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# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons  
Action Group, Inc. Free

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 45, Number 11 November 2022

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Encouraging  
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### *Season for gratitude:*

Homer friends Ruth Lavrakas and Richelle Miller hold some of the cornucopia collected for the upcoming Thanksgiving Day holiday. Read about surprising ways to use and preserve leftovers from your feasts.

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Jim Lavrakas photo



### INSIDE:

Caregiver Resource  
Guide booklet

2022  
National Mature  
Media Awards<sup>SM</sup>  
Winner





# How could your community be more age-friendly?

Senior Voice Staff

“Age Smart – Let’s Talk,” the series of forums sponsored by AARP Alaska, Anchorage Senior Activity Center and Older Persons Action Group, returns Nov. 1, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. This free event will be in-person at the senior center, with appetizers and

refreshments provided. This month’s program is a listening session with AARP Alaska on the Age Friendly Livable Communities initiative. Share your thoughts on what makes Anchorage inclusive for seniors and community members of all ages and abilities. Prior to the forum, there will be a presentation

about ranked choice voting at 5 p.m., followed by a light dinner at 6 p.m. 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. Doors open and a light dinner is served at 6 p.m. Program is 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Register at [https://events.aarp.org/Ag-eSmart\\_2022](https://events.aarp.org/Ag-eSmart_2022).

# Social Security COLA increase a mixed blessing

The Senior Citizens League

A Social Security cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) of 8.7% is rare — enjoy it now. This may be the first and possibly the last time that beneficiaries today receive a COLA this high. There were only three other times since the start of automatic inflation adjustments that COLAs were higher (1979-1981). You can find a history of the COLA at <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/colaseries.html>. Without a COLA that adequately keeps pace with inflation, Social Security benefits purchase less over time, and that can create hardships especially as older Americans live longer lives in retirement. It is too early to say how well the 8.7% COLA will keep pace

**Increased incomes due to the COLA can make older and disabled beneficiaries ineligible for the level of benefits they currently receive when their income exceeds the limits.**

with inflation in 2023. The 5.9% COLA received this year has fallen short on average by 50%. **Costly offsets?** Rising Social Security income due to COLAs can impact Medicare costs down the road. Any increase in the income of a Medicare beneficiary — whether due to COLAs, earnings from jobs, retirement savings, or pensions — could potentially affect what an individual pays in Medicare premiums if income is over certain thresholds. This premium surprise affects both those with the highest incomes, as well as those

with the lowest, but, in different ways. Those who receive low-income assistance for healthcare costs can be subject to trims in the amount of assistance they receive through Medicare Savings programs or Medicare Extra Help, or Medicaid. Increased incomes due to the COLA can make older and disabled beneficiaries ineligible for the level of benefits they currently receive when their income exceeds the limits. According to a recent survey by The Senior Citizens League, 38 percent of survey participants who received low-income as-

sistance in 2021 said their benefits were reduced to a lower level of assistance in 2022 due to the 5.9 percent COLA received this year. In addition, 16 percent reported that because their income was right on the borderline, they lost access to one or more low-income programs altogether. Higher-income Medicare beneficiaries may pay more in Part B and Part D premiums if incomes are higher than \$97,000 (individuals) or \$194,00 (joint). **Tax factors** A boost in income can push beneficiaries into higher premium brackets. Two important inflation-related factors affect what older (and disabled) taxpayers may pay in taxes. Up to 85% of Social Security benefits can be taxable if “provisional” income is above \$25,000 (single filers), or \$32,000 (joint filers). Unlike the rest of

the tax code, the income thresholds that subject Social Security benefits to taxation have never been adjusted for inflation since the tax became effective in 1984. Any increase in Social Security income due to cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), could mean a portion of, or a higher portion of Social Security benefits would be taxable if income exceeds the income thresholds. But the other factor — tax brackets, standard exemption, and the exemption for over 65 — are adjusted for inflation, and tax experts expect these to rise by a historically high amount next year. Rising tax brackets and the standard deduction could potentially offset much of the increase caused by higher income in 2022. *The Senior Citizens League is a Washington, D.C.-based senior advocacy organization. For details, visit <http://www.SeniorsLeague.org>.*

## Older Persons Action Group Annual Meeting

Nov. 17, 2022

OPAG board meets at 12:30 p.m., followed immediately by annual meeting. Held virtually online via Zoom. RSVP by phone for Zoom link details, 907-276-1059 or 1-800-478-1059.

### 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.”



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# Is it a scam? Alaska seniors are targeted

Alaska Div. of Banking and Securities

The Division of Banking and Securities’ mission is to protect consumers of financial services and promote safe and sound financial systems. We have seen multiple instances of elder fraud and scams involving different approaches: Purchasing investments – gold and silver; online shopping; business impostors; tech support; government

impersonation; romance scams.

Most recently, the financial circumstances of some older Alaskans have been negatively impacted by a scam involving precious metal trading. The Division of Banking and Securities advises Alaskans to be mindful of financial transactions stemming from unsolicited phone calls, emails or mail. Additionally, if you are asked to send money overseas,

please talk to a trusted source which may include your bank, relatives, or law enforcement agencies.

### What you can do

Awareness is the most important tool in protecting the financial security and avoiding fraudulent transactions.

**Start with communication.** Have a conversation with your family member, friend, or neighbor. Keep them informed on safe-

guards for their financial resources.

**Communicate with your financial institution.** They cannot help if they do not know.

**Do not be embarrassed.** Financial fraud is widespread. Quick action is key.

**Report suspected fraud.** File a police report with local law enforcement. Alaska Department of Law’s Consumer Protection Unit has a wide range of information on frauds and

scams at <https://law.alaska.gov/departments/civil/consumer/cpindex.html>. The Alaska Office of Elder Fraud and Assistance website is at <https://doa.alaska.gov/opa/oefa/>.

If you have additional questions or think you have been a victim of a scam involving a financial institution or investment, contact the Alaska Division of Banking and Securities at 907-269-8140 or [financialinstitutions@alaska.gov](mailto:financialinstitutions@alaska.gov).

# The season of remembrance and giving thanks

By DR. EMILY KANE

For Senior Voice

One of the most poignant exercises I have experienced was during hospice training in which participants envision, and write down, four favorite people, four favorite places, four favorite activities and four favorite objects. In the exercise, we strike off these precious parts of our life one at a time, saving the most well-loved until last. The objective is to understand the process of loss, which is an inevitable part of life, and certainly of aging.

Most of you reading this will acknowledge that, in the grand scheme of things, we are the lucky ones. That does not mean we don’t suffer hardships and loss. It means we are not living in a war zone and we likely know that tonight’s dinner will be available without too much of a struggle. We all have heard the cheerful and really quite useful recommendations to have “an attitude of gratitude” or to practice keeping a “gratitude journal” by writing down three or five items for which we are grateful every morning, as a great way to

start the day. I recommend starting or revisiting these practices during this holiday season.

### Fond memories don’t always make it easier

For those who have experienced loss – and the precious friends on our list are almost always the hardest to part with – going through the holiday season can be especially sad or lonely, because of course holidays are traditionally a time when fences are mended and families come together on best behavior. Many of us have fond memories from family gatherings at festive occasions, and missing friends or places during these times can understandably exacerbate the feelings of loss.

Although we logically understand that “none of us get out of here alive,” it is still quite shocking when a loved one dies. So final. So definitive. And yet, people, places and things will continue to fall away and there is very little we can do to stop that. Most of us mere mortals only have control over our own day-to-day decisions, and our attitudes.

### Help yourself by helping others

I used to think that cheerful, positive people were just born that way. I have come to appreciate that these folks make an effort. It’s a choice to be good to yourself (the foundation for authentically being good to other people) and to care about the environment and about the less fortunate. As a health-

care provider, I encounter human suffering on a daily basis. Being in a position to help is a big part of why I want to get out of bed in the morning. It is a well-worn axiom that tending to someone else’s suffering will help alleviate one’s own. Because it’s true, as durable clichés tend to be.

An aspect of senior living that I personally enjoy a good deal, and look

forward to more of when I retire from running a clinic, is community volunteer work. There is so much to attend to. Folks need help. Plus, paying it forward will help you be less reluctant to ask for help when you need it, now or in the days ahead.

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# What to do with your unneeded items

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice

**Q:** I own too much stuff, and it is daunting when deciding what to do with everything. None of my children nor grandchildren want my memorabilia, collections, furniture, or vintage kitchenware. Any suggestions?

**A:** For many of us, our homes are full of things we do not need or use anymore. As we get older, it's not uncommon for our living spaces to start feeling a bit cluttered. From clothes to trinkets to outdated electronics, it can be tough to let go of things we once held dear. We hang onto things we don't need or put items in storage simply because we do not want to deal with the hassle of getting rid of them. However, hanging onto things we no longer use makes our living spaces feel smaller and comes at a cost—both financially and emotionally. That is why it is vital to declutter your home regularly and eliminate unused household items. Here are some tips on how to do just that.

### Up for sale

One option is to sell them. You can have a garage sale or sell items online. This is a great way to make extra cash while removing unwanted objects. People scour online sources to furnish their homes; and encouraging reuse of items is also a sustainable choice.

This time of year, there is particular interest in acquiring furniture to accommodate guests and unique decor or glassware for entertaining. If you are not using it, why not move it along to others in need? Just be sure to price your items reasonably—you do not want them sitting in your home for weeks.

Platforms like Facebook Marketplace, eBay and Craigslist make it easy to sell nearly anything—clothes, furniture, electronics, you name it. Just be sure to take clear photos and write detailed descriptions of the items to be sold. If you are unsure how to sell things online,



find a trusted individual to help you, and consider offering them a percentage of sales as an incentive.

### Make a donation

Another option is to donate them. There are many organizations that accept donations of household goods. Some examples include Value Village, The Salvation Army, Goodwill, and Habitat for Humanity ReStores. Donating is a great way to declutter your home while allowing others to enjoy the items.

Be sure to research the organizations you are considering donating to, ensuring they are reputable and that your donations will be used in the way you intended. Additionally, consider contacting a preschool, private or charter school to see if they are interested in using any items for playtime activities, props for theatrical productions, or for auction/fundraising events.

You may own moderately valuable items. In that case, you might think about nonprofits in your area that could use furniture in good condition, artwork, supplies, or kitchen ware in their office, or as essential fundraising items.

### Going, going, gone

Finally, you could always throw them away. This is not the most eco-friendly option, but sometimes it is the only practical option. If an item is broken beyond repair or unusable, throwing it away is probably your best bet. However, before you throw something away, find out if there are any special instructions for

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# Leftovers: The holiday blessings that keep giving

By **LESLIE SHALLCROSS**  
*For Senior Voice*

With the fall and winter holiday season already upon us, we are planning menus and stocking up on ingredients to make family favorites. You may already intentionally plan for leftovers, using “cook once, eat all week” strategies, or you may just know that there will be more potatoes, peas or pie than your nutritionist recommends consuming at one meal. In either case, storing and creatively using the excess may daunt a weary cook.

Studies on food waste in America suggest that most households waste approximately 32% of the food brought into the home, with the most conservative households tossing around 9%. Part of this waste appears to be due to concerns and misapprehensions about safety and “use by” dates. Other reasons may be lack of knowledge about the best way to store individual



*Turkey Tetrazzini and lingonberry sauce – a fabulous meal from Thanksgiving leftovers.*

*Courtesy Leslie Shallcross*

foods and a lack of planning for tasty ways to use leftovers. The following ideas will help you know what is safe and what is not.

**Check the refrigerator temperature.** Your first consideration should always be food safety. If you haven’t invested in thermometers, get a low cost, rapid read, food thermometer and a couple of refrigerator/freezer thermometers on your next trip to the grocery store. Adjust your refrigerator settings so that the temperatures

throughout the refrigerator are below 40° F.

**Clean the refrigerator before loading up with ingredients or leftovers.** Ideally, you clean your refrigerator once a week to get rid of spills or any deteriorated foods. This will help to minimize germs in the refrigerator and odors that can be absorbed and reduce the quality of stored food. These are important factors, especially for foods like produce that are eaten fresh.

**Store in refrigerator – or**

**freezer-safe containers.** The best containers will be clear so that the contents are easy to identify and airtight to prevent drying out and absorbing odors. If you are buying new food storage containers, check the label for a little “snowflake” or “freezer safe” statement. Old, recycled plastic containers are not a good choice because they are likely to crack with low, freezer temperatures and they are unlikely to provide an airtight seal.

**Position leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer where you won’t forget them and label with the date prepared.** Refrigerated leftovers should be safe to eat for three to four days in your refrigerator while many frozen leftovers will be safe for several months. Properly refrigerated leftovers can be moved to the freezer after three or four days.

**Reheat hot leftovers to an internal temperature of 165° F** (use your food ther-

mometer). Even though refrigeration and freezing slow/stop the growth of bacteria, the bacteria are often not killed and will revive when food is heated. Slow cookers are not a good way to reheat leftovers because food is often at bacteria-friendly temperatures for an extended period during reheating. Use the stove top or microwave and bring the foods to at least 140° F before transferring to a hot slow cooker.

**Use heat-safe containers for reheating.** Most of us use the microwave for reheating. Keep in mind that many plastic food storage bags, brown paper bags, plastic grocery bags, newspaper, aluminum foil, or plastic containers are not safe in the microwave. Some of these may leach toxic compounds into the food.

**Many precooked or uncooked foods can be safely frozen and stored.**

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## Hearing loss can spoil the holiday season



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

Sounds of holidays – joyous music, lively conversation and family gatherings are a cherished part of the holidays. If a loved one has trouble hearing in crowded, noisy situations, or suffers any hearing loss, they could miss a grandchild's recitation of a wish list, or not join family conversation. It is frustrating for both the person suffering from hearing loss and family.

Help a loved one with hearing problems enjoy the holiday season and life. It takes observation, awareness and a healthy dose of patience.

- Be sure the person is

paying attention before you speak.

- Speak face-to-face, never from a different room or from behind.

• Dimly lit rooms make it hard to see facial expressions. Have conversations in areas with good lighting like a kitchen or near a window.

- While speaking, avoid activities like smoking or chewing that make lip reading difficult.

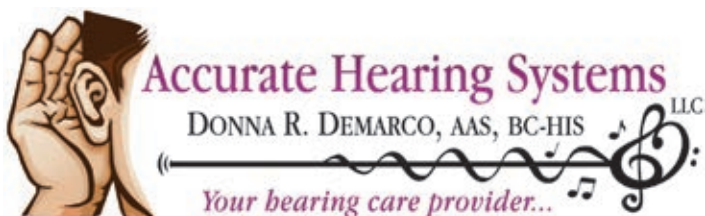
- Speak at a natural pace and volume level.

- Reduce background noise.

The holidays often provide opportunity for a heartfelt family discussion about health concerns. Family support can help a loved one take the first steps to better hearing.

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.*



### ADVERTISEMENT

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

# Long COVID, vaccines and antibody tests

By **JOHN C. SCHIESZER**

*For Senior Voice*

Here is some good news for older adults who are worried about long COVID. A new study has found that most people infected with the SARS-CoV2 virus recover within 12 months, regardless of the severity. The study showed that 75% recovered at the 12-month mark after becoming ill with the virus, and 25% of patients still had at least one of the three most common symptoms (coughing, fatigue and breathlessness). Researchers found that patients with persistent symptoms also had antibodies associated with autoimmune illnesses, as well as raised levels of cytokines, which cause inflammation.

The findings are based on a survey of 106 adults recovering from COVID-19 infections at three, six and 12 months after contracting the disease. All the patients surveyed were healthy and had no pre-existing autoimmune conditions or any other underlying diseases pre-pandemic.

“Generally, one should not worry if they are feeling unwell right after their infection, as the chances of recovering within 12 months are very high, and just because you have typical long COVID symptoms at three months does not mean they will stay forever,” said senior author Manali Mukherjee, an assistant professor of the Department of Medicine at McMaster University

in Canada. “However, the study highlights that at 12 months, if you still feel unwell and the symptoms are persisting or worsening, you should definitely seek medical attention.”

Mukherjee said patients with persistent long COVID symptoms should see a rheumatologist because they specialize in autoimmune disorders and can better assess development of rheumatological complications and the need for an early intervention. She said that most patients with long COVID currently are assessed by lung experts and infectious disease specialists, who do not specialize in autoimmunity.

Mukherjee said that of the patients who recovered, a reduction in autoantibodies and cytokines was matched by their symptoms improving. Those who had elevated antibody and cytokine levels after one year were those whose symptoms persisted.

“Sometimes, while the body is fighting the virus, the immune system gets so amped up that, in addition to making antibodies that kill the virus, it can produce those that attack the host,” said Mukherjee.

### Vaccinations may dramatically reduce the risk of long COVID

Being vaccinated with at least two doses of Pfizer vaccines dramatically reduces most of the long-term symptoms individuals reported months after contracting COVID-19. Researchers in Israel

found that eight of the ten most-commonly reported symptoms were reported between 50% and 80% less often among individuals who received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine compared with those who received no doses.

Nearly 3,500 adults across Israel participated in the study and it was carried out between July and November 2021. These individuals completed a survey with a variety of questions about previous COVID-19 infection, vaccination status, and any symptoms they were experiencing.

More than half of the participants (2,447) reported no previous SARS-CoV-2 infection, while 951 were previously infected. Of those infected, 637 (67%) received at least two vaccine doses. Of the 2,447 individuals reporting no previous infection 21 (0.9%) received one dose, 1,195 (48.8%) received two doses, 744 (30.4%) received three doses, and the rest were unvaccinated (19.9%).

After adjusting for factors such as age and time elapsed from infection to responding to the survey, the researchers found that vaccination with two or more doses of the Pfizer vaccine was associated with a reduced risk of reporting the most common post-COVID symptoms. Among those in the current study group, the most common symptoms reported were fatigue, headache, weakness of limbs, and persistent muscle pain.

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## Harriet Drummond CARES About Our Seniors



*Above, Harriet consults with Gordon Glaser at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. Below, Harriet with her Rogers Park neighbors Karen Ruud and Peter Mjos.*



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# Review and update your Medicare Part D plan

By SEAN McPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare  
Information Office

Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit, is the part of Medicare that covers most outpatient prescription drugs. Part D is offered through private companies as a standalone prescription drug plan (PDP) for those enrolled in Original Medicare. Sometimes a Part D plan’s costs change or the plan no longer covers your medications. Today I will discuss how you can review your current plan, or choose to enroll in a new Part D plan. The goal is to ensure you have the lowest cost coverage that meets your prescription needs.

### Take an inventory

The chart below shows all of the Medicare Part D plans offered in Alaska for 2023. Before you start looking at plans, make sure you know the prescriptions you take, the dosages of each, and the pharmacies you usually use. To compare different plans available in your area, you can use Medicare’s Plan Finder tool at [www.medicare.gov/](http://www.medicare.gov/)

***The chart below shows all of the Medicare Part D plans offered in Alaska for 2023. Before you start looking at plans, make sure you know the prescriptions you take, the dosages of each, and the pharmacies you usually use.***

plan-compare. For assistance comparing plans, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). You can also contact one of the Certified Medicare Counselors at the State of Alaska’s Medicare Information Office by calling either 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680. We will be happy to help you select the best plan. When choosing a Part D plan, make sure to ask the following questions:

- Does this plan cover my drugs? You should also find out if there are any restrictions on your covered drugs, such as prior authorization, step therapy, or quantity limits.
- What are the costs associated with this plan? The Plan Finder tool provides an estimated out-of-pocket cost for the year for each plan, based on your medications and dosages.
- Are my pharmacies preferred and in-network? You will pay less

at preferred in-network pharmacies.

• What is the plan’s star rating? Medicare uses a star rating system to measure how well plans perform in different categories, like quality of care and customer service.

While comparing plans, it may be helpful to know that starting in 2023 all Part D plans will cover vaccines with zero cost-sharing and will cap monthly insulin cost-sharing at \$35.

### Making changes

You can make changes to your coverage during Medicare’s Open Enrollment Period, from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7. Part D plans may change their cost and formularies from year to year, so it is important to review your plan notices to learn if prices will change and if your drugs will still be covered next year. When you make a change during the Open Enrollment Period, your new plan will

become effective on Jan. 1.

You may also make a change to your Part D plan if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period (SEP). For example, those enrolled in Extra Help, the federal program that assists with drug costs, have SEPs each year to change their drug coverage. When eligible for this SEP, your new plan will become effective on the first day of the next month following the change.

Your Part D prescription drug plan typically sends you a statement after you receive your prescriptions. This is called your Explanation of Benefits, or EOB. It is important to remember that an EOB is not a bill. It tells you how much your provider billed, the approved amount your plan will pay, and how much you may owe your provider. Compare your statements to your own records. You may prefer to use the “My Health Care Tracker” pamphlet available from the Medicare Information Office.

It is important to read your EOB soon after you receive it for accuracy. If you think there has been a

billing error, first call your Part D plan to try to get it corrected. If the potential errors are not corrected, if you have additional questions, please call Senior Medicare Patrol professionals at the Medicare Information Office. The SMP program empowers and assists Medicare beneficiaries, their families and caregivers to prevent, detect and report health care fraud, errors and abuse.

### Ready to help

For any Medicare related questions, please feel free to 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.

If you are part of an agency or organization that assists Seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office.

Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

## 2023 Alaska Medicare Part D Options

Choosing a Medicare Part D Drug Plan can be confusing. The Medicare Information Office is here to assist you with all your Medicare questions. If you call us, please have your Medicare card and a list of your prescriptions available. Call **(907) 269-3680** in Anchorage or **1-800-478-6065** Alaska statewide.

| PLAN Name & Contract ID                     | Company Name        | Phone Number   | With Full Extra Help | Monthly Premium | Annual Deductible |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Cigna Extra Rx (S5617-279)                  | Cigna               | 1-800-735-1459 |                      | \$ 41.20        | \$ 100.00         |
| Cigna Saver Rx (5617-384)                   | Cigna               | 1-800-735-1459 |                      | \$ 12.50        | \$ 505.00         |
| Cigna Secure Rx (S5617-227)                 | Cigna               | 1-800-735-1459 | X                    | \$ 27.50        | \$ 505.00         |
| Clear Spring Health Premier Rx (S6946-058)  | Clear Spring Health | 1-877-317-6082 |                      | \$ 42.60        | \$ 505.00         |
| Clear Spring Health Value Rx (S6946-029)    | Clear Spring Health | 1-877-317-6082 | X                    | \$ 25.80        | \$ 505.00         |
| Elixir RxSecure (S7694-034)                 | Elixir Insurance    | 1-888-377-1439 |                      | \$ 54.40        | \$ 505.00         |
| Humana Basic Rx Plan (S5884-116)            | Humana              | 1-800-706-0872 | X                    | \$ 32.10        | \$ 505.00         |
| Humana Premier Rx Plan (S5884-180)          | Humana              | 1-800-706-0872 |                      | \$ 83.70        | \$ 300.00         |
| Humana Walmart Value Rx Plan (S5884-213)    | Humana              | 1-800-706-0872 |                      | \$ 30.60        | \$ 505.00         |
| Mutual of Omaha Rx Essential (S7126-136)    | Mutual of Omaha Rx  | 1-800-961-9006 |                      | \$22.50         | \$ 505.00         |
| Mutual of Omaha Rx Plus (S7126-033)         | Mutual of Omaha Rx  | 1-800-961-9006 |                      | \$ 94.70        | \$ 505.00         |
| Mutual of Omaha Rx Premier (S7126-103)      | Mutual of Omaha Rx  | 1-800-961-9006 |                      | \$ 66.60        | \$ 505.00         |
| SilverScript Choice (S5601-068)             | Aetna Medicare      | 1-833-526-2445 | X                    | \$ 34.70        | \$ 505.00         |
| SilverScript Plus (S5601-210)               | Aetna Medicare      | 1-833-526-2445 |                      | \$ 77.50        | \$ 0.00           |
| SilverScript SmartRx (S5601-209)            | Aetna Medicare      | 1-833-526-2445 |                      | \$ 5.30         | \$ 505.00         |
| AARP MedicareRx Preferred (S5820-033)       | UnitedHealthcare    | 1-888-867-5564 |                      | \$110.30        | \$ 0.00           |
| AARP MedicareRx Saver Plus (S5921-377)      | UnitedHealthcare    | 1-888-867-5564 |                      | \$ 49.80        | \$ 505.00         |
| AARP MedicareRx Walgreens (S5921-415)       | UnitedHealthcare    | 1-800-753-8004 |                      | \$ 6.00         | \$ 350.00         |
| WellCare Classic (S4802-096)                | WellCare            | 1-888-293-5151 | X                    | \$ 30.90        | \$ 505.00         |
| WellCare Medicare Rx Value Plus (S4802-237) | WellCare            | 1-888-293-5151 |                      | \$ 71.30        | \$ 0.00           |
| WellCare Value Script (S4802-165)           | WellCare            | 1-888-293-5151 |                      | \$ 11.20        | \$ 505.00         |



# Easy lifestyle changes combat breast cancer, stroke

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

## Walking away from breast cancer

Boosting physical activity levels and curbing sitting time are highly likely to lower breast cancer risk, according to a newly published study in the British Journal of Sports Medicine. The findings were generally consistent across all types and all stages of breast cancer.

Observational studies show that physical inactivity and sedentary behavior are linked to higher breast cancer risk, but proving they cause breast cancer is another matter. The researchers used Mendelian randomization to assess whether lifelong physical activity and sitting time might be causally related to breast cancer risk in general, and specifically to different types of breast tumors. Mendelian randomization is a technique that uses genetic variants as proxies for a particular risk factor to obtain genetic evidence in support of a causal relationship.

The researchers examined data from 130,957 women of European ancestry and 69,838 of them had breast cancer that had spread locally (invasive) and 6,667 had tumors that hadn't yet done so (in situ). For comparison, the study also included 54,452 women who didn't have breast cancer.

The analysis showed that a higher overall level of genetically predicted physical activity was associated with a 41% lower risk of invasive breast cancer, and this was regardless of menopausal status, tumor type, stage or grade. Similarly, genetically predicted vigorous physical activity on three or more days of the week was associated with a 38% lower risk of breast cancer, compared with no self-reported vigorous activity.

Increasing physical activity and reducing sedentary time are already recommended for cancer prevention. This new study



adds further evidence that such behavioral changes are likely to lower the incidence of future breast cancer rates.

## Combating strokes at home at very little cost

There may be a very simple and painless way to dramatically lower your risk of suffering a stroke. A new study is suggesting that only about half of those who have hypertension or conditions linked to blood pressure regularly monitor it. Now, healthcare providers are recommending most older adults start home blood pressure monitoring.

The new study found that 48% of people age 50 to 80 who take blood pressure medications or have a health condition that's affected by hypertension regularly check their blood pressure at home or other places. A somewhat higher number (62%) reported that a healthcare provider encouraged them to perform such checks. Poll respondents whose providers had recommended they check their blood pressure at home were three and a half times more likely to do so than those who didn't recall getting such a recommendation.

Anyone can do home monitoring and keep a daily diary, which can be highly beneficial. Having uncontrolled high blood pressure is a leading cause of strokes. The study authors write that home blood pressure monitoring could play an important role in helping adults live longer and maintain better heart and brain health.

next page please



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Medical

from page 8

Past research has shown that regular home monitoring can help with blood pressure control, and that better control can mean reduced risk of death. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is also linked to cognitive impairment and dementia.

The findings, which were published in JAMA Network Open, were based on a national survey of adults age 50 to 80 concerning their chronic health conditions, blood pressure monitoring outside of clinic settings, and interactions with health providers about blood pressure. In this study, 1,247 respondents said they were either taking a medication to control their blood pressure or had a chronic health condition that requires blood pressure control, such as a history of stroke, coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or hypertension. Among these individuals, 55% said they own a blood pressure monitor, though some said they don't ever use it.

Keeping on a schedule matters

Older adults who consistently get up early and remain active throughout the day are happier and perform better on cognitive tests than those with irregular activity patterns, according to researchers at the University of Pittsburgh. The findings suggest that patterns of activity, not just activity intensity, are important for healthy aging and mental health.

"There's something about getting going early, staying active all day and following the same routine each day, that seems to be protecting older adults," said lead author Stephen Smagula, an assistant professor of psychiatry and epidemiology at Pitt. "What's exciting about these findings is that activity patterns are under voluntary control, which means that making intentional changes to one's daily routine could improve health and wellness."

Smagula and his team recruited 1,800 senior cit-

Only about half of those who have hypertension or conditions linked to blood pressure regularly monitor it.

izens older than age 65. Participants wore accelerometers, which are movement-detecting devices often found in smartphones and exercise trackers. The participants wore them on their wrist for seven days to measure activity, and they completed questionnaires to assess depression symptoms and cognitive function.

The analysis showed that 37.6% of participants rose early in the morning, stayed active throughout the day and had consistent daily routines.

"Many older adults had robust patterns. They get up before 7 a.m. on average,

and they keep going. They stay active for 15 hours or so each day. They also tend to follow the same pattern day in and day out," said Smagula. "Lo and behold, those same adults were happier, less depressed, and had better cognitive function than other par-

ticipants."

The participants who had disrupted activity patterns in which periods of activity were erratic throughout the day and inconsistent across days had the highest rates of depression and performed worst on cognitive tests.

"People often think about activity intensity being important for health, but it might be the duration of activity that matters

more," said Smagula. "This is a different way of thinking about activity. You may not need to be sprinting or running a marathon, but simply staying engaged with activities throughout the day."

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



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- ✗ Made massive cuts to services for seniors and the poor
- ✗ Implemented huge rate increases at the state's Pioneer Homes
- ✗ Decimated the Marine Highway and the University System
- ✗ Used tax-payer funded resources for his reelection campaign
- ✗ Promised a constitutional amendment to ban abortion in Alaska

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# Assistance paying rent, utilities in Anchorage

By MAUREEN HAGGBLOM

Anchorage ADRC

## ADRC ANSWER OF THE MONTH

Have you ever found yourself, a friend, or a family member in a situation that makes it difficult to pay the rent on time? Or maybe struggling with paying a utility bill?

Life happens. And sometimes not in a good way. Dealing with the unexpected such as a decrease in work hours or loss of income, an urgent

medical need, an increase in expenses, providing financial help to a loved one, emergency travel – are all part of life, and can also threaten a family's housing stability when the unexpected makes it difficult to pay the bills.

If you are an Anchorage resident experiencing a financial hardship which threatens your ability to pay the rent, and are not

receiving assistance from another agency, the Anchorage Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) may be able to help.

Most of our emergency assistance calls related to housing are triaged by Alaska 2-1-1 and referred to the ADRC for assistance. Experienced Resource Specialists will then help guide a household to the resources that are the most appropriate for the situation.

If you or someone you

know is struggling with a life event that threatens the ability to pay rent, dial 2-1-1 or 1-800-478-2221.

Or, if you would like to ask the ADRC about utility assistance, please contact us directly at 907-343-7770.

Sometimes life can be difficult to navigate. Give us a call and we will do our best to help get life back on track.

Submitted by Maureen Haggbloom, Anchorage Aging

and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) program manager, and the Anchorage ADRC team.

Alaska's Aging and Disability Resource centers connect seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers with long-term services and supports. For assistance and answers, call your regional ADRC toll-free at 1-855-565-2017. Or visit the Alaska Div. of Senior and Disabilities Services ADRC website at <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/pages/adrc>.

# Bonanza for at-home medical studies

## New medical records business shares health records

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

PicnicHealth is a business with a new approach to medical studies. It will take the information from your medical history through an online portal and share it with researchers. All of your records, no matter how many times you move, will be organized for your, your doctors' and researchers' convenience.

The researchers will only receive records stripped of any information that could be used to identify you personally. Outside of that, no one—including your doctor or insurance company—will be able to see your medical records

unless you choose to share them by clicking "Send Records" at the top of your PicnicHealth timeline.

Here are four current PicnicHealth studies – they are not clinical trials – that can be participated in remotely from your own home.

1. Immunoglobulin A Nephropathy (IgAN) research is lacking, so PicnicHealth is teaming up with Clinical Connection to encourage research and optimize care for those living with IgAN.

In this research, the company is only looking at data from medical records produced during your normal visits to the doctor. The goal is to better understand

how patients across the U.S. are being treated and why the disease looks different in different people.

Anyone diagnosed with Berger's Disease and who has received medical care for it in the past seven years is eligible. After signing up, you will receive \$200 and a free lifetime membership to PicnicHealth that gives you control and access to your complete medical history and records

Go to <https://bit.ly/3So8i3p>.

2. Studying Huntington's disease to find out where there are gaps in current treatments where new cures could be developed.

Anyone who has been diagnosed with Huntington's disease is eligible for this study where you will help researchers determine who is most at risk of side effects from certain med-

ications and how effective new treatments are over time. Anyone who has received medical care in the U.S. for this disease is eligible.

By signing up for this study, you agree to share your medical records with medical researchers.

After you sign up, you will receive \$200 and a free lifetime membership to

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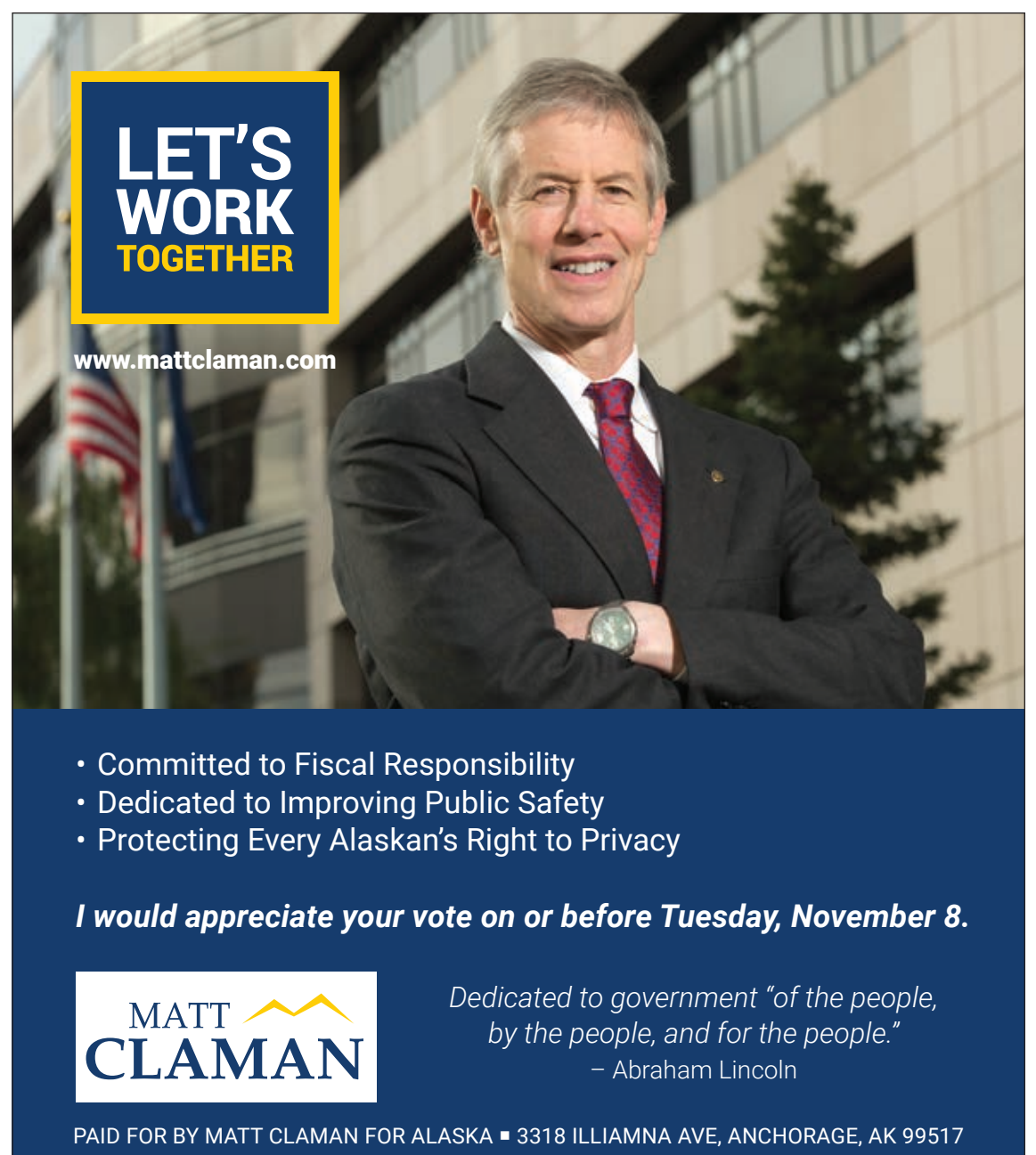
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## Thanks

continued from page 3

### Lead by example

We live in anxiety-producing times. The U.S. Preventive Task Force, a health-policy organization, recently recommended that all adults under age 65 be screened for anxiety. We elders are perhaps a bit more mellow — let's help spread that down to the generations that are following us. The foundation of a more peaceful world is self-care. It is not selfish to be good to yourself. Self-care is crucial both because it is one small part of life over which we actually can exert some control, and also serves as an example to our friends, family, and community.

Remember the power of slow breathing. It is so very helpful to take a few breaths before responding to an anxiety-producing or irritating situation. These will arise regularly. Deep, slow breathing creates an "alpha" state, which is an inwardly focused, relaxed, receptive awareness of reality. Allow time every day for deep breathing and self-reflection so you can access this state on-demand.

### Pay attention to these basics

Self-care basics include: Move every day. Reduce consumption of alcohol, caffeine and junk food. Stay hydrated: Drink half your weight (in pounds) in ounces of water daily. Always drink between meals so as to not dilute your digestive enzymes, which are crucial for proper nutrient absorption. Honor your emotions. Acknowledge them, allow them, name them. Express them in a way that is not harmful to yourself or others.

Create fun, loving relationships. Avoid judgment. Life is too short to hang out with people or situations which drag you down. You do have options. I believe you get what you think about most. Think positively. Release negative emotions — they are not helping you. Feel gratitude. It is a lovely feeling.

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

## Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program will hold the following peer support meetings in November. 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 Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program office is located at 35477 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 205. You can

call them at 907-262-1280 or email [kpfscsp@soldotna-seniors.com](mailto:kpfscsp@soldotna-seniors.com).

**Nov. 3** Sterling Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

**Nov. 4** Seward Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m. Meet and greet and play some Bingo.

**Nov. 8** Tyotkas Elder Center (Kenai), noon to 1:30 p.m.

**Nov. 11** Soldotna Senior Center meeting is canceled this month, for Veterans Day. Next meeting will be Dec. 9.

**Nov. 15** Kenai Senior Center, 1 to 3 p.m. With a presentation by Valerie Flake on nutrition and hydration for older adults, from 1 to 2 p.m. Support

meeting follows, 2 to 3 p.m.

**Nov. 30** Nikiski Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Nov. 10; Nov. 24 is Thanksgiving holiday), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

### Statewide

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Caregiver Support Group meets every Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom, available to all caregivers in the region. For information and a Zoom invitation,

call Denny Darby at 907-463-6181 or email Denny.Darby@ccsjuneau.org.

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meetings around the state, including: Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau/Southeast, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Willow. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details.

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

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## Unneeded

continued from page 4

disposing of it properly. For example, electronic waste should be taken to special recycling centers.

### Worth the work

Getting rid of unused household items can be challenging, but it is worth it. Not only will declut-

tering your home reduce stress and help you save money, it will also free up space in your house. So next time you are feeling overwhelmed by the amount of stuff surrounding you, remember these tips and act

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

## Fall health fairs wrap up this month

By SHARON PHILLIPS

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair is approaching the end of our fall event schedule with our final community events. Nov. 1 and 15, There are two Fairbanks Office Draw dates that are filling fast for Nov. 1 and 15, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., by appointment only.

Nov. 5, Talkeetna Community Health Fair at Upper Susitna Senior Center, 16463 E Helena Dr.

Covid boosters and flu shots available at Talkeetna, and the Providence Mobile Mammogram available by appointment. Call 907-212-4184 and mention Talkeetna.

Nov. 5, Fairbanks University Park Community Health Fair, at University Park Elementary School Gym, 8 a.m. to noon.

Nov. 19, Anchorage, St. John Methodist Church Community Health Fair, 1801 O'Malley Road, 8 a.m. to noon. Providence Mobile Mammogram available by appointment at St. Johns. Call 907-212-4184 and mention St. John Methodist.

Appointment times are limited as we get to the end of the year, so please register asap. Take note that pre-registrations are preferred, and we only fit walk-ins

as space is available.

If you missed attending a health fair this season, don't worry. We have more starting in February and running through May for our spring health fair season.

Sign up for our newsletter on [www.alaskahealth-fair.org](http://www.alaskahealth-fair.org), and we will let you know as soon as our new 2023 event schedule is published and keep you informed of other announcements.

It's not too late to volunteer for this month's events or at our office. Help is needed year-round. Sign up on our website by clicking on our Volunteer tab and answering a few simple questions.

Our offices will be closed in late November, around Thanksgiving, then reopen for December business.

We deeply appreciate all our clients, donors, sponsors and especially our treasured volunteers, who have supported us during these challenging times.

For more information, please scan our QR code below or go to our website at [www.alaskahealth-fair.org](http://www.alaskahealth-fair.org). Or call

907-278-0234 (Anchorage) or 907-374-6853 (Fairbanks).

Sharon Phillips is the Alaska Health Fair, Inc. Tanana Valley/

Northern Region program director.



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# Electric vehicle was a good choice, says Alaskan

By **LAWRENCE D. WEISS**  
*For Senior Voice*

Richard Sewell came to Alaska in 1981 for a job at the Municipality of Anchorage as Regional Economist. He owned a couple of seafood businesses, and subsequently went to work in 2004 for the Dept. of Transportation Division of Statewide Aviation. Recently, he was hired as the Merrill Field Airport Manager in Anchorage.

Interested in buying an electric vehicle, like many Alaskans, Richard had questions about how it would work in our cold, remote location. Quite nicely, it turns out. Here are some of his experiences, as told to Senior Voice contributor Lawrence D. Weiss.

This interview was conducted Oct. 9, 2022, and has been edited for length and clarity.

Lawrence: Richard Sewell, what led you to purchase an electric vehicle last June?

Richard: Two things. You [the interviewer] had done an article about electric vehicles in the Senior Voice [Aug. 2021], and that kind of piqued my interest. And then, last April, we were visiting my brother-in-law who has a Tesla. We were going to the store and he said, “You want to drive?” And I was like, sure! We got out on the highway and he said, “Punch it,” so I did. It really took off like a shot. So those were the initial seeds of interest.

The next thing was I started to peruse online, just idly interested. And then my wife, Ellen, jumped into action and looked at Consumer Reports. She said, “Have you checked out the Kia EV6?” I said, “No, what’s that?” And she said, “Well, Consumer Reports says that it’s now best in class.” Oh, OK.

So, I called the dealership here in Anchorage and I said, “I’ve heard good things about the EV6.” The guy said, “Well, I have one



Satisfied customer Richard Sewell with his electric vehicle in Anchorage.

Lawrence D. Weiss photo

on the lot here and I can make you a really good deal.” The thing that I liked about it was that it’s about the size of a Honda CR-V, and also I like the seat. Getting in and out of it was much easier for an old guy like me. Plus, this one has a seat that raises and lowers.

You can punch a button and it goes up. I really liked that. And it handled very similar to a CR-V which Ellen currently has. The cabin is pretty spacious.

Kia gives it 100,000-mile warranty or 10 years, bumper to bumper. So, say the engine dies or the

battery dies, or whatever, mechanical parts. 10 years. Yeah. And the dealer can work on them here.

The sales guy was like, “What can I do to put you in this car today?” After a little

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# I'M PROUD

That public service has been my passion for over 38 years. During those years, seniors and our most vulnerable citizens have always been my focus. I've served on the Health and Human Services Finance Subcommittee since 2019 and advocated, during each budget process, for continued Medicaid funding, senior grants and more.

Be sure to visit my website for expanded details on my accomplishments and focus moving forward.

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# Denali Fault Earthquake, 20 years later

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**  
Senior Voice Correspondent

Upon feeling a familiar “swirling” motion that Sunday afternoon of Nov. 3, 2002, I left the kitchen and walked to the living room of our Slana home. I’m always a little jumpy during earthquakes, remembering the 1964 quake at age nine. Gary, my husband, agreed he felt it, but continued to sit in his recliner in another room. A few seconds later after a hard jolt, he joined me in the center of the house where there were no windows and many door-frames.

We held on to each other as the jerking and slamming grew more intense and I heard wave after wave of dishes smash to the floor in the kitchen. Because it was hard to stand up and Gary was bouncing around so much, I determinedly reached over and braced myself by holding onto the bathroom doorframe. A few seconds later the (newly purchased and not yet secured) 50-gallon water heater in the bathroom tipped over, slamming the door shut and pinning my hand between the door and the frame.

By this time, I was no longer holding on to Gary, because he had bounced too far away and didn’t know my hand was pinned. Another big jolt rocked the water heater the other way, the door opened by itself, and all of the sudden my hand was free. Quickly moving to Gary, he surrounded me with a bear hug. I shut my eyes and prepared for the worst.

Soon I felt warm liquid spattering all over my hand. It hurt so bad, I was afraid several fingertips

were gone. When the shaking stopped rather abruptly after about 90 seconds, I remember thinking, We are still alive! Maybe a few fingertips are missing, but we are alive! Then I slowly raised my hand to my face and saw that everything was still attached. The warm liquid I felt was water from the hot water heater. At this point, I went over to the couch, curled up into a ball, and had a short hysterical fit.

Meanwhile, Gary was trying to figure out how to upright the water heater, which was still spraying and leaking hot water all over the bathroom and flooding out into the pile of photographs and books that had come off the shelves. He couldn’t open the bathroom door with the water heater jammed up against it. In fact, the water heater had poked out into the hallway where it had broken away part of the solid wood door.

I pulled myself together and called his attention to the oil stove, which had slid over a foot away from the chimney and was still burning. He found the leather gloves and moved the stove back before he went outside to turn the propane off and check the generator. I went around and uprighted all the oil lamps, which were spilling kerosene onto the wood and carpet floors.

Still outside, with the help of a ladder, Gary crawled through the bathroom window, cleaned up enough to get to the water heater and started draining it. I ran upstairs to get a blanket to make a dam so no more books would be damaged. Retrieving a blanket from the nearby

bedroom was not possible because I could not bring myself to walk over the foot high pile of photo albums on the floor in the pathway. Fortunately, Gary had attached all the bookshelves to the walls when we moved into our home. I literally threw books away from the half-inch deep puddle and diverted the water down into the cellar.

Once the water heater was emptied enough to upright, we started looking around and decided to take pictures. After changing out of my “Sunday” dress,

I turned on the radio for news. Shortly after the quake, I had commented, “If it is this bad here, I can’t imagine what the epicenter is like and how many people were killed.”

Gary went around the house room by room and took photos with the digital camera. By the time he got to the kitchen — I was still trying to prevent further water damage — he called for me to come look. Walking over debris a foot deep, I tried not to focus on all



The entry to McMichael kitchen after the 2002 earthquake.

Maraley McMichael photos

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Damage to the Tok Cut-Off road near Mentasta Lodge.

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# Improving your recreational pickleball play

By JIM LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

We can all get stuck in a comfort zone. Trying new things and changing old habits can be a challenge at any age, but as we get older our attitude can become inflexible.

Like continuing to try to hit the pickleball like a tennis ball. Or stepping into the receiving box before the second bounce. Or always being late on your backhand.

All of these errors are the result of lack of movement on the court. And every pro player will tell you that the ability to move is key to better play. So, what does that mean? It's more than just moving your feet; it's staying balanced as you move. Here are suggestions from the pros for improving your balanced movement.

**Take small, balanced steps.** Just like in dance,

small steps in a court game allow for movement to be concise and stable. Lunging can throw you off balance and you can overcorrect. It can also cause joint and back problems, and muscle strains.

**Stay on the balls of your feet.** Don't get caught flat-footed. Keep your knees bent and you'll be naturally over your feet and balanced. Getting caught back-peddling to hit a shot? You'll be on your heels then, and unable to hit your return with any kind of power or control.

**Remain balanced.** You do this by having your feet spread a little wider than shoulder width. And knees slightly bent.

**Paddle out front and paddle "ready position".**



*Kathy Hill of Homer played years of tennis so her paddle ready position is second nature. She likes to keep her off-hand finders behind the paddle face.*

Jim Lavrakas photo

This is the one thing I see players fail to do that can improve their game immediately. Get, and keep, your paddle in the ready position. That means, get your paddle out in front of you with your non-paddle hand resting near your paddle hand wrist. (See photo.) To

page 21 please

## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Congratulations to this year's **Alaska Women's Hall of Fame** inductees, who were honored during a streamed induction ceremony on Oct. 18. The Hall of Fame selects women whose "contributions have influenced the direction of Alaska in any field, including, but not limited to the arts, athletics, business, community service, conservation, education, government, health, the humanities, Native affairs, philanthropy, politics, theology and science, among others," according to the AWHoF website. The 2022 inductees are **Barbara Berner, Pat Branson, Etheldra Davis, Shirley H. Fraser, Brenda Itta-Lee, DeeDee Jonrowe, Rebecca Parker, Karen Perdue, Sheila Toomey and Roxy Wright**. For biographies, photos and videos of inductees, visit the impressive website at [www.alaskawomenshalloffame.org](http://www.alaskawomenshalloffame.org) ... **Anchorage Senior Activity Center** will host a "**Holiday Trees from Around the World**" event on Friday, Dec. 3, featuring decorated trees, baked goods, music and more. Call for information, 907-770-2000 ... **Outer Coast**, the **Sitka**-based educational nonprofit, will again offer free Native language classes this year, starting in November. The Lingit "MOOC" (which stands for Massive Open Online Course) has been popular and two new courses will be added this year. **Shm'algyack/Sm'algyax** (Tsimshian) will be offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 1 p.m., Nov. 8 through Dec. 13. **Xaad Kil** (Haida) will run in February and March. The returning Lingit MOOC course will start in January. Co-hosted and sponsored by

page 16 please



## Family Caregiving

# Get the Family Caregiving Support You Need

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# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

Sealaska Heritage Institute, the courses are free for all participants. For more information, visit [www.outercoast.org](http://www.outercoast.org) ... **Santa's Senior Center** in **North Pole** is interested in **solar power** for its facility. Local interested parties are invited to join a committee to explore this option. Contact the center, 907-488-4663 or [santaseniors@alaska.net](mailto:santaseniors@alaska.net) ... **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.**, aka Wasilla Senior Center, brings back its "**My-O-My It's Pie**" fundraiser, Nov. 5-18. Help support local senior programs while indulging in a delicious treat by purchasing a pie – apple, pumpkin or pecan, \$30 each. You can also purchase and have the pie donated to a local senior. Order at the center or online at [www.wasillaseniors.com](http://www.wasillaseniors.com) through Nov. 17, and pick up the pies Nov. 19. There is also an **online auction** underway throughout the event. Check it out on the website ... **Seward Volunteer Fire Department's Angel Tree** program continues through Nov. 15, with donors providing gifts to put beneath the tree. Last year, almost 40 families received toys, diapers, warm clothing and household items through the program, according to the program website. Find out more, including where to pick up gift request angels, at [www.sewardfire.com/angeltree](http://www.sewardfire.com/angeltree) ... Also in **Seward**, the senior center and **American Legion Post 5** are sponsoring a special **Veterans Day lunch** on Friday, Nov. 11, at 11:30 a.m. Call to reserve a seat – preference given to veterans and spouses. 907-224-5604.

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

## Earthquake

continued from page 14

the pretty amber and green broken glassware. The microwave lay on the floor with the door torn off. It had hit the open (because of the quake) dishwasher on the way down and landed,



Shaken off the counter, the microwave propped open the refrigerator.

Maraley McMichael photo

propping the refrigerator door open.

By this time, an hour had passed and we decided we should call Gary's mom and let her know we were all right. The radio said the epicenter was 90

miles south of Fairbanks, so I tried to call my sister in Tok, but couldn't get through. I figured family members in Cordova, Anchorage and Homer were far enough away that they were probably okay.

We spent a couple of hours working our way across the kitchen floor, trying to salvage the oc-

the upstairs guestroom and bathroom while the husband helped Gary upright an elderly neighbor's boiler. Then we shared canned soup and grilled cheese sandwiches on the coffee table in the living room where there wasn't as much broken glass. The next morning, they acknowledged that they really didn't sleep well because of all the aftershocks. Neither did we.

When the local K-12 school reopened three days later, I returned to my school aide job. Chistochina School, 30 miles to the south, and Tok School, 65 miles to the north, were not affected. At my sister's home in Tok, a teapot fell off a shelf but didn't break. Our well-built log home suffered no structural damage or broken windows, but there was broken

glass in every room in the house. Framed pictures and mirrors slamming against the walls were the culprits in the bedrooms. It took weeks of work to return our house and Gary's out buildings to anything close to normal.

The cut on my left hand healed and the purple bruising eventually disappeared, but my little finger ached for weeks afterward. I decided that next time, I would just hold on to Gary and forget the doorway. There were a few other minor injuries reported in our area and a woman in Mentasta Village broke her arm when she slipped on the ice while exiting her home. But there was no loss of life.

The 7.9 Denali Fault earthquake was not as strong or as long as the 1964 Good Friday earthquake, but it is equally as memorable for me. I'm thankful that the vivid memories have faded over the last 20 years, so much so, that if it wasn't for writing about this event to family and friends in our 2002 Christmas letter, the details of this story would have been forever lost.

Maraley McMichael is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Palmer. Email her at [maraleymcmichael@gmail.com](mailto:maraleymcmichael@gmail.com).

casional unbroken cup or plate. About 80% of the two sets of everyday dishes were broken and 50% of the other two special occasion sets. All the drinking glasses, most of the coffee mugs and all the McMichael family crest crystal goblets and pitcher were beyond repair. There were broken chunks and glass shards everywhere. Thirty years of collected treasures and gifts, but only material wealth.

We reluctantly had bed and breakfast guests that night. A couple moving from Palmer to the state of Washington stopped to inquire about staying overnight. This was the first day of their trip, it was dark, and they were tired of driving their two heavily loaded vehicles and didn't want to travel the rest of the way to Tok. They didn't know about the earthquake. I politely told the woman no, but she didn't really understand why until I showed her the mess in the kitchen and the boxes of broken glass we had moved to the back porch.

When she and her husband returned an hour later saying that the road was impassable near Mentasta Lodge, and the only other alternative was to sleep in their vehicles, I relented. The wife cleaned

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Electric

continued from page 13

bit of dickering, we came to a price. I went over, called the credit union, presto changeo, I bought it. And I love it.

Lawrence: Approximately what did you pay for your electric vehicle?

Richard: Let’s see, I paid out of pocket, I think it was \$42,000 minus the \$7,500 [federal tax] credit. It was like \$35,000 net.

all of \$9.50 from Anchorage to Homer. In Homer they have a supercharger which you have to pay for, and they also have Homer Electric that has a level 2 charger for free. You can plug in and leave your car there and get a free charge if you’re going to leave it overnight. My experience was really good with that.

The Alaska Department of Transportation has a collaborative effort with the Alaska Energy Authority and DOT Public Facilities. They are developing



Richard Sewell charges his EV using equipment he had installed at his home.

Courtesy Richard Sewell

Lawrence: Tell us a bit about options for charging the battery.

Richard: Level 1 is a 110-volt charger. Plug it into your regular outlet? Yeah. And I have one of those, and that gives you the equivalent of about four miles per hour of charge. That’s pretty slow. In 10 hours you get 40 miles. But just driving around town back and forth to work, that’s more than enough for a day.

One of the things that Kia/Hyundai has done is they have it set up so that it can do a direct battery-to-battery charge of 800 volts [level 3], which is really competitive with Tesla. You can get a full charge from a supercharger in 20 or 30 minutes or so.

The Kia has about a 250-mile range. Earlier this summer we went to Homer. I got to Homer on one charge, which cost me

an electric infrastructure plan right now to deploy along the Alaska Highway System, strategic locations for superchargers. Hopefully soon you could go anyplace on the Alaska Highway System.

Lawrence: I understand you have a 240 volt Level 2 charger built right into your garage. How much did it cost to have that done?

Richard: The parts were about \$500, the electrician cost about \$1,000, and then the charger itself was I think \$650.

Lawrence: Thanks, Richard. I am sorry that we have to stop here because I know you have so much more to say, but this was a great introduction.

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

Calendar of Events

**Nov. 2 Nome** Elder swim each Wednesday at Nome Swimming Pool, 11 a.m. to noon. 907-443-5717

**Nov. 3 Valdez** Public Transportation Teleconference, 1 p.m. Virtual meeting hosted by Valdez Senior Center to hear public comments and ideas regarding local transportation for senior and disabled riders. Everyone encouraged to participate. Call for information and conference call-in instructions, 907-835-5032.

**Nov. 3 Fairbanks** Fairbanks-North Star Borough Senior Program hosts a Grandparents and Grandkids activity session on the first Thursday of each month, 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., at the North Star Room in the Carlson Center. Call for information, 907-459-1136.

**Nov. 5 Wasilla** Wasilla Area Seniors Inc. Craft Fair, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Wasilla Senior Center. 907-206-8800

**Nov. 5 Palmer** Mat-Su Senior Services First Annual Holiday Ball and Fundraiser, at Palmer Senior Center, 6:30 to 9 p.m. Food, auctions, raffles, music, games and more. Red carpet event is “Dress to Impress”. Individual tickets, \$100; Couples, \$180. Corporate sponsorship packages available. Call 907-745-5454 for registration information.

**Nov. 6 Statewide** Daylight Savings Time ends. Set clocks back one hour, beginning at 2 a.m.

**Nov. 8 Nationwide** Election Day

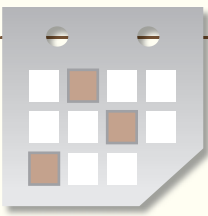
**Nov. 10 Anchorage** Anchorage Senior Activity Center “Celebrating Senior Veterans,” event, noon to 2 p.m. 907-770-2000

**Nov. 11 Nationwide** Veterans Day

**Nov. 25-26 Anchorage** “Holiday Craft Weekend: Crafted in Alaska,” at the Anchorage Museum atrium, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days. Shop a curated mix of handmade products including jewelry, textile and fabric art, pottery, printed designs and more. Buy direct from Alaska’s vibrant community of makers, designers and artists. Festive music and décor add to the atmosphere. Free museum admission both days. [www.anchoragemuseum.org](http://www.anchoragemuseum.org)

**Nov. 24 Nationwide** Thanksgiving Day

**Nov. 25-27 Juneau** Indigenous Artists and Vendors Holiday Market at the Elizabeth Peratrovich Hall, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free. <http://www.ccthita-nsn.gov/>



Send us your calendar items

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# Early Miners’ code ruled in the Last Frontier

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL  
Senior Voice Correspondent

As hordes of prospectors streamed into Alaska and Canada in the 1880s and 1890s, crime like thefts and claim jumping became more common. The Canadians had not yet established a law and order presence in their remote territory and the Americans’ only established civil government was hundreds of miles away in Sitka.

In 1893, miners in the camp of Fortymile formed the fraternal Yukon Order of Pioneers to enforce correct moral behavior. The order’s motto was “Do unto others as you would be done by.” Miners could call a meeting that served as an improvised court when they had a complaint that needed to be settled.

One such meeting was recalled by Canadian policeman Charles Constantine in 1894, according to a National Park Service document:

“Law and order in the country has been enforced by a committee of miners, and with the exception of one shooting and cutting case last winter, it has been quiet and orderly....The miners took the matter up and gave the principals to understand that they would be ordered out of the country if any further trouble took place between them, and the one who did the shooting that if the man he shot died, they would hang him.”

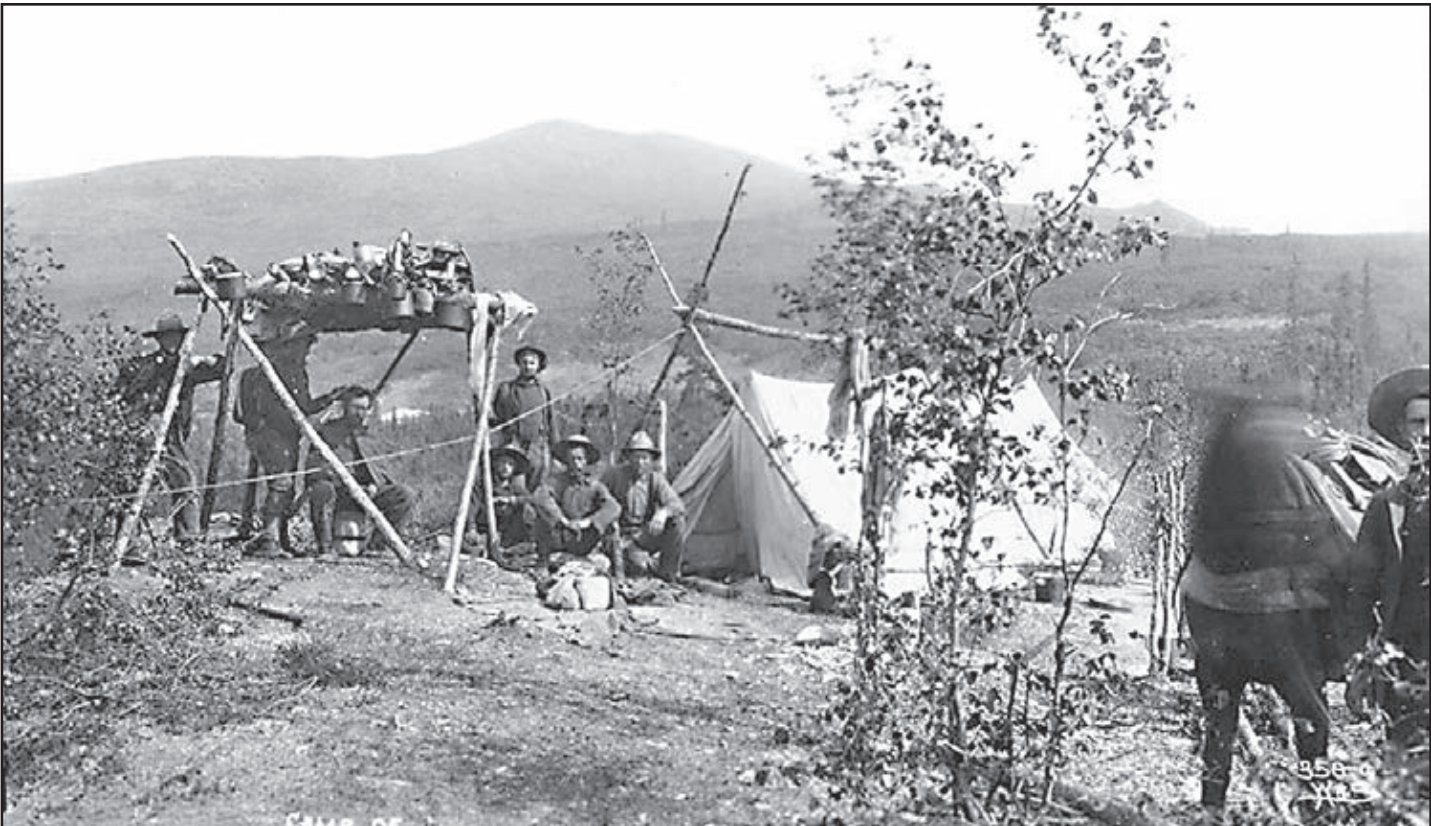
So prior to the arrival of sheriffs and judges to the Last Frontier, this sort of practical application of frontier democracy – called the miners’ code – spread and ruled the far North. Each camp decided matters of common concern by majority vote and meted out justice to fit the crime.

When a situation came along that necessitated a meeting, the miners came together and elected a judge and a sheriff. Defendants and plaintiffs then gave their sides of the story, and after all the evidence was weighed, the miners would render a verdict.

Murder was punished by hanging; stealing meant a sound whipping or banishment. The guilty had no notice of appeal, no bill of exceptions and no stay of execution.

Miners sometimes took justice into their own hands when it came to matters of the heart, too. With no judges or preachers in the camps, they had to think up unique ways to perform nuptials, as was the case of some lovers on the Koyukuk trail.

Aggie Dalton and Frank McGillis wanted to marry, and in lieu of an official marriage contract, they created a substitute document along with one “French Joe.” An account of the ceremony, which



Far from the long arm of the law, prospectors during Alaska’s gold-rush days relied on the miner’s code to mete out justice in the Last Frontier.

Courtesy Alaska State Library

### Life Choices

#### Across

- 1 Pro follower
- 5 Flat-bottomed boat
- 9 “Star \_\_\_\_”
- 13 Opposite of hinder
- 14 Hodgepodge
- 15 Gaucho’s accessory
- 17 One of TV’s Simpsons
- 18 Peter, Paul or Mary
- 20 Wallenda or Dare
- 22 Bear witness
- 23 Miss America topper
- 24 Mouths off
- 27 Bird’s beak
- 29 Coffin along with its stand
- 30 Psychic’s claim
- 33 Galton or Beadle
- 37 Fry briefly
- 39 Disney dog
- 40 Open, as a bottle
- 42 Rugged rock
- 43 Bottomless pit
- 45 Hitchcock and Kazan
- 47 Neighbor of Ger.
- 48 Words from Wordsworth
- 50 Round Table address
- 51 Danish writer who wrote about Africa
- 53 Man of morals
- 57 Like some movies
- 60 Luke or Matthew
- 62 Lincoln and Ford
- 65 Fountain order
- 66 Photo finish
- 67 Grazing sites
- 68 Eternally

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- 69 Crystal ball user
- 70 Shed
- 71 D.C. group

#### Down

- 1 Capital near Casablanca
- 2 Primitive calculators
- 3 \_\_\_\_ firma
- 4 Bryan and Hays
- 5 Comfy spot
- 6 Artery problems
- 7 Salad topper
- 8 Moo goo gai pan pan
- 9 Dupin and Doyle
- 10 Slangy negatives
- 11 Latest thing
- 12 Fr. holy folks
- 16 Verb with thou
- 19 Postpaid encl.
- 21 Barbara of “Mission: Impossible” on TV
- 25 Cast off
- 26 “Norwegian Wood” instrument
- 28 A.C. unit
- 30 Continental capital
- 31 Wish receiver
- 32 Coatrack parts
- 33 Response to an insult
- 34 \_\_\_\_ San Lucas
- 35 Tennyson work
- 36 Kind of card
- 38 Langtry and Lillie
- 41 Anatomical foot
- 44 La Fayette or Lee
- 46 “So long!”
- 49 Went out, as a fire
- 51 Butter up?
- 52 Birth-related
- 54 Pilot’s place
- 55 Antiquated
- 56 Compote fruit
- 57 Dashboard abbr.
- 58 Memorable times
- 59 Apportion, with “out”
- 61 “Hey, over here!”
- 63 Furniture wood
- 64 Newcomer, briefly





# A front-row seat to entertainment history

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

Aside from the songwriters, imagine being the first person on the planet to enjoy the words and music of some of the greatest classic songs to ever appear in Broadway and Hollywood productions.

Nancy Olson Livingston did not have to imagine. As she writes in her new November autobiography, “A Front Row Seat,” her lyricist husband Alan J. Lerner and composer partner Frederick “Fritz” Loewe would regularly serenade her with their latest compositions throughout the 1950s.

“We were living in New York and I remember one time being awoken at three in the morning by Alan and Fritz who were shaking the bed saying, ‘Nancy, Nancy, you have to get up!’” recalled Olson Livingston from her home in Beverly Hills.

A bitterly cold night in the midst of a New England blizzard, the wildly excited songwriters forced her into a heavy coat, galoshes and scarf as Lerner led his sleepy wife across the snow-covered road to their studio.

“You have to listen to something,” they insisted, depositing her in an armchair near the piano.

The pair began acting out scenes from their new



**Nancy Olson Livingston's new book is divided into more than 100 chapters, with stories outlining her movie career, extensive charity work, and life married to two extraordinarily talented men.**

play and then performed “The Rain in Spain” to their wide-eyed solo audience. The song was one of over a dozen Lerner/Lowe classics that would be used to score the 1956 Broadway debut of “My Fair Lady” with Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews, then eight years later on the big screen soundtrack featuring Harrison and Audrey Hepburn.

Whereas the original Broadway production continued into the early 1960s, the marriage to Lerner did not. The pair remained together from 1950 to 1957, when Lerner co-wrote songs for “Brigadoon” and “Paint Your Wagon.” But

by the time audiences were enjoying his hits in “Gigi” and “Camelot,” the couple had divorced.

Fortunately for Nancy, she married Alan Livingston several years later, a union that lasted 47 years until his death in 2009. Livingston was another giant in the music world, an entertainment executive who eventually became president of Capitol Records in the early 60s. He signed an aging Frank Sinatra to a record deal, produced Don McLean’s “American Pie,” and was instrumental in bringing the Beatles to the U.S. He even co-wrote the novelty song “I Taut I Taw a Puddy Tat” and created the character of Bozo the Clown.

Unlike her first Alan, Alan number two was a faithful and devoted husband and the love of Nancy’s life. At 94, she still lives in the same house the couple built in 1965.

While certainly a dutiful hostess who supported the careers and social demands of both spouses, she also enjoyed success as an actress. Credited as Nancy Olson in film and

television roles, she is often best remembered for her appearance in 1950’s “Sunset Boulevard,” playing the ingénue role with William Holden and Gloria Swanson. She went on to work with Holden in several more films.

“We formed a lasting friendship,” she said. “One time Alan (Livingston) and I were flying to London and were at Kennedy airport when I heard a voice calling from the other end of the hallway – it was Bill (Holden). We ran to each other and hugged which was very emotional. All of a sudden, a stranger walked up and taps us both on the shoulder and said, ‘excuse

me, but this is better than watching an old movie!’”

Many more stories outlining her movie career, extensive charity work, and life married to two extraordinarily talented men are described in Olson Livingston’s book, which she divided into over 100 easy-to-read chapters.

“I could have written many more,” she says, “but each one in the book represents important moments in my life.”

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



Publicity cast photo for “Sunset Boulevard,” with William Holden, Gloria Swanson, Nancy Olson and Erich von Stroheim.

Paramount Pictures

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## Thanksgiving

continued from page 5

Not everything, but more foods than you might have imagined can be frozen. Instead of wasting small quantities, save them for another meal. Packaging for longer storage in the freezer is especially important, as previously noted. Freezing causes food cells to break, causing liquid loss, dehydration and texture changes. To minimize quality loss, make sure that packaging has no holes in it and that lids are snug. Leave room at the top of containers with liquids for expansion, but plastic wrap or bags or freezer paper should have all the air removed.

A few foods that you may have as leftovers that can be frozen include:

- Whole eggs, egg whites, out of the shell
- Scrambled egg or frit-tatas
- Casseroles with meat, fish, poultry
- Soups and stews
- Butter, hard cheese,

milk, heavy cream, yogurt

- Cooked rice
- Vegetables from fresh at home
- Cookie dough

### Ideas for using leftovers

While I usually use recipes, leftovers call for more adventuresome cooks and eaters, but there is no shortage of ideas. One friend mentioned that she was able to get her kids to eat anything leftover by wrapping it in a tortilla and deep frying it. Casseroles may have had their heyday in American cooking in the 1950s but remain “comfort foods” for many of us. One such casserole, Turkey Tetrazzini, uses leftover turkey, combined with peas, mushrooms, celery, onions and spaghetti, all cooked in a rich, cheesy cream sauce using up many of the potential leftovers from your Thanksgiving dinner.

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

## Give leftovers some TLC

Plan ahead with some of the following ideas from the University of Iowa Extension. Use familiar techniques and spices, substituting a different meat, vegetable, grain or fruit, and your family will love it.

- **Ham:** Cut leftovers into cubes and add to scrambled eggs, potatoes, pasta salads, lettuce salads or rice dishes.
- **Taco meat:** Add to chili, top baked potatoes, or make homemade nachos.
- **Beef/pork roast:** Add to vegetable beef stew, use in beef and noodles, or make barbeque sandwiches.
- **Chicken:** Use in soups like chicken noodle or tortilla, make tacos or fajitas, add to salads,

wraps, pasta dishes, quesadillas and dips.

- **Steak:** Use for steak and eggs, in a quesadilla, or as a salad topper.
- **Fish:** Use for fish tacos or fish cakes. Mix with sour cream and chives for a fish dip. Make fish chowder with leftover vegetables.
- **Rice:** Make rice pudding or fried rice. Add leftover rice to vegetable soup or chicken broth.
- **Pasta:** Add leftover pasta to soups, pasta salad or stir-fry.
- **Bread:** Make croutons, French toast or breadcrumbs.
- **Grapes/berries:** Wash and freeze, add to yogurt, smoothies or ice cream.
- **Apples:** Sauté sliced apples with margarine and cinnamon for a dessert. Use older apples for

baking into a pie, cobbler or muffins.

- **Over-ripe fruit:** Add over-ripe fruit like pineapple or banana to smoothies.
  - **Vegetables:** Pickle extra vegetables using pickle juice or apple cider vinegar. Add leftover cooked vegetables to soups or stir-fries.
  - **Coffee/iced tea:** Freeze extra coffee or iced tea in ice cube trays and add to cold drinks.
  - **Wine:** Freeze wine in 1 tablespoon measurements in an ice cube tray to be used for cooking.
- For questions about storing and using leftovers, refer to the USDA at <https://bit.ly/3z8v7ko>. Or, call the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension.

### It never hurts to ask

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## Pickleball

continued from page 15

get into the habit of doing this I said to myself “paddle ready, paddle ready” after every shot, and that prompted me to bring my paddle back up after a shot. In this position you have your paddle out in front of you, you’re not swinging it up from your knees to make a shot. With your paddle out in front, you’re meeting the ball early and have better control. Swinging the paddle up from your knees involves too much motion to get to the ball, and that movement will cause erratic shots: “Paddle ready!”

**Transfer your weight.** When hitting both forehands and backhands, transfer your weight from your back to front. This doesn’t mean lunging or throwing yourself forward. It should be a smooth transition from back to front. Here’s a trick for improving the swing of your backhand: Place the face of your paddle directly on the opposite hip of your paddle hand as



*Lisa Schallock and Paul Allan of Homer return serve at Homer HERC during rec play.*

*Jim Lavrakas photo*

you prepare to strike the ball. This puts the face in the right position to hit the ball, and gets your body slightly turned so your feet are in the right position to transfer weight.

**Follow the flight of the ball.** As the ball flies towards you, track its flight with your paddle and take small steps toward its trajectory. Sometimes you can take one short step sideways to get to the ball, sometimes you’ll need to shuffle several steps. But

try not to lunge.

**On lobs, avoid backpedaling.** We talked about this in a previous column. Backpedaling is a recipe for injury. Instead, turn sideways and shuffle backwards to where you think the ball will land. Or if you have to run, turn away and run to where the ball will land.

**Learn to split step.** This is a way to prepare to take the ball when you’re receiving the serve, or a shot while you’re on the baseline. You see tennis pros do this. It

is a small jump (or small bounce) as the ball is hit and coming at you, that allows you to regain your balance, get you on the balls of your feet, and then ready to push off in either lateral direction to get to the incoming shot. You can Google “split step” and see any number of videos on how to do this. It does not have to be a real jump: I use a small up/down motion, just bending my knees a little, to achieve this.

**Stay behind the receiving line.** When receiving the serve, or the second bounce when serving (remember the two-bounce rule), stay out of the box. It’s much easier to run forward to get to the ball after it bounces. When you have to backpedal to hit the ball it’s much harder to generate force.

**Hitting on the run.** This is one of the hardest things to accomplish in a court game. If the ball bounces far enough in front of you that you have to sprint to it, try to get there early enough to stop, and then hit the ball. Being stationary, but balanced, when you hit the return, is best. But if you’re

still running when you get to the ball, by making sure your paddle is out in front of you, you’ll have better control when you do hit your return. Try to “soften” your grip. Holding the paddle too tightly will cause your shot to be too hard.

There are some very good Pickleball websites to help you improve your play. I’ve listed some below. To get better, you have to get uncomfortable. That means trying things that may not come naturally, and breaking bad habits. But in the end, this is supposed to be fun. So don’t berate yourself, keep at it, and remember to smile.

<https://thepickler.com/>  
<https://www.thirdshotsports.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/c/PrimeTimePickleball>

Next column: Court etiquette.

*Jim Lavrakas has lived in Alaska for almost a half century. The self-proclaimed “squirrel man” has found a lively outlet in the pursuit of pickleball. You can reach him at [www.FarNorthPress.com](http://www.FarNorthPress.com).*

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# The wild life and death of Anne Heche

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice



Here we go again: another celebrity estate mess.

You have probably heard of Anne Heche. Even I knew who she was, and I don't follow celebrity gossip or go to the movies that often. But even I have seen "Men in Trees". And anybody who has been to the movies in the last 20 years has probably seen her on the screen.

And if you don't remember seeing her on TV or in the movies, you can't help but have heard about her stormy personal life. She had significant mental health issues, including one very public psychotic break. She dated a number of famous men, including Steve Martin and Lindsey Buckingham, then for a while she was in a relationship with Ellen DeGeneres, and after that was over she went back to dating men.

Her recent death was "over the top" as well. Just a few months ago, she plowed her car into the side of the house, resulting in her death (not to mention destroying the house).

Of course, she didn't have a will. So now things are getting ugly.

Ms. Heche had two sons, from two different fathers. The older one, named Homer, is 20 years old. The younger one, Atlas, is 13. Homer, who is after all a

legal adult, has asked the court to appoint him as the executor, and to let him represent his brother's interests in court. The father of Atlas, the younger child, wants to represent his son's interest himself, and he will probably be allowed to do that since he is the surviving parent and Atlas is a minor.

The father argues that Homer lacks the maturity to be the executor of what is, no doubt, going to be a very large estate, and that Homer doesn't have the money to post a surety bond, which is normally a requirement if it isn't waived by the will. Homer is accusing Atlas' father of sending text messages in which he pretends to be Atlas, says he is "aggressive and manipulative" and that he is afraid of being alone with him. All of this is playing out in public, because a probate case is public record.

This isn't terribly surprising. The most common dynamic for probate con-

**All of this could have been so easily avoided. All Anne Heche needed to do was sign a simple will.**

flict is when the second wife or husband is fighting with the children from the first marriage. That happens a lot in probate court.

So there could be a lot of mischief and conflict between now, and the ultimate distribution of the estate. When I first heard about this, my assumption was that at least the final division, though, would be fairly simple. Anne Heche was a single individual with two children, and in any U. S. state, that means the estate will be divided equally between her kids.

But not so fast! Atlas' father has presented a will. Well, not exactly a will. There is an e-mail which Anne apparently sent to him 11 years ago, which he

wants the court to accept as a will. I very much doubt that is going to work, since it is not signed. But who knows, this is all going to be happening in California, where the official state anthem is the theme from Looney Tunes, so anything can happen.

All of this could have been so easily avoided. All Anne Heche needed to do was sign a simple will. A living trust would have been better, but even a will would have accomplished several things, including saying who the executor should be, waiving the requirement of an expensive surety bond, and clarifying when her sons would get the money. Did I mention that, once this is over,

Homer will receive his inheritance right away, and Atlas will get his money on his 18th birthday?

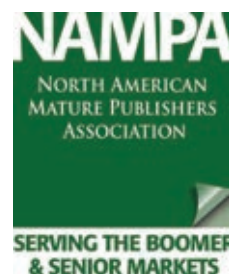
Unfortunately, despite all of her accomplishments as an actress, Anne Heche's loved ones will have to endure this as her final legacy. She now joins the Intestacy Hall of Shame alongside Prince, Aretha Franklin and more than a few others.

And, perhaps, you?

*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. What, you didn't see 'Men in Trees'? It was set in Alaska, for Pete's sake, you were supposed to watch it. No wonder it got canceled.*

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# Home automation, Nest Thermostat, Stable Diffusion

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Bob's Tech Talk

**Q.** I want to add home automation devices to my house. What is the best way to get started?

**A.** When the topic of home automation has come up in previous columns, my advice has been to hold off investing in expensive hardware. Most of the devices you can buy today are likely to disappoint you in fairly short order. This has not changed, but there is good news on the horizon.

The good news is Matter. A new industry standard that allows devices from different manufacturers to talk with one another. This is the technology that I hope will transform home automation products from an expensive hobby to a practical everyday solution for most people.

Some companies have announced they intend to add Matter support to their products, either in new devices or as firmware upgrades to existing products.

Matter should help make products better overall, because each device will have to compete in the marketplace on quality and reliability.

Nevertheless, it is still early days for Matter, and waiting to buy is more worthwhile now than ever before. I expect to see deep discounts on hardware as stores try to move out

***This is the technology that I hope will transform home automation products from an expensive hobby to a practical everyday solution for most people.***

older inventory the rest of this year. The smart play is to buy Matter-enabled devices. Your patience will be rewarded.

**Q.** I have wanted a Nest Thermostat for years. I just saw one for sale online at less than half the usual price. Is now a good time to add it to my home heating system?

**A.** The Nest thermostat's sudden low price is a good example of a worrisome trend.

Google did not reduce the price of its well-reviewed Nest Thermostat. Instead, they added a new low-cost model with the same name: Nest Learning Thermostat.

The original Nest, priced at \$249, has a new name: Nest Learning Thermostat. If you search for online reviews about the Nest online and are unaware of this name switch, you may conclude that the Google Nest available for about \$100 is a great choice.

But it might not be what you thought you were buying. It lacks features that made the original Nest highly desirable. There is nothing fundamentally unworthy about either Nest product. But they have very different

features. And those differences may not be obvious until after the device is installed in your home.

The key lesson in this story: Beware of online searches for product names. Make sure to add specific model numbers to your search and look carefully for similar names.

Also keep my general opinion about home automation in mind. Most products will eventually deliver unexpected behavior.

**Q.** What is "Stable Diffusion"?

**A.** Stable Diffusion is a tool that generates imagery from text input. For example, "a photograph of an astronaut riding a horse" will generate an image that depicts exactly that.

Stable Diffusion, and the other text-to-image tools that debuted this summer, are a fascinating technology that raises profound concerns.

Computers have been generating images for decades. Photoshop is a household word. Movies and TV shows are stuffed with special effects. But those computers are complex paint brushes guided by the hands of human artists.

What makes tools like Stable Diffusion and DALL-E (<https://openai.com/dall-e-2/>) different

is their scale, speed and accuracy. There is virtually zero effort needed to produce a new image. It is possible to string together a few words that describe something recognizable, and the computer will generate a real image in about a minute.

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## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

### Image Gallery

A continuously updated gallery of images generated by computers using text-to-image tools.

<https://arthub.ai/>

### Stable Diffusion Demo

A quick, lower quality image generator that demonstrates Stable Diffusion in action.

[huggingface.co/spaces/stabilityai/stable-diffusion](https://huggingface.co/spaces/stabilityai/stable-diffusion)

### Sound Excursion

One of my favorite blogs — mentioned here several times previously — has a new page. A deep dive on sound.

<https://ciechanow.ski/sound/>

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# Whales, eagles, nutcrackers take center stage

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel  
Correspondent

November brings a flurry of seasonal salutes to the whales and eagles that enhance our life here.

In Haines, thousands of bald eagles gather to chase the late chum and coho salmon run, while in Sitka the annual migration of humpback whales is saluted with several days of delving into the science of marine life that supports life on our planet.

## Sitka Whalefest

This annual celebration of science and everything marine life occurs in Sitka for three days, November 3 to 6.

This year's theme is "How it is Made: Court-ing, Babies and Growth." Scientists will present in the symposium at Harrigan Centennial Hall a variety of steamy subjects like Crissy Huffard's "Octopuses: How They Fight and Shag"; Joanie Van de Walle's "Mating in Troubled Waters for the Wandering



A bald eagle takes flight to join with the thousands of others to go fishing for sockeye salmon in Haines.

Photographs by Dimitra Lavrakas

Albatross"; Dara Orbach's "Sex in the SEAtaceans: Mating Behaviors and Reproductive Anatomy of Cetaceans"; and, Schery Umanzor's "A Dive Into the Surprising Reproductive Life of Seaweed;" as well as several other less titillating topics.

A daily symposium pass is \$35 with a three-day pass at \$95.

Aside from serious subjects, there's a fun market with local craftspeople

selling marine-themed crafts and jewelry and a café offering homemade food and sweets. And there is also bidding on silent auction items benefiting Sitka WhaleFest.

Take a whale observation tour from Crescent Harbor near the Centinel Building from 8:45 to 11:30 a.m. on Nov. 4 or 5, aboard an Allen Marine boat. Area wildlife experts will share their insights about the area and wildlife encountered on the cruise. This event supports the Sitka

Sound Science Center and the Sitka WhaleFest.

Bring your runner relatives along for the Whale Run, a 5K and 10K fun run and two-mile walk. Pre-race registration is on Friday, Nov. 4, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Centennial Hall, and on race day, registration on Saturday from 9 to 10 a.m. at Whale Park. Start time is 10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 5, at Whale Park.

Go to <http://sitkawhale-fest.org/> to register.

## Bald eagles galore

For the 27th year, the American Bald Eagle Foundation in Haines celebrates the gathering of eagles at the Chilkat River for the late chum and silver run in the Alaska Bald Eagle Festival.

Over 3,000 bald eagles descend, turning Haines into an early celebration of Halloween with birds everywhere, much like Hitchcock's horror movie "The Birds."

This year's theme is "Gathering Together," in recognition of being able to return to an in-person event after the years of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the course of three

days, Nov. 9-12, festival activities will include visits to the American Bald Eagle Foundation Museum, live bird presentations, eagle viewing in the preserve, a local artists fair, evening entertainment, and raffles. This year, a guided walk on the Bald Eagle Preserve is being included.

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A bald eagle looks down on an attendee to the annual Bald Eagle Festival in Haines.

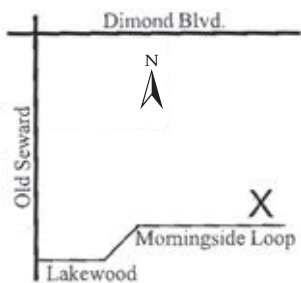


Humpback whale fluke flashes before the whale disappears into the ocean.

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## COVID

continued from page 6

The study contributes to scarce information to date about the impact of vaccination on long COVID.

"We don't fully understand what happens in the months and years following COVID-19 in terms of physical and mental health and wellbeing," said study lead author Michael Edelstein, of Bar-Ilan's Azrieli Faculty in Israel. "Because long COVID seems to affect so many people, it was important to us to check whether vaccines could help alleviate the symptoms. It is becoming increasingly clear that vaccines protect not just against disease, but as the results of this study suggest, against long-term, sometimes life-changing, effects of COVID-19."

### Do I need a booster and do I need it now?

A team of scientists from the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology (SMART), MIT's research enterprise in Singapore, have developed a quick test kit that can tell if a person has immunity against COVID-19 and its variants.

This rapid point-of-care test measures antibodies made by an individual. It requires a drop of blood and takes just 10 minutes for results, compared to the 24 to 72 hours required for conventional laboratory testing. The test kit detects the levels of neutralizing antibodies against SARS-COV-2 and its variants such as Delta and Omicron.

Using a paper-based assay that is coated with

chemicals that bind to antibodies in the blood sample, the test kit is low-cost, fast, and has up to 93% accuracy. It paves the way for personalized vaccination strategies, where people are only given vaccinations and booster shots when necessary, depending on their antibody levels and immune response. Having an accurate and rapid test can enable governments and healthcare organizations to effectively manage limited vaccine resources, and address vaccine hesitancy, particularly concerning multiple booster doses.

Vaccination has been an integral component of public health strategies to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, and 12.6 billion doses across 184 countries have been administered as of September 2022. Vaccines reduced the COVID-19 death toll by 63% within the first year of their rollout, preventing an estimated 19.8 million deaths worldwide, according to a report by the World Health Organization (WHO).

"Our study proves that our new test kit can be a powerful tool, allowing healthcare organizations to screen people and determine their vaccination needs, especially against the current and upcoming variants. This will help allay some people's fears that they will be 'over-vaccinated with a booster', since the results will inform them accurately if they are well-protected against COVID-19 or not," said study investigator Peter Preiser an Associate Vice President for Biomedical and Life Sciences at NTU Singapore.

## Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

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

but is resuming in-person meetings on site for select months. The November meeting is Nov. 9, hosted by the Palliative Care Alaska Network. Breakfast provided. Begins at 8 a.m.

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

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**ANDREW  
SATTEFIELD**  
State Senate

I'm offering my experience as a small business owner and family man to:

- Balance the budget
- Protect the innocent from crime
- Increase the safety of our neighborhoods
- Promote effective education
- Encourage job creation

I am committed to the 2nd Amendment, and your unencumbered right to hunt, travel, recreate, and work.

I will vote to follow the law on the PFD. I believe in the powerful opportunities our country has made available to every American.







Tech talk

continued from page 23

The profound concerns about text-to-images are also very real. Why pay for a single image when you can design hundreds of your own in seconds? Who owns the right to what you look like when a computer can create a photo of you without your knowledge? The

potential to create flawless “counterfeit” images is nearly endless. The phrase “photographic proof” is on a collision course with millions of synthetic images built with artificial intelligence. Coming soon to a screen near you. Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at [techtalk@bobdel.com](mailto:techtalk@bobdel.com).

Miners’

continued from page 18

took place at a night camp with a group of stampedeers en route to a Koyukuk River gold camp, was reported in the society columns of the Yukon Press on Mar. 17, 1899: “On the evening of Nov. 10, 1898, a romantic union took place between Frank McGillis and Aggie Dalton, near the mouth of Dall River. Splicing was done by ‘French Joe’ (J. Durrant), and the form of the contract was as follows:

Ten miles from the Yukon on the banks of this lake,  
For a partner to Koyukuk, McGillis I take;  
We have no preacher, and we have no ring,  
It makes no difference, it’s all the same thing.  
– Aggie Dalton.  
  
I swear by my gee-pole,

under this tree,  
A devoted husband to Aggie I always will be;  
I’ll love and protect her, this maiden so frail,  
From those sourdough bums, on the Koyukuk trail.  
– Frank McGillis.  
  
For two dollars apiece, in Chechaco money,  
I unite this couple in matrimony;  
He be a rancher, she be a teacher,  
I do the job up, just as well as a preacher.  
– French Joe.

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 are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphil-strunk.com](http://www.auntphil-strunk.com) and [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

Senior Voice Alaska.com

Crossword answers from page 18

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

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This program is supported by the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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Omada® is a digital lifestyle change program that inspires healthy habits that last.

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# Bonanza

continued from page 10

PicnicHealth.  
Go to <https://bit.ly/3B-ZrHSN>.  
3. Share records to help evaluate Alzheimer’s research and treatment. This study aims to help family and patients keep track of medical records while contributing to important research. Questions to be answered are: Who is most at risk of side effects from certain medications; how effective are new treatments over time; and what are the gaps in cur-

rent treatments where new cures could be developed.  
A family member or a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, and who is over 50 years old, and has received medical care in the U.S. is eligible.  
After you sign up, you will receive \$25 and a free lifetime membership to PicnicHealth.  
Go to <https://bit.ly/3E3XDXR>.  
4. Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP) is a blood disorder characterized by an abnormal decrease in the number of platelets in the blood. Platelets are cells in the blood that help stop bleed-

ing, and a decrease can result in easy bruising, bleeding gums and internal bleeding.  
“Idiopathic” means the cause is unknown; “thrombocytopenia” means a decreased number of platelets in the blood; and “purpura” refers to the purple discoloring of the skin, as with

a bruise.  
Researchers hope to learn if risk factors for developing ITP can be better determined; who experiences bleeding events and how can it be prevented; who benefits the most from early ITP treatments; and when is the best time to start them.

You are eligible if you have been diagnosed with ITP and if you received medical treatment in the United States.  
You will also receive \$150 and a free lifetime membership to PicnicHealth.  
Go to <https://bit.ly/3f-hCXkM>.

# Whales

continued from page 24

Up in the air still is the release of a rehabilitated eagle into the wild, and the collaboration with the Jilkaat Kwaan Heritage Center in Klukwan, so keep an eye on the festival’s site <https://www.baldeagles.org/bald-eagle-festival> or call 907-766-3094.  
Registration is open. Full registration is \$175, which includes admission Wednesday through Saturday, access to all evening events and banquet; individual event tickets are \$35 for one or two evening events on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday, but does not include admission

to the museum or banquet; a visitor banquet ticket is \$55, but includes no other event.

## Classic holiday ballet times two

Two companies will present the ballet “The Nutcracker” at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts in Anchorage.  
“The Nutcracker” is a Russian-choreographed ballet based on E. T. A. Hoffmann’s 1816 short story, “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King,” with a memorable score by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.  
The Eugene Ballet of Oregon and young Alaska dancers flock to the stage accompanied by live music from Anchorage Symphony Orchestra.

The performances run from Friday, Nov. 25 to Sunday, Nov. 27, with both matinees and evening shows. Tickets are \$43 and up for those older than age 6.  
December 9 brings the Anchorage Ballet and the Anchorage Classical Ballet Academy for Anchorage’s very own production of “The Nutcracker.”  
Tickets are \$44 and up for performances on Dec. 9 at 7 p.m., Dec. 10 at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.  
Grab a grandchild and join Marie as she joins the Nutcracker Prince on a dreamy journey through the enchanted Land of the Sweets.  
It could become a family tradition.

## Moving? Let us know!



Send your change of address to  
Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd.,  
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Or call  
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or 1-800-478-1059  
(toll-free statewide)

# Copper Can Stop a Virus Before it Starts

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 that cause illness.  
Colds and many other illnesses start when viruses get in your nose and multiply. If you don’t stop them early, they spread and cause misery.  
Hundreds of studies confirm copper kills viruses and bacteria almost instantly just by touch.  
That’s why ancient Greeks and Egyptians used copper to purify water and heal wounds. They didn’t know about viruses and bacteria, but now we do.  
“The antimicrobial activity of copper is well established.” National Institutes of Health.  
Scientists say copper’s

high conductance disrupts the electrical balance in a microbe cell and destroys it in seconds.  
The EPA recommended hospitals use copper for touch surfaces like faucets and doorknobs. This cut the spread of MRSA and other illnesses by over half, and saved lives.

Cornell an idea. He made a smooth copper probe with a tip to fit in the bottom of the nostril, where viruses collect.  
When he felt a tickle in his nose like a cold about to start, he rubbed the copper gently in his nose for 60 seconds.  
“It worked!” he exclaimed. “The cold never happened. I used to get 2-3 bad colds

every year. Now I use my device whenever I feel a sign I am about to get sick.”  
He hasn’t had a cold in 10 years.  
After his first success with it, he asked relatives and friends to try it. They all said it worked, so he patented CopperZap® and put it on the market.  
Soon hundreds of people had tried it. 99% said copper worked if they used it right away at the first sign of bad germs, like a tickle in the nose or a scratchy throat.  
As thousands more tried it, some found other things



New research: Copper kills viruses in seconds.

Users say:

“It works! I love it!”

“I can’t believe how good my nose feels.”

“Is it supposed to work that fast?”

“One of the best presents ever.”

“Sixteen airline flights, not a sniffle!”

“Cold sores gone!”

“It saved me last holidays. The kids all got sick, but not me.”

“I am shocked! My sinus cleared, no more headache, no more congestion.”

“Best sleep I’ve had in years!”

The strong scientific evidence gave inventor Doug

they could use it against, including: Colds, Flu, Virus variants, Sinus trouble, Cold sores, Canker sores in the mouth, Strep Throat, Night stuffiness, Morning congestion, Nasal drip, Skin Infections, Infection in cuts and wounds, Thrush, Warts, Styes, Ringworm, Other microbial threats.  
The handle is curved and textured to increase contact. Copper can kill germs picked up on fingers and hands after you touch things other people have touched.  
Scientists placed millions of viruses on copper. “They started to die literally as soon

as they touched it,” said Dr. Bill Keevil.  
Tarnish does not reduce how well copper works, EPA tests showed.  
CopperZap is made in America of pure copper. 90-day full money back guarantee. Price \$79.95. Get \$10 off each CopperZap with code AKSV16.  
Go to [www.CopperZap.com](http://www.CopperZap.com) or call toll-free 1-888-411-6114.  
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- **Connect** you with the resources you choose for yourself or your loved one
- **Follow Up** to ensure your needs are met

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[www.muni.org/adrc](http://www.muni.org/adrc)

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#### Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)  
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[www.sailinc.org](http://www.sailinc.org)

#### Mat-Su Borough

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

#### Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

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

#### Bristol Bay Native Association

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



## 1-877-625-2372

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