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Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons
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Volume 44, Number 8 August 2021

**The new Alzheimer's
drug: Cost and
controversy.** – page 2

**Is it time to upgrade
to an electric car?**
– page 13



Let's play!

Ruth Knapman and Colleen Redman check out the new miniature golf course earlier this summer in Fairbanks. Mini golf is one of the events in the annual Alaska International Senior Games, which returns to Fairbanks this year, Aug. 7-15, after taking last year off due to COVID. Volunteers are still needed to keep score at events, take photographs and help with results after the game. Check out the schedule and details about the many activities and other information at the Games' website, www.alaskaisg.org. You can also call 907-978-2388 or email info@alaskaisg.org. Diann Darnall photo



Senior Voice recognized in awards contest

Senior Voice Staff

Older Persons Action Group, Inc., earned honors for its monthly, statewide publication Senior Voice in the 30th annual National Mature Media Awards Program. The program, presented by the Mature Market Resource Center, a national clearinghouse for the senior market, recognizes the nation's



finest marketing, communications, educational materials and programs designed and produced for older adults. OPAG and Senior Voice won two awards:
► Gold Award in the Photograph category for photographer Michael Dinneen's captivating shot of Anchorage pool player Linda Cameron (see photo), commissioned for the

February 2020 cover.
► Silver Award to contributor Dianne Barske for her article, "Singing in Isolation," published in the December 2020 edition. The entries were judged by a panel of mature market experts from across the United States for overall excellence of design, content, creativity and relevance to the senior market. Older Persons Action

Group has been publishing Senior Voice for 43 years. The monthly newspaper, aimed at older Alaskans and their families, is distributed statewide, and provided free to low-income seniors. Some funding is provided through a federal and state grant managed by the State of Alaska. Senior Voice also posts editions to its website at www.seniorvoicealaska.com.

Is Aduhelm a new hope for Alzheimer's relief?

Studies are 'muddy,' reviews are mixed



ANALYSIS
By **ALAN M. SCHLEIN**
Senior Wire

If someone you love is suffering from Alzheimer's, the most common form of dementia, wouldn't you do everything possible to help them? What about if the medicine you give them has questionable usefulness or potentially dangerous side effects and costs a fortune? That's a question millions of people may face soon. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved Aduhelm, also called aducanumab, in June, in one of its most contentious decisions. This came eight months after a harsh rejection of the treatment by an FDA advisory committee, which warned its supposed benefit relied on flimsy data and hasn't been shown to help slow the brain-destroying disease. Soon after, the FDA announced it is limiting the recommended use of Aduhelm to patients with mild cognitive impairment or early dementia, a change from the original label that included every-

one. The revised label will mean that about two million people will be offered the drug, versus the six million suggested previously. They did this because the original announcement led to "negative attention and confusion." The new drug, which Biogen developed with Japan's Eisai Co., is for mild cognitive impairment or early-stage dementia caused by Alzheimer's. It is the first new Alzheimer's treatment since 2003 and the first treatment ever sold to slow the deterioration in brain function caused by the disease, not just to ease symptoms. Other drugs for the disease only temporarily ease symptoms like memory problems, insomnia and depression. Inside the agency, there were disagreements about how to handle the drug, which was designed to slow cognitive decline but had confusing data on effectiveness. Eventually, the FDA decided against "full approval." One of the main clinical trials did not show a benefit to patients, but another late-stage trial and an

early-stage trial showed the drug helped, agency officials concluded. But that study was marred by hard-to-interpret results. The data were so murky that the FDA ultimately granted the drug conditional approval based on a different measure: its ability to get rid of harmful clumps of plaque in the brains of patients with early forms of the disease. The FDA gave "accelerated approval" for the drug, saying it was "reasonably likely" the treatment would slow cognitive decline in patients. Critics assailed the decision, arguing that the FDA approval represents a dangerous lowering of standards in response to pressure from patients and advocacy groups.
Understanding Alzheimer's
Alzheimer's is a type of brain disease, the same way coronary artery disease is a type of heart disease. Alzheimer's gets worse over time and is thought to begin 20 years or more before symptoms arise. It usually starts with changes in the brain that are unnoticeable to the person affected. A toxic protein called beta-amyloid slowly accumulates and eventually

disrupts another protein that is critical to brain function. Over time, people suffer memory loss and language problems because nerve cells or neurons in the brain involved in cognitive functions like thinking, learning and memory have been damaged or destroyed. As the disease progresses, other parts of the brain are also damaged. Over time, the parts of the brain that allow a person to carry out basic functions like walking and swallowing are affected. People become bed-bound, requiring around-the-clock care. Alzheimer's is ultimately fatal. Aducanumab, the new medication, is a monoclonal antibody, a protein made in the laboratory that can bind to substances — in this case, clumps of amyloid beta, a sticky plaque compound that many scientists think

causes the brain damage. The treatment is designed to trigger an immune response that removes the plaques. There have been controversy and questions since the 1990s about the "amyloid hypothesis," a theory that amyloid plaques are the cause or at least an important hallmark of Alzheimer's and should be targeted. Detractors say this approach has yielded a string of failed drugs — including ones that clear amyloid but don't improve cognition — and that has squeezed out other approaches. But supporters say using higher doses of anti-amyloid treatments and administering them much earlier will make them effective. What both sides agree on is that other approaches need to be explored and it will probably require

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Mission statement:

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

Vision statement:

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

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Starting a discussion on voter, civic issues

By **BEVERLY CHURCHILL**

Seniors are known nationally for being “super voters”. But many voters find it challenging to understand and evaluate the issues and candidates. Hence this series has been created to dive into civic issues to help our Alaskan seniors, friends and families become more familiar with some issues that should be considered when casting a vote.

In this series, we will start by focusing on campaign finance. In the next few columns, we will identify some of the problems that currently exist in our political system, provide history about how these

problems arose, and review current solutions being proposed. We will review some of the ongoing efforts happening in Alaska and talk about why many believe a new amendment is now necessary in order to further the perfection of our democratic system of government.

What is the problem with our current financing of political campaigns? It is clear that more and more money is being spent to influence elections. Voters are being overwhelmed with phone calls, emails, radio and TV ads and flyers. Is this creating better information for the average voter? Surveys taken

nationwide and locally tell us that they are not. Just think if these millions of dollars could be used to solve issues, build roads, improve education.

So how did we get here? There are a couple of legal doctrines that have allowed a small number of very powerful individuals and entities to override the preferences of large percentages of our citizens. These legal doctrines have been created over time by the United States Supreme Court. We will discuss these doctrines later in this series.

Why should this matter to seniors? The political interests of some of the most

influential economic interests are not in alignment with the interests of most seniors. Some of them want to privatize the Social Security program, Medicare and Medicaid. Some want to reduce government protections against financial fraud, toxic pollutants, or unsafe consumer products.

Some economic interests seek to greatly reduce or eliminate school lunches, childcare and even free public education. Many of these interests have successfully acted to greatly reduce their own taxes, while increasing the taxes that must be paid by individuals. We will discuss how seniors and the people

they love have been harmed by these doctrines.

Because these problems have been created by the Supreme Court as constitutional doctrine, they can only be reversed by the Supreme Court, or by a constitutional amendment that overrides the Supreme Court. The remainder of this series will provide you with the information you need to understand these issues.

Beverly Churchill is a member of Alaska Move to Amend, whose mission includes educating Alaskans on constitutional issues regarding personhood and money as a form of free speech.

Family caregivers face severe financial strain

Credit for Caring Act can help

By **MARGE STONEKING**

AARP Alaska

New research from AARP shows that nearly 8 in 10 of those caring for an adult family member (78%) are facing regular out-of-pocket costs, with the highest burden falling on younger caregivers and those who are Hispanic/Latino or African American. The organization is launching a national campaign urging Congress to do more to support family caregivers. AARP tracked what caregivers pay for using their own money and found average annual spending totaled \$7,242, and, on average, 26% of the caregiver's income. Housing expenses like rent or mortgage payments, home modifications, and assisted living made up more than half of caregivers' spending, followed by medical expenses at 17%.

“This research reflects the incredible strain and sacrifices the more than 80,000 family caregivers in Alaska face every day. They are the backbone of our long-term care system, yet their backs are breaking from a lack of support,” said AARP Alaska State Director Teresa Holt.

“I spent my career as a nurse here in Alaska, spend-

ing most of my time in Nome and Anchorage, but 40 years as a professional caregiver still couldn't prepare me for my husband developing dementia,” said Michelle, a local caregiver who spoke with AARP Alaska. “I spent a minimum of \$600 per month on personal care items and dietary supplements, plus time taken from work, expenses for respite, and items not covered by insurance. Our family lifestyle changed dramatically.”

Out-of-pocket spending is much greater for some groups of caregivers, either in total dollars spent or as a percentage of average household income.

► Working caregivers who reported two work-related strains from caregiving, such as taking time off or working more hours, spend \$10,525 each year on average – twice as much as caregivers who report one or no work-related strains.

► By age, Gen X caregivers spent the most money at \$8,502, while Gen Z and Millennial caregivers reported the greatest financial strain, spending a larger share of their household income.

► Hispanic/Latino and African American caregivers also reported greater financial strain than White or Asian American caregivers. Hispanic/Latino caregivers spent, on average, 47% of their household income on

caregiving, and expenses for African American caregivers totaled, on average, 34% of income.

► Caregivers caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease/dementia or mental health issues tend to spend more (\$8,978 per year and \$8,384 per year, respectively) than those caring for someone without those conditions.

In addition to direct out-of-pocket spending, caregivers are also experiencing indirect financial setbacks. Nearly half of family caregivers (47%) experienced at least one financial setback such as having to cut back on their own health care spending, dip into their personal savings or reduce how much they save for their retirement.

“AARP Alaska and our colleagues across the coun-

try are calling on Congress to pass the bipartisan Credit for Caring Act to provide some much-needed financial relief to family caregivers who work to help offset the cost of caring,” said Holt.

The Credit for Caring Act would provide a tax credit of up to \$5,000 to eligible working family caregivers for expenses they incur as caregivers. AARP is launching a national campaign urging passage of the act and more support for family caregivers.

To add your voice to encourage the Alaska delegation to support the Credit for Caring Act, visit <https://action.aarp.org/secure/congress-credit-caring-act>

To share your Alaskan family caregiving story with AARP, visit https://aarp-marketing.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8kw8h-

FP6NW6aIya

More resources for family caregivers, including a free financial workbook, are available at aarp.org/caregiving. The AARP Alaska caregiver resource guide (<https://states.aarp.org/alaska/caregiver-resources>) can help Alaskans find local organizations, services and support available to family caregivers. Michelle, the family caregiver who spoke with AARP Alaska, also recommended the Alzheimer's Association 24-hour help line, staffed around the clock, for caregivers dealing with memory loss in a friend or family member. That number is 800-272-3900.

Marge Stoneking is the AARP Alaska Associate State Director for Advocacy.

Correction

Our story in the July edition about broadband services in Alaska erroneously stated that Alaska Communications is providing the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) discount for purchase of tablet devices. The company clarified that they are not offering this.

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about 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 (formerly known as the Interagency Breakfast), sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free,

the monthly event currently meets virtually online via Zoom. The August meeting is Aug. 11, hosted by the Stone Soup Group. Begins at 8 a.m.

RSVP by calling Older Persons Action Group, Inc. for more information on these events or to be added to our e-mail reminder and Zoom invitation list, 276-1059.



Know the signs of caregiver burnout

National Hispanic Council on Aging

Caregiver burnout—also known as caregiver stress or caregiver syndrome—was first described by the American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger in 1974. The mental health professional worked in a

Hispanic caregivers

Caregivers, whether family members or professionals, play the role of primary caregiver for a dependent person, and are usually given the responsibility of coping with whatever the situation requires. This is particularly true

In a cultural context, Latinas grow up being cared for by women, and grow up to fulfill that role with subsequent generations.

clinic for drug addicts in New York and observed that most of the volunteers at the clinic had a progressive loss of energy, leading to exhaustion, symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as lack of motivation at work and aggressiveness with patients after a year of working.

This is a disorder with serious implications both physically and psychologically. Caregivers are at risk of experiencing episodes of stress of varying intensity. The stress of caregivers is higher than that of other profession, due to the fact that they are largely faced with pain and human suffering on a daily basis.

To prevent caregiver burnout before it's too late, here are some symptoms to watch out for:

- ▶ Physical symptoms such as tiredness or muscle aches
- ▶ Emotional lability or sudden mood swings
- ▶ Sleep problems or weight gain
- ▶ Chronic fatigue
- ▶ Isolation
- ▶ Frustration
- ▶ Cognitive difficulties like memory problems, attention, etc.

among Hispanic women, who are often the heart of their homes. In a cultural context, Latinas grow up being cared for by women, and grow up to fulfill that role with subsequent generations.

Therefore, it is necessary to recognize the need to watch over caregivers, regardless of their sex, so that they can enjoy an optimal state of health while carrying out their work. It's important that they are able to develop in other areas of their lives outside of caregiving. NHCOA directs all its efforts to improve the quality of life of older adults, their families, and caregivers. Through spaces such as our seminar "Caring for the Caregiver," we seek to create awareness about the importance of caring for all the people who are dedicated to this noble and important work, as well as giving them the tools so that they can carry out this work without sacrificing their mental and physical health.

This article is part of an ongoing series from the Diverse Elders Coalition, focusing on different senior populations. It originally appeared on the National Hispanic Council on Aging website, nhcoa.org.

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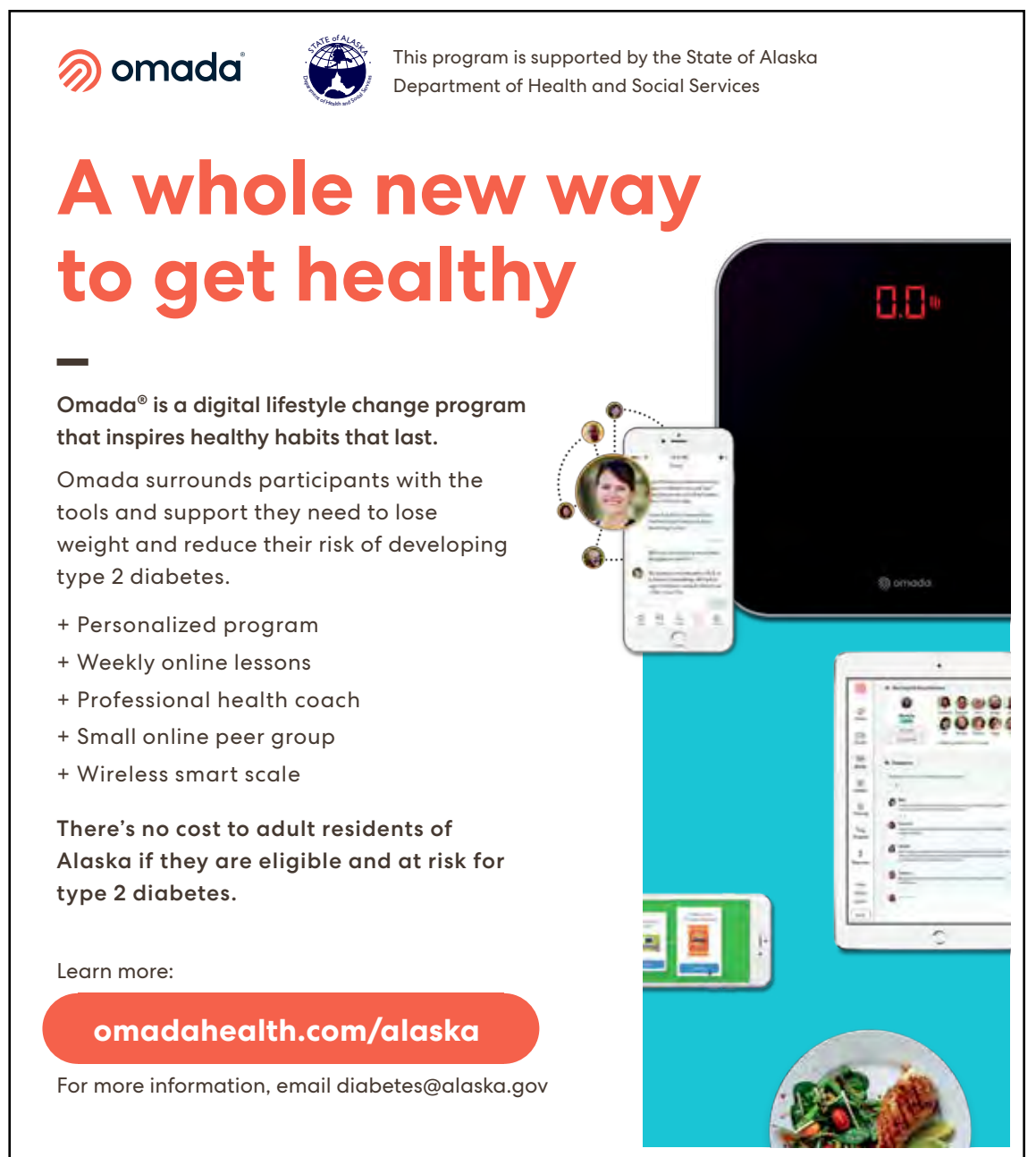
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Coronavirus updates
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What 'breakthrough' COVID cases mean for seniors

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS

For Senior Voice

Breakthrough. As in falling through thin ice? No, this one is different, and it may be more important to seniors than any other age group. Here's how the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) put it: "COVID-19 vaccines are effective. However, a small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus that causes it. These are called 'vaccine breakthrough cases.' This means that while people who have been vaccinated are much less likely to get sick, it will still happen in some cases. It's also possible that some fully vaccinated people

A small percentage of people who are fully vaccinated will still get COVID-19 if they are exposed to the virus that causes it. These are called 'vaccine breakthrough cases'.

might have infections, but not have symptoms (asymptomatic infections)."

Here's the thing about seniors: As of the second week in July, 56% of ages 12 and older in Alaska had received one or two doses of COVID vaccine. However, 74% of ages 65 and older had received one or two doses of COVID vaccine, according to Alaska's Vaccine Monitoring Dashboard. In other words, a higher percentage of seniors in Alaska are fully or partially vaccinated than younger age groups. For this reason, breakthrough may be more

prevalent among seniors.

There's more to glean about breakthrough in Alaska seniors from a recently completed study reported in the State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin (epidemiology is the study of the distribution of diseases in populations). From February 1 to June 30, 2021, 656 cases of COVID-19 infection were classified as Alaska vaccine breakthrough cases – all these cases were among people who were fully vaccinated.

Note that vaccine breakthrough is rare. Those 656

cases represented only 0.2% of all fully vaccinated Alaskans as of June 30, 2021. Unfortunately, the bulletin does not report the percentage breakdown of these cases by age, however the study does note that the median age in years is 47, and that the age range is from 16 to 96(!). This appears to be predominantly an older crowd.

The vaccines we use in the United States protect against breakthrough very well, and are particularly good at preventing a breakthrough infection from progressing to hospitalization or death. The CDC reports that as of July 6, 2021, over 157 million U.S. residents were fully vaccinated. The CDC does not report how many



breakthrough cases there have been nationwide, but they do report that during the same period a total of 5,186 patients who suffered a breakthrough infection were hospitalized or died from it. Compared to 157

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Strategies to avoid, identify and solve Medicare issues

By HEATHER ANDERSON

For Senior Voice

In the past, you may have had trouble navigating the maze of Medicare. Here are some helpful strategies to avoid, identify and solve Medicare issues that you may encounter.

Know your coverage

Medicare coverage rules can be complicated. My advice is to not become overwhelmed. Before receiving a service, you do not need to be a Medicare specialist. My recommendation is to check to make sure Medicare covers the service and if there are any steps you

must take prior to receiving it. If Original Medicare, your employer-provided retiree benefits and/or Medigap Plan, does not cover a service, it may be because you did not follow or meet coverage rules. An example of this happening would be sometimes Medicare will only cover certain preventive screenings if you meet a specific criterion. A service also may not be covered if it is an excluded service. An example of an excluded service is elective cosmetic surgery.

There are a few options to learn about Original Medicare's coverage of a service. You can call Medicare di-

rectly at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-42273), open seven days a week, 24 hours a day, visit the Medicare website (Medicare.gov), read the relevant sections of the "Medicare & You" handbook or speak with your provider.

To learn about your employer-provided retiree benefits and/or Medigap plans coverage, you will need to call your plan directly or read your plan's handbook.

Medicare notices

The Medicare Summary Notice, or MSN, is a document sent to people with Original Medicare. The Medicare Summary No-

tice statement should be reviewed for accuracy of services received, expense to Medicare and the amount that is your responsibility to pay. Also, check the notes section of the statement. This is where Medicare may further explain its payment decision or give you other important information.

Your review helps keep your benefits correct and can help prevent Medicare fraud.

If you have a Part D plan, you will receive an Explanation of Benefits, or EOB. An EOB is a summary of your medications purchased.

MSNs are mailed quarterly, while EOBs are usu-

ally sent monthly. If you haven't used any medical or prescription services, don't be concerned if you do not receive statements. Statements are only sent when you have received medical related services or medications.

Both MSNs and EOBs show the amount that Medicare or your private plan was billed, the amount that they paid on your claim and the amount that is your responsibility to pay. It is important to note that neither an MSN nor an EOB is a bill.

After reviewing your statements, and if you disagree with a non-covered

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Your time, companionship are the best gifts

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice, PPC, CPCC

Q: How can I maximize time with my neighbor who is living with cancer?

A: I am so glad we are talking about this important topic. It must be incredibly difficult for you.

You have taken the first step of support by being there for your neighbor. In moments of crises sometimes the best source of reassurance is a hug or your gift of time. Often you don't need to say much, but just sit with them, offer to



fix food (if they are willing or able to eat), without offering platitudes. Fear and stress are emotional challenges of this disease. You cannot make their can-

cer disappear, or produce a better outcome. You can, however, help them feel less scared and let them know you are here for them. There is healing power in giving back.

In formidable times most people do not want to hear false hopes or pretend nothing is wrong. Real, honest, candid discussions about the existing situation is appreciated.

Validated measures that meaningfully capture the patient experience across their cancer treatment is limited, but there is evi-

In formidable times most people do not want to hear false hopes or pretend nothing is wrong. Real, honest, candid discussions about the existing situation is appreciated.

dence that individuals receiving the support of hope, optimism, well-being, social support, self-efficacy and ways of relieving distress have greater health competency, resilience and quality of life. Caregivers who help a cancer patient maintain their sense of purpose, offer help when they're in inconsolable pain, or provide consistent

emotional support, elevate a patient's perspective across the continuum and forge pathways for empowerment and hope.

While you may not always know what to say to your neighbor—unless you are a cancer survivor—try not to say 'I know what you're going through'.

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Misunderstanding words



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

Part two of two.

When you have a hearing loss and are filling in the blanks and interpreting what words are, you run a huge risk of losing your language. Say you learned a foreign language in high school and did not speak it for many years. If someone speaks to you in the foreign language you might understand a word or two, but for the most part it would be more like it sounds familiar, but not understood. If you do not use it, you lose it.

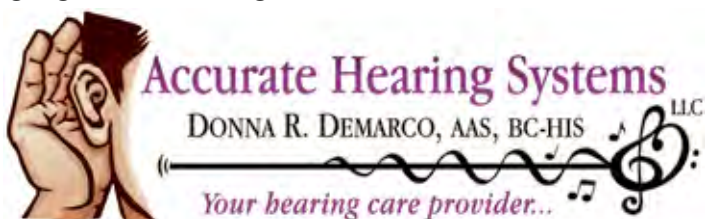
Hearing aids amplify sound, they don't teach a foreign language. Once you start losing your language then hearing aids

only amplify a foreign language. It is extremely critical to start wearing hearing aids before this happens.

WRS (word recognition score) is a test we run to verify what your understanding will be once we put the hearing aids on you. The higher the score the better understanding. If your score says 35% that would mean you are only going to understand 35% of what is being said. What you hear on the left side is processed on the right side of the brain and vice versa. One ear might not understand that word, but the other ear might understand it.

Accurate Hearing offers free hearing tests and ensure every patient gets the right hearing aids to best meets their hearing loss, lifestyle and budget needs. Request an appointment by calling 907-644-6004.

Donna R DeMarco, AAS, BC-HIS, Tinnitus Care Provider, certified from the International Hearing Society.



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How to buy the best blood pressure monitor for you

By **JIM MILLER**

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: I just found out I have stage 1 hypertension and my doctor recommended I get a home blood pressure monitor to keep an eye on it. Can you offer me any tips on choosing a good one? – *Hypertensive Helen*

Dear Helen: It's a smart idea. Everyone with elevated or high blood pressure (stage 1 and higher) should consider getting a home blood pressure monitor.

Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure in a comfortable setting. Plus, if you're taking medication it will make certain it's working, and alert you to a health problem if it arises. Here are some tips to help you choose a good monitor.

Types of monitors

The two most popular types of home blood pressure monitors sold today are automatic arm monitors and automatic wrist monitors that are electric

and/or battery powered.

With an automatic arm monitor, you simply wrap the cuff around your bicep and with the push of one button the cuff inflates and deflates automatically, giving you your blood pressure reading on the display window in a matter of seconds.

Wrist monitors work similarly, except they attach to the wrist. Wrist monitors are also smaller in weight and size, which

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Gifts: Time, companionship

continued from page 5

Instead say 'I know what you're going through is tough'. Also, conversations about topics other than cancer are generally welcomed. Talk about issues of interest to them, upcoming events, and the future rather than focusing on their illness. Distraction is an option when your friend isn't in the mood to have cancer talks.

Writing cards or letters is another way to provide support and relive memories of the past. If hospitalized, your friend could be undergoing a procedure, or may feel interrupted by a phone call. He/she/they could be receiving a treatment, getting a scan or blood draw, or taking a nap. Talking on the telephone takes more energy than we might realize. Cards on the other hand are a perfect source of communication. It requires less energy to read them. Your neighbor can glance through the cards when most convenient and rested.

You might coordinate with other visitors or their co-workers (if applicable) to minimize the energy needed to interact with others. While visits are appreciated, your neighbor may not have the energy to tell the same story repetitiously to everyone who visits. (Verify in person visits are permitted with their health-compromised situation during the pan-

demic.)

Taking care of practical tasks provides needed assistance. Shop or cook a meal when your friend might be too tired to cook for themselves or doesn't have strength to even walk from the kitchen table to the refrigerator. Ask if you can schedule their doctor's appointments, or offer to drive them to their appointments. Helping with household chores or proactively taking care of errands is another way to provide practical assistance—whatever seems meaningful in the moment. Ask how you can help.

If your neighbor feels well (and safe) enough, invite them to share a meal with you. Sometimes getting out and talking or laughing can be very therapeutic. Gift certificates are another way of providing little luxuries, or if they have children, or grandchildren, offer to assist with care for a few hours to give them a break.

Other kind gestures are sending balloons instead of floral bouquets. They can really brighten and cheer up a space. Help coordinate ways for colleagues to donate unused leave time in the event your friend has used up all theirs. Some companies have leave banks where employees can donate their own unused vacation time to coworkers who are experiencing catastrophic illness or a life-threatening diagnosis.

Finally, be sure to take care of yourself while providing support for your neighbor. Strong, positive energy, and finding coping strategies for both you and your friend will benefit both of you. Connect with others that know how you feel and can provide referrals or a list of suggested resources.

Living with cancer is not an easy road. Provide encouragement when you can. There are no set rules. Every friendship is different. Think about the unique dynamic with your neighbor and let that guide you as you support them. Keep it simple. Often the little things mean the most.

Cancer support resources

- <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/support-programs-and-services.html>
- <https://www.cancer-center.com/community/for-caregivers>
- <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/coping/adjusting-to-cancer/support-groups>

Karen Casanovas is a Professional Certified Coach who oversees a private practice specializing in aging and health. She's a Fellow with the Institute of Coaching and former member of the Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission. If you have a question for Karen, email her at info@karencasanovas.com.

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Fall health fairs are coming right up

By SHARON PHILLIPS

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. will start holding fall health fairs later this month. We will also continue to offer blood draws by appointment in our office, but are planning to hold the majority of our events at community and worksite venues.

Most fall events will require pre-registration online for a blood test ap-



pointment time slot. We will have exhibitors and screeners when space and

safety permits. Our staff have returned to local offices and are available should you have questions about the fall season.

Staying informed about Alaska Health Fair events is just a few clicks away. Our health newsletters, seasonal schedules, announcements, agency updates and more are very accessible and easily within your reach. You'll be the first to get the information that includes the new dates

for late summer and fall offerings. The best ways to stay informed include:

- ▶ Visit www.alaskahealth-fair.org and sign up for the newsletter
- ▶ Catch agency/event information on Facebook
- ▶ Read our monthly column in Senior Voice (hard copy edition) or online at www.seniorvoicealaska.com
- ▶ Hover your smartphone camera over our QR Code (left) to quickly access our

website

Volunteers have been our lifeblood and we encourage you to consider giving time in one of our medical or non-medical fields.

We hope that your Alaska summer ends on a great note.

Sharon Phillips is the Tanana Valley/Northern Region Program Director for Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Control headaches once and for all

By SUZY COHEN

Senior Wire

A "migrenade" is my term for substances that go off like a grenade in your brain, and trigger a migraine. It's a made-up term that works well and is immediately understood. All the pain-causing cytokines in your body should

NF Kappa B as a natural compound in your body, but one that is associated with migraines. Activation of this substance is also associated with facial pain, autoimmune diseases, depression, anxiety, attention deficit, diabetes, chronic infections, obesity and just the mere fact that you're aging.

be considered migrenades, because they are responsible for the pain and inflammation associated with

headaches. One of them is NF Kappa B which is discussed below. But first of all, I suggest you minimize or eliminate these most powerful migrenades if you ever want to feel better:

- ▶ Artificial sweeteners and dyes
- ▶ Any clothing that requires dry cleaning
- ▶ Monosodium glutamate

(MSG)

- ▶ Vegetable oil which contains bromine
- ▶ Fancy dryer sheets
- ▶ Perfume that contains synthetic chemicals

By the way, you can make your own dryer sheets by taking some cotton and putting a few drops

page 21 please



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Better cancer detection, blood pressure control

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Detecting cancer long before symptoms

There may now be a way to find cancer before symptoms ever occur. A new blood test, which can detect more than 50 types of cancer, has been found to be accurate enough to be rolled out as a multi-cancer screening test among people at higher risk of the disease, including patients age 50 years or older.

In a paper published in the journal *Annals of Oncology*, researchers report that the test accurately detected cancer, often before any symptoms arose, while having a very low false positive rate. The test also predicted where in the body the cancer is located with a high degree of accuracy, which could help doctors choose effective diagnostic tests.

The California company developing and funding the research is called GRAIL, Inc., and it has now made the multi-cancer early detection test available in the U.S. by prescription only. It is designed to complement other existing screening methods such as those for breast, cervical, prostate, lung and bowel cancers. Many of the cancers that the test is capable of detecting do not have screening tests available, such as liver, pancreatic and esophageal cancers, which are among the most deadly and where early detection could make a real difference.

"Finding cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful, is one of the most significant opportunities we have to reduce the burden of cancer. These data suggest that, if used alongside existing screening tests, the multi-cancer detection test could have a profound impact on how cancer is detected and ultimately on public health," said study investigator Dr. Eric Klein, chairman of the Glickman Urological and Kidney Institute, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, Ohio.

The test involves taking



a sample of blood from each patient and analyzing it for DNA, known as cell-free DNA (cfDNA). Tumors shed it into the blood. Genomic sequencing is used to detect chemical changes to the DNA called "methylation" that control gene expression. Using artificial intelligence (AI), it is now possible to predict where in the body the cancer is located. Results are available within 10 business days from the time the sample reaches the lab.

The third and final sub-study of the Circulating Cell-free Genome Atlas (CCGA) study, which was just completed, investigated the performance of the test in 2,823 people already diagnosed with cancer and 1,254 people without cancer. It detected cancer signals from more than 50 different types of cancer and found that across all four cancer stages (I, II, III, IV), the test correctly identified when cancer was present. The test's specificity (the true negative rate) was 99.5%, meaning that the test wrongly detected cancer (the false positive rate) in only 0.5% of cases.

"We believe that cancers that shed more cfDNA into the bloodstream are detected more easily," said Dr. Klein. "These cancers are also more likely to be lethal, and prior research shows that this multi-cancer early detection test more strongly detects these cancer types. Cancers such as prostate shed less DNA than other tumors, which is why existing screening tests are still important for these cancers."

next page please



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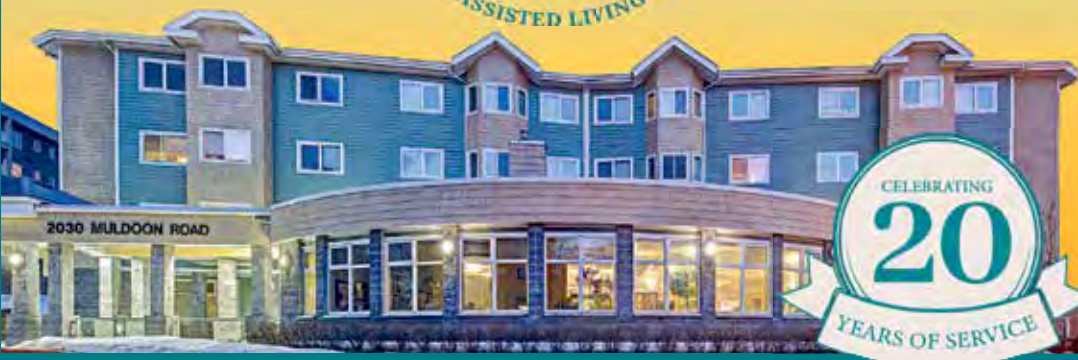

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Breathing: Training to control blood pressure

from page 8

Big benefits with 5-minute breathing workout

A new study shows that a breathing exercise known as Inspiratory Muscle Strength Training can reduce blood pressure in weeks, with benefits on par with daily exercise or medication. Working out just five minutes daily via a practice described as “strength training for your breathing muscles” lowers blood pressure and improves some measures of vascular health, according to a new study by researchers at Colorado University at Boulder.

The study, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, provides the strongest evidence yet that the ultra-time-efficient maneuver known as High-Resistance Inspiratory Muscle Strength Training (IMST) could play a key role

IMST involves inhaling vigorously through a hand-held device which provides resistance. Imagine sucking hard through a tube that sucks back.

in helping aging adults fend off cardiovascular disease. In the United States alone, 65% of adults over age 50 have above-normal blood pressure, putting them at greater risk of heart attack or stroke. Yet, fewer than 40% meet recommended aerobic exercise guidelines.

“There are a lot of life-style strategies that we know can help people maintain cardiovascular health as they age. But the reality is, they take a lot of time and effort and can be expensive and hard for some people to access,” said lead author Daniel Craighead, an assistant research professor in the Department of Integrative Physiology. “IMST can be done in five minutes in your own home while you watch TV.”

Developed in the 1980s as a way to help critically ill respiratory disease patients strengthen their diaphragm and other breathing muscles, IMST involves inhaling vigorously through a hand-held device which provides resistance. Imagine sucking hard through a tube that sucks back.

The researchers recruited 36 otherwise healthy adults ages 50 to 79 with above normal systolic blood pressure (120 millimeters of mercury or higher). Half did High-Resistance IMST for six weeks and half did a placebo protocol in which the resistance was much lower. After six weeks, the IMST group saw their systolic blood pressure (the top number) dip nine points on average, a reduction

which generally exceeds that achieved by walking 30 minutes a day five days a week. That decline is also equal to the effects of some blood pressure-lowering drug regimens.

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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Kenai Peninsula/Kodiak Island/Valdez/Cordova

Independent Living Center
47255 Princeton Ave., Ste 8, Soldotna, AK 99669
907-262-6333 / 1-800-770-7911 www.peninsulailc.org

Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)
3225 Hospital Dr., Ste 300, Juneau, AK 99801
1-800-478-SAIL (7245) www.sailinc.org

Mat-Su Borough

LINKS Aging & Disability Resource Center
777 N. Crusey St., A101, Wasilla, AK 99654
907-373-3632 / 1-855-355-3632 www.linksprc.org

Fairbanks North Star Borough

Fairbanks Senior Center - North Star Council on Aging
1424 Moore St., Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-452-2551 www.fairbanksseniorcenter.org

Bristol Bay Native Association

Aging & Disability Resource Center
1500 Kanakanak Rd., Dillingham, AK 99576
907-842-4139 / 1-844-842-1902

1-877-625-2372

The State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, administers the ADRC grant in partnership with the 6 regional sites. For more on the ADRC grant program, contact an ADRC Program Manager at 907-465-4798 or 1-800-478-9996.





Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program has moved into a new office located at 35477 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 205 (located in the 4D Professional Building). You can call them at 907-262-1280 or email dkebschull@soldotnaseniors.com.

Caregiver support group

meetings will be held at the following locations and times in August. Please join to share your experiences as a caregiver or to support someone who is a caregiver.

Aug. 12, Sterling Senior Center, 1 to 3 p.m. The theme will be “Getting to Know Each Other.”

Aug. 13, Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 3 p.m. Alaska Legal Services will present

“Answering Caregiver Legal Concerns,” from 1 to 2 p.m. and a peer support meeting will follow from 2 to 3 p.m.

Aug. 17, Kenai Senior Center, from 1 to 2 p.m., Anise Dobkins from Consumer Care Network will speak on “Learning How PCA Agencies Work,” with a peer support meeting immediately following from 2 to 3 p.m.

Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver.

If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. Call with suggestions and ideas for upcoming trainings or follow on Facebook, @KPFCSP.

Statewide

Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meetings all around the state, includ-

ing the following locations: 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 additional information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

Caregiving: How to get the whole family involved

Are you a relative or friend of an older, ill or disabled person? Is one family member responsible for providing or arranging most or all of the care? Do you want other family members to become more involved? These tips from Mardi Richmond can help.

Start with a family meeting.

Call a family meeting to discuss caregiving needs and ways for each person to help. Include everyone who can contribute. Consider holding the meeting in a neutral location with few distractions. Or if your family is spread out geographically, the meeting can be held by email or group telephone calls. Make up an agenda ahead of time so that everyone can contribute.

How will decisions be made?

If the person being cared for is able, he or she should have a say in how care needs are met. The person who has the primary responsibility should also have a say. Other family members’ views should be heard and respected too. For health and legal decisions, the person being cared for can use Durable Power of Attorney documents to designate someone to make decisions if he or she cannot.

If you disagree...

It is common for people to disagree about the best way to approach a caregiving situation.

Make sure each person’s concerns are heard. Try to reach a compromise. Avoid turning the disagreement into a feud. If you cannot agree, bring in an outside person – a counselor, care manager or clergy member, for example – to act as mediator.

Support the primary caregiver.

Try to respect the person who is taking primary responsibility. He or she is doing a difficult job. If you see that a problem exists, offer solutions and support, not criticism.

Don’t be afraid to take charge.

When there are several people involved, organizing tasks is very important. Make a list of what needs to be done. Ask people to volunteer for tasks. Consider having each person take responsibility for a different area of caregiving.

What can you do if you don’t feel others are carrying their weight?

Find out why. Sometimes a friend or family member would like to help but isn’t sure how. Sometimes a sibling may be respecting the role of the primary caregiver by not interfering. He or she may not get involved unless asked directly. If a person is not participating because he or she does not agree with the course of care, talking through issues may help.

- Dani Kebschull, Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support program

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Hospice campaign to lift up our caregivers

By AMY TRIBBETT

For Senior Voice

Hospice of Anchorage understands that being a caregiver is an important job. You shoulder many responsibilities caring for a friend or relative who is seriously ill. This summer, we are celebrating the caregivers in our community with our Care for the Carer campaign.

Each month we are giving out 100 Care for the Carer boxes, each filled



with caregiving resources, an assortment of coupons, and various self-care items. Each month's packages are different, so we encourage caregivers to treat themselves to a new box each

month.

To request a box, please call our office at 907-561-5322, or stop in to see us at 2612 E. Northern Lights Blvd. in Anchorage. We are in the brown house behind the First Congregational Church.

Caregiveraction.org offers these 10 tips to caregivers:

1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone.
2. Take care of your own

health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.

3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
6. Watch out for signs of depression, and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
7. Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.

8. Organize medical information, so it's easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.

10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

If you have a question about caregiving or want to know more about how we can help, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at 907-561-5322 or info@hospiceofanchorage.org. Amy Tribbett is the Hospice of Anchorage executive director.

Medicare: Strategies to identify, solve issues

continued from page 5

charge, you may decide to file an appeal. Instructions and deadlines regarding appeals will be on the final page of your MSN, titled "How to Handle Denied Claims or File an Appeal". Part D plans will send you a notice if denying prescription drug coverage. If

you receive a denial notice, read it carefully to guide your appeal and to ensure that your appeal addresses the plan's reason for denial.

Finding help

There are a few different places you can contact for Medicare assistance, depending on your issues or questions. You should

contact the Social Security Administration (SSA) for Medicare Part A and B enrollment, premium issues, update your address and/or contact information. For other matters concerning Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-42273) or use their website Medicare.gov. You can contact either SSA or Medicare to request a

replacement Medicare card. For questions or issues with your Part D or Medigap plan, you should contact your plan directly to learn about its coverage rules, costs, appeal a coverage decision or to file a grievance about poor customer service or administrative errors.

For any Medicare related questions feel free to

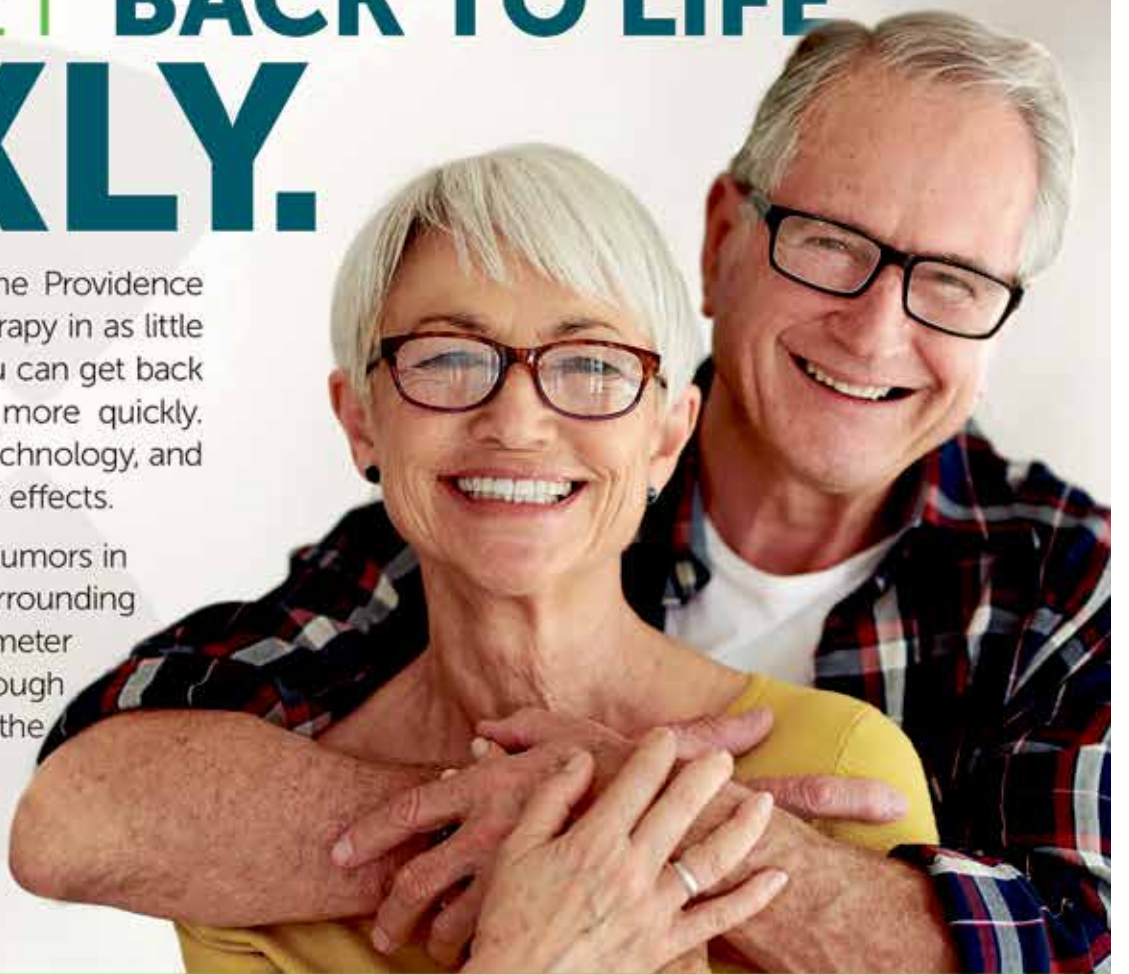
contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 1-800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680, also known as the Alaska SHIP, SMP and MIPPA.

Heather Anderson is the Office Assistant II for the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office.

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‘Breakthrough’: Post-vaccine cases and seniors

continued from page 5

million vaccinated residents this is a miniscule number. On the other hand, fully 75% of those who were hospitalized or died were 65 years of age or older. That’s a red flag for us.

But there is one factor that may make virus breakthrough cases among the fully vaccinated more common – the Delta variant. As explained on the Yale Medicine website, “A major concern right now is Delta, a highly contagious (and possibly more severe)

SARS-CoV-2 virus strain, which was first identified in India in December. It then swept rapidly through that country and Great Britain as well. The first Delta case in the United States was diagnosed a couple of months ago (in March) and it is now the dominant strain in the U.S.”

And of course, it is here in Alaska. Back on June 24, Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer for the State of Alaska, announced to a Zoom full of journalists that, “... we are seeing sort of widespread infection

[of the Delta variant]. So, we’re seeing it in multiple regions, including Anchorage, Mat-Su, the Interior, Southeast, Northern, and Gulf Coast regions.”

Since then, it has become even more widespread across the state. You might ask, “So what?”. Joe McLaughlin, State Epidemiologist and Chief of the Alaska Section of Epidemiology, explained in a June 30 press conference, “The Delta variant based on the currently available data appears to be about 50% more transmissible

than the B.1.1.7 variant. And remember that the B.1.1.7 variant was about 50% more transmissible than the original wild type strain that emerged out of Wuhan. If all those data are true and accurate, it is likely the most transmissible highly transmissible variant that we’ve seen so far.”

What to do? McLaughlin states bluntly, “...certainly, the number one best way to prevent acquiring the Delta variant and any other variant of the source covid-2 virus is through vaccination.”

In response to a question at a late-June public forum, Dr. Zink, Alaska Chief Medical Officer, addressed one thing vaccinated seniors can do: “If you’re going into a highly crowded bar, where there’s lots of people without masks hanging out, that’s going to be high risk, particularly you know, someone who is older, in your 70s [or older], so consider wearing a mask when you’re going into those indoor spaces.”

Your blood is needed, regardless of age

By ROBERT SCANLON

Blood Bank of Alaska

The Blood Bank of Alaska (BBA), located at 1215 Airport Heights Drive in Anchorage, is just a stone’s throw from the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. Did you know that as a senior over 70 years old, you may still give blood? All you need is a written doctor’s acknowledgement that you are well and able to do so. Given the continuing need for all blood types, especially O-positive, O-negative, and A-positive, we welcome Alaska seniors to give blood, including seniors from rural parts of the state. The need for blood and blood products in our state never diminishes.

Are you, your friends, or family outside of Anchorage? Blood Bank of Alaska has donation facilities in Fairbanks, Juneau and Wasilla, all prepared to make convenient appointments for you to come donate. In Fairbanks, blood donors can call 907-456-5645. In Juneau, they can call 907-222-5680, and in Wasilla, call 907-357-5555.

To schedule a donation in Anchorage, call 907-222-5600. You may also schedule an appointment at the Dimond Center Mall. In addition, calling will also help arrange a mobile blood collection vehicle to visit a site you might want to recommend. Online, visit www.bloodbankofalaska.org.

org.

Blood Bank of Alaska is the state’s sole blood collection, processing and distribution non-profit organization. It continues to successfully manifest its core mission, to provide safe, quality blood products to Alaskan patients in need.

Along with uninterrupted core service delivery, the BBA offers its facility as a convenient location for obtaining COVID-19 vaccinations to the general public. This partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage’s Department of Health is an ongoing community benefit we are providing at no cost to the municipality or the public. You are welcome to call 646-3322 to schedule an appointment, or to seek further COVID and/or variant information.

Our core mission, now in its 59th year, still needs about 2,500 blood donations per month to meet hospital demand for an array of life-saving blood products. If you’re not already a blood donor, please consider stepping up and joining us. We need you. All blood collected to meet the medical needs of your family, friends and neighbors is voluntarily donated.

Just 4% of Americans are actual blood donors. The majority of us therefore, depend on a relatively few dedicated volunteers to provide blood for our medical needs. One out of three of us will require

blood or blood products in our lifetime, more so as seniors. The profile is the same in Alaska, but with the added challenges of our geographical and distribu-

tion realities.

We hope to welcome you soon to one of the BBA’s in-state facilities. Painless blood donations are a lifeline to the health

and recovery of your fellow Alaskans. Please join the effort to support them in their time of need.

Robert W. Scanlon is the Blood Bank of Alaska CEO.

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.

Spotlight: AARP Veterans Webinar Series

AARP
Alaska



When you’re a Military Veteran with over 40,000 organizations trying to help you, it can be hard to find the right answers. How do TRICARE and Medicare work if I am eligible for both? What programs does the VA provide for veterans who wish to stay in their own home? What caregiving options does the VA help pay for?

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View details and register for individual events by visiting aarp.org and clicking “Webinar Series on Veterans Services” or by calling 1-877-926-8300.



Kiss your last gas guzzler goodbye

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS

For Senior Voice

A few weeks ago I asked my wife if she would like to go on a “date.” I told her that it has two parts, and the second part is a picnic here in Anchorage featuring Arctic Roadrunner hamburgers. With some apprehension, I circled around to the first part of the date. “But first, let’s go take a look at the free electric car charging station in the parking lot of Chugach Electric.”

During the previous few months I had been — perhaps obsessively — perusing the internet about electric vehicles, watching loads of YouTube videos, and listening to numerous podcasts about electric vehicles. I kept up a running conversation with Christy about my findings, so the somewhat unusual highlight of our “date” was not all that surprising to her. The question I was trying to resolve was this: Should our next car be a fully electric vehicle, or perhaps a gasoline/electric hybrid?

Compared to gasoline-powered cars, electric vehicles are way more fuel efficient, less air-polluting, much cheaper to run, have very little maintenance, and



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to Bloomberg New Energy Finance, “Electric vehicles (EVs) currently make up only 3% of car sales worldwide. By 2025 electric vehicles (EVs) will reach 10% of global passenger vehicle sales, growing to 28% in 2030 and 58% by 2040.” General Motors recently announced that by 2035, they won’t be making any gasoline-powered vehicles. Their entire lineup will be electric. Other auto manufacturers are headed in the same direction.

According to Policyadvice.net, “58% of new car sales in Norway were electrically chargeable in the first half of 2019. Iceland takes second place with 18%, followed by Sweden with an 11% [electric vehicle] market share.” Note, by the way, that these are all cold northern environments similar to Alaska. So much for the occasionally expressed notion that electric vehicles do not work

distinctions among electric vehicles you should know about, because each type has strengths and weaknesses that may help you determine which is appropriate for you. The first is a hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) which runs on gas and you never plug in. The electric battery and motor work with the gasoline engine to make it more efficient. Think Toyota Prius, which has been around since the late 1990s.

At the other end of the spectrum are the battery electric vehicles (BEVs), which run solely on electricity stored in batteries, commonly with a range of 200 to 300 miles. There is no gasoline engine. Think Tesla or Chevy Bolt. Typically,

you would charge this up at home, probably with a special charger installed by an electrician. Great for trips around town and nearby environs, but not much further. Alaska is short on public chargers to extend your range, although RV parks often have 240-volt connections you can use for an overnight charge.

Finally, there are plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), which typically run for a limited range (often 25 to 40 miles) on battery power before switching over to an internal combustion engine. You would likely plug this in at home overnight for a charge. It is all-electric for trips around town, but operates on the gasoline engine once the battery is drained. It’s a good compromise if you are

not ready to go all-electric quite yet. Examples include Honda Clarity and Hyundai IONIQ PHEVs.

For more information, contact the very knowledgeable Dimitri Shein at the Alaska Electric Vehicle Association, akeva.org, (907) 308-2078; or take a look at the websites of Alaska electrical power generators in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau for lots of local information about electric vehicles. Sooner than later you just might kiss your gas guzzler goodbye forever.

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.

What about my electricity costs?

According to the Chugach Electric website, the cost of charging an EV is about half the cost of fueling an internal combustion vehicle when fuel cost is \$3 per gallon and electricity is \$0.20 per kWh, which is Chugach’s approximate residential rate. Put in dollar terms, if you drive 10,000 miles in a year, you would spend \$1,390 using an average efficiency gasoline vehicle, as compared to \$690 to power an average efficiency electric vehicle, saving \$700 per year.

Panelists on a Commonwealth North forum report that the typical cost to install a home charging station is \$500, but can run into the thousands depending on the particulars of the installation, such as the location of fuse board vs where charger will be. The wall-mounted charger itself costs

about \$400 to \$1,200.

From Insideevs.com: “Every electric vehicle sold today comes standard with a 120-volt level 1 portable charger. These chargers can be plugged into a simple household outlet, and don’t require any special installation. Some manufacturers, such as Tesla, supply a plug-in 120/240-volt Level 1/2 charger with the vehicle. These dual-voltage chargers can be used with either a 120-volt or a more powerful 240-volt outlet like what an electric dryer plugs into.

“However, most manufacturers only provide a basic level 1, 120-volt charger, and offer a higher-powered level 2 unit for sale as an option. In order to recharge their EV faster, many owners choose to install a 240-volt electrical supply and level 2 charging station.”

Compared to gasoline-powered cars, electric vehicles are way more fuel efficient, less air-polluting, much cheaper to run, have very little maintenance, and are typically less prone to breakdowns.

are typically less prone to breakdowns. Some of the vehicles have heated seats and steering wheels that can be remotely turned on with your smartphone before you leave the house, and once on the road, electric vehicles are very quiet to operate. Finally, if you have an electric vehicle plugged in while you sleep at night, you leave the house in the morning with a “full tank” — no need to fill up at a gas station. So, I am interested.

Growing mainstream

Electric vehicles and hybrids are increasingly mainstream globally and in the United States. According

well in cold climates.

Here in the United States, 727,000 electric-drive vehicles were sold in 2019. About half of those were plug-in electric cars capable of operating on electricity alone.

In Alaska, according to the Alaska Electric Vehicle Association, there are currently about 1,600 “electric vehicles,” which include any vehicles you need to plug in to charge the battery. That includes, among others, around 350 Teslas of various models, over 500 Nissan Leafs, and about 250 Chevrolet Bolts and Volts.

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A full day of people, stories at the Alaska State Fair

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

Since 2014, I’ve enjoyed working each Wednesday and Thursday morning in the Flower Department in the Barn at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Wednesdays I fill the “vase” bottles with water and help exhibitors with their entries and Thursdays I’m one of the judges’ helpers. For this volunteer work, I receive a free ticket for myself and one extra for each of those four days, as well as parking passes.

But, after working my volunteer shift I’m usually too tired to take in many fair activities. Once I drive home for my usual afternoon bed rest, I never manage to return, even though I get my hand stamped and the parking pass is still good. This same scenario took place in 2016.

But, determined to enjoy a day of fun and not just work, I made plans for Sept. 5, that year’s last day of the fair. I invited my husband, Gary, to join me, but he declined, which was fine. I much prefer going by myself rather than attending with a group of women friends, a group of family, or even a husband.

After paying for parking, I offered and gave his entry ticket to the lady who parked next to me, with



Maraley McMichael working in the flower department at the 2014 Alaska State Fair.
Photos courtesy Maraley McMichael

three kids in tow. Stuffing my raincoat in my backpack, I set out foot loose and fancy free.

My first stop was at the Valley Quilters cabin to rest a minute and visit with the two ladies hosting the booth, where I soon was involved in a conversation about material “stashes”. One of the ladies commented that during her working years, she periodically bought materials that she liked. Now, upon retiring, she had been making a dent in her stash. Since her stash was very important to her and her daughter didn’t care much about quilting, this woman had formally written in her will, that after she dies, two la-

dies from the Valley Quilters Guild would come to her house and deal with her stash. Her daughter was not to donate it to a thrift store. I thought this was rather extreme planning, but certainly understood the concept. With quilting on my mind, I walked directly across

the way to the Irwin building and attended the quilt show, which I’d already sat through on one of my volunteer days. Beginning at the top of each hour, a quilt expert spoke about a select group of displayed quilts.

Continuing on down that avenue, I wandered into the antiques booth. I’ve frequented this particular concession since 1986,

but don’t think I’ve ever bought anything. When I first walked in, there were no other customers and the owner asked if I was looking for something in particular. I told her I didn’t need anything because I’d recently inherited many antiques from my parents’ estate, which started a conversation.

We talked about how big a job it is to sort through an estate and how some family members are more interested than others.

Our conversation was interrupted several times so she could answer customer questions. I didn’t want to take away time from her customers and was ready to move on, but she kept asking me questions. One customer bought a silver vase brooch for wearing real flowers. It reminded me of my glass vase brooch at home, which I later dug out and wore full of sweet peas about four times

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Giant vegetables on display at the 2017 Alaska State Fair.

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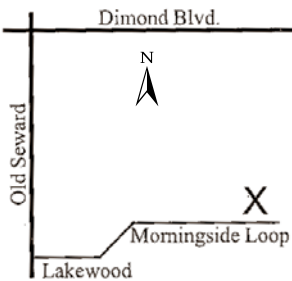
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Video of 'Celebration 1986' now available online

Sealaska Heritage digitizing project continues

Sealaska Heritage Institute

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) has digitized and posted online video of its third Celebration, a dance-and-culture festival first held in 1982 that has grown into the world's largest gathering of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people.

The entire event, which was documented in 1986 on now-obsolete video tapes, is viewable on SHI's YouTube channel for the first time. Go to the link <https://bit.ly/2WmPAlo>.

Celebration 1986, held in Juneau November 20-22, featured dance performances from 19 different

groups, speeches by prominent Elders and a Tlingit play.

"As we've digitized and uploaded this series, starting with Celebration 1982 in February of this year, you can see that the event continued to grow and develop as Native people formed new dance groups—which was itself a new concept, as traditionally only clans sang clan songs. You can witness the evolution and expansion of Celebration through these videos," said SHI President Rosita Worl.

The videos are a resource for Native people studying dancing, oratory, Native languages and regalia and for scholars researching

Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures, Worl said.

Comments on past Celebration releases also show that the videos have been a way for people to see family and clan members who are now passed.

The rest of SHI's Celebration footage, up through Celebration 2016, will be posted online by 2022. Celebration 2018 was the first Celebration posted on YouTube in its entirety in 2019.

SealaskaHeritageInstitute is a private nonprofit founded to perpetuate and enhance Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian cultures of Southeast Alaska. Visit www.sealaskaheritage.org for more information.

Subscribe to Senior Voice Call 276-1059 in Anchorage or 1-800-478-1059 toll-free statewide

Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Love bicycling but poor balance now rules it out? **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.** (aka Wasilla Senior Center) has **adult tricycles** available for free loan through its **Club 50 fitness program**. Sally at Club 50 tells us there are three available: two one-seaters, and a two-seater, and more than one trike can be checked out when available. She says availability has been good; just call in advance, 907-376-3104, extension 8672. Club 50 membership is required (\$10 per month for WASI members or \$15 per month for non-members) ... **Anchorage Senior Activity Center** is loaning out **tablet computers** to seniors who don't have their own computers or devices and want to keep in touch with loved ones, participate in virtual Zoom classes and activities. The tablets have 10 inch screens and can be easier to navigate than a laptop or computer, according to the center's August newsletter. If interested, call **Julie McFarland** at 907-770-2009 or email programs@anchorage-seniorcenter.org. Also at **Anchorage Senior Activity Center**, **volunteers** are needed to help with the center's **gardens**. The center's newsletter notes there are eight garden

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

areas around the center, which allows for up to 16 workers at any one time with safe distancing. Work at your own pace, for as little as an hour a week or every day – it's up to you. For more details, call **Lynne Duncan** at 907-694-6730 ... **Soldotna Senior Center** will take a 54-seat chartered bus to the **Alaska State Fair in Palmer** on Monday, Aug. 23 (Senior Day at the fair). Cost to ride is \$50, which includes the fair entrance tickets. The bus will leave the center at 8:15 a.m. and arrive at the fairgrounds before noon. It will depart the fair at 6 p.m., stop in Girdwood for a break and arrive back in Soldotna at 10:30 p.m. Seats are limited; call now to reserve yours, 907-262-2322 ... Local band **The Whippersnappers** are back performing live at **Kodiak Senior Center** each Friday afternoon. Dancing is limited, due to distancing concerns, but the music is good, with senior musicians and lots of smiling faces. Call for more information, 486-6181 ... This insight comes courtesy of the **Kodiak Senior Center's** August newsletter: "How times have changed! Now all of my childhood punishments have become my adult goals: Eating all my vegetables, staying home, taking a nap and going to bed early" ... **Valdez Senior Center's** next meeting of their **board of directors** is Aug. 17 at 1:30 p.m. The meeting is via teleconference. Call for agenda and other information, 835-5032.

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

Alaska State Fair: People, stories

continued from page 14

during that fall, always receiving compliments.

Next I noticed the Tundra booth and stopped to purchase Chad Carpenter's newest comic book for my grandson for Christmas. While talking to Zack (Chad's right hand man and who I knew as a little kid) I brought up the Tundra board game, which I'd recently purchased at the Colony House Museum. Since the box stated "for ages 13 and up," I asked if the contents of the game were more gruesome than the typical "roadkill" scenes from the comics. I was happily surprised to learn it contained nothing different from the usual depictions, but that it cost so much more to license for younger children, they decided to just go with the higher age rating. Good to know. Now I could give it to my grandson for his next birthday instead of waiting until he turned 13.

Then I went to the Colony Barn where I ran into Gayle Rowland (who has



Gayle Rowland and Maralee McMichael at the 2016 Alaska State Fair.

Photo courtesy Maralee McMichael

since passed away), who was working a volunteer shift for the Palmer Historical Society. I knew her as a friend and grandmother to one of my daughter's childhood friends, but she was also a fellow docent at the Colony House Museum where I volunteer one day a week during the summers. Gayle was three years old when her parents moved to Palmer in 1935 as part of the Colony Project.

It had been raining on and off all day and I walked into the Colony Barn with my rain coat dripping. I already knew Gayle's mother's wedding dress was on display from an earlier visit and planned to take a photo of it, but Gayle standing next to it was even better. She told me how her mother had an outdoor wedding in 1927, so I told her that I also had an outdoor wedding on May 26, 1973, but that the trees had only begun to leaf out that spring, so the vegetation background in my wedding photos is rather drab looking.

When Gayle said, "The 26th is the day Bob is getting married," I asked, "Bob who?" When she responded with the last name of a mutual friend, I was shocked. I said I needed to sit down before she told me the details of the amazing love story (which first began in the early 1960s) and would soon result in a wedding for Bob at age 80.

When I was ready to move on, Gayle mentioned that it was such a cold day, she wished she had a hot drink, so I went to the nearest coffee booth and

got the largest cup of hot water they offered and a tea bag. She was so surprised and appreciative when I returned to the Colony Barn and handed it to her.

On my walk back toward my parked car, since I was on my own and had no time schedule, I stopped and watched the quite fascinating back-hoe rodeo exhibition. At some point, I sought out one of the newer food booths, which serves the DenBleyker family's delicious Rueben sandwiches. The lady who took my order was another of my daughter's childhood friends, so we briefly exchanged greetings.

Because of timing and locations, I had to do some back tracking to take in my interests, so by the time I got home, I was plenty tired and it was way past my usual afternoon rest time. But, what an absolutely wonderful day at the 2016 Fair. The unexpected personal conversations were the highlights of my day.

That's the unique thing about the Alaska State Fair. Someone else might find my day rather boring. But with so many different activities, music events, competitions, educational opportunities, farm and garden displays, and of course the carnival rides, food and merchandise booths, there is something for everyone.

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



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“Age Smart” forums return: Music is the August topic

Senior Voice Staff

AARP Alaska, Older Persons Action Group and the Anchorage Senior Activity Center resume the “Age Smart – Let’s Talk” forums this month on Aug. 10, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Events are currently held virtually on the internet, using Zoom.

This month’s topic focuses on the impact of music on brain health. Music is all around us. Learn how it can benefit us by decreasing depression, lowering blood pressure, reducing chronic pain, elevating mood and much more, with presenter Ann Farris, Education Specialist at Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska.

The “Age Smart – Let’s Talk” series is a monthly

forum that focuses on a topic of interest and importance to Alaskans who want to be thoughtful about how to make good choices as they grow older. The series is developed to provide working age adults with information necessary to plan and fulfill a secure, healthy and satisfying “life After 60” (all ages are welcome). Each month the series highlights a particular topic with a variety of formats, including issue experts, panel discussions, interactive presentations, and plenty of time for questions.

Admission is free and open to everyone. Presentation begins at 6:30. To sign up, go to AARP’s event page at <https://aarp.cvent.com/AUG102021>.

Long Term Care Ombudsman is training volunteers

Alaska Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman

If you love visiting with seniors and want to speak up for them, join the dedicated volunteer advocates of the Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman program.

Volunteer Ombudsmen are needed to advocate for seniors living in assisted living homes and long-term care facilities.

Volunteers are needed statewide, including Anchorage, Bethel, Dillingham, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Galena, Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak,

Kotzebue, Nome, North Pole, Palmer, Petersburg, Sitka, Seward, Tanana, Unalakleet, Valdez, Wasilla and Wrangell.

Join us for our next Volunteer Training October 16 and 23, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Make a difference today!

Apply at <https://akoltco.org/volunteer/>

For more information, call Mikki Easley, Deputy Ombudsman/Volunteer Coordinator, Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman, 907-334-2535 or 1-800-730-6393.

Calendar of Events

Editor’s note: Due to COVID-19 safety concerns and restrictions, all events are subject to change or cancellation. Always confirm before attending.

Aug. 6-8: Ketchikan Blueberry Arts Festival in downtown Ketchikan, Fri.-Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Arts, crafts and food booths, Blueberry Vaccine and Health Clinic, Blueberry Beard and Mustache Contest, parade and more! Ketchikanarts.org

Aug. 7: Bethel End of Summer Celebration! at Kuskokwim Consortium Library, 1 p.m. Celebrate the end of summer reading with games, prizes, art displays and more. Facebook: Kuskokwim Consortium Library

Aug. 7 & 8: Anchorage Alaska Veterans Gun Show at Lumen Christi High School, Sat. & Sun. 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hosted by Mat-Su Veterans Foundation, the Alaska Veterans Gun Show has booths including guns, military collectibles, camping gear and more. Door prizes all day. Visit http://matsuveterans.org/annual_gun_show.html to register or for more information.

Aug. 13 & 14: Coffman Cove 10th Annual “By the Sea” Arts and Seafood Festival, Friday, 3 to 10 p.m. & Saturday, noon to 10 p.m. Join in celebrating the arts and seafood with food and arts vendors and performances! <https://fb.me/e/B5alCNAC>

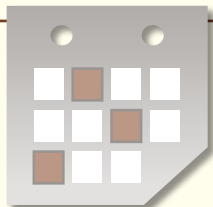
Aug. 14-22: Seward 66th Annual Silver Salmon Derby at Seward Boat Harbor. One of Alaska’s largest and oldest fishing derbies. Earn prizes for the heaviest fish in various categories. Registration will start a few days before the tournament at ssd.seward.com. General derby info at salmon.seward.com

Aug. 16-20: Wasilla Walk Across Wasilla. Challenge yourself, your friends and your co-workers to walk around Wasilla for five hours each day. Learn some of the challenges facing families in our community when they face adversity that forces them to leave them home — the challenges they face are real. To participate, email your contact information to walkwasilla21@gmail.com or sign up at fpm-su.com/events.

Aug. 18: Statewide AARP AK Veterans Services Virtual Presentation, noon to 1 p.m. AKST. When you need assistance in getting the benefits you are due as a veteran, you should utilize the assistance of a Veterans Service Officer. Visit <https://states.aarp.org/alaska/akevents> and scroll down until you find “AARP AK, Veterans Services.” Click the link to register.

Aug. 21: Juneau True Crime Capital Killer Walking Tour at City Museum. This guided tour starts and ends at the City Museum and is led by former Juneau criminal reporters, Ed Schoenfield and Betsy Longenbaugh, who will focus on historic Juneau murders. Tickets: \$30. Space is limited, so register in advance at City Museum or by calling 907-586-3572

Aug. 22: Fairbanks Gazebo Nights 2021 at Pioneer Park Gazebo, 7 to 8 p.m. Free, nightly performances by Steve Moore, country and rock standards artist, every Sunday in August. www.Fairbanksarts.org



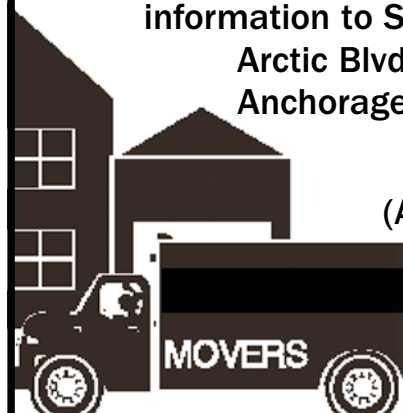
Send us your calendar items

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 Deadline for September edition is August 15.

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Klondike discovery launched a gold rush

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

George Washington Carmack and his two inseparable friends, “Skookum” Jim Mason and Tagish Charlie, had wandered up and down the Yukon for several years before their gold discovery electrified the world in August 1896.

Carmack traveled over glaciers, through marshes, among forests, lakes, rivers and mountains in search of his destiny. He seemed a misfit in a land where every man was looking for gold. He only wanted to live like the Natives among whom he’d made his home since coming north in 1885.

When he joined Maj. William Ogilvie’s party, sent to survey the Alaska-Canada border in 1887, Carmack knew the country well and could speak both the Tlingit and Tenneh languages.

Jowly, round-faced Carmack married the Tagish chief’s daughter, Kate, and many said his ambition was to someday become chief of the tribe.

Skookum and Charlie were Kate’s relatives. The three packed occasionally and did odd jobs for traders at Dyea. Carmack also made an effort to do something with the coal he’d discovered near the settlement known now as “Carmack’s,” Yukon Territory. He grew tired of the effort, however, and in 1895 posted a note on his cabin door that read, “Gone for grub,” and never returned.

One day in spring 1896, while sitting alone among the ruins of old Fort Selkirk, Carmack had a premonition that a great change was coming in his life.

“Right then and there,” he later recalled, “I made up my mind to take action on that hunch. So taking a silver dollar out of my pocket – that was all the cheechako money I had – I flipped it high into the air.”

If it came up heads, he thought it meant he should go upstream. If tails, it meant that fate had something in store for him downstream. Tails turned up, so Carmack got into his canoe and started paddling downstream the 200 miles or so to Forty Mile.

Then one night he had a vivid dream.

“I dreamed I was sitting on the bank of a small stream of water, watching the grayling shoot the rapids. Suddenly, the grayling began to scatter as two large king salmon shot up the stream in a flurry of foaming water and came to a dead stop in front of the bank where I was sitting. They were two beautiful fish, but I noticed that instead of having scales like salmon, they were covered with an

armor of bright, gold nuggets and had \$20 gold pieces for eyes....”

Carmack interpreted his dream to mean that he must go salmon fishing and decided upon the Thron-diuck – later called Klondike – because it was a good salmon stream. He and his wife, along with Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie, set nets and hauled in a few king salmon along the riverbank. But fishing was poor, so they gave up and cut timber instead. That was a good way to make a few bucks before winter – the sawmill at Fortymile paid \$25 per 1,000 board feet (about \$768 today).

They worked their way down Rabbit Creek that August, through fallen trees and devil clubs, gnats and mosquitoes and glacial ooze. When their provisions ran out, Skookum Jim went hunting, shot



The cabin in the foreground is where George Carmack and his friends discovered the first major gold deposit in the Klondike. Bonanza Creek and Gold Hill are seen to the right. The mouth of Eldorado Creek is just beyond Gold Hill.
Photo courtesy University of Washington, HEG580

a moose, and called for the others who where a short distance away. While waiting for them, he looked at the sand of the creek

where he’d gone to get a drink. He saw gold in greater quantities than he had ever seen before. That was August 17, a memorable day that still is celebrated in the Yukon territory.

When news of the find reached Fortymile, the rush was on. Drunken men were thrown into boats, one man was tied and made to go along. By midnight, the stampede was in full swing and

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Pairing Up

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- 20 Cafes & greasy spoons, e.g.
- 22 Kind of room
- 23 They have wisdom, usually (Abbr.)
- 24 Aurora’s counterpart
- 25 Wordsmith Webster
- 26 Door sign
- 27 Golden Horde & Cossack leaders, e.g.
- 31 Leaves for lunch?
- 34 Spanish sparkling white wine
- 35 Shake up
- 36 “Aquarius” musical
- 37 Blubbers
- 38 Palm starch
- 39 Venus de Milo’s lack
- 40 Shanties
- 41 Brusque
- 42 Barney Fife & a cartoon “Dawg,” e.g.
- 44 Au ____ (French dip sauce)
- 45 Time gone by
- 46 Pay-____-view
- 47 Irish Sea feeder
- 50 Skirt style
- 52 Painting & sculpture, e.g.
- 54 Michigan & Ontario, e.g.

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A tale of two Maldens - Carla and Karl

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

Carla Malden credits her father, actor Karl Malden, for sowing the seeds of her writing career – first as a screenwriter then an author.

“He used me and my sister to cue him quite often when he was learning a part,” she recalled from her home in Los Angeles. “I think I learned a lot about writing as a result. If it was a heavily dialogued scene, he’d sometimes tell me to cross a line out of the script because he said ‘I can act that.’ It taught me the importance of seeing the actor’s character on screen as well as through the dialogue. It was fascinating to watch him break down a part and develop a character.”

Earlier this year, Carla



Carla and Karl Malden.

published her forth book, “Shine Until Tomorrow,” branching out into the Young Adult (YA) book market. The story fea-

tures a teenage girl who travels back to 1967 and the summer of love in San Francisco. “It’s not a traditional sci-fi adventure or even a fantasy really, but a girl’s coming-of-age story that happens to involve time travel and features a driven teenager who learns about having to live in the present by traveling back to the past. It was designed as a YA book, but I’ve been gratified to see it’s crossed over to adults.”

A longtime screenwriter alongside her late husband (see www.carlamalden.com), Carla published her first book co-written with her dad in 1997, the well-received Karl Malden autobiography, “When Do I Start?” Malden (1912-2009) is

viewed by many as one of the great character actors from the 50s, 60s and beyond, with critically acclaimed dramatic roles in films such as “A Streetcar Named Desire” for which he won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar. In the 70s, he co-starred with Michael Douglas in the popular “The Streets of San Francisco” ABC crime drama series.

“He had been approached by a few people and tried to do it on his own over a few years then asked me to help,” Carla recalled. “Writing it with him was one of the great joys of my life.”

“His father was very involved in the church, which was the social hub of the Gary Serbian community and he organized all the plays that were integral to the community. So my grandfather was always enlisting my dad as a kid to be in the plays and that’s how he got the acting bug.”

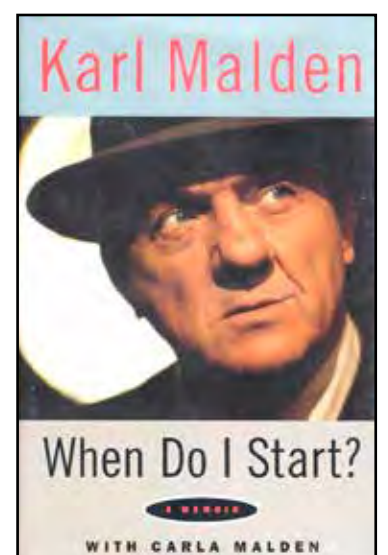
Away from the screen, Malden says her dad was a fabulous father and husband, married to his wife, Mona, for 70 years. “He was also an amazing grandfather and even had a few years of being a great grandfather.”

She says her father was very down to earth, would often work in his garden for hours, and never craved the adulation that often follows

entertainers.

“After he died, I got reams of letters from people for whom he had done major acts of kindness in all kinds of ways that I never knew about,” says Carla. “I miss him every single day of my life, ferociously.”

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



Book Cover of Carla and Karl Malden’s book, “When Do I Start”.



Vivien Leigh and Karl Malden in “A Streetcar Named Desire”.

Warner Bros.

published her forth book, “Shine Until Tomorrow,” branching out into the Young Adult (YA) book market. The story fea-



Michael Douglas and Karl Malden, publicity photo for “The Streets of San Francisco”.

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Approval: New Alzheimer's drug raises many concerns

continued from page 2

a combination of drugs to find an effective treatment. More than six million Americans have Alzheimer's currently, a number expected to jump to 14 million by 2060 in the U.S. It is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. and quickly moving up on that list. With deaths due to Alzheimer's rising 145 percent over the past 20 years, the disease not only robs individuals of their autonomy but also places a huge burden on family members. Caring for people with Alzheimer's in the U.S. cost \$355 billion last year, and that number is skyrocketing.

Mixed reviews

Supporters, including some doctors who treat Alzheimer's, and advocacy groups such as the Alzheimer's Association and UsAgainstAlzheimer's, acknowledge the drug's clinical trial data is far from perfect. They argue it would help some patients and will result in increased research and investment into therapies. But Harvard's Kesselheim, who quit the committee after the approval, said it's cruel to people with Alzheimer's to "put out a product that doesn't work," which will be sold at an extremely high price and waste resources that could go to other potential solutions.

While the medication could potentially slow down the disease, giving patients more valuable time with their families, critics point out that the studies so far have had potentially dangerous side effects so there are risks involved. In two of the largest Biogen clinical trials, brain swelling and hemorrhages or tiny bleeds occurred in about 40 percent of participants. While the side effects usually resolved, in rare cases they led to more severe bleeding that could potentially cause brain injury or other dangerous complications. And about 6 percent of patients had to quit the trials because of the brain swelling or brain bleeding.

Where this all gets even

Where this all gets even more controversial – for the patients and their families – is the cost. Aduhelm is expected to carry a price tag of \$56,000 a year per patient and it has the potential to be used by millions of patients, adding multi-billions of dollars to the nation's health tab – with Medicare and Medicaid picking up the bulk of that, depending how FDA writes the rules.

more controversial – for the patients and their families – is the cost. Aduhelm is expected to carry a price tag of \$56,000 a year per patient and it has the potential to be used by millions of patients, adding multi-billions of dollars to the nation's health tab – with Medicare and Medicaid picking up the bulk of that, depending how FDA writes the rules.

Moving forward, Medicare, Medicaid and other entities are expected to require brain MRIs to monitor anyone taking the drug, which could easily approach \$10,000 the first year, according to physicians. One study proponent, who favors the FDA decision, estimated that one out of 200 or 300 individuals could have serious side effects that might require hospitalization.

Insurers will likely require prior approval of those scans, which could delay care for many. They will likely cover the scan costs as well as other medical costs, but depending on coverage, patients still might be liable for thousands of dollars annually from the scans and treatments due to deductibles and other out-of-pocket costs.

One carefully calculated budget projection of the costs suggested that spending on the drug for Medicare patients could end up being higher than the entire budgets for the Environmental Protection Agency or NASA. An estimated six million Medicare enrollees do not purchase supplemental drug coverage, so they would have to pay 20 percent of the drug's cost, which would be \$11,200 this year. It is also impossible to predict the costs for people covered under Medicare Advantage.

Many other practical questions remain including how long do patients benefit? How do physicians determine when to discontinue

the drug? Does the drug have any benefit in patients with more advanced dementia?

Dr. Stephen Salloway, a Brown University professor of neurology and psychiatry, who directs the Memory and Aging Program at Butler Hospital and has been researching Alzheimer's disease for 30 years, has been closely involved with the clinical development of the drug. He understands the desperation situation of patients and families facing no treatments for the disease. If he told patients there was a new Alzheimer's drug with mixed data on effectiveness and asked whether they would like to try it "they'd say, 'Are you nuts? Of course I would,'" Salloway told the Washington Post.

The controversy over the drug has focused on whether or not the drug works. But another major issue has received less attention: which patients should receive the drug and what doctors should do to prescribe it responsibly and safely.

While the only patients who received the drug during clinical trials were those with very mild Alz-

heimer's or an even milder pre-Alzheimer's impairment, the FDA's label for the drug says simply it is "for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease." Under "contraindications," the term for health conditions or other characteristics that should prevent patients from taking a drug, the label says "None."

The broadness of the label has surprised and concerned even the biggest champions of the drug. Even advocates for the drug like Salloway suggest limits. He suggests doctors should only try the drug on those in early stages of the disease whose brains contain high levels of amyloid, the group that the drug has been tested on, instead of people with later stages of Alzheimer's.

Congress, budget experts and many Democratic and Republican White House administrations have spent many years suggesting ways to trim spending in Medicare, a large and growing share of the federal budget. Sens. Elizabeth Warren, D.-Mass., and Bill Cassidy, R.-La. recently called for hearings, concerned that spending billions on Aduhelm could undermine Medicare and Medicaid. The House Committee on Oversight and Reform has already announced an investigation into the drug's approval and pricing.

Medicare, which covers 61 million Americans 65 and over, does have some tools to contain costs, but

it cannot negotiate a bulk price purchase for the drug. It could decide to cover the drug in a way that is more limited than the FDA approval, a break from its normal practice.

Or it could do something even more unusual: try putting the drug into a randomized experiment to evaluate how well it works — paying to cover the drug in some parts of the country, but not others. Such policy experiments were authorized under the Affordable Care Act, but one has never been used to limit coverage of a drug in this way.

The companies now have nine years to complete an additional clinical trial demonstrating that the drug can reduce the onset of Alzheimer's disease, although revoking approval for a drug is rare.

Critics suggest that Biogen should conduct a third trial, but Johns, of the Alzheimer's Association, said a third trial would simply take too long — four to six years — during which more and more patients would slide deeper into dementia. But it also means that patients will be using the drug without actually being certain that it has the ability to help them.

A useful resource for families dealing with potential Alzheimer's cases: <https://www.alzheimersnavigator.org>.

Also contributing to this column: Washington Post, New York Times, Forbes; Roll Call; and NBC.

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Social Security: Applying online; scam prevention tools

Social Security Administration

Five ways to apply for Social Security benefits online

Social Security continues to make it easier for you to access our programs and benefits. Our website offers a convenient way to apply for benefits online.

You can apply online for: **Retirement or Spouse's Benefits.** You must be at least 61 years and 9 months in age and want your benefits to start in no more than four months. Apply at www.ssa.gov/retireonline.

Disability Benefits. You can use our online application, available at www.ssa.gov/disabilityonline, to apply for disability benefits if you:

- ▶ Are age 18 or older;
- ▶ Are not currently receiving benefits on your own Social Security record;
- ▶ Are unable to work because of a medical condition that is expected to last at least 12 months or result in death; and
- ▶ Have not been denied

disability benefits in the last 60 days. If your application was recently denied, our online appeal application, is a starting point to request a review of the determination we made. Please visit www.ssa.gov/benefits/disability/appeal.html.

Security Income (SSI). SSI is a federal income program funded by general tax revenues and helps people who have little or no income and who are age 65 or older, blind, or have disabilities. If you meet certain requirements, you may apply online at www.ssa.gov/benefits/ssi. If you are not able to apply online, call your local Social Security office to apply.

Medicare. Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people age 65 or older, some people younger than 65 who have disabilities, and people with end-stage renal disease. If you are not already receiving Social Security benefits, you should apply for Medicare three months before turning age 65

at www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare.

Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug costs. People who need assistance with the cost of medications can apply for Extra Help at www.ssa.gov/i1020.

Top fraud and scam prevention tools

Knowledge is power and having the right tools to fight fraud can make a huge difference. Knowledge can also help those you love and want to protect. We put together a list of the five most important resources about

Social Security scams you should know about:

- ▶ Read and share our fact sheet *Beware of Social Security Phone Scams* to learn how to spot fake calls and emails at www.ssa.gov/fraud/assets/materials/EN-05-10535.pdf.
- ▶ Visit our Office of the Inspector General's Scam Awareness page at oig.ssa.gov/scam for information on phone scams and how to report them.
- ▶ Read our blog post at blog.ssa.gov/protecting-your-social-security-number-from-identity-theft to learn how to

protect your Social Security number from identity theft.

- ▶ Create your own personal my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount to help you keep track of your records and identify any suspicious activity.
- ▶ Visit our Fraud Prevention and Reporting page at www.ssa.gov/fraud to understand how we combat fraud.

Please share these resources about scams with your friends and family and help us spread the word on social media.

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

We're also on Twitter at @seniorvoiceak

Headaches: Remedy

continued from page 7

of your favorite essential oil and tossing it in the dryer with your clothes. I like lavender mixed with either wild orange or lemon essential oil. The possibilities using natural essential oils are limitless and this trick won't harm your endocrine glands.

Now, let's cover two important nutrients that support your endocrine glandular health:

Iodine. Iodine is one of the components that helps make thyroid hormone. Low thyroid hormone is one cause for migraines, so iodine or a good thyroid supplement could be helpful at reducing frequency.

Ashwagandha. This herb comes from a shrub native to India, and it's also called Indian Ginseng. The extract helps make thyroid hormone and provide antioxidant protection. One of my favorite supplements for thyroid (and adrenal) health is "winter cherry" or ashwagandha, known

botanically as *Withania somnifera*. I often suggest it as an option for people who cannot sleep because it is so sedating. This herb is a strong antioxidant and will protect your DNA.

Earlier, I mentioned NF Kappa B as a natural compound in your body, but one that is associated with migraines. Activation of this substance is also associated with facial pain, autoimmune diseases, depression, anxiety, attention deficit, diabetes, chronic infections, obesity and just the mere fact that you're aging.

Fortunately, there are natural compounds that slow down this pathway, reducing pain. Among the best are probiotic supplements, a cup of green tea, lipoic acid, omega 3 fish oils, curcumin, lipoic acid, resveratrol and a few others. The popular medication for diabetes "metformin" also happens to dampen down this pathway.

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Oops, she did it again – Britney and conservatorship

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

I usually start thinking about my next column at least a month ahead of time. But then sometimes events derail my plans, and I have to write about something else. The 2018 earthquake, the recent pandemic, and more than a few surprise elections, judicial decisions, or Congressional acts have caused me to re-rack everything and start over.

This time, my plans were hijacked by Britney Spears.

For the benefit of those of my readers who have been living in a cave for the last 20 years – because otherwise, you already know this – Britney Spears is a popular singer, and occasional actress, who has had a number of major hit songs. For the last 13 years she has been under a conservatorship in California, and she recently tried to have it overturned. In her support, a number of celebrities have started a “Free Britney” campaign to end the conservatorship.

Before I go any further, let me explain about the word “conservatorship”. We use this word here in Alaska, but we use it differently. In Alaska, we would say that Britney has a guardian. For us, a conservator only oversees



the financial aspects of a person’s life, whereas a guardian also has charge of medical, housing and other decisions. But in California, guardians are only appointed for minors, and what we call an “adult guardianship” they call a “conservatorship”.

Either way, though, having a conservator appointed for you is a pretty big deal. It means that you lose the ability to control your assets, your earnings, and your spending. A judge enters an order placing that authority in someone else. It might be a friend or relative, an accountant or other professional, or a state office called the “public guardian”. It isn’t quite the same as being in jail, but your ability to do what you want is severely curtailed.

And because it is such a big deal, such a huge infringement on a person’s liberty, there are a lot of procedures and requirements put in place.

In Alaska, before a judge can order a conservatorship several things have to happen. If the person doesn’t have an attorney to represent her, the judge has to appoint someone. The judge also has to appoint an investigator to dig into the situation and provide a detailed report. And the judge has to hold a hearing to give that person an opportunity to argue against the conservatorship.

The petitioner – the person or agency which is asking the judge to order a conservatorship – has to bear the burden of proof, and there is a legal standard the judge will have to follow to make the decision. To appoint a conservator in Alaska, the judge would have to find that the person is unable to manage her property and affairs effectively because of mental illness, disability, chronic drug use, or for some other specific reason. The judge would also have to find that the person has property that will be wasted or dissipated, or that protection is needed to secure funds

for that person’s care.

How hard is it to have a conservator appointed for someone? It really depends a lot on the judge. I used to handle a lot of conservatorship appointments, where I was assigned by the judge to represent the defendant. I can honestly say

So what about Britney? Should she have a conservator? There are certainly arguments to be made on both sides. On the one hand there is evidence of significant problems; she has been committed to mental health facilities in the past, and apparently her perfor-

Before I go any further, let me explain about the word “conservatorship”. We use this word here in Alaska, but we use it differently.

that sometimes a judge appoints a conservator when it should not have been necessary, and other times the judge doesn’t appoint a conservator when he really should. The standards are very subjective, and if the judge tends to be a protective sort, he will tend to “do what he thinks is best for” the person, regardless of the legal standard. If the judge is a more legalistic sort, he is going to tend to let that person “make her own mistakes” unless it is absolutely clear that the legal standards are met, even if that might leave the person exposed.

mance at the most recent hearing was concerning. On the other hand, during these years that she has been under conservatorship, she has engaged in many public performances, acting jobs, and recording sessions where she has done quite well.

The short answer to the question is, I don’t know. I don’t have access to any of the confidential information I would need to form a meaningful opinion.

What I do know is that it is best not to have to go

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Juneau..... 586-6425 or (800) 789-6426
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Windows 11, teaching online, Apple Watch battery life

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**
Senior Wire

Q. I am excited about Windows 11, but I do not want to wait until December to try it. Is there a way to get an advance copy?

A. It has been six long years since Microsoft launched Windows 10, and from what I have seen so far of Windows 11, it was time well spent.

Windows 11 is available now through the Windows Insider program (<https://insider.windows.com>). Once you enroll, navigate to Settings -> Update & Security -> Windows Insider Program on a Windows 10 device and enable the Dev Channel. From there, you can download the latest Windows 11 preview release.

My advice is to hold off a while unless you have a PC dedicated to testing. The usual caveats apply to pre-release versions of software. Expect bugs, potential data loss and no real support.

Note also that the current preview release is missing one of the Windows 11 marquee features: the ability to run Android apps.

The system requirements are steep, so unless your PC is fairly new, it might not be able to run the preview. Hopefully, the requirements will be relaxed closer to the "Holiday 2021" release date.

Personal computing was once dominated by PCs, but the center of gravity is now tilted toward smartphones and tablets. PCs are still important. But most people are better served by keeping their data in the cloud and accessing it from handheld devices. Windows 11 clearly reflects this new reality.

Q. I have enjoyed playing the piano all my life. Now that I am retired, I would love to teach music. Is there a way to find students online?

A. There are services that allow people to create online courses and make them available for sale, including Teachable, Udemy, and Skillshare, just to name a few.

Typically these services

Because of the fall detection feature and because the Apple Watch is waterproof, I am considering wearing it in the shower on days when I am alone.

take a hefty percentage of sales in exchange for hosting the course. In addition to knowledge about the topic itself, you will need some basic skills in creating video and navigating a web site to set up a course.

These sites have the potential build a following, but with dozens of courses in every subject area competing for attention, building a course that can stand out among the crowd is difficult.

There is also a site dedicated to music instruction called Lessonface. Unlike the services above, Lessonface connects teachers and students for live lessons over the Internet. This model is much closer to traditional fee-per-hour tutoring, utilizing the internet for video calls.

Lessonface fees are far lower when a teacher finds a student directly, which is great for instructors who already have active students and want the option to provide services online.

While they are still a bit on the techie side of things to use, I think these services can be a wonderful way for retirees to share their knowledge with others.

Q. If the Apple Watch can track someone's sleep, and it detects if someone falls, when does one charge it?

A. For several months now I have successfully worn my Apple Watch about 23 hours a day. I use it to track my exercise during the day, and my sleep at night.

I charge it in the morning, as soon as I awaken. I put it on my night stand charger while I get ready to start my day. I also charge it while reading before I go to sleep.

According to Apple, and verified by my experience, the Apple Watch will recharge fully in about an hour. Because I charge the watch twice a day, it is usually fully charged in about 15 to 20 minutes.

Because of the fall de-

tection feature and because the watch is waterproof, I am considering wearing it in the shower on days when I am alone.

In that case, I need to find a different routine. When I first switched from overnight charging to two charges per day, I experimented with different routines until I found one that fit my lifestyle. It might take a few weeks of trial and error, but the end result is well worth the effort.

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

Wander the Web

- Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:
- Google Takeout**
It sounds like another food delivery service, but Takeout is actually a way to find out what Google knows about you.
takeout.google.com
 - Weird New Jersey**
Grab a slice of N.J. that Tony Soprano would never be caught dead in. The title says it all.
www.weirdnj.com
 - Waste Time Online**
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By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

The English have always been keen to train travel, particularly during the days when they had private compartments and different classes. The Brits do love their classes.

Today, while the trains are more modern and may remind you of a New York subway, they do have amenities like a club car and sleeping quarters.

Take a pass

The BritRail train ticket is worth buying as it is exclusive for tourists, providing unlimited journeys and discounts, and gives you the freedom to go at your own pace. You can buy tickets online from National Rail, The Trainline, or directly from the train companies.

Tourists from outside Britain can get discounted and flexible travel with a BritRail Pass, from the VisitBritain Shop, or also purchased from agents such as ACP Rail, Rail Europe and International Rail.

Keep a passport-sized photograph handy for buying passes. If you have a pass, you will need to show it when you buy a ticket.

Britain's fastest and most comfortable trains are those on the mainline routes. Reserve your seat in



The private dining car "Raven" on the luxurious Royal Scotsman.

Photo Courtesy Belmond/Martin Scott Powell

advance, especially if you want to travel at peak times, such as Friday evenings. Mainline trains have dining cars and air conditioning, and they are fast – for example, traveling from London to Scotland's capital city Edinburgh takes just four hours and 20 minutes direct, or from London Paddington to Wales's capital city Cardiff it's just two hours direct.

If you are disabled go to <https://bit.ly/3x0CZ3x> to book your ticket.

Pass costs vary on how many days you intend to travel. For instance, two days at first class is \$201, up to eight days is \$531 for one adult, and standard is \$132 and \$357 respectively.

See other prices at https://shop.britrail.net/#/pass/britrail_passes.

The BritRail South West

M-Pass is an electronic rail pass that you can download directly to your smart phone. This pass can also be printed in case of loss or theft, and stored on electronic devices like iPads and tablets. For easy train travel in the UK, this is the way to go.

A consecutive pass is valid for a set number of days in a row. For example, if you start using a four-day pass on a Monday, it will be valid until Thursday.

This pass is ideal for trains to Oxford and trains to Bath.

Short jaunts from London

Journeys across the country may involve changes since most lines radiate from London, which has seven major terminals. Here are some examples:

from London King's Cross Station to York (1hr 50mins), Lincoln (2hrs 20mins), Newcastle (2hrs 50mins), Durham (2hrs 55mins), Edinburgh, Scotland (4hrs 20mins), London Waterloo Station to Salisbury for Stonehenge (1hr 20mins), Bournemouth (1hr 55mins); London Marylebone Station to Bicester Village (50mins), Warwick (1hr 25mins), Stratford-Upon-Avon (2hrs), Oxford (1hr 10mins); and, London Paddington Station to Oxford (55mins), Windsor (55mins), Bath (1hr 25mins), Bristol (1hr 40mins), Cardiff (2hrs).

Pay attention to the yellow line above a train window indicating a first class compartment. Even if the train is full, you cannot sit in the first-class area

without paying the full fare.

For sure go and see Stonehenge. When we went to see it back in 1967, some Welsh nationalists had painted slogans all over it and groundskeepers were busy washing them off.

Stonehenge is a must-see. About eight miles north of Salisbury (go see Salisbury Cathedral too) it is thought to be a religious site although there is no evidence. The chieftains, aristocrats and clergy who built it are buried nearby.

This prehistoric monument sees crowds on the summer solstice, especially by present-day druids.

Take a Bath

For centuries Bath has been the place people come to relax, thanks to the ancient Romans who came here for the hot thermal



Windsor Castle is the oldest and largest occupied castle in the world and has been in the royal family since William the Conqueror in the 11th century.

*Royal Collection Trust /
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2018 Photographer: Peter Packer*

waters. Victorians made the Bath popular by taking the

next page please

England opens up for U.S. visitors

*There still are
some hurdles*

The United States is considered an "amber" country, meaning it's not as good as a green country but not as bad as a red country as far as the rate of vaccination and active cases, and England has loosened restrictions for travelers to and from England from amber countries.

However, the new rules as of July 19, 2021, do not include Ireland, the Isle of Man, or Scotland,

which have separate orders, but if you arrive in England and travel to those parts, you will have conformed to the rules.

People covered by the amber list rules, like Americans, will not need to quarantine on arrival in England or take a COVID-19 test on their eighth day in the country, as long as you have been fully vaccinated under the UK vaccination program or have not been in a red list country or France in the 10 days before you arrive in England.

Fully vaccinated means that you have had your final dose of

an approved vaccine at least 14 days before the date you arrive in England. The day you have your final dose of the vaccine does not count as one of the 14 days.

You will still need to take a two-day test when you arrive in England, and you will need to declare that you have been fully vaccinated on your passenger locator form and show proof of your vaccination status to your carrier (ferry, airline or train) when you travel.

You do not need to take a COVID-19 test or quarantine on arrival in England if you are trav-

eling within the UK, Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man (the Common Travel Area), and you have not been outside of the Common Travel Area (meaning the United Kingdom) in the previous 10 days.

This website is updated and contains the passenger locator that you have to fill out before you land in England. It also has links to Wales, Ireland and Scotland regulations: <https://bit.ly/3kMGyru>.

And you can also visit <https://www.visitbritain.com/us/en/know-you-go>.



Trains: *Better sightseeing in England*

from page 24

waters and with its high-class boutiques, beautiful Georgian architecture and elegant eateries it remains a beehive of activity to this day.

One of best preserved ancient sites in Europe, the Roman Baths' colonnaded pools promises a tonic to your aching back and is just five-minute walk from the train station. At the Thermae Bath Spa, bathe in naturally warm, mineral-rich waters in a rooftop pool overlooking the city skyline. It is also just a five-minute walk from the train station.



Cardiff Castle, a major visitor attraction, is a traditional castle with a Norman bailey or keep built on top of a mound and a long narrow set of steps up to the gate.

Photo courtesy of VisitBritain/Simon Winall

Visit the bard

Yes, there's more to Stratford-upon-Avon than Shakespeare, as the city's tourist site proclaims, but really you go because of Shakespeare, who was born there.

I visited in 1972, and made a grave-stone rubbing of his stone but forgot it in a hostel, which I regret to this day. It read: "For Jesus sake forbear, to dig the dust enclosed here,

blessed be ye man that spares these stones, and curst be ye that moves my bones."

The Royal Shakespeare Company, headquartered here, will resume its post-pandemic season in September, but in October it presents its only Shakespeare play "The Comedy of Errors." The company also presents non-Shakespeare plays. See the season at www.rsc.org.uk.

Go in style

The legendary steam train The Flying Scotsman that plied the rails between London and Edinburgh is featured on a special trip with the East Lancashire Railway.

Famous for being the first train ever to travel 100 miles an hour, it will travel at the end of September for a special journey between Bury and Rawenstall. Book online at <https://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk/events-activities/flying-scotsman>.

Now, the Royal Scotsman is a different



Stonehenge is a prehistoric monument on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire, England.

Photo courtesy of VisitBritain/Simon Winall

story. Pricey but wallowing in luxury, this train offers several different itineraries priced from \$3,350 pounds to \$12,500 pounds per passenger, or \$4,586 and \$17,113!

The Royal Scotsman, decorated in Edwardian style, will carry you through the Highlands to some of the most historic sites in Scottish history — the Culloden Battlefield, Eilean Donan Castle and Glamis Castle, and all that gorgeous scenery in between. Go to <https://bit.ly/36YFmcG>.



Illuminated at night, the view from a height over the intricate rooftops of Oxford city.

Photo courtesy of VisitBritain/Guy Richardson



A passenger shows his ticket to the inspector during a train journey to Edinburgh, Lothian, Scotland.

Photo courtesy of VisitBritain/Simon Winall



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Blood pressure monitor: Finding the best match

continued from page 6

makes them more portable and a bit more comfortable to use than the arm monitors, but they tend to be a little less accurate. To help you choose the best monitor for you, here are several things to check into:

Make sure it fits. Be sure the cuff fits the circumference of your upper arm. Using a cuff that's the wrong size can result in an inaccurate reading. Most arm models have two sizes or an adjustable cuff

that fits most people. Wrist models also fit most people.

Choose one that's easy to use. Be sure the display on the monitor is easy to read, and that the buttons are large. The directions for applying the cuff and operating the monitor should be clear.

Consider what extra features you want. Many automatic monitors come with additional features such as irregular heart-beat detection that checks for arrhythmias and other abnormalities; a risk cat-

Everyone with elevated or high blood pressure should consider getting a home blood pressure monitor. Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure in a comfortable setting. Plus, if you're taking medication it will make certain it's working, and alert you to a health problem if it arises.

And the top wrist monitors are the Omron 7 Series BP6350 (\$80); and the Equate (Walmart) 4500 Series (\$40).

After you buy a monitor, it's a good idea to take it to your doctor's office so they can check its accuracy and teach you the proper techniques of how and when to use it.

You can also get more detailed information on how to accurately measure your blood pressure at home at www.Heart.org/HBP – click on “Learn How to Monitor Your Blood Pressure at Home.”

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

Oops: Conservatorships

continued from page 22

through a conservatorship case, even if you do become incompetent. It is a significant intrusion on someone's life and liberty, it can rupture personal and family relationships, and whether you get the “right” answer is hit-or-miss.

There are two documents which everyone should have, which can almost always keep you out of conservatorship court, even if you become incapable of managing your own affairs. If you have a power of attorney, that allows a person you have appointed to manage your finances for you. And if you have an advance health care directive, you can appoint someone you trust to make medical decisions for you,

if you can't make them on your own. A third item, a revocable living trust, can also be helpful in these situations.

Having these documents is not foolproof, and sometimes even with the best planning it becomes necessary to go through the wringer in court. But perhaps 90% of the time, you can avoid that by having the right things in place. And that way, it's your prerogative.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. I know I say that every column, but I thought I'd hit you, baby, one more time.

Where to buy

You can find blood pressure monitors at pharmacies, medical supply stores or online, and you don't need a prescription to buy

one. Prices typically range between \$40 and \$100.

In most cases, original Medicare will not cover a home blood pressure monitor, but if you have a private health insurance policy it's worth checking into, because some plans may provide coverage.

The best automatic arm monitors as recommended by Consumer Reports include the Omron Platinum BP5450 (\$75), Omron Silver BP5250 (\$50) and the Omron 10 Series BP7450 (\$100); A&D Medical UA767F (\$45); and Rite Aid Deluxe Automatic BP3AR1-4DRITE (\$37).

Klondike Gold: Discovered

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Fortymile was deserted in just a few hours.

Two hundred claims were staked before the news got down in Oscar Asby's saloon in Circle City. During that winter and following spring, hoards of prospectors panned for golden riches. And in July 1897, when steamers Portland and Excelsior carried tons of gold to Seattle and San Francisco, the rush to the Klondike began in earnest.



Skookum Jim were made honorary citizens of the Dominion of Canada for their part in discovering the Klondike gold. Charlie sold his mining properties in 1901. He spent the rest of his life at Carcross where he operated a hotel, entertained lavishly, and finally one summer's day, fell off a bridge and drowned.

Skookum Jim spent the rest of his life traveling ceaselessly across the north seeking another gold claim – even though his mining property paid him royalties of \$90,000 a year (close to \$3 million today). He died in 1918.

Carmack, Kate, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley all reaped benefits from their major discovery. But life has a way of intervening with success.

Civilization and the means to satisfy his desires seemed to have extinguished Carmack's plans to live like a Native. He abandoned Kate and her people and married a camp-follower in Dawson, who lived with him until his death at age 62 from pneumonia in Vancouver in June 1922.

Kate finished out her

George Washington Carmack is known as the man who started the Klondike gold rush after finding a large quantity of nuggets along Rabbit Creek in 1896.

Photo courtesy University of Washington, CUR1618

life at Carcross, on Lake Tagish, living on a government pension. She always wore a necklace of nuggets taken from the famous claim on Rabbit Creek (later renamed Bonanza) that started the gold rush. She died in 1917.

Tagish Charlie and

Crossword answers from page 18

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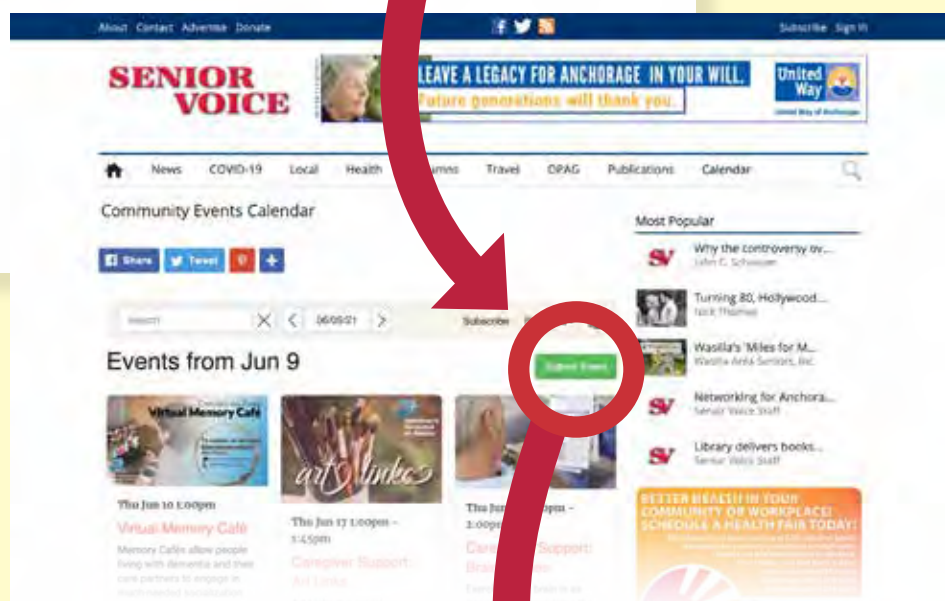
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