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# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons  
Action Group, Inc. Free

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Volume 44, Number 12 December 2021

## HOLIDAY RESCUE

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**TRAVEL** Webcams  
bring remote (and  
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Alaska to you.

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2021  
National Mature  
Media Awards  
Winner

© Can Stock Photo / liukov





# ‘Wish of a Lifetime’ at Age Smart forum, Dec. 14

Senior Voice Staff

“Age Smart – Let’s Talk”, the series of forums sponsored by AARP Alaska, Older Persons Action Group and the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, returns Dec. 14, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Events are currently held virtually on the internet, using Zoom. This month’s presentation features the “Wish of a Lifetime” program, whose mission is to shift the way society views and values our oldest generations by fulfilling seniors’ dreams

and sharing their stories to inspire those of all ages. The “Age Smart – Let’s Talk” series is a monthly forum 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/ASDEC142021>.

## OPAG elects officers for coming year

Older Persons Action Group, Inc. (OPAG) held its annual membership meeting on Nov. 18 and the following board officers were elected: Dylan Webb, president; Gail Opalinski, vice president; Joan Haig, treasurer; Yvonne Chase, secretary. Other

board members include Leonard T. Kelley, Sharon White-Wheeler (Emeritus), Robert Bracco, Pam Yeargan, Beth Goldstein, Hollis Mickey, Eileen Lally.

**Provider Breakfast, Dec. 8**  
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 is being continued virtually online via Zoom. The December meeting is Dec. 8, hosted

by Hospice of Anchorage. Starts 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, 907-276-1059.


## Different vaccine mandates for long term care workers

Also: New survey highlights medical debt crisis

By ALAN SCHLEIN  
Senior Wire

### Vaccine mandates

The Biden administration recently rolled out several steps toward getting more Americans vaccinated with two different new rules covering more than 100 million workers and specific guidelines for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The first rule, issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) covers companies with 100 or more employees, applying to an estimated 84 million workers. It requires companies to ensure that their workers are either fully vaccinated against the coronavirus by January 4, 2022, or that they test negative at least

 **WASHINGTON WATCH**  
once a week. But it was temporarily blocked when a three-judge panel for the Louisiana-based Fifth

Circuit Court of Appeals, rejected a Justice Department request. That court said the Biden administration’s order exposes companies to “severe financial risk” if they refuse or failed to comply and that might “decimate” their workforces. A group of companies and individuals, including churches and grocers, filed the suit, seeking a permanent injunction. The groups argued that OSHA usurped its authority by issuing a sweeping mandate. The OSHA mandate will take months to work its way through the court system. But the second rule, which applies to nearly 17 million workers in nursing homes,

**The high cost of medical care in the U.S. has also led to huge increases in medical debts, which skyrocketed during the pandemic and now stands as the largest source of debt collection, a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association said.**

hospitals, dialysis centers, ambulatory surgical settings and home-health agencies and other Medicare and Medicaid-funded facilities, requires them to be fully vaccinated by Jan. 4. The medical workers rules are tougher than overall OSHA rules. It gives these health care workers no option to instead get tested for the virus. They can, however, still seek exemptions on medical or religious grounds. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) told healthcare providers that it would tie COVID-19 vaccinations to Medicare and Medicaid funding in September. That prompted nursing home workers to increase vaccination rates

by about nine percentage points from 62% to 71%. The latest emergency regulation aims to boost vaccination rates among the general health care worker population and create a more consistent standard within Medicare and Medicaid. The nursing home rules immediately drew concern from the largest asso-

ciation of senior living providers. While they said they support the overall intention of getting everyone vaccinated, Mark Parkinson, president and CEO of the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living, warned the rules would “exacerbate” the already “dire workforce crisis in long term care.” Roughly 75% of nursing home employees nationally are already vaccinated, Parkinson said. But imposing a hard deadline, will likely “push too many

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### OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

#### Mission statement:

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

#### Vision statement:

“Promote choice and well being for seniors through legacy and leadership.”



OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

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# Stop the corporate Medicare money-grab

By EMILY KANE

As a primary care doctor, I believe Alaskans must understand that a critical portion of our Medicare dollars is bleeding away into privately held corporations, which inherently value profits over people. Recently, Direct Contracting Entities (DCEs) have been tapping into the Medicare trust. This is money held in trust by the federal government, which in 2020 was valued at \$937 billion. During the Trump

administration, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) vowed to pass all Medicare “risk” to “management” plans. “Risk” in this case is a misleading term: It refers to the healthcare costs of the beneficiaries – that is, paying for beneficiaries’ healthcare. “Management” involves more layers of middlemen tapping into the pot, rarely improving services and often denying care. After all, unlike Medicare itself, corporations like

DCEs exist to make a profit, so DCEs have every reason to pay as little as possible. Today, the Biden administration is allowing the continuation of so-called “demonstration projects”, which are moving 30 million of Medicare’s 38 million beneficiaries into the DCE plans without our consent or knowledge. This is occurring via several large corporations in the health arena, such as Anthem, Cigna, CVS, Humana and United Health Services, and

smaller private equity firms that are wooing physician groups with the promise of higher reimbursements and less Medicare paperwork. The catch? Toward the end of patients’ lives, when healthcare can get very expensive, many claims get denied. Yes, that is the “management” model, and it should shock us all. Here is a 14-minute YouTube video by a past-president of Physicians for a National Health Plan explaining the problem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L27lqMLr934>  
I recommend watching it twice, since the issue is complex. Please go to PNHP.org, sign the petition to stop DCEs, and spread the word. Our health, and healthcare benefits, depend on being aware and taking action.  
*Emily Kane is a naturopathic doctor and licensed acupuncturist living in Juneau.*

# Disclosing huge campaign contributions is not enough

By BEVERLY CHURCHILL

Alaska Move to Amend  
After the 2020 election in Alaska the hidden backstory came out: GCI donated \$100,000 to the national Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC), which gave \$380,000 to the Alaska Council on Good Government, which launched late-in-the-campaign attack ads against Alaskan Independent and Democratic legislative candidates, and ads supporting five Republican candidates in Anchorage and Fairbanks. At the same time, another group, Defend Alaska, collected \$150,000 from the Sixteen Thirty Fund based in Washington D.C. and spent it in support of progressive candidates in Alaska. Nobody knows who funds the Sixteen Thirty Fund: Politico reports it is funded by “massive anonymous donations, including one gift totaling \$51.7 million.” This type of donation is known as “dark money”. Alaska voters want to know who is trying to manipulate our vote, in real time. So last November we passed Ballot Measure 2 to shine a light on dark money,

requiring disclosure of the true sources of campaign contributions larger than \$2,000. (The RLSC, GCI and two GCI executives also gave \$245,000 to oppose Ballot Measure 2.) This step toward fair and open elections is important, but not enough. We, the Alaska voters, also want to limit individual, corporate and Outside contributions to campaigns, to ensure that the candidates are courting and representing us, the multitude of voters, and not just the donor class. We had a law that regulated the amount that individuals could donate, but that law has been gutted by the courts. The legislature could pass a new law that would pass court scrutiny, but will they? Voters can certainly urge their representatives to address this in the next legislature and hope it will somehow get past the gridlock in Juneau. Ultimately, to reassert our state’s right to pass campaign finance laws -- including a new law that would regulate campaign contributions on ballot measures, which currently have

no limits — we will need to demand that our legislature push for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to allow Alaska to pass such laws. Ballot Measure 2 also called for such an amendment. In doing so, we joined 21 other states calling for the 28th Amendment. The next step is to hold our state legislators and congressional

delegation accountable to answer the call for a resolution. If Congress fails to act in a timely fashion, we can call for a Convention of the States to write the amendment, without the help of Congress, which some consider a “nuclear option” and that has never been used before but may have merit.

*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. This article is part of a series on campaign finance reform.*

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





# American Indians have the highest COVID vaccine rate

NICOA Media

In May 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced on Twitter that its COVID-19 data tracker now displays U.S. vaccination progress by race and ethnicity. The tracker, “Percent of People Receiving COVID-19 Vaccine by Race/Ethnicity and Date Reported to CDC, United States,” showed that as of

vaccination rates are higher than white vaccination rates in 28 states, including New Mexico, Arizona and Alaska, where many indigenous people receive care from tribal health centers and the Indian Health Service (IHS) Connecticut News Project’s CT Mirror reports. In states like South Carolina and Tennessee, however, vaccination rates have been far lower for American In-



Photo credit: NICOA photo

July 6, American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest vaccination rate in the country, with 45.5 percent having received at least one dose and 39.1 percent fully vaccinated. This is especially impressive as the U.S. Native population had more than 3.5 times the infection rate, more than four times the hospitalization rate, and a higher mortality rate than white Americans, reports the Indian Health Service (IHS), a federal health program for American Indians and Alaska Natives. Official data reveal that the Navajo Nation, the largest tribe in the U.S., has been one of the hardest-hit populations, reporting one of the country’s highest per-capita COVID-19 infection rates in May 2020. From the beginning, American Indians and Alaska Natives were being hospitalized and dying from COVID-19 at a higher rate than any other racial group in America throughout the pandemic. Now, American Indian and Alaska Native

dians and Alaska Natives than for white Americans. In the American COVID-19 Vaccine Poll, a new national survey focused on overcoming obstacles to full and equitable vaccination coverage, 43 percent of American Indians who are not vaccinated report that they do not plan to get a vaccine, higher than any other racial or ethnic group in the survey. Nearly half (47.4 percent) of unvaccinated American Indians reported that they would prefer to get a vaccine at their doctor’s office. The other most-cited locations were at a hospital (24 percent) or a community health clinic (13.1 percent). The survey also highlights that 13 percent of the unvaccinated population cite socioeconomic reasons for not getting the vaccine, including not having transportation or not having time to get a vaccine. The successes of Native American LifeLines, Native Health Central and

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# COVID vaccinations save lives, study confirms

*Also:  
Sotrovimab  
shows promise*

By **JOHN C. SCHIESZER**

For Senior Voice

Vaccination is more than 90% effective at preventing deaths from the Delta variant of COVID-19, according to the first country-level data on mortality. Researchers found that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 90% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine 91% effective in preventing deaths in individuals who have been double vaccinated, but who have tested positive for coronavirus.

The study, using data from the Scotland-wide

EAVE II COVID-19 surveillance platform, is the first to show across an entire country how effective vaccines are at preventing death from the Delta variant, which is now the dominant form of COVID-19 in the United States. Researchers analyzed data from 5.4 million people in Scotland between April 1 and Sept. 27, 2021. During this period, 115,000 people tested positive for COVID-19 through a PCR test conducted in the community, rather than in a hospital, and there were 201 deaths recorded due to the virus.

The Moderna vaccine is also available in Scotland and no deaths have been recorded in those who have been double vaccinated with it. The researchers say to

increase confidence in these early findings, a similar study needs to be repeated with longer follow-up time after full vaccination.

"Our findings are encouraging in showing that the vaccine remains an effective measure in protecting both ourselves and others from death from the most dominant variant of COVID-19," said Professor Chris Robertson, University of Strathclyde and Public Health Scotland.

## A patch that delivers COVID-19 protection

Researchers at Georgia Tech's School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering have developed and tested an innovative method that may simplify

the complexity of delivering vaccines, including those for COVID-19, through a handheld electroporator. The researchers report that electroporation is commonly employed in the research lab using short electric pulses to drive molecules into cells. However, the technique currently requires large, complex and costly equipment, severely limiting its use for vaccine delivery. Georgia Tech's approach does the job using a novel pen-size device that requires no batteries and can be mass produced at low cost.

The team's findings are reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal and they could dramatically change how some vaccines

and drugs are delivered. The inspiration for their breakthrough came from an everyday device that people use to start a grill, an electronic barbecue lighter.

"My lab figured out that you could use something all of us are familiar with on the Fourth of July when we do a barbecue, a barbecue lighter," said Saad Bhamla, who is an assistant professor in the School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Georgia.

His team took the innards of a lighter and reengineered them into a tiny spring-latch mechanism. The device creates the same electric field in the skin as the large bulky

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# Alaska Health Fair ends another year serving Alaskans statewide

By **SHARON PHILLIPS**

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. The Alaska Health Fair office in Fairbanks will hold blood test draws by appointment on Dec. 4, 7 and 8. Register early, as they are filling up fast.

All our offices are closed from the third week of December until the start of 2022. We will reopen the first week of January and start preparing for an active Spring 2022

health fair season.

We are extremely grateful and amazed at the dedication our volunteers have exhibited, as they have helped us to bring much needed services to their communities throughout the past two difficult years.

Note to site coordinators: Call to reserve a date from February 2022 through May 2023 for your community or worksite event. Do so as soon as

possible, as the appointment-based system has made us very popular and dates are filling up fast.

For more information, scan our QR code below or go to our website at [www.alaskahealthfair.org](http://www.alaskahealthfair.org).

[alaskahealthfair.org](http://alaskahealthfair.org).

Or, call the offices in Anchorage (907-278-0234) or Fairbanks (907-374-6853).

Have an enjoyable, healthy and safe holiday season and

New Year.

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



# What vaccines does Medicare pay for?

*Also: Watch  
for COVID-19  
Medicare fraud*

By **SEAN McPHILAMY**

For Senior Voice

Preventive healthcare is care you receive to prevent illness, detect medical conditions, and keep you healthy. Medicare covers many preventive healthcare services, including

vaccines. Today I will discuss how the different parts of Medicare cover vaccines, along with some important notes about a few common vaccines.


## Part D coverage



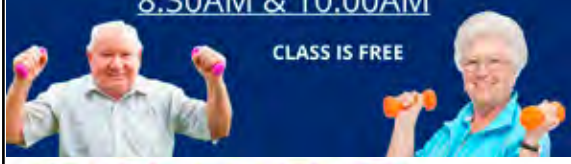



If your provider recommends that you get a vaccine, in most cases this service will be covered by your Part D prescription drug plan. Part D plans must

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## Talking to a loved one about hearing loss



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

Part one of two.

Hearing loss doesn't just affect the person who has it. It also affects spouses, family members and friends. From frustration with having to repeat things over and over to heartbreak at seeing someone you care about isolate themselves from the people and activities they love, the negative effects of hearing loss cast a wide net.

### When approaching this important subject

Left untreated, hearing loss can affect a person's quality of life in many ways. Without even realizing it, you may make it easier for someone not to seek help.

Well-intentioned ef-

forts such as repeating yourself or "translating" what others say may be preventing your loved one from realizing how much communication they fail to understand or miss completely.

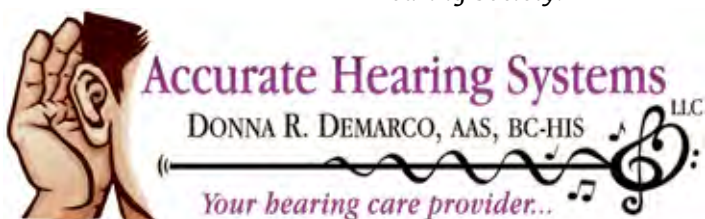
### How to help

- Gently remind them of their loss every time you "translate" or repeat something for them
- Share hearing information you find about hearing loss
- Offer to schedule and attend a hearing consultation with them
- Remind them they have nothing to lose and potentially everything to gain by seeing a hearing professional

### Hearing test is the best first step

If you know someone who could benefit from help, suggest they get a hearing test. Call Accurate Hearing for a FREE hearing test 907-644-6004.

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



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

## Medicare

continued from page 5

include most commercially available vaccines on their list of covered drugs (the formulary), including the vaccine for shingles. The amount you pay for your vaccine may vary depending on where you get vaccinated. Be sure to check

step on a rusty nail, or a rabies shot if you are bitten by a dog. If you qualify for one of these vaccinations, Original Medicare covers the full cost of the vaccine when you receive the service from a participating provider. This means you pay nothing. Let's review who is eligible for these vaccines and when:

**Flu shot:** Medicare covers one flu shot every flu

**Medicare has not issued a "COVID-19 insurance card" and anyone contacting you about this is likely attempting to steal your information.**

your plan's coverage rules and see where you can get your vaccine at the lowest cost. Typically, you will pay the least for your vaccinations at an in-network pharmacy or at a doctor's office that can bill your Part D plan for the entire cost of the vaccination process. When you get a vaccine at your doctor's office, ask the provider to call your Part D plan first to find out if the provider can bill your Part D plan directly. If this is not possible, your provider may bill you for the entire cost of the vaccine, and you will have to request reimbursement from your Part D plan.

### Part B coverage

While most vaccines are covered by Part D, there are certain vaccinations that are always covered by Part B, like the flu shot, pneumonia shot, hepatitis B shot, and the COVID-19 vaccine. Part B also covers vaccines after you have been exposed to a dangerous virus or disease. For example, Part B should cover a tetanus shot if you

season. The season usually runs from November through April.

**Pneumonia shot:** Medicare covers two separate pneumonia vaccines. Part B covers the first shot if you have never received Part B coverage for a pneumonia shot previously. You are also covered for a different, second vaccination one year after receiving the first shot.

**Hepatitis B shot:** Medicare covers the hepatitis B vaccine if you are at medium or high risk for hepatitis B, a virus that attacks the liver and can cause chronic liver disease. If you are at low risk for hepatitis B, the shot will be covered under Part D.

**COVID-19 vaccine:** Medicare Part B covers COVID-19 vaccines, including an additional dose or booster for certain at-risk populations and people 65 or older. You will owe no cost-sharing, meaning you should pay nothing for this service. Speak with your doctor to learn more about the vaccine and whether a booster or additional dose

is recommended for your individual circumstances. Please bring your red, white and blue Medicare card with you to your vaccination appointment.

### Avoiding COVID-19 Medicare fraud

Scammers quickly adapt their schemes to our changing world. Here are some tips to help protect yourself from potential fraud concerning COVID-19:

- Medicare has not issued a "COVID-19 insurance card" and anyone contacting you about this is likely attempting to steal your information.
- Be suspicious of COVID-19 related surveys that offer money or gifts in exchange for personal, medical or financial information. It's probably a scam.
- Remember that you should not be charged for the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Contact your doctor or trusted health care providers if you would like to receive a COVID-19 vaccine or are experiencing potential symptoms of COVID-19.

For any Medicare related questions, contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA) program.

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

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Nome.....	443-2230 or (888) 495-6663
Palmer.....	746-4636 or (855) 996-4636

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

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6 | Senior Voice, December 2021





# Concern for a loved one's medication use

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

**Q:** I have been watching the TV series “Dopesick” about opioid addiction. How do I talk to my mom’s doctor about whether or not the medication she is on needs to be adjusted as she ages?

**A:** This is a relevant question for any family. As adults age, social and physical changes occur which may increase vulnerability to substance misuse. As reported from 2018 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration data, 1 million adults age 65 and older live with a substance use disorder. While the total number of substance abuse disorder admissions to treatment facilities between 2000 and 2012 differed slightly, the proportion of admissions of older adults increased from 3.4% to 7.0% during



this time. That means that while the abuse of prescription or illicit drugs in older adults is much lower than among other adults, it is currently increasing.

Older adults are more susceptible to the effects of drugs because as their body ages, it often cannot absorb and break down drugs as easily as it once did. Misuse can often be unintentional, as forgetfulness, or taking medication too often, or taking the incorrect

amount can occur.

Events such as retirement, personal loss, declining health, or a change in living situation may cause older adults to take medication or consume alcohol in order to cope with big life changes.

Questions to your providers can give you the expertise to aid your mother. It’s always best to talk to your family member first to express your concerns before discussing with their doctor. These inquiries can then get you started in a conversation with the medication prescriber to find out what’s necessary for the current health situation.

- Are they taking medications that have a potential for interaction?
- What symptoms should I be on the lookout for that suggest potential side effects or drug misuse?

## Additional resources for download

- “Too Many Prescription Drugs Can Be Dangerous, Especially for Older Adults”: <https://bit.ly/3FBxlJQ>
- “Talking with Your Adult Patients about Alcohol, Drug, and/or Mental Health Problems: A Discussion Guide for Primary Health Care Providers”: <https://bit.ly/3kWgIAQ>
- “Linking Older Adults With Medication, Alcohol and Mental Health Resources”: <https://bit.ly/3r1gRXd>
- “National Council on Aging, Issue Brief 2: Alcohol Misuse and Abuse Prevention”: <https://bit.ly/3nFyKsI>

- What are the best practices for organizing medications to minimize errors?

Accidental misuse of prescription drugs and possible worsening of existing medical health issues put older adults at risk. Providers may confuse symptoms of substance use with other symptoms of aging, which could include

chronic health conditions or reactions to stressful life-changing events. Additionally, marijuana use can interact with a number of prescription drugs and complicate already existing health issues and common psychological changes in

page 10 please



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# Breast cancer vaccine; organs from pigs; vitamin D

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

A breast cancer vaccine is becoming a step closer to reality. Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic are studying a vaccine for preventing triple-negative breast cancer, the most aggressive and lethal form of the disease. Currently, the researchers are conducting a phase I trial to determine the maximum tolerated dose of the vaccine in women with early-stage triple-negative breast cancer.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently approved an investigational new drug application for the vaccine, which permits Cleveland Clinic and partner Anixa Biosciences, Inc. to start the study.

"We are hopeful that this research will lead to more advanced trials to determine the effectiveness of the vaccine against this highly aggressive type of breast cancer," said study principal investigator Dr. G. Thomas Budd of Cleveland Clinic's Taussig Cancer Institute, Cleveland, Ohio. "Long-term, we are hoping that this can be a true preventive vaccine that would be administered to healthy women to prevent them from developing triple-negative breast cancer, the form of breast cancer for which we have the least effective treatments," he said.

Triple-negative breast cancer accounts for a disproportionately higher percentage of breast cancer deaths and has a higher rate of recurrence. This form of breast cancer is twice as likely to occur in African-American women, and approximately 70% to 80% of the breast tumors that occur in women with mutations in the BRCA1 genes are triple-negative breast cancer.

"This vaccine approach represents a potential new way to control breast cancer," said Vincent Tuohy, who is the primary inventor of the vaccine and a staff immunologist at Cleveland Clinic's Lerner Research Institute. The investigational vaccine targets a



breast-specific lactation protein,  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin, which is no longer found post-lactation in normal tissues, but is present in the majority of triple-negative breast cancers. Activating the immune system against this "retired" protein provides pre-emptive immune protection against emerging breast tumors that express  $\alpha$ -lactalbumin. The vaccine also contains an adjuvant that activates an innate immune response that allows the immune system to mount a response against emerging tumors to prevent them from growing.

"This vaccine strategy has the potential to be applied to other tumor types," explained Tuohy. "Our translational research program focuses on developing vaccines that prevent diseases we confront with age, like breast, ovarian and endometrial cancers. If successful, these vaccines have the potential to transform the way we control adult-onset cancers and enhance life expectancy in a manner similar to the impact that the childhood vaccination program has had."

## Xenotransplantation opens door to new supply of organs

It may soon be possible to grow organs in pigs and transplant them in individuals needing organ transplants. The first investigational transplantation of a genetically engineered, nonhuman kidney to a human body was recently completed at NYU Langone Health, marking a major step forward in potentially utilizing an alternative supply of organs for people facing life-threatening diseases.

**There are more than 90,000 people awaiting a life-saving kidney transplant in the U.S. and more than 32,000 people have been added to the national kidney wait list year to date.**

Known as xenotransplantation, the kidney was obtained from a genetically engineered pig hundreds of miles away and transplanted into a deceased donor who was maintained on a ventilator, with the consent of the family, for 54 hours while the function

and acceptance of the new kidney was studied.

The gene that encodes the glycan known as  $\alpha$ -gal, which is responsible for a rapid antibody-mediated rejection of pig organs by humans, was "knocked out" in the donor pig. The pig's

thymus gland, which is responsible for "educating" the immune system, was transplanted with the kidney to stave off novel immune responses to the pig kidney.

Whole body donation after death for the purpose of breakthrough studies represents a new pathway that allows an individual's altruism to be realized after

*next page please*

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# Transplant

from page 8

brain death declaration in circumstances in which their organs or tissues are not suitable for transplantation.

According to data compiled by the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there are more than 90,000 people awaiting a life-saving kidney transplant in the U.S. and more than 32,000 people have been added to the national kidney wait list year to date.

“This is a transformative moment in organ transplantation,” said Dr. Robert Montgomery, who is a Professor and chair of the Department of Surgery at NYU Langone, New York, New York. “The medical and scientific communities have been working toward xenotransplantation to sustain human life for more

than 50 years. There have been many hurdles along the way, but our most recent procedure significantly moves these endeavors forward.”

This research now provides new hope for an unlimited supply of organs, a potential game-changer for the field of transplantation and those now dying for want of an organ, according to Dr. Montgomery.

## Know your vitamin D levels

All the staying home during the pandemic has left many more people vitamin D deficient and some researchers now refer to vitamin D deficiency as an “invisible epidemic.” Vitamin D deficiency is already extremely common, affecting approximately 42% of the U.S. population, according to research published in the National Institutes of Health database.

Doctors ranging from orthopedic surgeons to

## Some researchers now refer to vitamin D deficiency as an “invisible epidemic”.

family medicine practitioners are seeing an uptick in patients with vitamin D deficiency. More testing, people staying indoors because of skin cancer risk, and safety precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic, have been factors in the increase.

Although most people have no symptoms, severe cases of vitamin D deficiency can lead to thin, brittle, or misshapen bones. The deficiency is highest among older adults, and individuals who are institutionalized or hospitalized, according to a study published in Pharmacotherapy. It found that 60% of nursing home residents were low in vitamin D. A separate study in The New England Journal of Medicine found that 57% of hospitalized patients were vitamin D deficient.

“As you get older, bone resorption increases and

bone formation decreases, so if you don’t substitute that loss with enough calcium, it causes a bone mass deficiency,” said Dr. Deepa Iyengar, who is a professor of family and community medicine at UTHHealth in Houston, Texas. “Your body thinks you’re short of vitamin D, so it takes that vitamin from the bone and gives it to the blood, which puts people at major risk for osteoporosis.”

Vitamin D production in the skin from sunlight exposure also declines with advancing age, making older adults more

dependent on the dietary supplements. A person can get vitamin D in three ways: through the skin, from their diet, and from medically prescribed supplements. A few foods, including fatty fish, beef liver, cheese, mushrooms and egg yolks, naturally carry the nutrient. It can also be found in fortified foods and beverages such as milk, breakfast cereals, orange juice, yogurt and soy drinks.

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.

## Donations wanted

To benefit OPAG and Senior Voice projects  
Older Persons Action Group, Inc. is a non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible. Call OPAG at 276-1059 in Anchorage or toll-free statewide at 1-800-478-1059



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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.

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### Bristol Bay Native Association

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# Misconceptions about time and aging

By DENNIS GALL, Psy. D.

For Senior Voice

"Time and tide wait for no man," is an ancient proverb that appears especially relevant to the aging process. However, time by itself it cannot affect living functions, behaviors or organic changes. This distinction is important. If time were the causal factor in aging there would be no need to examine the underlying genetic, biological, cognitive, cultural and environmental interactions that contribute to the aging process.

If the passage of time is accepted as the causal factor in the aging process, our attitudes toward aging and the aged are affected in ways that may reduce the willingness to intervene in the difficulties that may arise, as these difficulties may be seen as inevitable. This in turn creates a negative influence on the functional ability and quality of life of older individuals. An awareness of the factors that con-

tribute to the aging process often leads to interventions that may help overcome functional difficulties that may arise over time.

## Life-long process

Newer approaches to understanding the aging process involve a growing awareness that aging is a life-long process. Research has shown that events and behaviors occurring at a time early in life, including smoking, drug and alcohol use, diet, activity level, prenatal nutrition, and socioeconomic status, as well as early child abuse and neglect, among others, have significant impacts on health and future aging. This changing perspective leads to a greater emphasis on examining the specific mechanisms of aging. Aging is therefore seen as a multifaceted concept that requires a biopsychosocial approach to understanding

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# Medication

continued from page 7

older adults.

Brain health refers to the overall function across cognitive, motor, emotional and tactile areas:

► **Cognitive health:** How well you think, learn, and remember.

► **Motor function:** How well you make and control movements, including balance.

► **Emotional function:** How well you interpret and respond to emotions (both pleasant and unpleasant).

► **Tactile function:** How well you feel and respond to sensations of touch, including pressure, pain and temperature.

Brain health can be affected by age and related changes in the brain, injuries such as stroke, or a traumatic brain injury, mood disorders such as depression, substance use disorder or addiction, and diseases such as Alzheimer's. More science is

needed on the effects of substance use on the aging brain, as well as into effective models of care for older adults with substance use disorders. And, while some factors affecting brain health cannot be changed, there are many lifestyle changes that might make a difference.

Have a thorough discussion with your mother first. Then, if necessary, a conversation with her providers could be useful.

Year's end is a good time to consider a wellness and medication review. What drugs are absolutely necessary for chronic conditions? Could healthier eating, physical activity, emotional engagement and social activities improve overall mental, physical and social health? If so, make them a priority in 2022 for a full and thriving life. Happy New Year.

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, is a restorative coach in Anchorage. If you have a question for Karen, email her at [info@karencasanovas.com](mailto:info@karencasanovas.com).

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# Resources to stay safe and comfortable in your vehicle

By **THERESA HAUSER**

For Senior Voice

The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) is holding Older Driver Safety Awareness Week December 6-10. According to the Center for Disease Control, the ability to drive can be affected as we age. Older drivers are also more likely to be injured in a crash.

As part of Older Driver Safety Awareness Week, the Center for Safe Alaskans wants to share the following tips to help you stay safe. Gordon Glaser, the former Chair of the Alaska Commission on Aging, says, "I use these driving tips below to keep my passengers, other drivers, and myself safer."

- Buckle up and wear your seatbelt. Place the shoulder belt across the middle of your chest and away from your neck. Place the lap belt across your hips.
- Make sure there are at least 10 inches between you and the steering wheel.
- Center your ears in the middle of the headrest for the best protection in a crash.
- Adjust the seat so you can easily press the pedals without stretching.
- The best view of the road is three inches above the top of your steering wheel.
- Learn to use your vehicle's safety features; we can help.

Want to learn more? Safe Alaskans has an online library of 12 short videos to improve your safety and comfort while driving. CarFit created these videos with help from AAA, AARP, and AOTA. The library takes less than an hour to view. After viewing, you can complete a survey and enter a monthly drawing for a \$25 gift card. <https://safealaskans.org/de-library/>

The CarFit on-demand workshop is another great resource. If you watch this 45-minute series, you'll learn how to get the best fit in your vehicle and stay safer on the road. <https://learn.aarp.org/carfit-on-line-workshop>

Contact the Center for

## Older Driver Safety Awareness Week is Dec. 6-10.

Safe Alaskans at 907-929-3939 or [info@sa-fealaskans.org](mailto:info@sa-fealaskans.org) for more information.

*Theresa Hauser is the Senior Program Manager for Center for Safe Alaskans.*

By **LAUREN BERG**

Senior Wire

Eighty years later, the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor remains significant as one of only a few times the United States has been attacked by a foreign adversary on its own soil. The tragedy of the attack came not only in the loss of over 2,400 lives, but also in how unprepared the U.S. was for it. Not that they can be much blamed — a surprise attack from a nation over 4,000 miles away had been previously unthought of.

While much has been

said about the attack itself, here are some lesser-known facts and stories surrounding Pearl Harbor:

1. Japan's surprise attack came in the wake of a devastating American oil embargo. In July 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order announcing a freeze on assets with Japan. Now, any business would need to seek the U.S. government's permission to trade with the country. However, confusion about the order resulted in cutting off all trade with Japan — including the export of U.S. oil,

which the Japanese naval forces were dependent upon.

This led the island country to set its sights toward an invasion of Southeast Asia and its oil resources, though it knew such an act would lead to war against America. As a result, Japan decided to attack America's Pacific Fleet based out of Pearl Harbor to prevent American interference in its plan for accessing the resources of these other countries.

2. Among the fallen were

*page 25 please*

## Hear for the Holidays



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# Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program office is located at 35477 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 205 (located in the 4D Professional Building). You can call them at 907-262-1280 or email [kpfscsp@soldotnaseniors.com](mailto:kpfscsp@soldotnaseniors.com).

The program will hold caregiver support group meetings at the following locations in December. This month's activity will feature a presentation from 1 to 2 p.m., with support group meetings following, 2 to 3 p.m.

**Dec. 1** Sterling Senior Center, "Mysteries of Sleep," a PBS documentary on the powerful role that sleep – or lack of – plays in memory, trauma and emotional regulation.

**Dec. 10** Soldotna Senior Center, Sterling Senior Center, "Mysteries of Sleep" presentation.

**Dec. 21** Kenai Senior Center, "Alive Inside," a documentary that explores the restorative power of music.

**Dec. 29** Nikiski Senior Center, "Alive Inside" presentation.

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, @KPFCSPP.

The Homer Area Caregiver Support Group has resumed its monthly meetings in the Homer Senior Center multi-purpose room. For more information, call Pam Hooker at 907-299-7198 or Janet

## Tips for family caregivers during the holidays

During the hustle and bustle of the holidays, many caregivers can become overwhelmed physically and emotionally. Jane Felczak, RN, a family caregiving expert, offers these practical tips to help caregivers make it through the holidays without losing their twinkle:

**Keep it realistic.** Pare down your expectations. Make a list of what you think you can accomplish and then cut it in half.

**Take shortcuts.** Go to the bakery for cookies and breads. Give gift cards. Order pizzas. And say no. Just because you always did something in the past, doesn't mean you have to do it this year.

**Accept help.** If someone offers to help, accept their offer and give them a task. Then let them do it without interference.

**Take care of yourself.** Take 10 minutes every day to sit and just be. Go outside if you can.

Clear your brain and don't do anything. It's amazing what this mental break can do for you. Don't skimp on sleep and try to keep alcohol and caffeine intake to a minimum.

**Get support.** Support groups, like the ones the Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program offers, provide encouragement and understanding. Talk to your friends and family about how you're feeling. The more you can put a voice to your feelings, the more you will feel supported.

Felczak has special advice for those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia:

- ▶ Focus on the joy and interaction.
- ▶ Be mindful of the present and don't focus on the future.
- ▶ Play your loved one's favorite holiday music.
- ▶ Connect over memories of the past and tell stories.

### Setting realistic expectations

Don't expect the holiday season to be perfect. Sometimes things don't go as planned, but those moments can make the best memories, too.

After the holidays are over, you may feel let down or disappointed. Take a look back. Think about what happened that was good as well as the fun moments here and there. It's also good to remember that at any time of year you can end your day by taking a minute to think of three positive things that happened. Thinking about these things at the end of the day means you go into sleep with a more positive attitude and when you go to sleep that way, chances are good you'll wake up that way, too. It's a simple technique worth trying.

– Dani Kebschull, Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support program

Higley at 907-235-4291.

### Statewide

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meetings all around the state, including 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.

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# No shortage of scams this holiday season

By **MICHELLE TABLER**  
For Senior Voice

Most holiday scams are just variations on scams we see year-round, but scammers will ramp up their efforts and tailor their fraud to holiday activities during this time of year.

### Online shopping

Scammers target shoppers looking for bargains by creating fake websites (spoofing) and social media ads impersonating major retailers and brands. These sites will advertise products at bargain prices. You will never receive these products and in the meantime, the scammers now have your credit card information.

To avoid these scams, look for too-good-to-be-true pricing on products you want buy. Watch for spelling and grammar errors on the website. If the company is unfamiliar,

check to see if there is a real street address and an actual office. Is there only a fill-in form for contact with only an 800-number phone number? Does the website include their privacy, returns and refund policies? Type the name of the company +reviews or +scam into your browser and read what comes up. Also, it's best to not click on ads that pop up on your social media (click-baiting). If you are interested in a product, go directly to a known website to view.

We've always advised in the past to make sure the website has the "https" and lock icon before putting in your personal and credit card information, to insure an encrypted website. But scammers have caught on and now use this technology. Really do your research before buying from an unknown company.

Always pay by credit card so you can dispute any

fraudulent charges. Never use a debit card, wire transfer, gift or prepaid card. It's the same as cash and the money will be gone if it turns out to be a fraudulent transaction.

### Delivery scams

Scammers will ramp up their fraudulent phishing emails (fake shipping notices, notifications of missed deliveries) during the holiday season, spoofing known delivery services such as the US Postal Service, UPS or FedEx. You may be expecting packages, but these shipping companies normally will not be sending you emails. The links in the phishing email can infect your computer with malware or send you to a form asking for personal information. Ignore these emails – you can research shipping information yourself by going directly to the carrier's website and checking the status of your packages.

And then there are the porch pirates who steal your packages after they arrive at your home. In most cases, these crimes happen during daylight hours, with packages visible from the street. If you are not home during the day, arrange to have packages delivered to your work address or to a friend or neighbor who will be home. Or have the package delivered to a hub locker, a local retail location, or the nearby office of the shipper or postal office.

Track your packages so you know when delivery will be. If you have a door camera, you can see when the package was delivered and have it picked up immediately. You can also request that your package be delivered with a signature required.

### Charity scams

These scams increase during the holidays just as charitable giving in-

creases. Watch for fake websites touting "look-alike" charities that imitate well-known charity names. Never respond to any unsolicited phone calls asking for donations. And never give out personal or financial information on the phone. Just hang up. You can verify the legitimacy of a charity at Charity Navigator or Give.org.

We want you to be safe this holiday season. AARP's Fraud Watch Network at [www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/](http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/) can help you spot and avoid scams. Sign up for free Watchdog Alerts, review our scam-tracking map, or call our toll-free fraud helpline at 877-908-3360 if you or a loved one suspect you've been a victim.

*Michelle Tabler volunteers with the Alaska Fraud Watch Network, as part of AARP Alaska.*

(paid advertisement)

## Nine years without a cold?

By **DOUG CORNELL, PhD**  
CopperZap

Scientists have discovered a natural way to kill germs fast.

Now thousands of people are using it against viruses and bacteria.

Colds start when cold viruses get in your nose. Viruses multiply fast. If you don't stop them early, they spread and cause misery.

In hundreds of studies, EPA and university researchers have confirmed that viruses and bacteria die almost instantly when touched by copper.

That's why ancient Greeks and Egyptians used copper to purify water and heal wounds. They didn't know about microbes, but now we do.

The National Institutes of Health says, "The antimicrobial activity of copper is now well established."

Scientists say the high conductance of copper disrupts the electrical balance in a microbe cell

by touch and destroys it in seconds.

Some hospitals tried copper for touch surfaces like faucets and doorknobs. This cut the spread of MRSA, and other illnesses, by over half and saved lives.

The strong scientific evidence gave inventor Doug Cornell an idea. He made a smooth copper probe with a tip to fit in the bottom of his nose.

The next time he felt a tickle in his nose that felt like a cold about to start, he rubbed the copper gently in his nose for 60 seconds.

"It worked!" he exclaimed. "The cold never got going. That was September 2012. I use copper in the nose every time and I have not had a single cold since then."

"We don't make product health claims," he said, "so I can't say cause and effect. But we know copper is antimicrobial."

He asked relatives and friends to try it. They reported the same thing, so he patented CopperZap® and put it on the market.

Soon hundreds of people had tried it. The feedback was 99% positive if they used the copper within 3 hours after the first sign of unwanted germs, like a tickle in the nose or a scratchy throat.

Early user Mary Pickrell said, "I can't believe how good my nose feels."

"What a wonderful thing!" exclaimed Physician's Assistant Julie. Another customer asked, "Is it supposed to work that fast?"

Pat McAllister, 70, received one for Christmas and called it "one of the best presents ever. This little jewel really works."

Frequent flier Karen Gauci used to suffer after crowded flights. Though skeptical, she tried copper on travel days for 2 months. "Sixteen flights and not a sniffle!" she exclaimed.

Businesswoman Rosaleen says when people around her show signs of unwanted germs, she uses copper morning and night. "It saved me last holidays," she said.



**Copper can stop germs before they spread.**

"The kids had crud going me."

Attorney Donna Blight tried copper for her sinus. "I am shocked!" she said. "My head cleared, no more headache, no more congestion."

A man with trouble breathing through his nose at night tried copper just before bed. "Best sleep I've had in years!" he said.

In a lab test, technicians placed 25 million live flu viruses on a CopperZap. No viruses were found alive soon after.

Some people press copper on a lip right away if a warning tingle suggests unwanted germs gathering there.

The handle is curved and round and round, but not textured to increase contact. Copper can kill germs picked up on fingers and hands after you touch things other people have touched.

The EPA says copper still works even when tarnished.

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[www.CopperZap.com](http://www.CopperZap.com) or call toll-free 1-888-411-6114.

Buy once, use forever. *Statements are not intended as product health claims and have not been evaluated by the FDA. Not claimed to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.*

(paid advertisement)





# Senior ride services on the Kenai, Kodiak

By **JOHN C. SCHIESZER**  
*For Senior Voice*

Traveling in the dark can be treacherous this time of year, but now many transportation systems are being kicked into motion. The COVID-19 pandemic left many stranded at home for weeks and months at a time. However, this year can be different. Last month, Senior Voice reviewed ride services in the Anchorage area. This month we look at the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak.

### Kodiak

The Kodiak Area Transit System (KATS) has been in operation since August 2000, under the administration of Senior Citizens of Kodiak Inc. (SCOK). The system began as a coordinated transportation system used only for local non-profits, but seven years ago it became a public system. It is a dial-a-ride system. You may call 24 hours ahead for door-to-door pickup. “We have a public schedule, but due to COVID these town stops are no longer being used. Once we are cleared a bit from COVID, we will re-implement town stops,” said Pat Branson, CEO of Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. SCOK contracts with



**Kodiak Senior Center administers the town's Kodiak Area Transit System (KATS), which started out as a ride service for area non-profit agencies but now serves the full public.**  
*Courtesy Kodiak Senior Center*

First Student, which operates the town's school buses, to handle dispatch, operations, maintenance, fuel and insurance for the KATS buses, which SCOK owns. KATS operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The KATS schedule is operational all year long with no changes. “Since KATS is the only handicapped accessible transportation in Kodiak, it is vital in getting people to shop, all appointments, jobs, community events and social service programs,” Branson said. “Without KATS, people would be isolated and not have a way to be inclusive in our community. Taxi rides are expensive and not handicapped accessible.” KATS is growing each year in popularity. SCOK

does get annual funds from the city but “the Kodiak Island Borough does not give us funds for KATS,” said Branson. However, there is optimism that the system will be getting federal funds to help expand and improve KATS, she said.

### Kenai-area rides

At The Kenai Senior Center, rides are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Masks are required. At the Kenai Senior Center, doctor appointments take precedence over other rides,

and appointments must be made 24 hours in advance. For doctor appointments in Soldotna, it is recommended that clients schedule pickup times for at least 30 minutes prior to the appointment. Rides are available to and from the senior center for lunch. The Kenai Senior Center is funded through grants and donations, so there are some costs involved. Suggested ride donations are \$3, \$6 and \$10 and based on roundtrip from various locations. Ride scheduling is made through the front desk by calling 907-283-8211 or 907-283-4156. It is possible to make a stop during your ride. Additional stops are a donation of \$3. It is recommended you mention you need to make stops when you make your appointment. Those running the Kenai Senior Center understand that not everyone's budget is the same and drivers will never ask if you have paid for a ride. A suggested ride donation is \$3 for Kenai city limits, \$6 for Kalifornsky

Beach Road, and \$10 for Soldotna.

### Nikiski

The Nikiski Senior Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. It will assist with booking transportation, but currently it is not offering transportation through the center, said Sasha Fallon, Nikiski Senior Center Executive Director. The center helps older adults sign up for local transportation through CARTS (Central Area Rural Transit System). “Unfortunately, there have been barriers such as confusion with scheduling requirements, limit to one stop per ride etc.,” said Fallon. Subsequently, the current transportation option is not a great fit. Older adults in the rural Alaskan community need to be able to go to town for shopping, for joining community outings, as well as attend appointments and more, Fallon said.

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**Wednesday, January 19, 2022, 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, Am I Missing Deductions that Can Save Me Money?**

**Wednesday, February 16, 2022, 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, New Tax Changes that Can Save Me Money**

**Wednesday, March 16, 2022, 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, How Does Retirement Affect My Taxes?**

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022, 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM, What If I Can't Get My Taxes Done on Time?**

Learn more and register for these sessions at <https://states.aarp.org/alaska/tax-aide-series-2022>





## Shopping sprees were rare and memorable

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**  
Senior Voice Correspondent

One winter while living in Slana, a couple months after our devastating 2002 Denali Fault earthquake, I took a two month leave of absence from my school aide job, and my husband, Gary, and I drove our truck camper Outside to visit family in several states.

One of our stops was at his sister Diana's home in Gilroy, California, which is located near an outlets shopping complex. This really excited me since I had not had time to drive to Anchorage to shop for replacement items destroyed in the earthquake.

When Gary and his mother decided to drive to San Francisco for the day on

business, I realized it would be the perfect opportunity for me to go to the outlets. Besides my list of mostly kitchen items and a few things for my school job, I also wanted to window shop with no one hurrying me along. People who have not lived remotely, will not understand how excited I was about having a whole day designated for nothing but shopping.

During our periodic trips to Anchorage, with a minimum 4.5 hour one-way drive, there was only time to purchase groceries and other basic household and hardware necessities, even with spending the night in town. We usually returned home with a few things on our list not crossed off, having run out of time. Leisurely browsing was rarely considered.



The stores near Gilroy, California, presented an overwhelming shopping opportunity for a rural Alaskan.

[visitgilroy.com](http://visitgilroy.com)

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## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

**Santa's Senior Center** in North Pole receives tickets from the **Fairbanks Concert Association** for senior center members' use. If you're interested in attending a performance, let them know and they put your name on the list and when it's your turn, they will let you know tickets are available. Call the center at 907-488-4663 or email [santaseniors@alaska.net](mailto:santaseniors@alaska.net) ... **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.** (aka Wasilla Senior Center) is considering offering **beginner computer and smartphone classes**, and wants to gauge interest. If it's something you'd want to participate in, drop a note in the center's suggestion box in the front entry ... Congratulations to the **Kenai Senior Center**, which reaches its **50th birthday** this year. A celebration was scheduled for Nov. 30, and the center's November newsletter included a fascinating article about the center, its history and people, including all the directors over the years. According to the article, the center started in 1971, in a small trailer donated by **Phillips Petroleum**. "The first director was **Betty Warren**. There were a small group of people from all over the Peninsula (Cooper Landing to Homer) that met every two months for a potluck dinner and social," the article begins. The current center was completed in 1983. Thank you to the center's current data entry clerk **Carol Prior**, for researching and composing the story ... **Soldotna Senior Center** hosts its **Christmas Dinner**

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# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

Friday, Dec. 17 at noon. To attend, you must sign up by Wednesday, Dec. 15. The menu will include roast turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, dressing, veggie casserole, three-berry pie for dessert. Costs is \$15 for non-seniors, \$10 children under 12 and a donation of any amount for seniors. There will also be a gift exchange, with a gift cost limit of \$10. Women bring a gift marked for a “woman” and men bring one marked for a “man”. **Santa** and his elf are flying in to hand out gifts. Call for information, 907-262-2322 ... **Homer Senior Citizens, Inc.** reports that members of its **Friendship Center** adult day program participated in an online **virtual bingo game** on Oct. 22 that will go into the **Guinness Book of World Records** for the most players. The worldwide virtual event was the largest bingo game on a livestream platform in history, with people from 29 countries joining. There were people from 26 U.S. states and the Homer seniors were the only group representing **Alaska**. The event was organized by **Televeda**, an online platform working to alleviate social isolation ... In other innovative virtual events news, **Valdez Senior Center** is putting together a **virtual Holiday Bake Sale**, with “all holiday goodies hand-made with care and love by our chef,” according to the center’s November newsletter, which adds that the sale’s mid-December dates will be announced in the December newsletter and posted on the center’s Facebook page.

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

# Shopping

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Gary and his mom dropped me off when the outlets shops opened at 10 a.m., with the agreement that I would call when ready to come home. With over 95 stores, I knew I couldn’t dawdle or there wouldn’t be time to check them all out. If a purchase was made, I asked the clerk to hold it for me behind the counter and made a list of the stores I would need to return to, when Gary came to pick me up. With only a 15-minute food court hot dog lunch break, I concentrated on shopping and the day flew by.

This was back in the days before pay phones became obsolete. Actually, we did have a cell phone, but there was no cell service in Slana and we didn’t even think to bring it along on this trip.

About 6 p.m., I located one of the several pay phones and called to check in and say that I needed more time. When Diana answered she said, “Where are you? We’ve been worried! The guys are over there driving around the

outlets looking for you.”

Well, I was shocked and frustrated at the same time. Driving around looking for me was as ridiculous as looking for a needle in a haystack. My fun day of shopping had unexpectedly come to a disappointing screeching halt.

I gave Diana the name of the store nearest to the pay phone. Keeping me on the line, she used her cell phone to call her husband Jim’s cell phone. Diana wouldn’t hang up until she got confirmation from Jim that I’d been “found.”

Jim and Gary arrived in less than a minute. After I got into the car, I had to listen to a repeat of the concern and questions from Jim. “Why didn’t you call earlier? No one shops that long! We were so worried!”

Gary hadn’t been worried, but he couldn’t very well sit at home while Jim searched for me. With all the turmoil, I knew it was best not to ask for more shopping time and my “shop till I dropped” day ended before the stores closed at 9 p.m. Jim graciously drove me around

to all the shops which were holding my purchases. For years during repeat visits, my brother-in-law made comments of disbelief about my shopping marathon, but for me it was a pleasant memory.

We lived in Slana another 10 years and I enjoyed other shopping trips both in California and Colorado, when leaving Slana in the winter months became our routine. It was either feast or famine shopping – feast during the winter and famine during the summer.

Now that we live only five minutes from a Three Bears store in the Mat-Su Valley, I can go shopping for one item, on a moment’s notice if need be, and leisurely wander the aisles while I’m at it. I still recall my California outlets shopping day with fondness, but with my current location and lifestyle, there is no reason for any more shop until you drop days.

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

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# Exhibit shares stories of Alaskan women fighting cancer during the pandemic

Senior Voice Staff

Think life during the COVID-19 pandemic has been hard? Imagine what it's been like for Alaskans who have been fighting cancer. Add the terrifying experience of chemotherapy, radiation and being immune-compromised during a pandemic to the list of other effects such as isolation, loneliness and lack of access to health care – yet many Alaskans have survived and thrived. Pandemic Portraits, an exhibit honoring Alaska women who have faced cancer during COVID is a new Affinityfilms, Inc. project, and can be experienced at a venue near you.

“We wanted to honor the women who have been doing ‘double duty’ – cancer treatment during the pandemic,” said Affinityfilms producer and director Mary Katzke in a press release. “It’s important to understand the experience these women have been through, and how courageous they’ve been against all odds.”

Pandemic Portraits includes a photo and an audio story of 16 Alaska women from across the state. Fifteen different photographers took the photos. Author Deb McKinney wrote two- to three-minute nar-

ratives about each woman’s story. By clicking on a QR code on each photo, you can listen to narrator Michelle Conklin read the stories, allowing for insight into the journey each woman faced. The stories are as unique and heroic as the women profiled.

Pandemic Portraits just wrapped up its exhibit at Loussac Library in Anchorage. Other Alaska communities interested in hosting the exhibit can contact Katzke to arrange for the exhibit to visit in 2022. There is no cost, other than covering shipping costs for one large box.

Pandemic Portraits is sponsored by the Alaska Run for Women and Alaska State Council on the Arts.

Affinityfilms, Inc. is a nonprofit media production company formed in 1982. The company has a long history of coordinating projects around cancer, including six documentary films on cancer, many public service announcements, wellness calendars and a previous photo exhibit called “Alaskans in Pink,” which is permanently housed at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center. To schedule the exhibit, or to learn more about Affinityfilms, go to [www.affinityfilms.com](http://www.affinityfilms.com).



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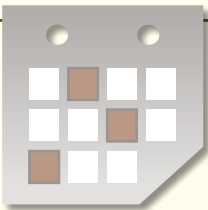


Alaska Chamber Singers is funded, in part, by the Atwood Foundation, Richard L. and Diane M. Block Foundation, The Carr Foundation, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, Municipality of Anchorage, Rasmuson Foundation, and through the generosity of many individuals and corporate community leaders.

# 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.

- Dec. 2: Bethel** “Holiday Crafting for Grown-Ups,” Kuskokwim Consortium Library, noon to 2 p.m. Supplies and instructions will be available to create your own Christmas trees, felt ornaments and more. Ages 18 and older. Call 907-543-4516.
- Dec. 3-4: Seward** Seward Holiday Arts and Craft Fair at the Alaska Railroad Cruise Ship Terminal. Over 70 booths including homemade crafts, baked goods, food vendors and more. Friday, 4-9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Call 907-201-1872 or email [Sewardcraftfair@gmail.com](mailto:Sewardcraftfair@gmail.com).
- Dec. 4: Anchorage** Alaska Writer’s Guild holiday book sale, for any and all Alaska authors, Loussac Library, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. 907-272-0327
- Dec. 7: Nationwide** Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec. 8: North Pole** Santa’s Senior Center monthly board meeting, 1 p.m. To attend, contact 907-488-4663 or email [santaseniors@alaska.net](mailto:santaseniors@alaska.net)
- Dec. 10-12: Palmer** Colony Christmas in downtown Palmer. Arts and crafts return this year, to locations at the Palmer Train Depot, Mat-Su Borough Gym, and Mat-Su Senior Services. Other popular events include the Gingerbread house and cookie contests, cornhole tournament, Arctic Olympics (new this year), and the Parade of Lights and Fireworks Show on Dec. 11. [www.palmerchamber.org](http://www.palmerchamber.org) or 907-745-2880 for information.
- Dec. 10: Girdwood** Alyeska Resort opens its tramway and ski area for the season. [www.alyeskaresort.com](http://www.alyeskaresort.com)
- Dec. 11: Juneau** Small Business Winter Market, Juneau Christian Center, 8001 Glacier Hwy., 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Find last-minute gifts while supporting local businesses. 907-789-2176
- Dec. 18: Anchorage** 13th Annual Polar Plunge at Goose Lake, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Brave souls plunge into icy waters to raise proceeds for Special Olympics Alaska. Virtual (online) participation is an option this year. For registration and other information, visit [www.specialolympicsalaska.org](http://www.specialolympicsalaska.org).
- Dec. 25: Worldwide** Christmas



## Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503  
[editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)  
Deadline for January edition is December 15.

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# Island of mystery

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL  
Senior Voice Correspondent

Capt. James Cook reported seeing a tall, sail-like rock about 60 miles west of Dutch Harbor in 1778. Unbeknownst to him and his crew, a 6,000-foot volcano lay beneath the conical mountain and its crater sat just below sea level.

At various times throughout Alaska's history, navigators' logs recorded changes in the volcanic island's shoreline from season to season. Sometimes it was said to have disappeared into the ocean, only to emerge later in other locations.

The mystery island, named Bogoslof, is of black sand that's unstable and shifts with the tide. Its first recorded eruption occurred in 1796, when a large peak, later called Castle Rock, came up from the bottom of the sea. Another peak estimated at 800 feet high heaved up about a mile north of the first peak in 1883. It was called Fire Island. At first, deep water separated these two peaks, but later land formed between them.

Another eruption in 1906 brought up two more peaks, each about 400 feet tall. Within a year, these two peaks disappeared after the washing of icy waters and the winds wore them down.

Lt. George E. Morris Jr. led a team to chart the island in the mid 1930s. After 10 weeks of surveying, Morris noted that the island's reputation for shifting position and change in appearance could be accounted for by reasons other than faulty navigation.

"Without doubt there were changes in the contours of the island only after each eruption," he wrote in his journal. "Although the island is small, it presents a marked difference in appearance when viewed from different directions. Anyone seeing the island from one direction at one time and from another direction at a later time might believe the island had changed even though there had been no eruption."

Morris also discovered the volcanic island teeming with sea lions that used it as a breeding place. He found hundreds of them on the beach during June and July.

"The continuous roar and barking of the herd made a noise like an airplane at close quarters," he noted. "The herd was quiet for only a few of the very early hours of the morning."

While charting the island, Morris also found that sea gulls, murre and a few other species of birds were "the only other inhabitants of the island besides ourselves and the sea lions."

"About 1,000 gulls were nesting

on the plateau...they lay two or three eggs in the nest about the first of June... The pallas murre arrived between the first and fifteenth of June. There were soon 50,000 of them, by conservative estimate, nesting on pinnacle rocks and Castle Rock."

The surveying team eventually determined that the charted positions of the shoreline of Unalaska and Umnak islands were in error by a few miles, which probably accounted for the impression that Bogoslof changed its position from time to time.



Early navigators thought the volcanic island of Bogoslof, about 60 miles west of Dutch Harbor, disappeared and reappeared in different locations. Today it is home to thousands of sea birds and sea lions, as seen in this photograph.

Photo courtesy University of Washington, HAR169

U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt designated Bogoslof and Fire Island sanctuaries for sea lions and nesting marine birds in 1909.

Today the islands, known as the Bogoslof Wilderness, are part of the Aleutian Islands unit of Alaska

Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and are breeding sites for seabirds, seals and sea lions. An estimated 90,000 tufted puffins, guillemots,

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### Get Smart

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  - 64 It's just over a foot
  - 65 Yemeni port
- 10 Dimethyl sulfate, e.g.
  - 11 It's often one-sided
  - 12 Women in habits
  - 13 Get the pot going
  - 18 Honkers
  - 22 Macedonian's neighbor
  - 24 Disreputable
  - 25 Cubic measures
  - 26 Prospector's find
  - 28 After paper and cider
  - 30 Soave, e.g.
  - 31 Unique person
  - 32 Pond organism
  - 33 Owl's hangout
  - 34 A bright idea
- 35 Kind of goat
  - 36 Indian side dish
  - 38 Adolescent
  - 41 Tiny payment
  - 42 Fetch
  - 45 Sock pattern
  - 47 Buenos \_\_\_
  - 48 Kind of wave
  - 49 Equipotential surface of the Earth
  - 50 Draw out
  - 51 Stationer's stock
  - 52 Trim to fit, maybe
  - 53 Done for
  - 55 Ready for business
  - 57 Massage locale
  - 58 Half a score
  - 59 Cellular stuff

Crossword answers on page 26





# Claude Jarman Jr. recalls family classic, “The Yearling”

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

Premiering in Los Angeles a few days before Christmas 75 years ago this year, “The Yearling” depicted the post-Civil War Baxter family struggling to survive in the backwoods of Florida. Notwithstanding fine performances from screen parents Gregory

Peck and Jane Wyman, the film soon became a family favorite due in no small measure to Claude Jarman Jr. and his dramatic portrayal of their son, Jody.

some community theater in Nashville where I grew up,” said Jarman from his home north of San Francisco. “MGM conducted a national search and the director, Clarence Brown, wanted a boy who was totally natural and looked the part – a skinny blonde kid, which I was.”

Location filming in Florida took several months

and was especially challenging because the director required dozens of takes for almost every scene which often featured animals, notably wild deer.

“They are obviously unpredictable,” explained Jarman. “In one scene I had to run up to a neighbor’s

house with the deer following me, but it wouldn’t.

lap for hours with its legs folded, which is unusual because they normally want their legs down so they can quickly run from danger. I had a wonderful relationship with that fawn which, like me, grew up while making the movie.”

Like Bambi, Claude also grew taller during production, but he actually lost weight as the grueling shooting progressed through the humid Florida summer.

“In those days, we could shoot seven days a week in Florida,” he recalled. “I was 110 pounds at the beginning of filming but lost 10 pounds by the end and was totally spent.”

Considering his limited previous acting experience, Jarman’s moving performance is still impressive to watch, especially the final scenes with the deer.

“The cast and crew were together for many months, so as the filming

progressed you really got into the part and lived it,” he said. “It was emotional for me, but you just took it one day at a time.”

Jarman’s film career ended in the mid-1950s, but not before working with legends such as John Wayne in “Rio Grande” and Randolph Scott in “Hangman’s Knot.” “Intruder in the Dust,” dealing with racial issues in the South, remains a personal favorite. He discusses his career in his 2018 autobiography, “My Life and the Final

Days of Hollywood,” available through Amazon and his Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/MYLIFEANDTHEFINALDAYSOFHOLLYWOOD](https://www.facebook.com/MYLIFEANDTHEFINALDAYSOFHOLLYWOOD)).

“I made 10 other films after ‘The Yearling,’” says Jarman, “but nothing came close to being as difficult.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama, and has written features, columns and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See [www.tinseltown-talks.com](http://www.tinseltown-talks.com).



Claude Jarman Jr. holds a deer on his lap in “The Yearling.”

MGM photo



Gregory Peck and Claude Jarman Jr. go bear hunting in “The Yearling”

MGM photo



Claude Jarman Jr. at the Oct 2021 Lone Pine Film Festival, visiting Alabama Hills where hundreds of westerns were filmed.

Photo by Don Kelsen



Jane Wyman, Claude Jarman Jr., and Gregory Peck on the Florida farm set for “The Yearling.”

MGM photo

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# Buses

continued from page 14

Recently, Alaska Cab announced that it will not be providing waiver service transportation for seniors. "Losing a local transportation provider will create dire straits and we are attempting to apply for additional funding needed to implement our own transportation service as soon as possible," said Fallon.

CARTS and Alaska Cab have been a public transportation option in the Nikiski community for years. However, transportation needs for older adults are not being fully met, but Fallon hopes that will change. "Transportation for seniors should be easily accessible, with low to no barriers, considering the needs of our seniors foremost," said Fallon.

More information is available at [www.nikiskiseniorcenter.org](http://www.nikiskiseniorcenter.org).

## Anchor Point Senior Center

At the Anchor Point Senior Center, Executive Director Julie Otto said the center is offering transportation to and from town, 40 miles one way to Soldotna/Kenai once or twice per week, depending on the need.

"I don't think it would be considered extensive, as we only go to Kenai/Soldotna and there are many more places than that on the peninsula and beyond," Otto said. "Transportation issues are huge for the senior community, as many of them are concerned about driving the 40 miles one way to town in the dark and cold of Alaska's winters. We have transported several people to and from doctor appointments. These are appointments that would not have been made possible if we hadn't taken them," she said.

The current transportation programs have been around for many years, however, COVID did affect the programs as older adults needed help with simple things like errands.

"We increased our transportation service and offered pickup services for groceries, and medication so they did not have to travel and risk getting the virus," Otto said.

For more information,

visit [www.anchorpointseniorcenter.com](http://www.anchorpointseniorcenter.com).

## Cooper Landing Senior Citizens Center

The Cooper Landing Senior Citizens Center has two buses and a van. The buses are equipped for full accessibility, accommodating any older adults with walkers or needing wheelchairs. These transportation services operate solely with the help of volunteer drivers.

Prior to the pandemic, the buses went on Wednesdays to Soldotna and Kenai for doctor and dental appointments, grocery shopping, and wherever they needed to go. Since the pandemic began, the bus is only used upon request, with many seniors still limiting their group activities, according to a spokesperson for CLSCCI.

Cooper Landing Senior Citizens Corporation, Inc. (CLSCCI) has fared well through the pandemic and is proud to have transportation to serve local seniors, especially during the winter, with the closest supermarket more than 45 miles away. The buses will pick up seniors in Sterling en route to Soldotna and Kenai, said the spokesperson.

## Seward Senior Center

Seward Senior Center plans to offer, once drivers are hired, ADA compliant transportation, with a 24-hour reservation system to start, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., year-round. Transportation had stopped on March 13, but the center is resurrecting accessible services. Rides are offered on senior shopping day, post office runs (there is no home delivery) and medical appointments for individuals who rely on a wheelchair for mobility.

For more information, call 907-224-5604.

## Pandemic hits Homer's transportation system

Homer Senior Citizens, Inc. was incorporated in November of 1973 as a non-profit corporation, and for the past 44 years has been a leader in providing programs for area seniors. However, Homer is currently lacking in reliable senior transportation due to fallout from COVID-19.

"We have been shut

down, reopened, and shut down so many times," Homer Senior Center Executive Director Keren Kelley said. "Currently, seniors must go to the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to pick up cab vouchers, and there are not enough of these to go around," Kelley said.

This is causing great concern at the senior center this winter, Kelley said. A lack of transportation means much more than just missing one appointment. "Transportation in our community is essential. We are spread out and during the winter it can be very dark, icy and harsh," said Kelley. "Homer

Senior Citizens, Inc. would like to be a transportation provider, but grant funds do not exist. Having a grant lowers the cost passed on to the consumers," Kelley said, noting that there are still many hurdles to overcome as the pandemic lingers.

For more information, call 907-235-7655. The Administration Office is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to 4 p.m. Or email questions to [info@homerseniors.com](mailto:info@homerseniors.com)

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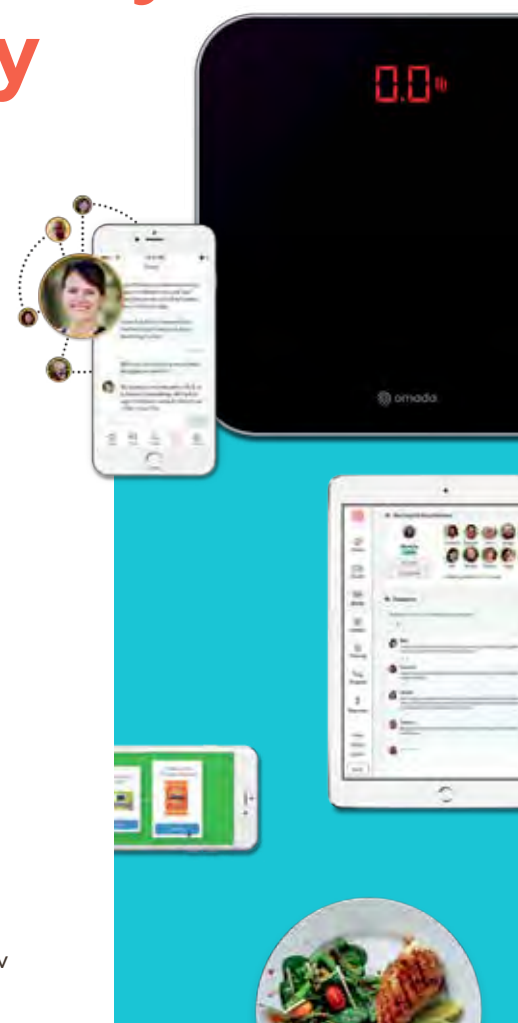
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# Mandates

continued from page 2

(workers) out the door, forcing a staffing crisis at facilities nationwide that revolve around around-the clock care,” he warned.

The vast majority of employees fired due to vaccine refusal this year (5,939 out of 6,843 workers fired since June) worked in the health care sector, according to a report by staffing firm Challenger, Gray and Christmas Inc.

Around the country, state nursing care associations report that they continue to struggle to hire enough nurses and that problem has grown during

In an effort to push workers to choose vaccinations over testing, the rule does not require employers to pay for or provide testing for workers who decline the vaccine. In some cases, though, collective bargaining agreements may dictate otherwise. Some 41% of hospitals across the country have some sort of vaccination mandate in place, according to data from the American Hospital Association.

## Medical debt crisis

Do you have emergency money saved to cover medical expenses? A new survey finds that nearly half (46%) of individuals age 65 or older are concerned

that a major health situation in their household could lead to medical debt or bankruptcy, even though most are covered by Medicare.

The survey, from Medicare-Guide.com, which was released recently, found that 27% of

many seniors are dealing with.

The survey had some other disturbing results. Those without medical savings continue to face tough choices over their health care. Roughly 25% of the seniors surveyed said they have deferred treatment for dental, hearing or vision issues because of lack of funds. Nearly one-third (29%) have had to put off other expenses, such as home repair, to afford health care, while nearly two-thirds (65%) have tried to save on prescription drugs by buying in bulk or using generic versions.

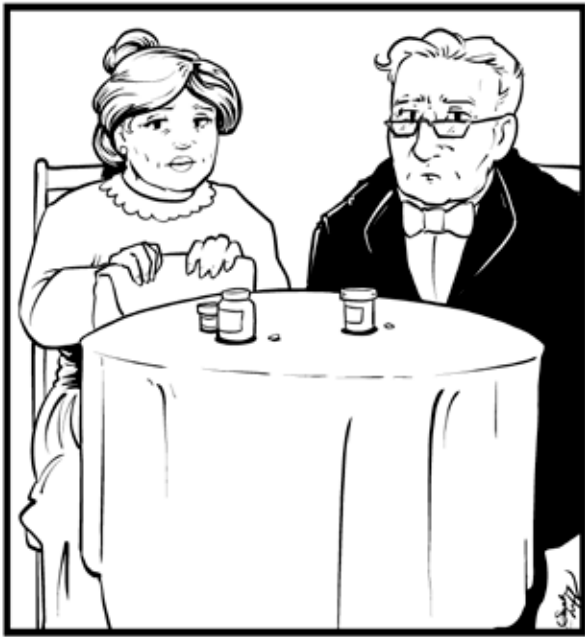
A recent Gallup/West Health poll continues to point to the stresses people are dealing with over high health care costs and mounting drug costs. An estimated 18 million Americans – or 7% of U.S. adults – said that within the previous three months they had been unable to pay for at least one doctor-prescribed medication. The situation is even worse for low-income households with annual income of less than \$24,000, with almost 20% unable to pay for at least one prescription med-

ication in the prior three months. The survey, of almost 5,000 adults, also found that about 1 in 10 adults say they’ve skipped a pill in the prior year as a way to save money.

The high cost of medical care in the U.S. has also led to huge increases in medical debts, which skyrocket-

ed during the pandemic and now stands as the largest source of debt collection, a recent study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association said.

Also contributing to this column were: NPR, CBS, CNBC, Kaiser Health News and Go-bankingrates.com.



“WE HAD TO CANCEL OUR FANCY DATE NIGHTS, SO NOW WE GET DRESSED UP TO TAKE OUR MEDS.”

the coronavirus.

The Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services (CMS) said it concluded that nursing home settings facilitated the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S. and established the specific rules to create a consistent standard to assure patients safety from those providing care for them.

According to CMS numbers, as of September, almost 140,000 residents and 2,100 staff members died at nursing and assisted living facilities in the United States, out of the 750,000 Americans who died due to coronavirus.

The OSHA rules that were sidetracked would cover 100 million employees, about two-thirds of the U.S. workforce, requiring employers to give workers time off to get vaccinated and provide sick leave for workers to recover from any side effects.

nearly 1,200 adults aged 65 or older, have less than \$500 in savings to pay for medical bills. Roughly 25% carry medical debt and more than a third said they found it either difficult or very difficult to pay for health care. More than 28% said they would have to use non-medical savings to pay for a severe illness, including dipping into their retirement accounts.

The survey also found that to pay for medical treatments or severe illness, some 22% of seniors said they would turn to credit cards, while another 15% said they would tap into their retirement savings and 13% said they would draw on other savings.

Surprisingly, however, one third of those interviewed, said they had more than \$6,000 set aside in medical savings, which demonstrates the divergent financial circumstances

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# Do you know ‘who’s gonna drive you home’?

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

Many of our Senior Voice readers will remember Ric Ocasek. He was the lead singer of a band called The Cars which had quite a few hits in the late 70s and early 80s. And if you were paying attention to pop culture in that time frame, you might also remember Paulina Porizkova, a supermodel who graced the cover of Sports Illustrated.

Did you know they were married? This is their story. At least a little piece of it.

Ric and Paulina met while filming the video for the song “Drive”. You might remember it; it was a fairly ground-breaking video at a time when most music vids were pretty rudimentary. She played the young woman who appears to be having a mental breakdown in the video. Eventually Ric and Paulina were married, and remained so until his death.

Except it wasn’t quite that easy. Before Ric died, at the age of 75, they had filed for divorce. No decree of divorce had actually been granted; if you know anything about divorce cases, you know that it can sometimes be several years between a complaint being filed, and the divorce decree being signed by a judge. During that time, the parties are still, legally speaking, a married couple.

In the meantime, Ric and Paulina were still living together. I suppose when you have a \$10 million home, you can probably find room for both of you. But maybe not enough room; she was the one who found his lifeless body one day in 2019. He had various heart problems and was recovering from surgery at the time.

Here’s the problem: As many estranged spouses do, Ric had rewritten his will during this same-house separation, to disinherit Paulina.

But you can’t completely disinherit your spouse.

Every state has laws which prevent people from disinheriting a spouse. You can disinherit your kids, your parents, your significant other, your best friend’s girl, or anybody



else you don’t like, but a spouse has some very specific rights.

In Alaska there are several different statutes which prevent the disinheritance of the surviving spouse. The biggest one is the “spousal elective share” law. It gives a surviving spouse the right to at least one-third of the “augmented estate”, which means all of the assets of either husband or wife, added together.

For example, if the husband has \$1.1 million in his name, and the wife has \$400,000 in her name, the augmented estate is \$1.5 million. A third of that would be \$500,000. So if he dies with a will which attempts to leave the entire estate to someone else, she can still pick up another \$100,000 to get her up to that one-third. If she already has more than a third of the assets, she doesn’t get anything more through this particular law (she wouldn’t get less, though).

Ric and Paulina weren’t living in Alaska, of course, but New York has a similar law. Paulina recently announced that she has settled with the estate, and that they have given her what she understands she is entitled to. In an interview she referred to it as being a third, so New York’s law must be fairly similar to ours.

So what are the take-aways, for those of us who are not former supermodels married to former rock stars?

First of all, the will still matters. One-third is a lot less than half, let alone the entire estate. Imagine a long-time marriage in which the assets were mostly in the husband’s name, and then he dies without having updated his old will. His widow might have received his entire

**Every state has laws which prevent people from disinheriting a spouse. You can disinherit your kids, your parents, your significant other, your best friend’s girl, or anybody else you don’t like, but a spouse has some very specific rights.**

estate if he updated the will, but now she might only get a third.

Or to change the facts a bit, imagine this was a late-in-life marriage in which the husband had already earned a lot of money, and has children from a prior

marriage, but the husband doesn’t have a will at all. He might have wanted his children to have received most of his assets, but now the lion’s share is going to go to the surviving spouse under the “intestacy law”. She won’t be worried about

the spousal elective share law; she’ll get way more than a third.

Is there any way to get around the spousal elective share? Sometimes. A properly drawn prenuptial agreement can waive that right. And if the spouse doesn’t claim the elective share within a certain period of time, she can’t claim it later. But generally speaking, no, the surviving

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# Last minute gifts; Keeping devices connected

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**  
*Senior Wire*

**Q.** I was able to install Windows 11 on my PC. What should I do now?

**A.** Move that Start button back where it belongs! The Start button has been at the bottom left of my screen for decades, and that is where I think it belongs. To move it, right-click the Task Bar, and choose Taskbar Settings -> Behaviors -> Alignment -> Left.

Next, open Windows Settings and double check the privacy settings. They should be unchanged if this is an upgrade install, but a quick review is an ounce of prevention.

There are also new options in the Accessibility -> Visual Effects section of Settings. Two of them will tone down some of the Windows 11 design choices: enable always-visible scrollbars and disable animation effects.

Windows 11 has beefed up Widgets since Windows 10. Widgets provide quick access to information that is important to you. To make the most of it, configure it with the Widgets you find useful, and deactivate the rest.

The Action Center on previous versions of Windows is now known as the Notification Center, and it

*Device compatibility is a minefield of options that no sane person can navigate alone, so tech gifts are often safest in the form of a gift card. Just be sure to get the right one. For an Android user, a Google Play Store card is a good choice. If they own an iPhone or iPad, try an Apple gift card.*

can be accessed from the Date and Time icon on the Task Bar.

If there is a tip you think other readers should know, please send me an email.

**Q.** I need a last-minute gift suggestion for a family member. I prefer a tech gadget that will have an impact.

**A.** One of the challenges of tech gadget gifting is finding something that fits into the recipient's lifestyle. Often you have to know details about the devices they already own to find something that fits.

Device compatibility is a minefield of options that no sane person can navigate alone, so tech gifts are often safest in the form of a gift card. Just be sure to get the right one. For an Android user, a Google Play Store card is a good choice. If they own an iPhone or iPad, try an Apple gift card.

But gift cards have downsides, especially if you do not know which device they own.

There is one gift this year

that I think will be special. Apple's new HomePod mini paired with the new Apple Music Voice Plan. (\$99 plus \$4.99 a month).

The HomePod mini is a speaker with two requirements: household Wi-Fi and a source of music.

While the HomePod mini will work with different music sources, that gets complex. Add the Apple Music Voice Plan instead, which enables the HomePod to play 90 million songs, along with hundreds of playlists to suit every occasion, just by asking.

No commercials, no data collection. Just music. If I had grandchildren of my own, that is what I would get them this year.

**Q.** We are moving next month. I do not know how I will ever properly

re-connect all the cables and devices we use. Help!

**A.** The number of wires we have in our lives has exploded in the last decade. Whether moving a TV from one room to another, or relocating a house full of products to a new home, the best approach is to label

everything first.

There are specialized labels designed just for wires. A quick internet search for "wire label stickers" will turn up dozens of options to help you label every device you own.

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## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

### Hard to Find Ebooks

Arc Manor is a small publisher with an extensive eBook catalog that includes science fiction, fantasy, and romance.

[www.arcmanorbooks.com](http://www.arcmanorbooks.com)

### Cable Labels


This store looks industrial at first glance, but they carry a number of useful products for residential organizing projects.

[www.cableorganizer.com](http://www.cableorganizer.com)

### Holiday Stuffing

The original Santa tracker is still the best. The site opens on December 1.

[www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org)



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# Web, animal cams offer Alaskan escape

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

Chances are if you've lived in Alaska, you've resided in or traveled to different parts of the state. If not, well shame on you. But if you have and your life is not as mobile as it once was, there's a way to visit your old haunts and home towns.

Think of these webcams and animal cams as magic carpets.

## Utqiagvik Ice Cam brings the Arctic to you

My favorite weather cam is the University of Alaska Fairbanks Sea Ice Group Utqiagvik Ice Cam at [https://seaice.alaska.edu/gi/observatories/barrow\\_webcam/](https://seaice.alaska.edu/gi/observatories/barrow_webcam/). Here you can see what the shore and the ice pack are doing.

I learned the importance of whether the ice is in or out when I lived in Utqiagvik (formerly named Barrow). Taking the bus around town, when it traveled close to the shore, all heads swiveled to see where the ice was. If the pack was in, that meant polar bears might have come off and into town, and during whaling season if it was in that meant whalers would have access to the shore ice to station their whaling camps about three miles out.

But for you at home, sit back and enjoy the view, which is recorded every five minutes and archived to play three days of video. This is most fun to watch on the day after New Year's, which is when residents stream in their cars and snowmachines to enjoy the fireworks over the lagoon and sometimes another simultaneous display over the Arctic Ocean. And it's a holiday when the sky is dark, as compared to the 24-hour daylight of the summertime.

As quickly as the three days' images play, you can see the cars driving out and then the bursts of fireworks, as well as the daily changes in the light during the darkest time of the year. Kind of like the Keystone Kops movies.

At other times of the

year, you can see the moon coming up and then setting, and in the summer the sun slowly tracks across the sky to mid-November, when it sets until it rises again January. During those months there's not total darkness as there's a beautiful, haunting blue afterglow in the middle of the day.

If you go there or if you live there, try, like my friend Cindy Lagoudakis and I once did, and jump up and down on the street in front of the camera hoping for a cameo in the recording, but we failed.

UAH also has an ice cam in Wales, which is located on the westernmost point of the American mainland, Cape Prince of Wales, and on the western tip of the Seward Peninsula. See it at [https://seaice.alaska.edu/gi/observatories/wales\\_webcam/](https://seaice.alaska.edu/gi/observatories/wales_webcam/).

Images are taken by a camera mounted just below the radar on the Kingikmiut School. On a clear day, both Fairway Rock and the Diomed Islands are visible, and the images are updated several times per hour. The camera is looking approximately west northwest.

## Take a peek at Tenakee Springs

Webcams also serve as a vital navigation indicator for the many airplanes and float planes that serve rural and Bush Alaska.

For those of us in a remote location, checking the webcams can point to the success of our journey or dash any hopes of getting to a desired destination. I often say, "Alaska, the place where you can't get anywhere from somewhere at a desired time." Patience is key, but the cameras help you wrap your head around what's happening, and provide either hope or despair.

The Tenakee Springs webcam updates several times a day. Right now, as I write this, it's zero visibility and snowing sideways.



*This image has been recorded by a web cam overlooking the land-fast ice (or coastal ocean during the ice-free period in summer) from atop the Wells Fargo bank building in downtown Utqiagvik, Alaska. The camera is located at 71° 17' 33" N, 156° 47' 18," and is approximately 20 meters above sea level and looks approximately northward.*

*Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks Sea Ice Group*

Maybe it's improved? Go see at <https://bit.ly/32mPHjj>

## Watch the cruise ships come and go

The White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad in Skagway has been around since 1898, when it was built as a better way to transport gold seekers to the Klondike Gold Rush at Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada. Called "The Scenic Railway of the World" and built in 1898 during the Klondike Gold Rush, the narrow gauge railroad is an International Historic Civil Engineering Landmark, a designation shared with the Panama Canal, Eiffel Tower and Statue of Liberty.

In the winter, Skagway has a population of about 890, but in the summer it climbs to around 1,200 with summer workers and welcomes close to 900,000 tourists.

The company's only webcam active in the winter is at the dock. Summertime sees one at

the caboose, the border at Fraser, British Columbia, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Carcross, Yukon, and behind its headquarters in Skagway.

These are not continual recordings but change several times a day. Visit <https://wpyr.com/sights-sounds/webcams/>.

## Animal cams delight birders and big carnivore enthusiasts

The popularity of the Katmai Bear cam is nationwide, but there are many more across Alaska.

Checkout <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=viewing.webcams>, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game webcam site with links to webcams at Round Island for walrus; AF&G's salmon cam; the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Pacific Loons cam in Anchorage (May to August for nesting and rearing season only); Homer's Pratt Museum Gull Island cam (May through August only); the U.S. Forest Service's fish/beaver cam at Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau; and the Utqiagvik ice cam.

And of course, the Katmai National Park and Preserve bear cam (early June to October).

Gull Island off Homer is a birding destination with its steep sides packed with a wide array of seabirds.

If you click on the walrus link, it leads you to Explore.org, which is the world's leading philanthropic live-nature cam network and documentary film channel.

Use these sites to take you out of the white winter world and into nature and familiar places.



*Tenakee Springs Mayor Dan Kennedy's dog Taz watches an Alaska Seaplanes floatplane land in Tenakee Springs, bound for Juneau.*

*Dimitra Lavrakas photo*





# Aging

continued from page 10

its complexity in full. Because of these many factors, older adults of the same age display a wide range of differences and the range of differences has been found to be larger than those found in younger adults. The many differences in individual history and biography that interact with genetic differences over long periods of time create a wide range of developmental outcomes. Utilizing such terms as ‘the old’ or ‘the elderly’ can be problematic, as they may unrealistically lead to expectations of commonality by age, or time since birth, that do not exist in reality.

## Harmful effects of ageism

This lack of understanding of life’s diversity contributes to the formation of over-simplified and

stereotyped perceptions of individuals based upon age. This process has been labeled ageism, the systematic and negative stereotyping of individuals simply due to their older age. Ageism may be subtle or quite overt and tends to focus on perceived negatives of aging without a consideration or understanding of an individual’s unique history and strengths. It promotes an overly pessimistic and reductionist view of the aging process.

These negative views are not harmless. Individuals with a negative view of aging when young have been found to be more likely to develop chronic illnesses in later life. Negative messages about aging have been shown to frequently accelerate the rate of cognitive decline among older adults. Ageism has also been shown to accelerate health declines including increased blood pressure and cardiovascular stress, and as well as functional abilities.

When ageist views are

internalized, older adults may not seek help for treatable conditions as they may feel that pain and loss of function are inevitable. Healthcare providers may also react to and treat older patients differently. Elders are not the only ones who suffer from the effects of ageism. Society suffers a loss when the experience and wisdom accumulated over a lifetime is discounted and shunted aside.

It’s an interesting contradiction that while most individuals hope to live a long life themselves, they may also frequently view the process of attaining advanced age negatively. However, numerous studies in multiple countries examining subjective feelings of well-being over the lifespan have consistently found a U-shaped trajectory. On average this trajectory dips from relatively high scores in young adulthood to a low point in subjective feelings of well-being when individuals are in their early to mid 50’s which then climbs

steadily as individuals reach their 80’s, to a point even above that noted by young adults. Growing older can be a challenge, but challenges

can also provide opportunities for positive change.

*Dennis Gall, age 68, is a counseling psychologist working in Anchorage.*

# Pearl

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the remains of a baby girl. In 1937, Chief Yeoman Albert Wagner’s wife gave birth to premature twins, one of whom died two days later. Wagner planned to scatter his daughter’s ashes at sea, storing the urn in his locker on the U.S.S. Utah. But he never got the chance. While he survived Pearl Harbor, the daughter’s remains were lost with the sunken ship, along with the lives of 58 sailors.

A funeral was never held for baby Nancy until 2003, when her twin sister, Mary, gathered friends and family to the site of the memorial to say an official goodbye.

“I feel nothing but pride and pleasure that she’s in such magnificent company,” Mary said. “I could not ask for anything better than for her to be tenderly, carefully looked after by America’s finest.”

3. A conspiracy theory developed about newspaper ads warning of the attack. Two weeks before the December 7 attack, the New Yorker published an ad promoting a mysterious board game called “The Deadly Double,” which featured people in an air raid shelter playing dice — two of which were numbered 12 and 7 — and included words like “alert” and “warning.” After Pearl Harbor, people saw the ad in a different light, convinced it was a

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# Island

continued from page 18

red-legged kittiwakes and gulls nest there. Bogoslofs landmass has been increasing, too. On Dec. 20, 2016, a series of short – almost daily – volcanic eruptions started that changed the geography of the island. When scientists could evaluate what had occurred, they found the original island had fractured in three smaller islands centered on what appeared to be the active vent of the eruption and gained a net of 1.2 acres. By January 2017, Bogoslof had reached 108 acres, merging again into a single island. It continued to grow over the next

few months, adding more landmass. It was estimated at 319 acres by May 10. Slight volcanic activity continued into early December, and then the volcano returned to realive inactivity. *This column features tidbits found among the writings of the late Alaska historian, Phyllis Downing Carlson. Her niece, Laurel Downing Bill, has turned many of Carlson’s stories – as well as stories from her own research – into a series of books titled “Aunt Phil’s Trunk.” Volumes One through Five, which won the 2016 gold medal for best nonfiction series from Literary Classics International and voted Best of Anchorage 2020, are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphilstrunk.com](http://www.auntphilstrunk.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).*

# Native

continued from page 4

other organizations’ vaccine campaigns, and the CDC’s vaccination rate data, counter longstanding assumptions about vaccine hesitancy in Native communities — assumptions that were already disproven in January by the results of a survey conducted in urban Indigenous communities. The survey, issued by the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI), involved nearly 1,500 American Indians and Alaska Natives repre-

senting 318 tribes across 46 states. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed said they’d be willing to be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Many cited having a “strong sense of responsibility to protect the Native community and cultural ways,” as their primary motivation to get vaccinated, the UIHI reports on its website. *This article National Indian Council on Aging website at [www.nicoa.org](http://www.nicoa.org) and is part of an ongoing series by the Diverse Elders Coalition, focusing on different groups of the senior population.*

## Crossword answers from page 18

W	A	L	T		A	M	B	E	R		E	T	N	A
E	R	I	A		N	A	I	R	A		S	H	U	N
B	R	A	I	N	S	T	O	R	M		T	I	N	T
B	A	N		O	W	E	S			S	E	N	S	E
	S	A	S	S	E	S		C	L	E	R	K		
			H	E	R		M	O	O	R		T	W	O
A	B	B	A	S		B	I	R	D	B	R	A	I	N
L	A	R	D		T	I	L	D	E		A	N	N	E
G	R	A	Y	C	E	L	L	S		B	I	K	E	R
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P	E	W	I	T			S	I	G	N		E	D	O
A	D	A	R		S	T	U	D	Y	G	R	O	U	P
D	I	V	E		P	E	N	A	L		N	I	C	E
S	T	E	S		A	N	K	L	E		A	D	E	N

# Pearl

continued from page 25

coded message to Japanese spies warning them of the impending assault. However, the conspiracy theory was quickly debunked when it was discovered that Roger Paul Craig had indeed invented such a game and created the ads, with the numbers on the dice amounting to coincidence. Despite its notoriety, the game never sold well, and Craig ironically ended up working for the Office of Strategic Services — the U.S.’s intelligence agency during

World War II. 4. Months later, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor again. After the success of its initial attack, Japan began plans for bigger targets like mainland America. But first, the military decided to do a reconnaissance flight over Pearl Harbor to see how the repair operations were going and to drop some bombs while there. Less than 90 days after the first attack, Japanese bombs once again fell on Oahu. Fortunately, bad weather stymied the pilots’ efforts and the bombs missed their targets, hurting no one. Though less damaging than “the date which will live in infamy,”

the second attack was kept secret from the public for decades. 5. Elvis Presley helped raise money for the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial Fund. A few years after President Dwight D. Eisenhower authorized the building of the U.S.S. Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, the project struggled to raise enough funds. Elvis Presley decided to help by putting on a benefit concert, performing classics like “Hound Dog” for thousands of fans at Pearl Harbor’s Bloch Arena. The event brought in more than \$54,000 and helped raise public interest in the memorial, which was dedicated a year later in 1962.

# Tech

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Here are a few specific strategies to consider. The most important is to label every cable with the name of the device it matches. Color coding is handy for devices that have more than

one cord. Consider a typical television. At minimum it will have a power cord and a signal cable, but it could easily have a half-dozen or more connections that use the same style connector. In this case, add a color to each wire’s label, then add a tiny label with the same color to the device near

where the cable plugs in. Moves are always stressful and making labels for all your wires may seem like just more work. But the payoff will be well worth the effort. *Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at [techtalk@bobdel.com](mailto:techtalk@bobdel.com).*

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# COVID

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electroporation machines already in use, but using widely available, low-cost components that require no battery to operate.

“Our aha moment was the fact that it doesn’t have a battery or plug into the wall, unlike conventional electroporation equipment,” Bhamla explained. “And these lighter components cost just pennies, while currently available electroporators cost thousands of dollars each.”

Besides the lighter, a key innovation involved tightly spacing the electrodes and using extremely short microneedles. While commonly used in cosmetics to rejuvenate skin and for potential medical applications, microneedles are not generally used as electrodes. Coupling the tiny electroporation pulser with microneedle electrodes

made an effective electrical interface with the skin and further reduced the ePatch’s cost and complexity.

The ePatch is generating excitement among health experts and there is hope it can be potential game changer in the vaccine delivery arena.

**Sotrovimab may prevent COVID-19 deaths**

A new Phase 3 study published in The New England Journal of Medicine is suggesting that the COVID-19 monoclonal antibody treatment sotrovimab may be highly effective. The study found that compared to the placebo group, COVID-19 patients who received sotrovimab had a significantly reduced risk of hospitalization or death and that the treatment, which was administered by intravenous infusion on an outpatient basis, was safe.

Of the 583 study participants included in this analysis, three participants

who received sotrovimab and 21 participants in the placebo group experienced disease progression that led to hospitalization or death, representing a risk reduction of 85% in people with COVID-19 who received the monoclonal antibody treatment. Among the participants who were hospitalized, five participants were admitted to intensive care units and one participant died, all of whom were in the placebo group.

These results are part of an interim analysis of the COMET-ICE Trial, a randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blinded, multicenter trial that enrolled participants across 37 sites in four countries, including at the COVID-19 Clinical Research Center (CCRC) at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle.

“Effective vaccines are the foundation for prevention and curbing the epidemic, but COVID-19 treatments are still needed

for people who are immunocompromised or for people who don’t have access to COVID vaccines yet,” said Dr. Adrienne Shapiro, a researcher at Fred Hutch and UW Medicine. “Based on these efficacy results, we are excited for the potential of sotrovimab (which now has emergency use authorization from the FDA) to reduce hospitalizations and thus relieve the burden of hospital crowding, another

serious consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

In lab studies, sotrovimab was effective against Delta and all other circulating variants of concern. Based on the science of how this antibody treatment was identified, study authors hypothesized that sotrovimab could remain effective even if the virus continues to evolve and create new variants of concern.

# Drive

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spouse is entitled to at least that one third, regardless. You can do a living trust, designate beneficiaries on accounts, do anything else you want, and the spouse still gets to claim a third.

After all, as Paulina Porizkova might have said, it’s “just what I needed”.

*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. And then let the good times roll.*

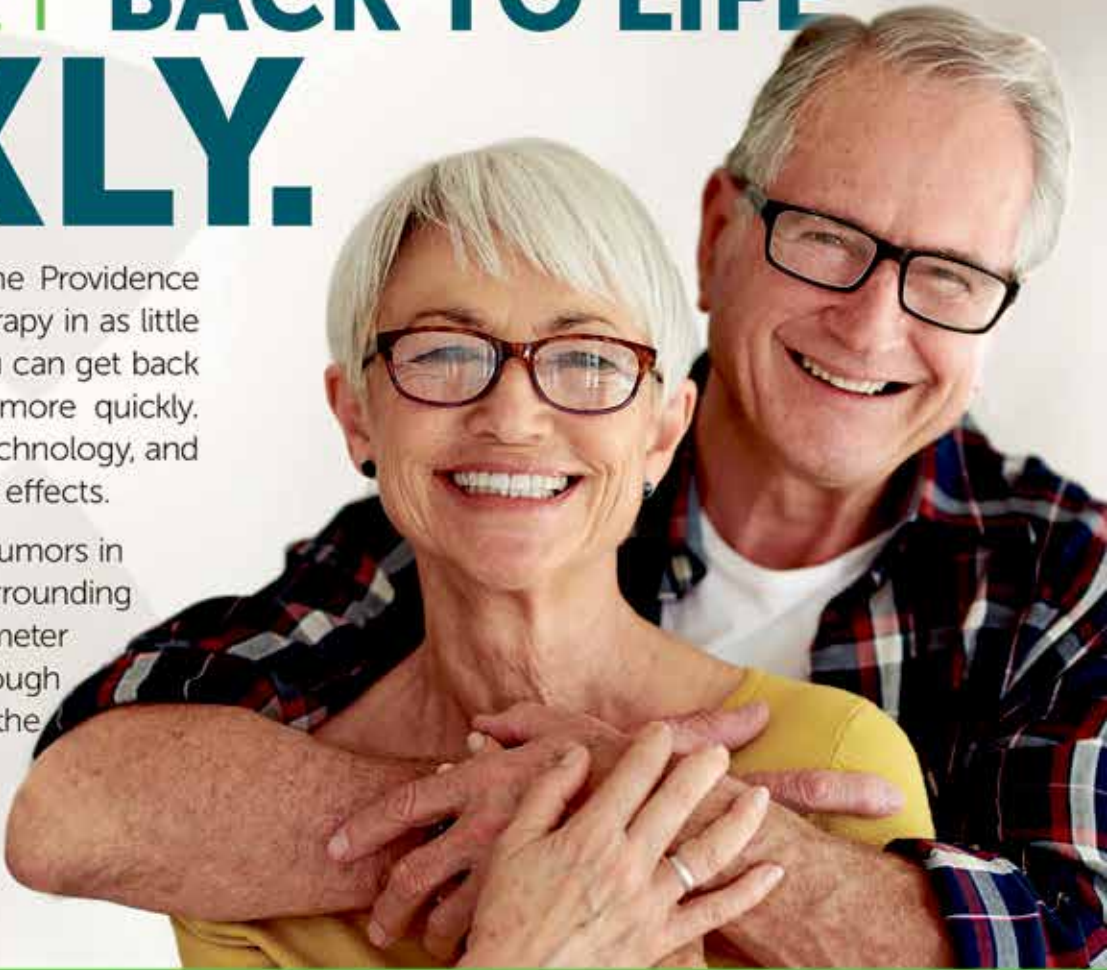
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