a lower premium. In most cases, you will have to pay that penalty every month for as long as you have Medicare. If you are enrolled in Medicare because of a disability and currently pay a premium penalty, once you turn 65, you will no longer have to pay the penalty.

Everyone has the right to file an appeal with the Medicare contractor, C2C

Innovative Solutions Inc., regarding their LEP determination. You can appeal the penalty (if you think you were continuously covered) or its amount (if you think it was calculated incorrectly). You should complete the appeal form you received from your plan, attach any evidence you have, and mail everything to C2C Innovative Solutions at the address provided in the notification letter received.

IRMAA assessments and appeals

An Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount (IRMAA) is the amount you may owe in addition to your Part B and Part D premiums if your income is above a certain level, affecting approximately eight percent (8%) of Medicare recipients. Federal law sets income brackets that determine your—or you and your spouse’s—IRMAA.

This year, an individual with a prior year modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) greater than \$106,000 will likely be assessed an IRMAA; for couples filing a joint return, the prior year MAGI greater than \$212,000 will likely be assessed an IRMAA.

If the Social Security Administration determines that you owe an IRMAA, they will mail you a notice called an initial de-

termination. This notice will include information on how to request a new initial determination. A new initial determination is a revised decision that Social Security makes regarding your IRMAA. You can request that Social Security revisit its decision if you have experienced a life-changing event that caused an income decrease, or if you think the income information Social Security used to determine your IRMAA was incorrect.

To discuss any Medicare premium-related concerns, or to ask any questions regarding your specific situation, please contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680. Our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program. If you are part of an agency or organization that assists seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

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

Medicare counseling by phone

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

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

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

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The National Council on Aging (NCOA) supports a network of Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs) that help people find and enroll in benefits programs. BECs are free, private community organizations that can help people with low income, disabilities, or other challenges.

BECs can help people enroll in programs such as Medicare Part D Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs (MSP), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

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

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

Send your news tips and event items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.



Preserving subsistence culture in changing times

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice

Q: Ice patterns and reduced snowfall in Alaska have created challenges for those who rely on subsistence hunting and gathering. These changes threaten access to fresh water and impact animal migration, leading to hardships for communities that depend on a stable environment. Elders like my grandmother note that shorter seasons and unpredictable ice conditions affect traditional lifestyles. It is crucial to explore ways to preserve these cultural practices. How can we do this?

A: You pose an interesting question. One effective step is to encourage elders and hunters in your community to document their environmental observations for the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, through the Alaska Native Knowledge Network. The Alaska Native Science Commission



(ANSC), through UAF, collects valuable data impacting the Alaska Native population. You can reach their staff at 907-474-5897 or via email at rehum@alaska.edu.

Established in 1994, the ANSC collaborates with the Native community to support research and preserve knowledge relevant to their culture. To contact them for research or policy info:

Alaska Native Science Commission
P.O. Box 244305
Anchorage, AK 99524
907-258-2672
info@aknsc.org
You can also help by

sharing knowledge about subsistence practices, Native foods and storytelling. Educating others fosters understanding of indigenous lifestyles, emphasizing that subsistence is about more than food—it's about community and cultural identity.

Additionally, consider contributing artifacts, photographs or personal stories to museums or visitor centers. These items help highlight the changes in Alaska's environment and can support efforts by tribal organizations and researchers to address these challenges.

As we recognize Women's History Month in March, it's fitting to honor Abbie Joseph, an Athabascan woman whose life in the Denali area exemplifies the enduring subsistence lifestyle. Her interviews from the 1980s provide insight into the traditional practices of Alaska Natives, showing the deep connection to the land that has

persisted for generations.

The National Park Service acknowledges that Denali has been home to people for thousands of years, where Alaskan Natives have sustainably harvested resources. The stories of women like Abbie Joseph are vital to understanding this continuity of life.

Finally, you can also support initiatives that track environmental changes, combining traditional knowledge with formal scientific research. This collaboration could lead to new subsistence practices and more adaptable regulations.

I hope these suggestions help you preserve your way of life. Thank you for your thought-provoking question.

Karen Casanovas, PCC,



Abbie Joseph, husband John Evan and children Walter and Martha, Lake Minchumina, 1919.

Stephen Foster Collection, 69-92-335, Archives University of Alaska Fairbanks.

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

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New at-home urine test for prostate cancer

Also: Benefits of the MIND diet and lowering blood pressure

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

At-home urine test for prostate cancer

Researchers at Vanderbilt and the University of Michigan are now reporting that they have come up with a simple at-home urine test for prostate cancer screening. Traditional prostate cancer screening with PSA testing and biopsy has been shown to lead to unnecessary procedures and overdiagnosis of low-grade cancers, according to researchers Dr. Jeffrey Tosoian, an assistant professor of Urology and director of Translational Cancer Research at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, Tennessee.

“The test is highly accurate for ruling out the presence of clinically significant prostate cancers, those that merit treatment. So, patients with a negative test result can confidently avoid having to undergo MRI or biopsy,” said Dr. Tosoian. “In the current study, this non-invasive urine test would have allowed patients with an elevated PSA to avoid 34 to 53% of unnecessary biopsies.”

MyProstateScore 2.0 (MPS2) urine test is a non-invasive test used to help identify high-grade prostate cancers that need early detection and treatment by analyzing 18 genes associated with prostate cancer. In a 2024 study, Dr. Tosoian and colleagues developed and validated the test in urine collected after a digital rectal exam, but the new study re-validated the test in urine obtained without the exam and the accuracy was very similar.

The test is used to rule out the presence of clinically significant prostate cancer that require treatment with high accuracy in men being evaluated for prostate cancer due to elevated serum PSA (PSA >3 ng/ml).

“Rectal exams are no fun,” said Dr. Tosoian. “These findings will increase the impact of the test, as it can now be used for at-home testing.”

This urine test will now be tested on men undergo-



ing active surveillance for low-grade prostate cancer. If proven to be similarly accurate in this setting, use of MPS2 could eliminate or reduce the need for prostate biopsies during active surveillance, enabling reliable non-invasive monitoring of low-grade cancers.

MIND diet may boost brain health

A good diet should align with specific nutritional and health goals. Now in its 15th year, U.S. News’ Best Diets examines 38 diets among 21 categories. The MIND diet was ranked among the top four overall, and the best for brain health and cognition.

“We are excited to see the MIND diet’s recognition as one of the top diets in multiple categories by U.S. News & World Report for the eighth year in a row,” said Jennifer Ventrille, registered dietitian and MIND diet researcher. “Its high rankings in areas like brain health and cognition, healthy eating, and mental health reflect the scientific evidence supporting its benefits.”

Combining elements of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, the MIND diet emphasizes the consumption of brain-boosting foods like leafy greens, berries, nuts, extra-virgin olive oil, whole grains and fish, while limiting foods that are linked to cognitive decline, such as red and processed meats, fried foods and sweets.

U.S. News analyzed the latest industry research and consulted with renowned medical and nutrition experts to identify the most effective and sustainable diets for a wide variety of lifestyle goals and health conditions, allowing individuals to choose the diet

that best fits them. U.S. News’ evaluation of diets followed a methodology devised in partnership with the Harris Poll, which factors in evaluations from 69 expert panelists, including medical doctors, registered dietitians, nutritional epidemiologists, chefs and weight loss researchers.

Blood pressure control good for brain health

A new study is suggesting that good blood pressure control may reduce the risks of cognitive impairment. The National Institutes of Health-supported Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial (SPRINT) Memory and Cognition in Decreased Hypertension (SPRINT MIND) study involved 9,361 participants age 50 years and older at more than 100 clinic sites in the United States and Puerto Rico. Participants were randomly assigned to a systolic blood pressure goal of either less than 120 mm Hg (intensive treatment) or less than 140 mm Hg (standard treatment).

Participants were fol-

lowed for a median of seven years, with cognitive assessments conducted both in-person and via telephone. Participants were then classified as having no cognitive impairment, mild cognitive impairment or probable dementia.

“We found that the intensive treatment group had a sustained lower incidence of developing cognitive impairment compared to those in the standard treatment group,” said study investigator David M. Reboussin, professor of biostatistics and data science at Wake Forest University School of Medicine.

Researchers found that participants in the intensive treatment group had a lower rate of mild cognitive impairment and a lower combined rate of mild cognitive impairment or probable dementia. In 2015, researchers demonstrated that intensive blood pressure management reduced cardiovascular disease and lowered the risk of death by 30 to 40% in people with hypertension.

SPRINT was stopped

early due to the success of the trial in reducing cardiovascular disease. As a result, participants were on intensive blood pressure lowering treatment for a shorter period than originally planned. The authors at that time concluded that the shorter time made it difficult to accurately determine the role of intensive blood pressure control in dementia cases.

Five years later, in 2019, researchers showed that there was a significantly reduced risk of developing mild cognitive impairment for up to five years following the initial 3.3 years of intensive blood pressure control. These latest SPRINT MIND findings showed the same previously observed significant reduction in cognitive impairment rates, but over a longer period of at least seven years.

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



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Free support, resources for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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

March 5 Kenai Senior Center, 2 to 3:30 p.m.

March 6 Tyotkas Elder Center (in Kenai), 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

March 7 Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m. Emergency preparedness training with Valerie Flake. All registered caregivers will go home with a starter “bug out bag”.

March 20 Sterling Se-

nior Center, 1 to 2 p.m. Emergency preparedness training with Valerie Flake. All registered caregivers will go home with a starter “bug out bag”.

March 25 Nikiski Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m. Alzheimer’s Association training with Cindy Harris. The topic is “Building Foundations of Caregiving.”

Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to

attend. For information or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Kebschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654 or email kpfensp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org.

Kodiak Senior Center hosts the caregiver support group on the third Thursday of each month (March 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, Willow. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details.

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

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

The national Alzheimer’s Association operates a 24-hour help line for caregivers, staffed by specialists and Masters-level clinicians, at

800-272-3900.

Online caregiver support for Alaska veterans

The Alaska VA Caregiver Wellness Cafe is held monthly on the first Thursday (March 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. Enrollment in Alaska VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is not required to participate in the call. For information, call 907-375-2606.

Organizing a dementia-friendly home

By LISA SAUDER

For Senior Voice

As the seasons change and we welcome the longer days of spring, many of us take the opportunity to refresh and reorganize our homes. For families caring for a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementias (ADRD), this is also a perfect time to evaluate and adapt the living space to ensure it remains safe, comfortable and supportive.

A well-organized, dementia-friendly home can reduce stress and confusion

Spring cleaning isn’t just about tidying up, it’s an opportunity to create an environment that promotes dignity, independence and safety.

while promoting independence for those living with ADRD. Below are some essential tips and modifications to consider during your spring cleaning.

Declutter and simplify

Excess clutter can create confusion and increase the risk of falls. Keep commonly used spaces clear and organized, making it easier for your loved one to

navigate the home safely.

- ▶ Remove unnecessary furniture or decorative items that may cause tripping hazards.

- ▶ Use clear labels or pictures on cabinets and drawers to help with recognition.
- ▶ Store frequently used items in easily accessible places to minimize frustration.

Enhance safety in every room

A few small adjustments can make a significant

difference in preventing accidents and enhancing comfort.

- ▶ Install grab bars in bathrooms and ensure non-slip mats are in place.
- ▶ Secure loose rugs or remove them altogether to prevent falls.

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- 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
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Maintaining your motivation to move

By **TRACY DUMAS**

For Senior Voice

We're a few months now into the new year. Raise your hand if you made a resolution to get more exercise? Have you kept your promise? By the time you've committed to starting a regular exercise program, you've likely made up your mind that you're ready to do that daily walk, start a strength training routine, or go to more yoga classes.

For some folks, developing a new exercise habit is easy. For others, it can be a challenge. For adults over 65 years old, The Center for Disease Control recommends at least 30 minutes a day of aerobic activity five days a week, at least two days a week of strength exercises, and incorporating activities to improve balance.

How can you keep your motivation to move when you're busy taking care of your grandkids, would rather stay home to watch TV, or are dealing with aches and pains that sometimes come along with aging? Here are some tips from the National Council on Aging for older adults to stay motivated to move.

Put fun front and center. Moving doesn't have to mean slogging away alone on a treadmill. Try listening to music or your favorite podcast, meeting a friend

for a walk, joining a group fitness class, or taking your grandkids swimming.

Get social! Moving is more fun with friends. Finding a group of like-minded folks who have the same goals of making exercise a regular habit will hold you accountable and keep you coming back for more. Interested in pickleball? Try an intro workshop at your local gym or community center. Love to dance? Hit a Zumba class. Passionate about a cause? Sign up for one of the many local walks or runs in Alaska such as the Alaska Run for Women or Alaska Heart Walk & Run, get connected with other participants, and start training together leading up to the big day.

Mind over matter. Visualize yourself getting stronger and healthier with regular exercise. Imagine being able to comfortably play tag with your grandchildren, easily lifting groceries out of the trunk of your car or playing a round of golf this summer – without the need to ride a cart.

Set goals. It can be intimidating to jump into a new fitness routine. Start small by trying a few 10 to 15 minute at-home workouts. Or visit a local gym and ask for a fitness consultation with a personal trainer. Personal trainers can work with your unique needs and goals to help



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design the right exercise program for you.

Give yourself a break. If you need a break from your exercise routine, take it! Hitting the gym doesn't always have to

mean putting in a tough workout. Recovery is just as important. Get a massage, relax in a sauna, or do a less-intense workout on the days you're not feeling it. Building breaks into your

fitness routine will help you come back stronger and stay motivated to keep moving.

Tracy Dumas is the Director of Marketing & PR for The Alaska Club.



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Liver

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from chronic liver damage caused by various factors, including fatty liver disease, viral hepatitis and excessive alcohol consumption. Liver cancer, often a complication of cirrhosis or chronic viral hepatitis infections, is another serious concern.

Look for these indicators

Symptoms of liver issues can vary widely but often include jaundice, a yellowing of the skin and eyes. Fatigue, a persistent feeling of tiredness, is also common. Abdominal pain or swelling, especially in

the upper right side of the abdomen, nausea, and vomiting that are unexplained and persistent, as well as dark urine and pale stools can all be indicative of liver dysfunction.

It's important to note that many liver issues can be asymptomatic in the early stages, making regular checkups and blood tests essential for early detection. If you experience any of these symptoms or have risk factors for liver disease, such as family history, exposure to hepatitis viruses, or excessive alcohol consumption, consult your healthcare provider. Early detection and intervention can prevent severe liver damage and improve long-term outcomes.

Minimizing the risk

So, how can you minimize the risk of developing liver issues? Maintaining a balanced diet is crucial. Include plenty of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains while avoiding excessive fats and processed foods. Regular exercise is also key; aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity per week.

Getting vaccinated against hepatitis A and B can provide an additional layer of protection. Practicing safe sex by using condoms can prevent the transmission of hepatitis B and C, while avoiding simple things such as sharing personal items like razors or toothbrushes can reduce the risk of blood-borne pathogens.

Regarding alcohol consumption, current health guidelines emphasize that drinking less is better for health, and some individuals should not drink at all. This includes pregnant women, people with certain medical conditions, and those taking medications that interact with alcohol. If you choose to drink, be mindful of your consumption and discuss appropriate limits with your healthcare provider.

Be cautious with medications as well. Follow your doctor's recommendations and avoid excessive use of over-the-counter medications that can harm the liver. For example, acetaminophen, while safe when used as directed, should not exceed 4,000 mg per

day for adults. Exceeding this limit can cause severe liver damage.

Get tested

Alaska Health Fair (AHF) offers blood tests to assess liver health. The Comprehensive Chemistry/Hematology profile for \$45 is a valuable and affordable screening tool for assessing liver health and over 25 other tests that assess your overall well-being. This test includes a wide range of measurements that can provide insights into many different aspects of your health, including liver function.

Remember, taking care of your liver is an investment in your long-term health.

Spring health fairs coming to a location near you

Senior Voice Staff

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. will offer the following health fairs around the state in March:

March 8 Anchorage Moose Lodge Community health fair, 4211 Arctic Blvd., 8 a.m. to noon.

March 8 Wasilla FYZICAL Therapy and Balance Centers, 650 N. Shoreline Drive, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

March 8 Salcha Community health fair at Salcha Fire and Rescue Firehouse Bldg., 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

March 15 Anchorage St. John United Methodist Church, 1801 O'Malley Rd.,

8 a.m. to noon

March 15 Palmer Depot Community Center, 610 S. Valley Way, 8 a.m. to noon

March 18 Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair office draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201 (Food Bank bldg., second floor), 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Appointments served first, walk-ins accepted.

March 22 Soldotna Area health fair at Soldotna Regional Sports Complex, 538 Arena Ave., 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

March 22 Nenana James A. Coghill Community Center, 8 a.m. to noon.

March 25 Anchorage Hope Community Resources, 570 W. 53rd Ave., 8 a.m.

to noon.

March 27 Healy Tri-Valley Schools gym, 400 Suntrana Rd., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

March 29 Anchorage Alaska Pacific University, Moseley Sports Center on 4400 University Dr., 8 a.m. to noon.

Health fairs offer a great opportunity to learn about important health topics in

an informal setting. Attendees can receive free basic screenings, information and resources, and have their questions answered by health professionals.

Blood screenings at health fairs provide quick, accurate results at a fraction of the usual cost. Please note that although blood testing is a great

tool that can help identify problems early, only your healthcare provider sees a complete picture of your health. Sharing your test results with your doctor is recommended.

For more information, visit alaskahealthfair.org. Making an appointment online is quick and easy.

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Living with volcanoes: Staying safe when ash falls

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice



As Mount Spurr shows signs of potential activity, many Alaskans are wondering how to prepare for possible volcanic ashfall while maintaining their daily routines. Understanding how to protect ourselves and our homes during these events is crucial for everyone in our region. Being prepared for volcanic ash will help keep you safe and comfortable if an eruption occurs.

Volcanic ash isn't like regular fireplace ash—it's made of tiny, sharp pieces of rock and glass that can hurt your eyes and lungs. There are simple ways to protect yourself and your home if ash falls from the sky, though. This column is not about a prediction of Mt. Spurr or any other local volcano, but is about preparational steps we can all take.

Before an eruption occurs, protecting your home is important. Sealing your house is the first priority. Use weather stripping or duct tape around windows and doors to close any air gaps, to prevent ash from seeping in through small gaps. This will help with your heating bill, anyway.

Consider installing high-efficiency air filters in your heating and cooling systems, and have extra filters on hand. Store several gallons of water, as water supplies might become contaminated during an ashfall event.

When ash is falling, try to stay indoors. If you must go outside, wear an N95 mask, protective eyewear, and clothes that cover your skin. Keep your windows and doors closed to keep the ash out of your house and avoid running air conditioning units unless they have proper filtration systems.

Many people wonder about going to work during ashfall. If you need to drive during an ash fall, be extra careful. Drive slowly and leave more space between

cars because ash makes roads slippery. Use your headlights even during the day. When cleaning ash off your car's windshield, always wet it first with washer fluid before using your wipers to avoid scratches.

Since volcanic regions often experience earthquakes, it's important to know how to stay safe during seismic activity as well. During an earthquake, remember to "Drop, Cover and Hold On." If you're in bed, stay there and protect your head with a pillow. Contrary to popular belief, standing in a doorway is no longer considered safe practice, as modern doorways are no stronger than other parts of a building.

After the ash stops falling, don't rush to clean up. Wait until everything settles, then wear your mask and eye protection while cleaning. Wet the ash with water before sweeping to keep it from floating in the air. Don't use leaf blowers, as they will spread the ash around.

Don't worry too much about ash on your roof—most roofs can handle several inches of it. But if you hear creaking sounds, it might be signs of structural strain. In that case, it's safer to leave and find a stronger building. Never try to clean ash off your roof yourself, as it's very slippery and dangerous.

Remember that volcanic events can last for days or even weeks, so it's important to keep enough supplies at home to last a week: food and fresh water (for both people and pets), masks, and cleaning materials. Stay tuned to local news and follow directions from emergency officials.

page 22 please



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Organize

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- ▶ Improve lighting, especially in hallways, stairwells and entrances.
- ▶ Use contrasting colors on walls, furniture and floors to help with depth perception and navigation.

Create a calming environment

- Dementia can heighten sensitivity to noise and visual distractions. A serene and structured environment helps reduce agitation.
- ▶ Reduce loud or jarring noises by using soft background music or white noise machines.
 - ▶ Opt for neutral, warm colors on walls and furniture, avoiding overly busy patterns.
 - ▶ Establish a consistent routine and keep personal items in familiar locations.

Organize for independence

Encouraging independence can boost confidence and maintain cognitive function for longer.

- ▶ Use memory aids like whiteboards or sticky notes for reminders about daily tasks.
- ▶ Arrange clothing and toiletries in the order they should be used.
- ▶ Provide easy-to-use appliances with simple controls.

Secure hazardous or dangerous items

- Memory impairment can lead to unsafe behaviors, so it's important to secure potentially dangerous items.
- ▶ Lock up medications, cleaning supplies and sharp objects.
 - ▶ Consider using safety knobs or automatic shut-off devices on stoves and ovens.
 - ▶ Install door alarms or monitoring systems if wandering is a concern.
 - ▶ Personalize the space
 - ▶ Familiarity and personal touches help create a sense of security and comfort.
 - ▶ Display labeled family photos or memory books to encourage recognition and storytelling.
 - ▶ Incorporate favorite items such as cozy blankets, familiar furniture or

cherished keepsakes.

- ▶ Keep a visible clock and calendar to assist with time orientation.

A thoughtful approach to spring cleaning

Spring cleaning isn't just about tidying up, it's an opportunity to create an environment that promotes

dignity, independence and safety for those living with ADRD. As you refresh your home this season, take the time to evaluate how your space can better support your loved one's needs.

At Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, we're here to help. If you need guidance on home modifications,

safety assessments or support services, please reach out to us. Together, we can ensure that every home remains a place of comfort, security and love.

For more information, visit www.AlzAlaska.org or call 907-561-3313.

Lisa Sauder is the CEO of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

AARP

continued from page 3

80% of Alaskans who want to age at home the services needed to do so. Inadequate funding for senior services at the lowest level of care drive older Alaskans into higher levels of care with much higher costs. According to an informal Alaska Commission on Aging survey of Alaska's senior centers, 90% are experiencing critical funding shortages due to rising food costs and an inability to offer competitive wages to keep staff.

Family caregivers do the lion's share of work to allow friends and family

members to age at home. When older Alaskans are unable to make life decisions and manage life independently, court-appointed guardians can step in to make judgments about property, medical care, living arrangements, and more. However, Alaska's outdated guardianship laws jeopardize the health, safety and finances of vulnerable adults and cost state courts valuable time and resources.

Improving guardianship

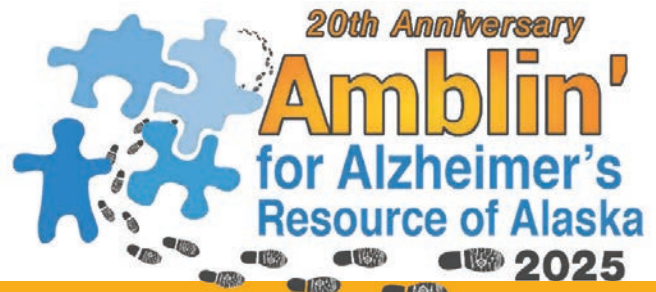
The Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Other Protective Arrangements Act (UGCOPAA) will modernize our state guardianship law and pre-

vent abuse and exploitation. AARP strongly supports the passage of the UGCOPAA to provide an accountable and efficient guardianship system that helps protect vulnerable adults and provide family caregivers with the tools they need to make important decisions for their loved ones.

From retirement readiness in the public and private sectors to supporting caregivers and aging in place, AARP Alaska is working on behalf of all Alaskans 50 and older. To learn more and join us in making Alaska a place where we can all choose how we live as we age, visit aarp.org/akadvocacy.

Marge Stoneking is the AARP Alaska Advocacy Director.

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Listening to music the old-fashioned way

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

One day last summer, as the dental hygienist walked me to the front desk, she said, “I’m excited to go home and tell my family tonight at the dinner table, that I saw a Walkman in use today.” Filling in for my regular hygienist, she said this with a smile, but it still took me a few seconds to realize it was a positive comment. I’ve been accused of being a “dinosaur” as far as electronic devices go and been told that if I had a smart phone, I wouldn’t need my Walkman – a reject left behind by one of my kids years ago. Listening to Olivia Newton-John singing on my Walkman always helps drown out dental sounds, but I use it on other occasions as well.

Then a couple months before Christmas, I was surprised to see in a catalog a Bluetooth Audio System (on sale for \$219.99) that looked almost identical to the 25-year-old audio system I listen to many nights while going to sleep, a silver and black AIWA with an AM/FM radio, remote control, CD player, dual cassette player, and detachable speakers. The one in the catalog also featured an MP3 player and was Bluetooth enabled, both of which I know nothing.

That reminded me of an article I’d read Christmas before last. In the December 2023 Costco Connection article “The Right Present,” author Andy Penfold wrote:

Does your gift recipient have a loft full of old records gathering dust because they subscribe to a music streaming service and already have



On vinyl, Reader's Digest editions like this 1981 eight-record pop collection provide Maraley with exceptional music quality. Photos courtesy Maraley McMichael

streaming devices in every room? Encourage them to embrace the warm, rich sound of vinyl with a new turntable. From vintage-looking wooden designs to sleek modern models, record players can be a hit for audiophiles.”

Old fashioned record players being suggested as good Christmas “tech” gifts? Could my vintage music machines possibly be making a comeback?

I fussed at my husband Gary for buying the new Aiwa back in 1999, saying I didn’t know why we needed another electronic gadget. He replied that he liked the double cassette recording feature. And I’m so glad he did purchase it! Six months later, it was the perfect setup for listening to music in our new-to-us Slana home, but only when the generator was running. Years later when we returned to Palmer, it became my standby for music, audiobooks and radio in my office/craft room. Now it has an honored place in my bedroom, with its stereo surround sound. In fact, my home is full of vintage music listening equipment that take cassettes, CDs, and vinyl records, and I enjoy using all of them. Besides the cassette player in my bedroom, there is a record player in the guest/craft room, and a Sony under-the-counter CD player in the kitchen.

I remember how excited I was when Gary installed the new Sony space sav-

ing CD player in my Slana kitchen in the spring of 2005. A few years prior, I had seen a similar cassette/CD player in the kitchen of a friend in Palmer, and I’d immediately decided that was something I would like when I could afford it. But, when I got serious about purchasing one, the combo player was no longer available anywhere. The

cassette part had become obsolete. I even tried eBay. So, I had to settle for only the CD player. But at the time, I had an old portable double cassette player in the kitchen that worked fine, so it really didn’t matter.

I spent a lot of time in that kitchen, especially in the summer – fixing breakfast for our bed and break-

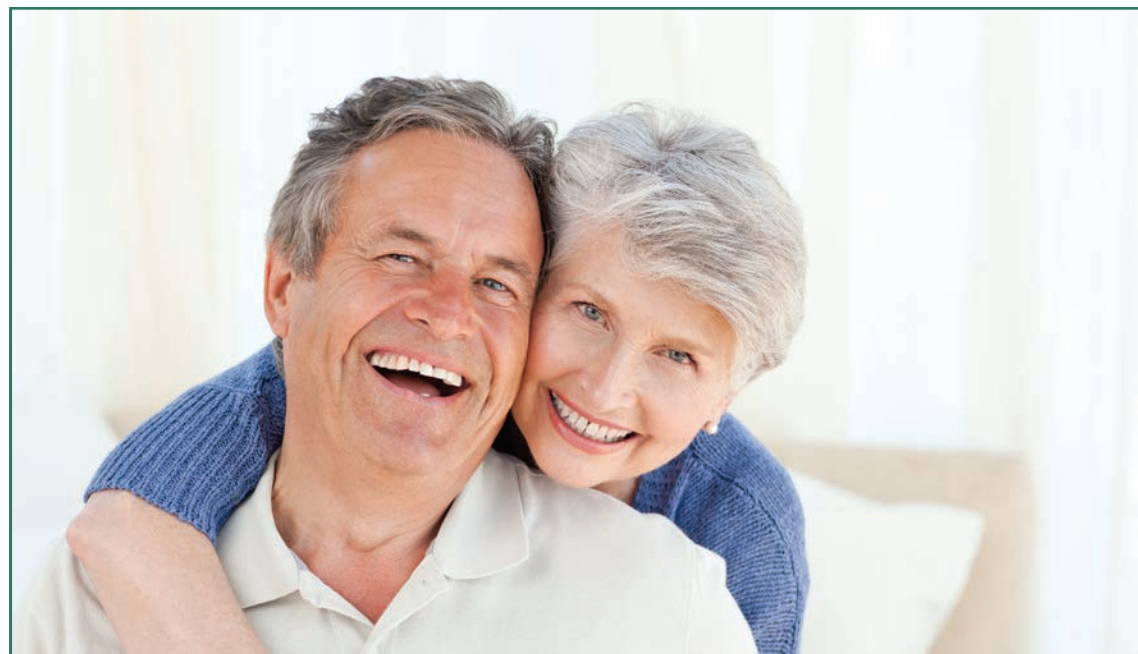
fast guests, making jam to sell, everyday cooking, and taking care of garden produce. Without even one radio station, sometimes the kitchen was too quiet. I really would have liked to listen to KCAM radio station out of Glennallen or KCHU out of Valdez, but the few people in “downtown” Slana where we lived could not receive either station. Too much static. Several different types of antennae had all been tried to no avail. Someone from KCAM personally came and checked out the problem. So, I relied on my cassette tapes for company.

My cassette collection started out with the ones Gary and I had bought new in the 1980s, but I added more from thrift store and garage sale shopping. By the early 2000s, people preferred CDs and the glut of cassettes were sold cheap. Slana didn’t have many garage sales, but one summer two long-time residents decided to sell out and move to the Lower 48. They each had the kinds of music I like (country,

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A recent catalog touts a ‘throwback’ special.



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Fuss and feathers: How tea parties saved America's wild birds

By J.K. ULRICH

For Senior Voice

Spring comes to Alaska on the wings of nearly five billion birds, making epic journeys under the protection of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Many will breed and nest within the state's 16 National Wildlife Refuges. Americans didn't always preserve wild birds this way. A century ago, birdwatchers would have spotted species from waxwings to warblers to woodpeckers adorning hats.

Bird hats became popular in America in the late 19th century, when mass printing of fashion magazines spread the trend from Europe. Hat-makers didn't stop at feathers: some used entire stuffed birds as decoration. One hat featured parts from 3,000 Brazilian hummingbirds. When the American Museum of Natural History's



An egret in breeding plumage. The species' population was decimated when hats using their feathers swept into fashion in the late 1800s.

© Frank Schulenburg/Wikimedia Commons

ornithologist surveyed Manhattan's streets in 1886, three-quarters of the 700 ladies' hats he saw featured stuffed birds or feathers, representing 40 different native species.

Beautiful feathers came at an ugly price. Hunters killed between 5 and 15 million American birds every year for the plume trade.

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Debbie Perez will be at the Kenai Community Library to help area seniors with their taxes on March 11 and 25, and on April 8. Hours are 3 to 6:30 p.m. Call 828-803-3599 to schedule an appointment ... March 20 is the deadline to submit nominations for the Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Recognition Day awards. Categories include Outstanding Senior Volunteer; Lifetime Fitness; Honored Caregiver; Model of Health. Nominees must be age 60 or older and live within the Fairbanks-North Star Borough. Nomination forms are available at local senior centers and the borough's Parks and Recreation senior program. Awards will be presented during the annual Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Recognition Day event, May 8 at the Carlson Center. Questions? Contact Marya Lewanski, 907-459-1136 or email Marya.lewanski@fnsb.gov ... In Anchorage, the Senior Citizens Advisory Commission is now accepting nomination forms for the annual Ron Hammett Award for Community Service. This award, presented each year at the Older Americans Month Kickoff event at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center (May 7 this year), recognizes "individuals whose outstanding service, dedication and leadership has had a significant impact on the quality of life for seniors in the Municipality of Anchorage." For nomination forms and award criteria, call Judy Atkins at 907-343-6590 or email her, Judith.atkins@anchorageak.gov ...

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QR codes are everywhere. Scammers know that.

Protect your phone - and your finances.

Keep your savings safe from QR code scams with these tips from the AARP Fraud Watch Network.

- Don't scan any QR code that looks tampered with
- Take a good look at the URL (web address) to make sure it matches the business and doesn't have weird spellings or inconsistencies
- Never scan QR codes from unsolicited texts or emails

Visit aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call the AARP Fraud Watch Network at 1-877-908-3360 for more resources.





Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

Homer Senior Center is looking for volunteers who have a skill, trade or just some extra time to share. Whether it's teaching a craft, playing music, leading an activity, or simply spending time with others, you can make a difference. To get involved, contact Kristina at kristina@homerseniors.com ... The Nikiski Senior Center sewing group meets Tuesdays from 12:30 to 3 p.m. Projects are more fun with friends! Call for information, 907-776-7654 ... Cozy Crafters meet at the Soldotna Public Library on March 31, from 1 to 3 p.m. Bring your own jar to make a watercolor luminary, all the other supplies for the project are provided. Or work on your own project—sewing equipment is available—and enjoy a quiet space with other crafters. Call for details, 907-262-4227 ... Valdez Senior Center invites local writers to send in their short stories, poems or other works to share with the community. Send them to Haden at vscofficeassistant@valdezak.net ... Anchorage Senior Activity Center is presenting a series of emergency planning and preparedness classes, held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month through June. Classes meet at 11 a.m. in the center ballroom and are led by SafeLogic Alaska. Sessions are hands-on, no membership required, snacks provided, and free. Made possible by a grant from the State of Alaska Dept. of Health. Call for more details, 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.

Velda Geller: A pillar of service in the Kenai community

By YASMIN RADBOD

For Senior Voice

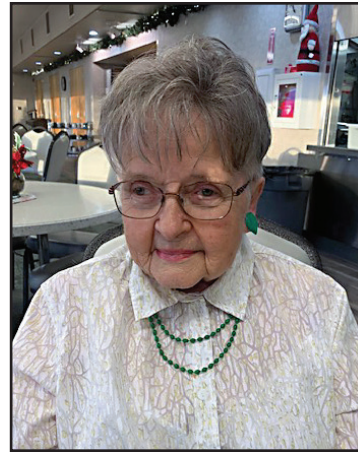
For over two decades, Velda Geller has been a cornerstone of the Kenai Senior Center, dedicating her time, energy and heart to improving the lives of seniors in the community. She reminds us just how much you get in return for "giving back."

A life of service

Her journey with the Kenai Senior Center began nearly 30 years ago around the time she and her husband turned 60. Originally from Kansas, Velda recalls how the senior center became a place of connection and belonging.

"When I first came here, I didn't know anyone," she shared. "But the people here just took me in. It was something to do, and as life went on, I kept coming back to help."

Her involvement quickly grew from casual volunteering to full-time commitment. Velda has been instrumental in plan-



Velda Geller at the Kenai Senior Center, which hosts its annual March for Meals fundraiser on March 28.

Kayla Feltman

ning events and ensuring that the center remains a welcoming space for all. Whether it's assisting seniors with the Social Security Video Delivery Project, leading fundraising efforts, or simply being a friendly face, Velda's presence is felt in every corner of the center.

A champion for seniors

As a commissioner on Kenai's Council on Aging, Velda advocates for the needs of seniors in the community. Her work has helped secure resources and support for programs that enhance the quality of life for older adults. From meal delivery services to exercise classes, Velda has been behind initiatives that promote health, wellness and social connection.

Kenai Senior Connection, the nonprofit board that provides financial assistance for the continued operation of the Kenai Senior Center, has benefited from Velda's leadership for over 10 years as its president. One of her proudest accomplishments is the annual March for Meals fundraiser, which raises money to support the center's meal programs.

"The reason we started March for Meals was to raise funds for our seniors," Velda explained. "A lot of people, even out of state, contribute because they know how important it is. Some folks who come up to visit Kenai in the summer end up subscribing to our newsletter and send in donations every year. It's

very special."

The event has become a beloved tradition, drawing support from across the community and beyond.

A heart for fundraising

Velda's knack for organizing fundraisers is legendary. For years, she has been a part of the center's Fourth of July pie sale, a staple of the community's Independence Day celebrations. Each year, volunteers bake dozens of pies—half apple, half strawberry-rhubarb—that sell out almost as quickly as they're made.

"We start early in the morning, and by the time the parade is over, people are lined up for pies," Velda said. "It's fun, it's family."

In addition to the pie sale, Velda helps with the center's Craft and Collectibles Fair, which provides seniors with an opportunity to showcase their handmade goods. During the fair, Velda sells tickets for the annual Doll Raffle fundraiser. The event not only raises funds for the center and Senior Connection but also gives seniors a chance to share their talents and connect with the community.

A humble leader

Despite her many accomplishments, Velda is quick to deflect praise.

"I don't want people to think it's just me," she said. "It's a lot of people that contribute." Kayla Feltman, the center's volunteer and activity coordinator, describes Velda as a steady and reliable presence who inspires others to get involved.

"She's a leader, but she doesn't seek the spotlight," Kayla said. "She just wants to help."

A personal mission

For Velda, volunteering is more than just a way to give back—it's a way of life.

"I don't think there's anyone here that lacks purpose," she said. "We all have something to contribute." Her faith and upbringing have been

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"I believe that city government should be non-partisan and work for the people. Good ideas are good ideas no matter where they come from, and everyone deserves to be heard."

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Prolific Alaskan writer releases 18th book

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

For Senior Voice

As a veteran mental health and addictions counselor in Alaska, you would think Alaskan writer Michael Horton would focus his writing on his work experiences all across the state.

Yet the prolific writer has veered far afield to the realms of a series inspired by Biblical characters, a Star Wars themed science fiction series and yes, one novel of Bush teens dealing with life challenges.

What comes across in his writings is his close connection to the many people he counseled and his understanding of their problems that fuels his books with deeply human truths.

Calling spirits

In his 18th book, "The Vasty Deep," Horton follows a kind spirit who looks over a young boy growing up in a very troubled home.

From a Shakespeare quote from "King Henry IV"—Glendower: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep". Hotspur: "Why, so can I, or so can any man. But will they come when you do call for them?"

In placing this work in a genre, he said, it would fit into the genre of "modern fantasy" where the character of Jinin is "supernatural" in her powers, but the setting is modern day, gritty small city life with homelessness, poverty and crimes on the street.

"In the midst of all that, it is still upbeat and hopeful. It is also a platonic love story—something that young people have said that they want to see more of—rather than hot, steamy romances."

A waiting audience

"I think the audience will be the same young adult/adult people who like the Harry Potter books – another modern fantasy with 'Muggle life challenges' and the fantasy world of solving challenges through upbeat magic—never so dark as to offend the reader," he said.

And like any important



Alaskan writer Michael Horton.

Courtesy Michael Horton



Michael Horton's 18th book, "The Vasty Deep," is available now.

book, there are lessons to be learned.

"The moral of the story is that, despite the pressures and confusion of the modern world, there is a place for innocence where it can ultimately prevail even where it appears that all hope is lost," he said. "In the battle against darkness, there will be a cost, but the fight for good is worth enjoining."

"The Vasty Deep" is available as a book or on Kindle at Amazon.

Audiobook to be released

One more new development, reports Horton: "I believe that the English-Scottish voice actor Grant Campbell will be turning my children's bedtime book, 'Original Animals' into an audiobook for broader distribution. He sent me a demo of one of the stories just this morning. It was amazing, and he has the perfect voice for it."

The book, available from Amazon, is full of bedtime stories Horton said are designed to help kids get to sleep to pleasant and educational fun, and to leave the adults with intriguing messages to ponder upon

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Calendar of Events

March 8-9 Anchorage Alaska Whole Life Festival at Coast Inn on Lake Hood. Metaphysical and healing arts event with lectures, demonstrations, vendors. \$10 per day; \$5 for seniors age 65+, military and students. Hours 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days. Visit alaskawholelifefestival.com or their Facebook page.

March 9 Statewide Daylight saving time. Move clocks ahead one hour.

March 11 Anchorage Age Smart forum at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join and learn at this free event. This month's topic is "Let's Talk Russia," with David Ramseur presenting on the heyday of Alaska-Russia relations and the new Cold War between the U.S. and Russia. Free, adults only event with complimentary refreshments. 907-770-2000

March 15 Sitka Sitka Cancer Survivor's Society annual meeting, downstairs at the Mean Queen, 1 to 3 p.m. No-host luncheon. The nonprofit group's mission is to honor, educate, comfort and inspire individuals and families affected by cancer. To RSVP, call or text Carolyn, 907-623-7028. www.Sitkacancersurvivorsociety.org

March 17 Worldwide St. Patrick's Day

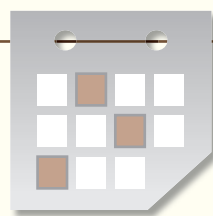
March 24 Anchorage Movie fundraiser at Bear Tooth Theatre, "The Last Ecstatic Days." Proceeds support Hospice of Anchorage. In this thought-provoking film, a young man with terminal brain cancer starts livestreaming his death journey on social media and thousands of people around the world join to celebrate his courage. Shows at 5:30 with Q&A after. Buy tickets at www.beartooththeatre.net

March 26 Wasilla 2025 Mat-Su Employer Expo at the Menard Memorial Sports Center, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Job seekers can explore career and job opportunities with more than 100 employers, schools and other partners on site. Workshops, resume assistance, typing certification testing, more. Employers can meet outstanding and non-traditional candidates with diverse skills and backgrounds and meet and network with other local and statewide businesses. Call the Mat-Su Job Center, 907-352-2500

March 28-29 Kodiak Alaska Food Festival and Conference. The state's largest convening of food experts, producers, advocates, educators, entrepreneurs and more from around Alaska and beyond. Expect a diversity of speakers, workshops and panels from all food systems sectors, who are working collaboratively for stronger, more resilient food systems. Learn, share your knowledge, and build your network. Hybrid events with both in-person and virtual attendance options. Get tickets, agendas and other information at www.akfoodpolicyCouncil.org.

March 28-30 Bethel Cama-i Dance Festival, Bethel Regional High School. Three-day traditional dance showcase with performers from all around the state and beyond. Native foods dinner on Saturday, March 29, from 4 to 7 p.m. www.swaagak.org/camai2025

March 31 Statewide Permanent Fund Dividend application deadline. File by 11:59 p.m. www.pfd.alaska.gov



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Kudos to the women of the Klondike

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

The Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-1898 drew thousands of hopeful prospectors north in search of fortune. While often overshadowed by tales of strong, rugged male adventurers, numerous courageous women also made the arduous journey, carving out unique roles and leaving an indelible mark on this pivotal chapter of North American history.

While dancehall girls like the infamous Kate Rockwell – known as Klondike Kate—and prostitutes were indeed part of the Klondike landscape, they represent only a fraction of the women’s experiences. Journalists, teachers, physicians and entrepreneurs all played crucial roles in shaping the social and economic fabric of gold rush communities.

Martha Black, who left Chicago and her husband to travel toward the exciting new gold fields, observed that women in Dawson City generally fell into three broad categories: prostitutes at the bottom of the social ladder, entertainers like dancers in the middle, and “respectable” homemakers and businesswomen at the top. Black eventually became a successful businesswoman and later served as only the second woman elected to the Canadian Parliament.

Another remarkable woman of the Klondike was Belinda Mulrooney. Arriving in Dawson City in 1897 with only \$5 in her pocket, Mulrooney quickly established herself as a savvy entrepreneur. She opened a restaurant and hotel, invested in mining claims and eventually became one of the wealthiest people in the Yukon. Known for her business sense and determination, Mulrooney exemplified the opportunities available to enterprising women in the gold fields.

Nellie Cashman, nicknamed the “Angel of the Cassiar,” was another notable figure. An experienced prospector who had worked in mining camps across the American West, Cashman arrived in Dawson in 1898. While she staked claims and pursued mining, her true passion lay in charitable works. Cashman used her earnings to support a local hospital and became known for her generosity and community spirit.

At age 55, Anna DeGraf was one of the oldest women to cross the Chilkoot Trail. The widowed German immigrant carried a sewing machine and feather bed as she climbed it on crutches in 1894 in search of her son, who had left for the Yukon six years earlier. A talented seamstress, she earned money sewing tents for the Alaska Com-



Klondike gold miner Nellie Cashman became known for her generosity and community spirit.

Alaska State Library

mercial Company and dresses for dancehall girls while she searched 23 years for her son. She helped start the first school in Circle City. And the Sisters of St. Ann, a

group of Catholic nuns, traveled to Dawson City to establish a hospital. During a typhoid epidemic in 1898, six nuns treated over 1,100 patients, providing crucial medical care.

Women brought a civilizing influence to the rough mining camps. They established businesses, organized social events, and worked to create a sense of community in the frontier boomtowns. Their contributions helped transform Dawson City from a collection of tents and shacks into a more structured and diverse settlement.

The gold rush offered women unprecedented opportunities for independence and self-reliance. Free from many of the social constraints of “civilized” society, women could pursue their ambitions and test their limits.

For some, like Black and Mulrooney, the frontier environment allowed them to achieve levels of wealth and influence that would

have been difficult to attain elsewhere. However, these opportunities were not equally available to all women. Indigenous women often faced discrimination and marginalization despite their crucial roles in supporting and guiding newcomers to the region.

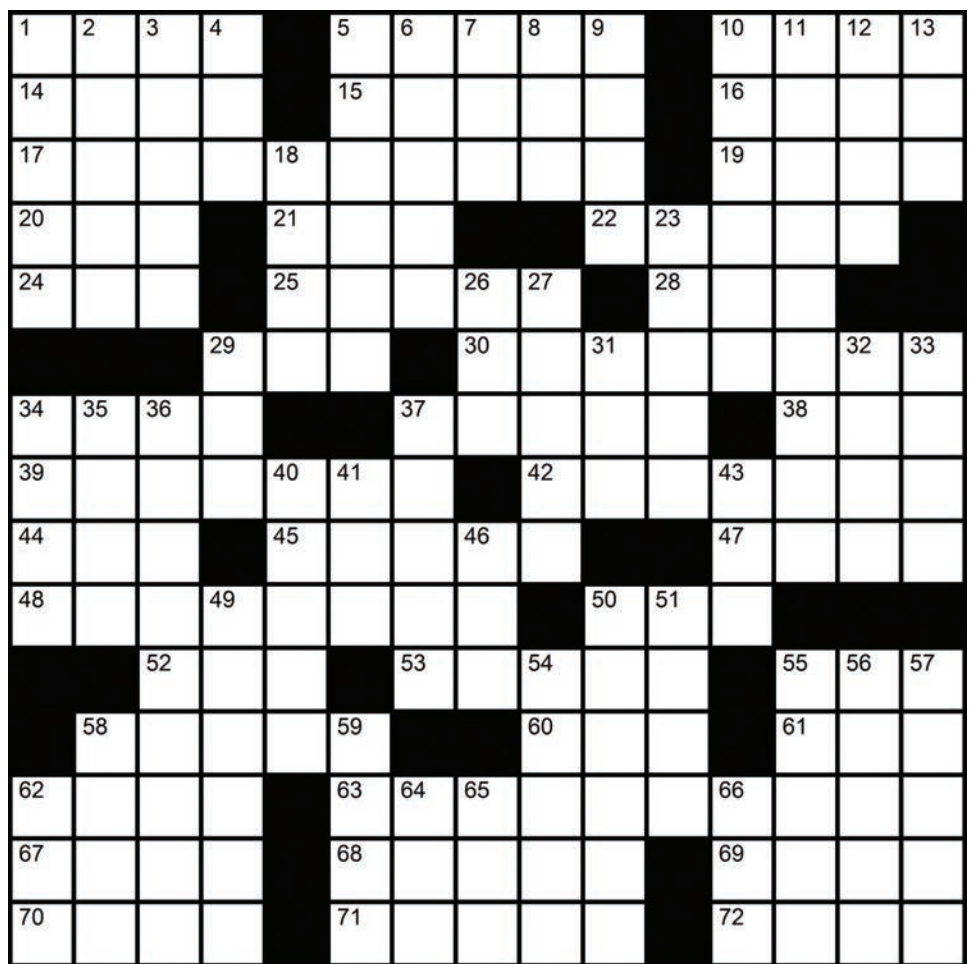
As the gold rush waned, many women who had come seeking fortune or adventure chose to make the north country their permanent home. Their legacy lives on in the rich history of the region and in the stories of pioneering spirit that continue to captivate our imagination.

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.

Show Me the Green

Across

- 1 Likewise
- 5 Big pigs
- 10 Taj Mahal site
- 14 Hang loose
- 15 Cupid’s projectile
- 16 Jockey’s whip
- 17 Shy colorful snake of Western Africa
- 19 Drop from the eye
- 20 Chemical ending
- 21 Fast no more
- 22 Put to the test
- 24 Jerboa
- 25 Shooting game
- 28 Many, many years
- 29 G.I. entertainers
- 30 Badger State city
- 34 It gives directions on the road
- 37 S-shaped moldings
- 38 Chicken ___ king
- 39 Sun-lit courtyards
- 42 Patella
- 44 Born
- 45 Butchers’ cuts
- 47 They are underfoot
- 48 Chinese restaurant offering
- 50 Vietnamese holiday
- 52 Long of “Boyz N the Hood”
- 53 Golf’s ___ Cup
- 55 Plum’s center
- 58 California’s San ___ Bay
- 60 Cyst
- 61 Musical Yoko
- 62 “Hellzapoppin’” actress Martha
- 63 “Rabbit food”
- 67 State categorically
- 68 Iranian money



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- 69 “Peter Pan” dog
- 70 Marries
- 71 Before the due date
- 72 Deuce topper
- 10 Director’s cry
- 11 Folding money
- 12 Highway
- 13 Abbr. in car ads
- 18 Capone nemesis
- 23 Witherspoon of “Vanity Fair”
- 26 Bird-to-be
- 27 Long and difficult trips
- 29 Prefix with sphere
- 31 Bard’s nightfall
- 32 Jai follower
- 33 Sounds in pounds
- 34 Warbled
- 35 Old Roman road
- 36 Jealous
- 37 Willow twig
- 40 Of an arm bone
- 41 Bon ___ (witticism)
- 43 Extreme suffix
- 46 Dissenting vote
- 49 Large sea ducks
- 50 Minuscule
- 51 Sea eagles
- 54 Inhabit
- 55 Kind of cap
- 56 Cockamamie
- 57 Not tomorrow
- 58 Do roadwork
- 59 Fairy tale villain
- 62 Like sushi
- 64 River inlet
- 65 Canal site
- 66 Aardvark’s morsel, usually

Crossword answers on page 26



Pianist revives great songs from stage and screen



Pianist Richard Glazier has released several CDs and performed on PBS TV specials.

Matias Antonio Bombal photo, courtesy Richard Glazier.

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

First it was COVID, then a chronic non-life-threatening illness kept Richard Glazier from performing. This year, he returns to the stage where audiences can again experience the pianist seamlessly blending recitals with fascinating personal stories describing friendships with legendary figures in American popular song such as Ira Gershwin.

I first encountered the master musician and music storyteller in 2011 during a four-day cruise to Cozumel, Mexico. Wandering the decks late one Friday night, I was drawn by the sound of piano music to a lounge where Glazier was in full swing.

Although he didn't finish until 1 a.m., Richard hung around talking to passengers and posing for photographs. Since that evening, Glazier has released several CDs and his three Public Television specials have been broadcast on PBS affiliates across

the country.

His most recent CD is "Pure Imagination – Great Songs from the Stage & Screen." As the title suggests, the recording contains (16) tracks from classics such as "Fiddler on the Roof," "West Side Story," and "Meet Me in St. Louis" (see www.richardglazier.com).

Glazier's journey to the concert stage as a performer and historian of popular Broadway and Hollywood music goes back over four decades when then 9-year-old Richard started digging through his aunt's collection of old 78 records in her Indianapolis home.

"I found an Oscar Levant recording of 'Rhapsody in Blue' and became obsessed with the music," recalled Glazier. "That led me to the library where I learned about the composer, George Gershwin, and his brother Ira."

Glazier was hooked after discovering the 1943 musical film "Girl Crazy" that featured Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney singing

page 27 please



A young Richard Glazier and Ira Gershwin. Taken by Richard's mother in the mid 1970s.

Courtesy Richard Glazier

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The emotional side of moving

How to navigate the transition with confidence



By **ALLANA LUMBARD**

Downsizing Alaska

Moving isn't just about boxes and floor plans—it's about memories, identity and change. For many seniors, leaving a longtime home brings a mix of emotions, from excitement to anxiety. Here's how to navigate the transition with confidence and peace of mind.

Acknowledge your feelings. It's okay to feel emotional about moving. Recognizing your attachment to your home and allowing yourself to process those feelings can make the transition smoother.

Focus on what you're gaining, not just what you're leaving. Downsizing isn't about loss—it's about creating a home

that fits your needs now. Whether it's less maintenance, a safer environment, or a more social lifestyle, shifting your mindset can make all the difference.

Take control of the process. Making the decision to move on your own terms—rather than waiting until it's urgent—allows you to stay in control. Planning ahead gives you time to sort through belongings, choose the right new home and say goodbye in a way that feels right to you.

With the right support, downsizing can be an exciting new chapter rather than a stressful ending. You're not losing a home—you're gaining a future that works for you.

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

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



DOWNSIZING ALASKA

📞 907-671-2663

✉️ downsizingalaska@gmail.com

Angela Frank for Anchorage Assembly

I find myself disheartened,

seeing the challenges our city is facing. Rising crime, homelessness, substance abuse, a struggling public school system, and housing shortages continue to impact many in our community. I've had the opportunity to meet dedicated people working to make a positive impact and I want to be one of them.

I'm a proud Alaskan living happily with my spouse and our senior dog.

Owner of Lilies of the Valley, I work as an end-of-life doula. I educate and support individuals and families during end-of-life planning as they navigate life's last milestone. Having personally faced near death experiences, I understand the fear and anxiety that can accompany uncertainty. This has driven me to generate more conversation around death and dying within our community.

If elected to the Anchorage Assembly, my commitment will be to collaboration, communication, and community engagement. I will work alongside local administration, community councils, and organizations devoted to improving Anchorage. I believe a more connected community will lead to a safer, healthier, and happier city. By strengthening our relationships and working together, we can address the challenges we face and build a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

For more information, go to www.liliesofthevalleyak.com or call me directly at 907.717.1947.



Lilies of the Valley, Owner

Are you age 70 or older and not yet receiving benefits?

Social Security Administration

Retirement is not one-size-fits-all. It can mean different things to different people. Perhaps you have not applied for Social Security retirement benefits because you're still working or are delaying applying so you can get a higher benefit. If you're age 70 or older, you should apply now for the benefits you're owed. Your benefits will not increase if you continue to delay applying for them because you are 70 or older.

Did you know that you can receive benefits even if you still work? Your earnings can increase your monthly

benefit amount—even after you start receiving benefits. Each year that you work, we check your earnings record. It's possible your latest year of earnings is one of your highest 35 years. If so, we will automatically recalculate your benefit amount and pay you any increase due.

The best and easiest way to apply for your benefits is with a personal MySocialSecurity account. You can create your free account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Once you create your account, you can get an estimate of how much you might receive each month based on when you want to start receiving benefits and then apply.

In your account, you can also:

- ▶ Access publications—like our fact sheet for workers ages 70 and up at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/assets/materials/workers-70andup.pdf.
- ▶ Learn about benefits for your spouse and family members.
- ▶ Manage your benefits once you start receiving them.

We're here to help you secure today and tomorrow and we invite you to learn more about applying for retirement benefits at www.ssa.gov/apply. Please share this information with those who need it.

Dogs

continued from page 5

—often golden and Labrador retrievers, and German shepherds—that know approximately 40 to 50 commands, are amazingly well-behaved and calm, and are permitted to go anywhere the public is allowed. Here's a breakdown of the different types of assistance dogs and what they can help with.

Service dogs. These dogs are specially trained to help people with physical disabilities due to multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injuries, Parkinson's disease, chronic arthritis and many other disabling conditions. They help by performing tasks their owner cannot do or has trouble doing, like carrying or retrieving items, picking up dropped items, opening and closing doors, turning light switches on and off, helping with household chores, barking to indicate that help is needed and more.

Service dogs can also be trained to help people with medical conditions

like epilepsy or other seizure disorders, autism, diabetes, PTSD and other psychiatric disabilities.

Guide dogs. For the blind and visually impaired, guide dogs help their owner get around safely by avoiding obstacles, stopping at curbs and steps, navigating shopping centers and buildings, finding doors, seats, pedestrian crossing buttons and more.

Hearing dogs. For those who are deaf or hearing impaired, hearing dogs can alert their owner to specific sounds such as ringing phones, doorbells, alarm clocks, microwave or oven timers, smoke alarms, approaching sirens, crying babies or when someone calls out their name.

Finding a dog

If your dad is interested in getting a service dog, contact some credible assistance dog training programs. To find them, use the Assistance Dogs International website at AssistanceDogsInternational.org which provides a listing of around 80 accredited members and 25 candidate programs in North America.

After you locate a few, you'll need to either visit their website or call them to find out the types of training dogs they offer, the areas they serve, how long their waiting list is and what they charge. Most dog training programs charge anywhere from \$10,000 to \$40,000 or more for a fully trained service dog, however, most programs can assist with fundraising or grant applications for those in need. None of that cost is covered by health insurance or Medicare.

To get an assistance dog, your dad will need to show proof of his disability, which his physician can provide, and he'll have to complete an application and go through an interview process. He will also need to go and stay at the training facility for a week or two so he can get familiar with his dog and get training on how to handle it.

It's also important to understand that assistance dogs are not for everybody. They require time, money, and care that your dad or some other friend or family member must be able and willing to provide.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

It never hurts to ask
 Many businesses offer a discount to seniors, but don't advertise it.
 Speak up - it may save you some money.



QR codes: Don't let the scan be a scam

By Michelle Tabler

For Senior Voice

A friend of mine was recently scammed in downtown Anchorage. While parking in a downtown lot, he used the QR code on the sign in the lot to pay his fee. He was in a hurry, so he didn't notice that the code took him to a fake website. Scammers had pasted an impostor QR code on top of the authentic parking authority sticker. I wasn't even aware of QR code scams until I heard his story. My friend caught the scam but spent significant time contacting his bank and taking steps to protect his finances and his identity.

QR (quick response) codes are popping up everywhere these days – you see them on TV during commercials, in parking lots, at restaurants, or even for getting into concerts or sporting events. They started out in Japan to keep track of vehicles during manufacturing, but they really took off during the COVID-19 pandemic as a touchless way to share information.

But watch out. Scammers have figured out how to use QR codes to get into your financial and credit card accounts and steal your personal information. They create fake QR codes to redirect you to scam websites where they can swipe your bank details.

Here's how you can avoid becoming a victim: Don't scan any QR code that looks tampered with. When you scan a QR code with your phone, take a good look at the URL (web address) to make sure it matches the

business and doesn't have weird spellings or inconsistencies. If it seems fishy, don't click on it. Never scan QR codes from unsolicited texts or emails. No matter what, it's always critical to keep your phone's security updates current. You can usually check to see if you need to update your software in the "Settings" app on your phone. And lastly, an important lesson from my friend's experience: Don't rush! Scammers often count on you being in a hurry and not double-checking before you hand over your credit card info.

If you do get scammed, report it to your bank or credit card company right away. You should also report it to the associated business, like the owner of the downtown parking lot. If you or a loved one has been targeted by a scam or fraud, you are not alone. Fraud specialists at the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline (877-908-3360) can provide free support and guidance on what to do next. Your call also helps AARP and our federal, state and community partners to spot trends and respond to emerging threats. You can also report your experience and see reports from around Alaska on the AARP Scam Tracking Map (just search "AARP Fraud Watch Network scam map" and you'll be redirected to the page).

To learn more about fraud, scams and prevention, visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at aarp.org/fraud. Remember: If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Michelle Tabler is a Fraud Education Expert for AARP Alaska.

Free assistance with taxes

Senior Voice Staff

Do you need help with a basic tax return? AARP Foundation Tax-Aide volunteers are IRS-certified to provide free tax help to low-to middle-income Alaskans of all ages at sites across the state. You do not need to be an AARP member.

To locate the nearest Tax-Aide site, you can use

the online AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Locator or call 2-1-1 or 1-800-478-2221, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. 2-1-1 is a free and confidential service of United Way.

For general tax-related questions, call the Alaska Tax-Aide answering machine at 907-538-4228 and someone will get back within 48 hours.

Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

Reader Satisfaction Survey

Name: _____

(Name and address are optional)

Address: _____

City State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Telephone: _____

Please indicate appropriate response

Age: _____

Would you like Senior Voice to be emailed to you in electronic format at no extra charge?

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Annual household income:

\$9,000 - \$20,000 and lower \$21,000 - \$35,000 \$36,000 - \$50,000

\$51,000 - \$75,000 \$76,000 - \$99,000 \$100,000 and over

Do you live: Alone With a spouse With family members Other _____

Do you: Own your home Rent Share residency

Are you on Medicare? Yes No Medicaid? Yes No

Please check off the columns you read regularly.

- | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Going Places/Travel | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal/Financial advice | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rambles | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar of Events |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Tech Talk | <input type="checkbox"/> Crossword Puzzle | <input type="checkbox"/> Aunt Phil's Trunk |
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Mail Senior Center Friend or Relative Other _____

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How many years have you been a Senior Voice subscriber? _____

How often do you read the printed edition of Senior Voice?

Every month, can't wait for it to come Every other month

3-4 times each year 1-2 times each year never

What topics would you like included in a Special Section? _____

How often do you visit the Senior Voice website, www.seniorvoicealaska.com, to

read articles? Daily Weekly Once a month Never visited website

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Suggestions for improving Senior Voice: _____

Mail to Senior Voice: 401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102, Anchorage AK 99503



Estate planning: Is it time to get motivated?

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice



A recent study on estate planning asked people, specifically those who did not have anything in place, what would motivate them to get that done. A full 24% said that nothing would motivate them. They simply had no expectation of doing it, ever.

The rest of them would probably move forward, if they had some reason to think they were in imminent danger of dying.

I think back to when the pandemic started. The first few weeks I focused on figuring out how to get things done when I couldn't have clients come into the office. After all, this was supposed to be "two weeks and we'll be done," if you remember that quaint expectation.

But after a few more weeks, when it became obvious that this was going to go on for at least some months, I started to worry. Up until then, I did public seminars about estate planning. I would send out a bunch of flyers in the local newspaper, inviting people to a meeting in a local hotel conference room, where I would explain this stuff, and then they could make appointments, if they wanted a consultation. Obviously, I couldn't do that during the pandemic, and I started to seriously worry that without those seminars, my practice would suffer.

To my surprise, I started getting calls from people who desperately wanted to get their estate planning done, because they were worried about Covid-19. Some of them had gone to one of my seminars in the past, sometimes even

years earlier, and some of them had just found me through the internet or other referrals, but they were all seriously motivated. Throughout that long period of shutdown, I was kept quite busy because people were worried about the disease.

But I probably should have expected that. Even before then, I got calls from people who were in desperate need of immediate planning. Sometimes it was a medical crisis which motivated them to finally move forward. Sometimes it was an upcoming trip. Not infrequently, the motivating factor was the unexpected death of a friend or relative, particularly one who was in their same age range.

But that first group—the ones with a medical crisis—can be a problem. It's not too bad if, for instance, they are going through chemo or some other treatment, but likely have some time left to get things done. But when those folks are on death's door or have an issue which impairs their abilities, that can be a big problem. I have had consultations with folks who have had a stroke or other neurological crisis, and they just aren't able to do it. They may be legally incompetent, or they may simply be having so much trouble keeping things

straight that they just can't get across the finish line.

One of the most maddening situations is the person who has dementia, but has waited too long to be able to finalize their decisions and sign the documents. More than once I have felt like grabbing someone by the lapels and saying, "You've known you had these issues for a long time, why didn't you get this done when you still could?" But of course I don't, because that would be pointless and cruel.

Yes, they could have gotten things done when they first found out they had a bad diagnosis. But

then, that fellow who dies unexpectedly from a heart attack, could have gotten his estate planning done too. Everyone can, until they can't.

In the days when I was writing this month's column, there were fatal crashes of a passenger jet and a helicopter over Washington DC, and a medical flight over Philadelphia. I don't know how many of them had their estate planning in place, but I'll bet most of them did not. And that is an added tragedy, on top of the tragedy of their deaths.

Incidentally, estate planning does not neces-

sarily mean you have some big, complicated arrangement. An estate plan can be as simple as a will, power of attorney, and advance health care directive. But everybody ought to get something in place.

While they still can. Because the time will come when they can't.

Now do you feel motivated?

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning attorney. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. Sign and date, before it's too late!

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206-761-0809
License #101548

Volcano

continued from page 12

By understanding these safety measures and being prepared, we can better protect ourselves and our community during volcanic events while maintaining our daily activities as safely as possible. Even if Spurr doesn't erupt, being ready doesn't hurt

anybody.

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.



FaceTime via the Web, travel chargers, multiple AppleIDs

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Bob's Tech Talk

Q. I want to FaceTime with my mom and sister, but not all of us have iPhones. Is there a way people on Android or other phones can join a FaceTime call?

A. Yes! Both Android and Windows users can join a FaceTime call. This may require extra patience on your part to set up because the configurations are not automatic on non-Apple devices. You will need to make sure the other devices are new enough to support FaceTime calls, and the recipient may have to set some permissions to enable the microphone in the browser.

Carefully following the instructions on this page should lead to success: support.apple.com/en-us/109364.

FaceTime calls to Web browsers requires at least iOS 15 or macOS Monterey and one person in the group with an Apple device to initiate the call.

Ask your most tech-friendly family member to help you, or wait until you're visiting them in person so you can see both ends of the conversation at once.

When you open the FaceTime app on iOS or Mac, there is a prominent button titled "Create Link." Send the link via a text chat or email to the other party. The recipient should be able to click on the link and join the call.

In practice, it might not be that simple the very first time you try it. But once it is working, it should be quick and easy.

Q. Is it worth the expense to invest in travel chargers, even if I do not travel often?

A. My answer is always yes. Even if you travel infrequently, the logistics of packing gear for the road is a challenge.

Imagine you just arrived in your hotel room. The last thing you want to do is struggle setting up device chargers. Worse, if you forgot something, you may have to endure an expensive scavenger hunt to find a replacement.

Consider every device you bring on vacation. Cameras, tablets, smartphones, headphones, the list is long. There are standard connectors, but rarely does one size fits all. It is a complex mix.

The solution is to create a pre-packed go-bag. An ideal go-bag contains a complete set of chargers needed on the road.

You could do with a written packing list that specifies everything you need to take, but an already packed go-bag is an inexpensive luxury.

Start by making a list of all the items you typically bring on a trip. Note the cable, connector and power adapter it accepts.

Most chargers are dedicated to a single device, but there are a number of adapters that support

multiple charging cables.

One of my favorites is the Anker line of chargers. They generally use a single wall outlet, and they have enough power to charge a watch, a phone and wireless headphones.

Q. I have multiple Apple IDs. Is there a way to merge them into a single address?

A. The AppleID system began in the previous century. The need to combine multiple accounts into a single account is the result of changes in how the AppleID is used. What began as a simple way to purchase music grew into an entire suite of services that depend on a valid AppleID.

For years it seemed Apple would never offer a solution, then we got Family Sharing, which helped new users avoid multiple IDs but it did not help early adopters.

Apple has finally released a method to migrate purchases from one AppleID into another. See support.apple.com/en-us/117294. This new migration feature comes with a long list of exceptions, restrictions, preparatory steps and warnings.

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

How Privacy is Quietly Invaded by AI

theyseeyourphotos uses Google AI to demonstrate the amount of information a single photo can reveal about you. This is a great example of why you should limit access to your entire photo library. theyseeyourphotos.com

Defending Civil Liberties in a Digital World

The Electronic Frontier Foundation has been around since 1990. Its primary mission is to address issues around privacy, free expression and legislation. eff.org

Road Trip

roadtrippers is a service to plan road trips. There are free and paid subscriptions offered, and it is accessible from the Web as well as apps from Google Play and the iPhone App Store. roadtrippers.com

The typical problem migration solves is when you have two AppleIDs, and both of them contain purchased items.

AppleIDs are also connected to many other parts of the Apple ecosystem, so merging might not be the best option for you right now.

My advice is to wait at least a few months. There were a few rough edges at launch, enough to encourage me to hold off for a while. I recommend you wait as well.

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

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Discover The 7 Threats to Your Estate Plan

It's all about family! Have you protected them?

Proper Planning Ensures You:

- Maintain control of assets for the sake of the family
- Give control to those you trust when you're not able
- Remain home without stress on the family, should the need for long term care arise
- Keep family business private

If Crisis Strikes, You Risk:

- Losing control
- Additional stress on your family
- Loss of what you spent a lifetime building

If something happens to you, do you want to:

- Protect your spouse and children?
- Be clear so your loved ones will know what to do?
- Ensure your hard earned money doesn't go to the government?

Yes? ▶ Then your first step in creating your asset protection plan is attending this workshop.

LIVE WEBINAR via Zoom: March 19 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Two options for participating in this live webinar:

Come to the Wasilla Senior Center or the Anchorage Senior Center on March 19th from 9:30-11:30 am to participate in the estate planning webinar and ask your questions. No computer skills required! Or, you can join the webinar from home.

To receive the Zoom link, call our office at (907) 334-9200 or register on our website www.akwillstrusts.com

Free initial consultation for those who attend the workshop. Book now to protect your loved ones.

To reserve your space call or text (907) 334-9200 or go to www.akwillstrusts.com

Unable to attend at the scheduled time? Call to request the link to a recorded webinar.



Fairbanks is a year-round destination for fun and wonder

Migrating birds, river rides, ice sculptures and more

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

Fairbanks has a lot to offer the visitor.

In March, brave the town's arctic weather to view the Ice Art Championship and its entries of intricately carved, sometimes gravity-defying wonders.

An ice challenge

The World Ice Art Championships are held from mid-February to March 1. Divisions include the Multi Block Classic is six days of four artists using nine blocks to create a massive piece. The Double Block Classic lasts three days and two carvers use but two blocks for their creation. And, for three days, one person works one block to gain "ice domination."

The ice sculptures will remain on display, and the ice playground open through the end of March.

For more information go to <https://icealaska.com>.

Viewing migrating birds

Summer brings magnificent migrating birds back

to Creamer's Field.

Once a small dairy owned by a couple named Creamer, this land is now an extraordinary wildlife refuge. More than 100 species of birds and mammals call this wilderness home. Sandhill cranes and mallards show up all summer.

Be there in the fall when the Sandhills rise as one mighty body to fly to their winter homes far south.

The Friends of Creamer's Field runs a small visitor center with exhibits and conducts guided nature walks. There are miles of trails that meander through a variety of habitats.

Don't miss the Alaska Bird Observatory at the east end of Creamer's Field, dedicated to understanding the dynamics of Alaska's 77 songbirds.

For more information, visit <https://friendsofcreamersfield.org>.

Museum of the North

The University of Alaska Museum of the North is an essential department of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It is the only research and teaching museum in Alaska.

The museum's research collections of 2.5 million artifacts and specimens represent millions of years of biological diversity and thousands of years of cultural traditions in the North.

The collections are organized into 10 disciplines consisting of archaeology, birds, documentary film, earth sciences, ethnology/history, fine arts, fishes/marine invertebrates, insects, mammals, and plants, which serve as a valuable resource for research on climate change, genetics, contaminants and other issues facing Alaska and the circumpolar North.

The museum is also the premier repository for artifacts and specimens collected on public lands in Alaska and a leader in northern natural and cultural history research.

Highlights of the collections include a 2,000-year spectrum of Alaska art, from ancient ivory carvings to contemporary paintings



Check out "25 Reasons to Visit Fairbanks" at the Explore Fairbanks website.

and sculpture, in the Rose Berry Alaska Art Gallery.

You'll find the state's largest public display of gold, as well as Blue Babe, an almost 50,000-year-old mummified steppe bison, in the Gallery of Alaska. An ever-changing sound and light installation driven by the real-time positions of the sun and moon, seismic activity, and the aurora can be viewed in the Place Where You Go To Listen.

Family programs for kids include Junior Curators and Early Explorers. Go to www.uaf.edu/museum/education/kids-families/hands-on-programs/index.php for more on family programs.

For general information, www.uaf.edu/museum.

A park for everyone

Pioneer Park celebrates Fairbanks' history and is preserved for all to enjoy. Pioneer Park is a 44-acre, entrance-free, historical theme park in the heart of Fairbanks, between Airport Way and the Chena River bike path.

Travel back to the Interior of Alaska 100 years ago in its historic village featuring original buildings moved from downtown Fairbanks, as well as museums, and the Gold Rush. Take a ride on the carousel and train that runs the perimeter of the park, visit a selection of local shops and dine in rustic cabin restaurants.

The Alaska Salmon Bake is open daily during the summer season from 5 to 9 p.m. for dinner, and the Palace Theater offers a daily show at 8:15 p.m.

Winter season hours are daily from 6 a.m. to midnight and provide the opportunity for self-guided tours of artifacts, buildings, grounds and special events.

Museums include the paddle wheeler SS Nenana, the Kitty Hensley House, President Harding's rail car, Pioneer Air Museum, Tanana Valley Railroad Museum, and the Wickersham House Museum.

Visit www.fnsb.gov/462/Pioneer-Park.

Fairbanks gold rush history

Travel back to the gold rush era in Fairbanks, where you can pan for gold and keep it. Since 1952, Golden Days, held in mid-July, has celebrated the city's gold

rush heritage.

Golden Days boasts exciting events for all ages, including the biggest parade in Alaska, a street fair, and a rubber duckie race along the Chena River.

Best is the Old Tyme Games, a family-friendly event that includes various old-time contests like watermelon eating, pie eating, balloon toss, water bucket brigade, log splitting, and cross-cut sawing. Fun for all ages.

The height of the Golden Days activities is the largest parade in Alaska, with more than 100 entries, including marching bands, clowns, jugglers, antique cars, unicycle riders and floats.

For more go to www.fairbankschamber.org/golden-days.



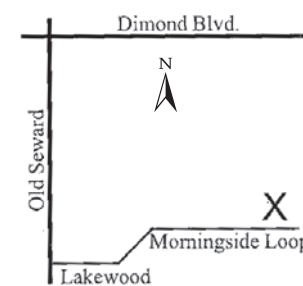
The first-place entry, "Musical Escape" by Daniel Bergin, in the 2024 World Ice Art Championships Single Block contest.

Courtesy of World Ice Art Championships

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Feathers

continued from page 15

An agent slaughtered 40,000 terns on Cape Cod in one season, while a trader on the Virginia coast bagged an equal number of seabirds to meet a single milliner's demand. Ships laden with feathers crossed the Atlantic to supply auction houses in London and Paris. The industry threatened more than 60 species worldwide with extinction.

Wading birds faced especially high risk. An ounce of lacy nuptial plumes from a heron's or egret's back cost twice as much as an ounce of gold in 1886. Since birds only grew these feathers in spring to attract mates, hunters raided nesting colonies. They shot the adults and left the orphaned chicks to starve.

In 1896, an American zoologist published an article describing this gruesome practice. "It was a common thing for a rookery of several hundred birds to be attacked by the plume hunters," he wrote.



Woman wearing a hat with egret feathers.

C & R Lavis, Eastbourne, Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

"In two or three days utterly destroyed."

The article outraged a Boston socialite named Harriet Lawrence Hemenway. An amateur naturalist notorious for birdwatching in unfashionable white sneakers, she could not stand by while birds were butchered. She shared the story with her cousin and fellow nature lover, Minna Hall. The egrets' plight horrified them both. But in an era when women could not even vote, how could they stop an entire industry?

Luckily, social change didn't intimidate Harriet. She had activism in her

blood. Born in 1858 into a family of abolitionists, she once invited black author Booker T. Washington to stay at her house when Boston hotels refused him a room. People said that outgoing, energetic Harriet had a mind of her own. And on that chilly January day, she made up her mind to save America's birds from a fashionable fate.

Harriet and Minna realized that if people stopped buying bird hats, the hunting would end. They invited Boston's most influential ladies to a series of tea parties where they discussed the plume trade. Over cups and crumpets, they persuaded 900 women to boycott feathered accessories. They also sent out flyers asking women to join "a society for the protection of birds, especially the egret."

Knowing they'd need male allies for their group to be taken seriously, Harriet and Minna recruited well-known bird experts to join their cause. They named the new organization The Massachusetts Audubon Society, after the famous bird painter John James Audubon. Member-

ship quickly grew to 111 local chapters that held fundraisers, sponsored conservation talks, and distributed pamphlets. By 1897, Massachusetts had outlawed the trade in wild bird feathers.

Soon the "Bird Hat Campaign" caught on across the country. Over the next three years, 20 other states formed Audubon Societies that boasted a cumulative 40,000 members. They helped popularize bird-free "Audubonnets" made from silk and ribbon. Responding to the shift in public attitudes, Congress banned interstate sale of protected species. That slowed the plume trade, but didn't stop it. According to one story, Harriet and Minna tracked down a warehouse selling illegal feathers and reported it to authorities. Clearly birds still needed more protection.

Three years later, at the urging of Audubon groups, President Theodore Roosevelt created the first Federal Bird Reservation. He went on to establish 55 preserves that became the National Wildlife Refuge System. In 1913, a new law

prohibited shooting birds in spring. This led to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, which outlawed commercial hunting of wild birds and effectively ended the plume trade. The advocacy of two bold women had driven feathered hats to extinction.

It can also inspire bird lovers today. Despite a century of legal protection, American birds are far from safe: recent political administrations have attempted to weaken the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and habitat loss threatens many species. The scale of these conservation challenges can seem daunting. Yet Harriet Hemenway and Minna Hall proved how much determined citizens can do, starting in their own communities. Alaskans can follow their example by connecting with local wildlife organizations like Bird Treatment and Learning Center at www.birdtlc.org. With compassion for the wild birds that share our world, positive change can take flight.

J.K. Ulrich is a volunteer at the Bird Treatment and Learning Center.

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Music

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oldies, Celtic, big band, hymns and praise, and instrumental) so I really stocked up at \$1 each. Now my huge collection is contained in several fake woodgrain cassette holders (which I also bought at thrift stores during our snowbird years) and

grouped in categories and labeled for easy locating.

When sorting our belongings one summer, I found an old shoebox of cassettes on which Gary had recorded many hours of San Francisco music radio stations during the time we lived in that area in the mid-1970s. I decided to listen to the tapes before throwing them away. I enjoyed them so much, I never did get rid of them. In be-

tween “oldies” and “easy rock” songs were commercials, DJ commentaries, and news blurbs. One DJ said, “After a weekend at St. Simons Island in Georgia, President Carter returned to Washington, D.C. this evening and immediately began preparing for a meeting tomorrow with Israeli Menachem Begin.”

Thirty years later, it was just like listening to a real radio station, only wrong president and I didn’t have a one-year-old playing at my feet.

When our son was in high school in the early 1990s, he started purchasing CDs and tried to persuade us how they were so much better than cassettes, and that Gary and I needed to switch over. I brought up 8-tracks and said CDs needed to prove themselves first and insisted that cassettes tapes would be all we’d need for our lifetime. Then five years later Gary decided to buy a CD player and a few CDs. Gradually we acquired a few more here and there. Now they are available as cheap as the cassettes used to be.

I’m aware there is a whole world of iPods, iPads, tablets, smart phones, streaming, apps, and other devices and formats that



Maraley's Aiwa system (top) plays cassettes and CDs. Her under-the-counter radio and CD player (bottom) gets use throughout each day.

Photos courtesy Maraley McMichael

I know nothing about. I admit to also listening to music through my Direct TV service and I tune into the local Big Cabbage 89.5 radio station more than once a day, as well as Casey Kasem’s weekly American Top 40 countdown every Saturday morning on Anchorage radio station Magic 98.9. But with all my vintage music playing

capabilities, I am perfectly content living in the old-fashioned music world I’m most comfortable in. Finding out our daughter-in-law gave our son a record player and some vinyl this past Christmas, put a smile on my face as well.

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

Geller

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guiding principles in her life, instilling in her a deep sense of responsibility to help others.

Velda’s dedication extends beyond the senior center. She has been known to check on homebound seniors, deliver meals and even lend a listening ear to those in need. Her grandson once remarked that if he couldn’t reach her on the phone, he knew she was at the senior center.

“Now I live next door and have my scooter,” Velda shared. “After my home caught fire and I lost most of my belongings, the community looked after me, donated clothes—all kinds of things to get me back on my feet.”

Velda is one of many seniors that call the adjacent

independent housing home.

Looking ahead

As the Kenai Senior Center prepares for its next big event—the annual March for Meals fundraiser, to be held on March 28, 2025—Velda is already hard at work. “It takes a village,” she said. “But when people come together, we can do amazing things.”

This year’s March for Meals theme is “Gilligan’s Island: Calling All Castaways,” featuring an island themed dessert auction, silent and outcry auctions, costumer contest. Dinner is prime rib and shrimp. Starts at 6 p.m. and tickets are \$50 per person, available at the senior center.

For more information, visit the center on Facebook at “Kenai Senior Center” or call: 907-283-4156.

Yasmin Radbod is the rural outreach coordinator at the Alaska Commission on Aging.

Senior Voice Proud Member

Crossword answers from page 18

A	L	S	O		B	O	A	R	S		A	G	R	A		
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Writer

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after the story time is over. “Encapsulated within the tales of the ‘Original Animals’ is how to deal with loss, an information-packed summary of ‘the universe,’ a story of addiction, lots of love, tears and laughter, and something for everyone.”

Resource for Alaskan authors

Horton, who lives outside of Anchorage, said he and his wife are hoping to set up a related book business.

“After hearing from bookstores that they only buy from wholesalers, we have started our own wholesaling business, Alaska Good Books,” he said. “We just got the business license and a website www.Alaskan-GoodBooks.com is still in construction.

“Our idea was to allow Alaskan authors to adver-

tise and sell their cheaper ‘authors’ copies through the site. In that way, Alaskan writers can get a little closer to the same playing field as established writers.”

Authors’ copies can usually be purchased online through Amazon and other places for \$6 to \$8 then a box can be shipped to the author at roughly \$25 for 50 books, he said.

“We charge roughly the same \$6 to \$8 for the books, then \$5.56 shipping for the first book and \$1 per book after that (the actual cost of Media or Book Rate at the USPS). We give bookstores and libraries the exact same deal.”

To discuss this, send him a quick note at AlaskanGoodBooks@outlook.com and he’ll get right back to you.

“The idea is not for us to get wealthy,” he says. “Most writers would rather have their books read than sitting and collecting dust on the off-chance someone will pick it up.”

Pianist

continued from page 19

Gershwin songs and he began piano lessons.

George, the composer, had died in 1937, but when young Richard learned that lyricist Ira was still living, he wrote to the aging songwriter asking for a photo. That led to a three-year correspondence between the music legend and his young fan.

“I was a small child who loved Gershwin music, so I think Ira wanted to encourage my passion for their music and my goal of being a pianist,” said Glazier who, to his astonishment, was invited to Gershwin’s California home to meet his hero.

Accompanied by his mother, Glazier remembers the butler leading them into the living room where Ira sat waiting. “He was very reclusive during his later years and hardly ever had company, but I would never have known since he was very warm and animated.”

During the two-hour visit, Ira showed Richard the Pulitzer Prize for Drama he won in 1932 for

writing “Of Thee I Sing.” He invited the boy to play a piano in the room – the same instrument on which the Gershwins composed their music such as “Porgy and Bess.”

When he departed, the lad didn’t leave empty-handed.

“He gave me a picture of George, along with one of his canceled checks, an autographed photo of himself, and an autographed score of ‘Rhapsody in Blue,’” said Glazier, whose mother also took a photo of her son with Gershwin wearing a monogrammed gold sweater.

Despite his absence from the concert circuit for four years, Richard says he’s playing better than ever.

“I couldn’t practice for almost two years,” said Glazier. “But I came out of this difficult time seeing life and music more emotionally and deeper, and that’s reflected in my playing, which is better than ever. A real triumph for me. I’m definitely back!”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala., and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnick.org.



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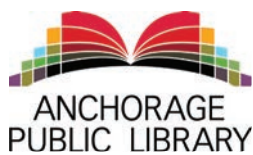
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