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Today’s directory has an impressive background

By DAVID WASHBURN
Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

Do you want to be more involved with helping Alaska’s seniors? Older Persons Action Group, Inc. has openings for board members and welcomes inquiries.

In the 1960s, many Americans tuned into the game show “Password,” where contestants were paired with celebrities to guess words from verbal clues. While that word, “password,” might have once brought to mind giddy TV contestants playing for free access to your personal information, passwords are required across the internet to pay bills, log in to social media, subscribe to streaming services and more. We’ve become quite familiar with the need to create user-names and passwords to access these accounts, and, unlike the old game show, our modern-day passwords aren’t ones we want people easily guessing. To protect yourself, the challenge is to create complex passwords that keep your personal information protected. Better Business Bureau (BBB) recommends the following password-creation tips to stay safe online.

Think of your passwords as walls. A password or a passphrase should be considered a wall between free access to your personal information and the world. The stronger the wall, the more difficult it is for others to break down. The more walls, the more difficult it is to access the information. Avoid easy passwords. An example of a weak password is easy-to-guess information anyone can find on social media sites or through a phishing email or text. A strong password has at least 12 to 14 characters mixed with uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols.

Commonly used passwords are your pet’s name, your mother’s maiden name, the town you grew up in, your birthday, your anniversary, etc. Surprisingly, the answers to these common passwords can typically be found online. Even if you don’t consider yourself an active social media user or the internet, your information is on one forum or another. Even for passwords that require numbers and letters, some people stick to simple patterns like 1234, etc., and you should not be so predictable. Never use the same password for multiple accounts, especially for the most sensitive ones, such as bank accounts, credit cards, legal or tax records or medically-related files.

Make them creative. Need more creative ideas for different passwords? Can you use song lyrics? Not only is it impossible for hackers to guess what song you are singing, but they are less predictable. Even better, try to use a search engine or computer.

Playing “password” must be taken seriously

By ROSEANN FREITAS
Better Business Bureau

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Age-friendly work in Anchorage and Juneau moves to year two

Age-Friendly Leadership Team

Alaska’s work creating “Age-Friendly Communities” is thriving, making the places we live better able to support people of all ages. The age-friendly program process began with Anchorage’s enrollment in the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities as the 678th community nationwide, with Juneau following shortly thereafter as the 754th member. As AARP Alaska enters the second year of membership in the Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities, efforts are focused on community needs assessments in both Anchorage and Juneau. The assessments are an avenue to involve older residents in all the stages of an age-friendly process through walkaudits, questionnaires and in-person or virtual listening sessions. The assessment process looks at each community’s “built” and “social” environments, including housing, outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, health services and community supports, social participation, respect and social inclusion, communication and information, civic participation, and employment. The availability and quality of these community features influence how well-being of older adults and people of all ages.

As part of their community assessment, Anchorage’s age-friendly team recently shared the results of a 2022 walk audit in the downtown area (5th and 6th Avenues between Gambell and Ingra) with partners nation-wide as well as the Fairview Community Council. In Juneau, the age-friendly team joined with their local Commission on Aging in sponsoring three-listening sessions to solicit information for future planning. They plan to solicit feedback throughout the summer to make sure all segments of the community have opportunities to share real life experiences, comments and concerns for an action and evaluation plan.

Age-friendly planning includes a five-year process of continuous improvement. The first two years of engaging the community, establishing teams, and completing the assessment result in the formation of a community action plan. Once adopted, plan implementation and evaluation are carried out during years three to five.

By the conclusion of the initial five-year period, the community should have made meaningful progress toward the goals laid out in the action plan and be able to continue development. Then the next five-year planning process begins.

The Anchorage and Juneau leadership teams have the mission to foster livable, age-friendly communities that promote neighborhood cohesion and maximizes ways for residents to be active and engaged with one another, family and friends. If you are interested in joining the effort to make Anchorage or Juneau more age-friendly, contact Patrick Curtis at 907-268-7919.

Age-Friendly survey online is https://bit.ly/jnu-age-friendly-questionnaires. The email address to contact Linda Kruger, the AARP Alaska Community Action Team Coordinator, is lindalaska2003@gmail.com.

Also in the July edition, the story on page 10 about lung cancer screening contained an error regarding age eligibility. The correct age range is 5 to 80 years old.

I would still be looking for meaning and purpose and activity. I would not feel right to just withdraw and say, “Well, I’m done.”

Now in retirement, what hobbies or other pursuits do you spend time on?

One of my lifelong pursuits has been playing the piano. I love music and I seek out opportunities to share that with others. One of the primary ways I do that is I serve as an accompanist for our church. Every Sunday morning I’m playing the piano for church. That’s very meaningful to me. I also enjoy other hobbies such as stained glass.

There are a few groups that I stay in touch with, that I have had involvement with for years. One of them is our LGBT elder group – Alaska Rainbow Elders. One of the other things that I have for now that I really value is being able to spend time with my family, people that are my friends, people that are important to me. And under the circumstances, I’m happy to say you know, I’ve done that. But I think about ways I might spend my time.

I worked in clinics, I’ve worked in nursing homes, I’ve worked for the Alzheimer’s Association, and I was involved in developing two different programs for older LGBT individuals – one in Denver and one here. I also worked at a very innovative program [for seniors] in San Francisco.

Then I worked for AARP as the advocacy director. In that job, I was responsible for public policy and legislation as it would affect older people. I actually was a lobbyist with a lot of people in state government here in the Alaska legislature and also with the federal delegation. And then I finished my career working at the Alzheimer’s Resource.

When did you retire and at what age?

I retired in October 2022 at the age of 74, because I became ill and was diagnosed with metastatic cancer.

I am happy to say you are looking pretty spunky all these months later. I would like to ask you why you kept on working after age 65?

Mostly because I enjoyed it. And felt that there was more that I could do within my field, make contributions. I was almost 65 when I took the job at AARP. I had been working in direct service with people and then as a specific program manager. Now, I was kind of taking it to a different level of working in policy that would affect people everywhere. I would say that was the climax of my career.

If you had to do it all over again, would you continue to work after age 65?

The biggest factor would have been financial. If I had the means and knew that I could retire without financial impact, I could do things like travel or maybe continue to do my job in a different sort of way through volunteer work, or writing or teaching, or things like that—I might have done that. But I think about ways I might spend my time.

I was ultimately forced to retire.

I was working with a job that I had for ten years to five. In the years to five. In the years beyond the usual age of retirement. In this article, Anchorage resident Ken Helander discusses why he worked into his 70s and why he was finally forced to retire.

We chatted in a local Anchor- age restaurant July 11, 2023.

When and why did you come to Alaska?

I came in 1981 from Colorado. I was married, had two boys, and I worked for a community mental health center in Fort Collins. The programs began to be cut after Ronald Reagan was elected. My wife was in education and her programs were also being cut. We thought maybe we ought to just move to Alaska and see what it’s like.

Upon arriving in Anchorage, I thought, “I’ll go to the mental health center here and see, maybe I can volunteer.” I walked out with a job that I had for eight years.

Please talk a bit more about your job history in Alaska.

I’ve worked with issues of aging my entire career in all kinds of settings. Community oral health was one where, as a clinician program developer, we ended up creating an adult day program. I worked in senior centers, with Juneau following Anchorage’s enroll-
Disparities in mental health for diverse groups

By OCEAN LE
Diverse Elders Coalition

July marked National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about mental health conditions currently prevailing among diverse groups, however we should take care of our mental health every month. The aim is not just to shed light on these issues’ gravity, but also to break down the stigma walls surrounding mental health in these communities.

In recognition of this, I want to share and discuss findings from a report released at the 2022 Alzheimer’s Association International Conference that intricately connect race, lived experiences, mental health and cognitive well-being. The research suggested a correlation between experiences of racism, discrimination and increased cognitive decline—a mental health issue that is particularly relevant to diverse communities.

The intersection of racism, discrimination and mental health is not a new area of research, yet it remains an inadequately explored territory even though it affects millions of diverse individuals. The recent study suggests that individuals who have experienced racial discrimination are more likely to show signs of cognitive decline earlier than those who have not. Cognitive impairment can lead to conditions like Alzheimer’s and dementia, which also disproportionately affect diverse populations.

This risk of cognitive decline amongst diverse communities is compounded by pre-existing risk factors such as social isolation and loneliness, high prevalence of diabetes, and genetic defects in the ABACA7 gene seen in African American/Black individuals.


These findings underscore the need for our healthcare systems and communities to address the unique challenges faced by diverse populations.

Helander
continued from page 3

circumstances of my own life right now, a lot of it has been taken up with medical appointments.

Do you have parting thoughts to leave with the readers?

You’re not going to be able to figure out retirement until you do it. It’s kind of like many things in life, like the experience of loss and grieving. There are components of that in retirement, but you really don’t know what it’s all about until you personally feel it and experience it. And then it begins to dawn on you—you have to make some more decisions about a new way of life. You don’t have to answer to someone else, but you have to answer to your own self.

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.

It’s easy to post your events to seniorvoicealaska.com—and it’s FREE.

1. Go to the Senior Voice website: seniorvoicealaska.com Click on the “Calendar” tab in the upper right corner

2. You will see the list of upcoming events. To add your own event, click the “Submit Event” button on the upper right.

3. You will be taken to a forms page where you can quickly enter your details.

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- Zoom, Skype and other conferencing links
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Senior Voice is published by Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

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For health and flavor, bring on the berries

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER
For Senior Voice

Berries are a great choice and very versatile in terms of how they can be consumed. There are many easy ways to enjoy berries by simply adding them to cereal, oatmeal or yogurt in the morning, or to a salad at lunch or dinner. Another simple way is to eat them fresh or frozen as a snack by blending them into a juice or a smoothie. “The recommended amount of fruit intake is 2 cups per day. Aim to eat at least a half cup of berries per day,” said Valencia.

When berries are frozen, the taste and texture might change, but berries have more potassium, but less fiber. Eating a variety of berries, you get the benefits of all. Even salmonberries are different and necessary because they have more vitamin B6 than their counterparts,” said Valencia.

Versatile superfood
Berries are a great choice and very versatile in terms of how they can be consumed. There are many easy ways to enjoy berries by simply adding them to cereal, oatmeal or yogurt in the morning, or to a salad at lunch or dinner. Another simple way is to eat them fresh or frozen as a snack by blending them into a juice or a smoothie. “The recommended amount of fruit intake is 2 cups per day. Aim to eat at least a half cup of berries per day,” said Valencia.

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The Mediterranean diet is ranked as one of the most healthful diets on the planet. The name derives from the geographical region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, which includes Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey and Tunisia, where this diet has been adopted for centuries. It incorporates different types of food that are mostly unprocessed plant foods typically found in this area: fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, legumes, extra virgin olive oil, lean proteins and fish.

Large studies have consistently indicated that those who follow this diet live longer and have a lower incidence of major chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases and Alzheimer’s disease. And, good news for Alaskans, berries play a role. Whether you opt for strawberries, cranberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries or salmonberries, they are wonderful functional foods.

“It’s important to add berries to any diet,” said Sandra J. Arévalo Valencia, who is the director of Community Health & Wellness at Montefiore Nyack Hospital, Nyack New York. “Berries are one of those ‘superfoods’ because of the great amount of nutrients they have in them that make the immune system stronger to add protection against infections. They also protect against other diseases due to the vitamin C, dietary fiber and antioxidants.”

Further, she said the latest research also indicates that some components of berries known as flavan-3-ols may be beneficial for heart health and protect against diabetes. Valencia said the best advice is to eat a large variety of berries because they are very similar in nutritional content, but some berries have different nutritional content.

“If we compare blackberries and strawberries for example, strawberries have more potassium, but less fiber. Eating a variety of berries, you get the benefits of all. Even salmonberries are different and necessary because they have more vitamin B6 than their counterparts,” said Valencia.

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Maintaining muscle mass as we age

By DR. EMILY KANE
For Senior Voice

Like keeping your bones strong, maintaining or even building muscle as we age requires daily movement and good nutrition. Staying strong as we age will not only be useful for hauling groceries, keeping our home clean, enjoying recreational activities, but also serve to elevate our mood. When it comes to muscle mass, the old adage “use it or lose it” definitely applies.

Establish a routine
Lifting weights is a proven method for building and maintaining both muscle mass and bone density as we age. Start slow and low. You don’t need to have dumbbells or kettlebells or any fancy equipment. If you like going to the gym and can afford a membership, great! But you can easily maintain or even improve your strength at home. There are many resources online. Start by hard-wiring into your schedule two 20-minute sessions per week. Resistance training – challenging yourself to push or pull heavier-than-usual weights, quickly – is the most efficient way to build muscle. Each session can involve 10 minutes of lower body strength exercises and 10 minutes of upper body. For upper body, use soup cans or 1 to 3 pound weights in each hand to push your arms overhead as quickly as is comfortable for your shoulders/elbows/wrists, to fatigue. If you don’t get a little burn after 10 to 12 repetitions, increase your weight. Repeat this “set” two more times.

Follow the same idea for three sets of biceps curls, and then finish with holding cans out from beside your body and doing small rotations, first one direction then the other direction. This last arm movement will require a lower weight, or keeping your elbows bent. Once this routine is established, add triceps dips. The basic lower body move is squats. You don’t even need to add weight. Make sure to stick your bottom way back as the knees bend so that your knees stay more or less over your feet. Pressing your arms forward is a nice counter-balance for the bottom going back. Hold onto the edge of a table or window ledge if needed when first doing squats. A chair modification would be seated, then alternately lift each thigh as high as possible in a “marching” movement, to fatigue. Repeat twice more. You can also engage in “power chair stands” which is basically getting up and down from a seated position without using your arms. Extend your resistance training with heavier weight, longer sessions, quicker movements, as feasible.

The main thing is to stay consistent. Commit to this self-care in your schedule. It’s fun! Bonus points for breaking a light sweat.

Track these numbers
Almost everyone will shrink in old age. Gravity happens. I encourage folks to keep track of their height quarterly, or every six months, from age 60

Medicare coverage for health-related transportation

By SEAN MCPHILAMY
Alaska Medicare Information Office

Ambulances are a critical resource in transporting patients to and from medical facilities, like hospitals. Ambulances are medically equipped and staffed by professionals like paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs).

Emergency transportation
Medicare Part B covers emergency ambulance services. Medicare considers an emergency to be any situation when your health is in serious danger, and you cannot be transported safely in another way. There are certain requirements you must meet for Medicare to cover an emergency ambulance ride:

First, the ambulance must be medically necessary. This means it is the only safe way to transport you.

Second, the reason for your trip must be to receive or to return from receiving Medicare-covered care.

Third, you must be transported to and from certain locations. For example, from your home to the nearest hospital, or from a skilled nursing facility to your home. Medicare will only cover your ride to a medical facility when it’s the nearest appropriate facility that’s able to give you the care you need.

Finally, the transportation supplier must meet Medicare’s ambulance requirements. For example, the ambulance must be staffed by at least two people.

Non-emergency transportation
Medicare Part B sometimes covers non-emergency ambulance transportation. You must meet one of two requirements to

image to the left

image to the right
Study shows untreated hearing loss, low employment rates

**By DONNA R. DeMARCO**

**Accurate Hearing Systems**

**Recent ly, the non-profit Better Hearing Institute took a close look at the impact untreated hearing loss has on the workplace — and its workforce. What they discovered was intriguing. Untreated hearing loss affected worker’s earnings, and even employment rates. They found**:  
- People with untreated hearing loss make about $5,000 less annually, depending on their degree of loss.  
- People with hearing loss who do not use hearing aids are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as peers who use them.  
- For people with milder hearing loss, the use of hearing aids reduces the risk of income loss by 90 to 100 percent.

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*The Dollars and Sense of Addressing Hearing Loss in the Workplace*, McClatchy Newspapers, June 2012.  

**Donna R. DeMarco, AAS, BC-HIS your hearing care provider.**

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**Health and Medicine**

**Senior Voice, August 2023**

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**Review and, if needed, renew your vaccinations**

*August is Immunization Awareness Month*

As we observe Immunization Awareness Month this August, we are reminded to underscore the importance of vaccines and acquaint you with the wealth of resources that our state offers to keep your immunizations current.

**Vaccines are an essential part of aging healthily and especially the elderly and those with chronic conditions.**

- **For those diagnosed with diabetes and prediabetes.**
- **Identify and assist individuals 18 years and older who are undiagnosed.**
- **Hepatitis B vaccine.**
- **Pneumococcal vaccine.**
- **Flu vaccine.**
- **COVID-19 vaccine.**

**COVID-19 vaccines reduce the risk of getting seriously sick from COVID. Maximize protection by staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccines.**

Visit vaccinate.alaska.gov to find an adult immunization schedule or talk to your health care provider.

**Check your records**

- Not sure if you are up to date on your vaccines? There are several ways to access your immunization records.
- Download the docket app and view your record. This mobile application allows you to review vaccines received in Alaska and check what vaccines you may be due for. Download the free app to your mobile device from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store. For help, email doh.dph.epi. docket@alaska.gov or call 907-666-3322 or 833-482-9546 (Toll-free).
- Request records by fax or mail. The Alaska Department of Health can fax or mail vaccination records. Visit vaccinationrecords.alaska.gov to learn more.
- Request records through your health care provider. Patients can request copies of their immunization records through their health care provider.

**A community effort**

Vaccines aren’t just about keeping you healthy. They’re about safeguarding our entire community. So, let’s roll up our sleeves and do our part to keep Alaska safe and healthy. Please note that vaccinations are usually available at multiple health fairs. Visit www.alaskahealthfair.org for our health fair schedule. Let’s make Immunization Awareness Month a resounding success. Stay safe and healthy.

This article is provided by the Alaska Department of Health, Immunization Program and Alaska Health Fair, Inc. a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

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**Fall brings the return of free diabetes screenings**

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

The Alaska Dept. of Health and Alaska Health Fair, Inc. are thrilled to announce the continuation of a vital screening program this fall through Alaska Health Fair, Inc. health fairs — free Hemoglobin A1C and Estimated Average Glucose tests. Our aim is to empower Alaskans with the information they need to lead healthier lives, by identifying early risks for diabetes and prediabetes.

**Are you at risk?**

Take our short self-assessment survey at https://bit.ly/3ry9D-jt to find out. If your survey result indicates a risk, and you’re not presently diagnosed with diabetes or prediabetes, you are eligible for a free A1C test this health fair season. The free tests are available to individuals 18 years and older. Our mission is to identify and assist individuals with undiagnosed diabetes or prediabetes. For those diagnosed with these conditions, scroll down for information on health insurance coverage for regular testing.

**Claim your one free A1C screening this health fair season at selected venues.** Exclusively for at-risk undiagnosed individuals. To participate in the survey to qualify, there will be a limited quantity at most events as we strive to make this available to Alaskans statewide. If you have any...
Finding steady answers to trembling uncertainties

By KAREN CASANOVAS
For Senior Voice

Q: Lately, I’ve been experiencing hand tremors and it’s been quite puzzling for me. Would you have any insights?
A: Hand tremors can be a concerning and disruptive condition, causing uncontrollable shaking or trembling in one or both hands. While a slight tremor is normal, an excessive and persistent tremor can significantly impact activities of daily living. Let’s explore a few causes, treatment, and management of hand tremors, for you and other individuals seeking relief from this condition.

Understanding normal tremors

In many cases, a slight tremor in the hands is considered normal. For instance, when you hold your hands or arms out in front of you, they may not remain completely still. However, certain factors can exacerbate these tremors, making them more noticeable. These factors include aging, stress, fatigue, anxiety, anger, excessive caffeine consumption, smoking, and extreme temperatures. Additionally, certain medications and medical conditions can also contribute to hand tremors. It is crucial, however, to confer with your provider before discontinuing any prescribed medication.

When to seek medical attention

While slight tremors are common and generally do not require treatment, there are instances when medical attention is necessary. It is advisable to consult with a healthcare professional if:
- you have balance impairment
- your tremor is worsening over time
- your tremor is significantly impacting daily activities

By seeking medical advice and following recommended treatment plans, people can regain control over hand movements and improve their quality of life.

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.

Understanding treatment options

When your healthcare professional determines your tremor is not a symptom of an underlying condition and explores potential treatment options, you can ensure that your tremor is not a symptom of an underlying condition and explore potential treatment options.

Determining the cause

When seeing a provider regarding hand tremors, a thorough examination will be conducted in addition to an inquiry about various aspects of your health. The practitioner may ask about your symptoms, medication intake, and your family’s medical history, as some types of tremors have a hereditary component. This assessment aims to identify the potential causes of your tremors and rules out any underlying conditions.

Non-treatment for mild tremors

In cases where the tremor is mild and not caused by a serious medical condition, treatment may not be necessary. Some people find relief through alternative therapies like acupuncture or yoga, while others have discovered nutritional deficiencies causing their symptoms.

Your healthcare professional may choose to monitor the tremor to ensure it does not worsen over time. However, if the tremor persists or becomes more severe, further investigations may be required, including referrals to specialists for additional tests.

Treatment for severe tremors

For individuals with severe hand tremors that significantly impact one’s daily life, treatment options are available to help manage the condition. An occupational therapist may be enlisted, or different meds prescribed. While medication may not eliminate the tremor entirely, it can often reduce the intensity of the shaking or trembling. Your practitioner may prescribe medication that needs to be taken regularly, or only when necessary—such as before encountering stressful situations that exacerbate the tremor.

If tremors extend to the head or vocal cords causing problems, a provider may offer injections to block the nerves and relax the affected muscles.

Regain control

Hand tremors can be a distressing condition that affects daily life and overall well-being. While slight tremors are normal, persistent and severe tremors may require medical attention. Consulting with a healthcare professional is essential in determining the cause of the tremors and to explore appropriate treatment options. Medication, injections, and, in extreme cases, surgical intervention can help manage and reduce the severity of hand tremors. By seeking medical advice and following recommended treat-
Prostate cancer screening is lacking for Alaska Native men
Also: Using humor for improved personal and social wellbeing

American Indian and Alaska Native men experience disproportionately greater prostate cancer mortality compared to other racial and ethnic identities. Men from Alaska often present for care when their prostate cancer is more advanced compared to other racial and ethnic groups, which may be a direct result of not getting PSAs and DREs at the same rate as other groups.

“For our findings highlight a significant healthcare disparity in accessing care,” said Chris Gillette, who is an associate professor at Wake Forest University School of Medicine and the principal investigator of the study.

According to the American Cancer Society, there are more than 34,000 prostate cancer deaths in the U.S. each year, and prostate cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in men. American Indian and Alaska Native men are less likely to be diagnosed with prostate cancer. However, their prostate cancer outcomes are much worse than other racial/ethnic groups, especially for men age 50 to 59 years old.

There are two tests that can help diagnose prostate cancer. One is a digital rectal exam (DRE), and the other is a blood test that measures the amount of prostate-specific antigen (PSA). Elevated levels of PSA in the bloodstream can be indicative of prostate cancer.

For the study, researchers conducted a secondary analysis of the National Ambulatory Medicare Care Survey (NAMCS) datasets from 2012 to 2015. NAMCS is a nationally representative sample of visits to non-federal office-based physician clinics. The CHC samples include outpatient visits to physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners at community health centers including federally qualified health centers and Indian Health Service clinics.

In the NAMCS dataset, researchers analyzed 509.7 million visits over a five-year period, of which 232,998 were for American Indian and Alaska Native men.

“We found that American Indian and Alaska Native men were significantly less likely to receive a PSA than non-American Indian and Alaska Native men,” Gillette said. “The most alarming finding is that there were zero instances of DREs in the NAMCS dataset over the entire five-year period, and there were no PSAs conducted in American Indian/Alaska Native men after 2014.”

In the NAMCS dataset, the rate of PSAs being ordered for American Indian and Alaska Native men was 1.67 per 100 visits but included no DREs. In analyzing the CHC dataset, the researchers found that American Indian and Alaska Native men had slightly lower rates of PSAs than non-Hispanic White men, but the difference was not statistically significant.

“We found that the disparity may not exist when men visit community health centers,” Gillette said. “More research is needed to better understand why.”

Currently, American Indian and Alaska Native men experience disproportionately greater prostate cancer mortality compared to other racial and ethnic groups, which may be a direct result of not getting PSAs and DREs at the same rate as other groups.

Laughter and humor for improving wellbeing

Telling a few jokes may be better for your health and others, and even much more so than ever realized. It turns out that laughter and humor are potent tools that can significantly impact our wellbeing, according to new research conducted by the University of Warwick in England.

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For more information, email diabetes@alaska.gov
Humor
from page 8

The researchers studied laughter and humor in both the workplace and in health-related circumstances and found that these two elements possess remarkable properties that can alleviate worry, diminish feelings of isolation, and instill a sense of control over one’s mental and emotional state. Humor and laughter can act as a natural pressure valve.

“Laughter is an important channel to express feelings, show appreciation and create a positive atmosphere. Similarly, by embracing humor, individuals can find solace and resilience in the face of adversity,” said Stephanie Schnurr, a professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick.

Laughter and humor play a crucial role in enabling individuals to cope with novel and potentially overwhelming situations, and to create healthy and happy relationships. Humor provides an avenue to express the unsayable, allowing individuals to discuss topics around social, economic and environmental issues that are typically considered taboo, such as financial issues, mental wellbeing and death.

Schnurr said laughter and humor can be incredibly effective tools for providing a mental break from life’s challenges. They allow individuals to adopt a more light-hearted viewpoint toward their circumstances. By finding humor, and even laughing in difficult situations, we can remind ourselves and those around us that the situation may not be as bad as we think.

She said laughing at disagreements and troubles among colleagues at work helps them to overcome these issues and lays the foundation for a more productive and collaborative working environment. Schnurr said laughter has the remarkable ability to empower us and give us a sense of control, transforming us from feeling like helpless victims to individuals in charge of our situations.

Laughing at and making fun of one’s outsider status in a work team is another example of this powerful function of humor. By embracing the power of humor and laughter, a person is able to navigate challenges with confidence. Moreover, laughter serves as a valuable outlet for emotional expression, promoting overall mental and emotional wellbeing, according to the researchers.

They contend that humor, especially when used with irony and sarcasm, plays a crucial role as a release valve, enabling individuals to effectively relieve stress and tension. By embracing the power of laughter, it is possible to lighten the weight of everyday challenges. Engaging in humorous exchanges allows a person to temporarily detach from the seriousness of life and work, offering a momentary respite and a fresh perspective.

It is also a chance to change your outlook on issues that impact overall well-being. In the medical context, humor is often used to put patients at ease, and used to tackle difficult or sensitive conversations, for example an unhealthy lifestyle or lack of engagement in a work team is another example of this powerful function of humor. By embracing the power of humor and laughter, a person is able to navigate challenges with confidence. Moreover, laughter serves as a valuable outlet for emotional expression, promoting overall mental and emotional wellbeing, according to the researchers.

“Humor creates a new version of reality that is easier to live in, less scary, and less likely to cause fear. Used by women in male-dominated professions to make fun of their outsider status, humor enables them to criticize and challenge the status quo without putting others off or offending them. Humor can also help people criticize their boss and communicate alternative views without running the risk of being shot down for disagreeing with the boss,” said Schnurr.

Laughing and having a sense of humor can help bring people together and build positive relationships. It can create a type of endearment. In the workplace, this is particularly useful in job interviews where creating a good relationship with the interviewers and signaling belonging are important for success. Although making fun of and laughing at someone could be hurtful, laughing with (rather than at) can show that you understand and like your colleague, and it can make both of you feel better and happier.

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.

Humor and having a sense of humor can help bring people together and build positive relationships. It can create a type of endearment.
Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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

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, Will- low. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details. ARA also hosts a state-wide 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.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Aug. 8 and 22), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Caregiver Support Group meets every Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. The group is available to all caregivers in the region. For more information and a Zoom invitation, call Denny Darby at 907-463-6818 or email Denny.Darby@ccsjuneau.org.

Car-shopping considerations for caregivers

Also: Check out these useful car gadgets

By KIMBERLY BLAKER

When you care for someone with physical or mental challenges because of age or disability, you might find regular transportation is more complicated. A traditional car setup may be difficult or even dangerous for those with limited mobility or safety concerns. Yet, the ability to get out and go places is necessary, not just for appointments or to run errands, but also to retain some freedom and engagement with the world.

Choosing a vehicle

If you’re choosing a new car, it may require additional consideration to find a vehicle that’s more accommodating. So it can be a bit trickier than the average car shopping experience. You’ll want to think about the basics like your budget, mileage, reliability, and desired features or technology. But it’s also important to consider the more specific needs of your passenger. Think about the person or people you’ll be driving, and what accommodations are needed to ensure their comfort and safety and provide them appropriate accessibility and convenience.

Common features caregivers may find helpful in a car include:

- Low floor but higher seats for easier time getting in and out
- Spacious interior with plenty of leg and headroom in the front and back seats
- Power doors that can

Regular screenings are key to prevention and early intervention. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force now recommends adults age 35 to 70 who are overweight or obese get screened for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes once every three years. This testing is typically covered by insurance.

In addition, we’re happy to refer adults with pre-diabetes to free or low-cost diabetes prevention programs available both in-person and online. These include:

1. Omada Health, an online diabetes prevention program. Visit omada-health.com/alaska to find out more.
2. InquisitHealth, a telephone–based diabetes prevention program. Fill out the form at https://bit.ly/3oAdLdD to see if Inquisit is right for you.
3. Contact Leslie Shally-cross at 907-274-2426 or l.shallycross@alaska.edu

For more information, contact 907-278-0234 in Anchorage/statewide; 907-734-6853 in Fairbanks; 907-723-5100 in Juneau.

This project is made possible by the Alaska State Dept. of Health, Fresh Start, and Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Screenings

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questions or need further information, reach out to us at the contact phone numbers listed below.

While blood testing is an invaluable tool, it is not a complete diagnosis. We strongly urge you to share your blood test results with your healthcare provider for a comprehensive understanding of your health. For additional help, we offer a free guide at bit.ly/3XI76eQ featuring local and national resources for diabetes, pre-diabetes, and type 2 diabetes to free or low-cost diabetes prevention programs available both in-person and online.

These include:

1. Omada Health, an online diabetes prevention program. Visit omada-health.com/alaska to find out more.
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Get word out about your upcoming event!

Publicize a program or class. Post an invitation to a new Zoom offering. The Senior Voice online calendar is here for you.

It’s easy to post your events to seniorvoicealaska.com – and it’s FREE.

1. Go to the Senior Voice website: seniorvoicealaska.com
   Click on the “Calendar” tab in the upper right corner

2. You will see the list of upcoming events. To add your own event, click the “Submit Event” button on the upper right.

3. You will be taken to a forms page where you can quickly enter your details.

   In addition to the date, time, location and description, you can include other items:
   - Photos
   - Fliers and other images
   - Links to your website
   - A button linking to the event and your site
   - Zoom, Skype and other conferencing links
   - Your email and other contact information

Try it now.

Our website readers are all around the state, and beyond. If you run into problems, call 1-800-478-1059 or email editor@seniorvoicealaska.com
Use these tips for safety from online scammers

By CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY
For Senior Voice

Today, it seems like we get more emails and phone calls from scammers than we do from our actual family and friends. These contacts pose a very real threat to people of all ages but particularly the seniors who can least afford to lose what they have been able to save. I hope to provide some sage guidance to help you safeguard yourself from online scams. All it takes is one mistake for half of a second and you can lose all of your personal data, your finances, or your social media account.

Stay informed about the latest tactics used by scammers. You can detect emails from Nigerian princes, but now people are creating fake accounts that are exact copies of real people and asking you for financial help. It is hard to keep up with all of the new scams. Contact your local senior center or a regional service organization and ask if they have classes or workshops specifically about online scams and frauds. It might also allow you to meet some new people to call friends, too. You can also read through reliable online resources, such as government websites and organizations you know and trust.

Create a unique password for your online accounts.

Create complex passwords by combining letters, numbers, and symbols, and avoid using easily guessable information such as birth dates or names. If you have memory problems, you can use a passphrase instead. For instance, you can use “Fagh56Ewlae$” as a password, or you can use a quote you love and always remember; for example, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!” (See related story on page 2.)

Be cautious when sharing personal information online. Never provide sensitive details such as Social Security Number, bank information, or passwords over the internet or email for any reason. Never share the information over the phone unless you can verify the legitimacy of the person asking. Did they call you? Then hang up and call them back at their customer service number to make sure you really do owe that bill. If they say you cannot hang up or they will call the police, it’s a scam. If it’s someone calling about a family member, hang up and call that family member.

Never enter personal information on any website unless the website begins with HTTPS://, not just HTTP://. That “S” after HTTP means it is secure. Avoid sharing personal information on social media platforms as scammers can exploit such information for identity theft and they can make a copy of your social media page and add your online friends. Always leave your friends list set to Private and not viewable by anybody. The website you are using will tell you how to, or ask someone to help you with that.

Be skeptical. Do not trust suspicious emails, messages or phone calls. Never click any links in an email that says it will take you to a login screen or a payment page. Instead, go to your internet browser and type in the address of the company. Many people hide really dangerous websites with links on words you trust, and you can’t see the bad link until after you click on it – which results in the scammer getting a copy of your login information when you log in from their link. Verify the identity of the sender or caller by contacting the organization directly. Never click on any email links or download attachments from unknown sources. That’s why you always verify it’s really the person talking to you on messenger by calling them to verify if they ask for personal information or for money.

Reach out to a trusted family member, friend, or caregiver for assistance and guidance regarding online activities. Allow them to share any concerns or questionable online experiences they may encounter. Loved ones can help monitor your online activities, assist in installing security software, or guide you through unfamiliar websites or applications.

As the digital world continues to evolve, people must equip themselves with the knowledge and tools to protect against online scams. Staying aware, practicing secure online habits, and seeking help when needed can significantly reduce your vulnerability to fraudulent activities. Remember the bottom line: If it doesn’t sound right, it probably isn’t right.
Car-shopping

continued from page 10

open by pressing a but-
ton on the remote and a
touch activated back door
easy loading and un-
loading

Remote start to heat or
cool the car before entering

Power windows and
doors with child safety locks
in the back

Also, don’t hesitate to
ask for advice from sales-
people at car lots for cars
that fit your specific needs.
A salesperson might offer
suggestions you hadn’t
considered and have a
better idea of what type of
cars will work best for your
situation.

Car accessories to
improve accessibility

Many helpful gadgets
and accessories can in-
crease your current car’s
accessibility. Consider
what specific parts of your
vehicle or aspects of trav-
eling that your passenger
struggles with. This will
ensure you best meet their
needs, allowing them more
independence while also
making travel easier and
more comfortable.

Swivel seat cushion.

Getting in and out of a car
seat can be very difficult
for those with limited mobi-
ity. A swivel seat cushion
makes it easy to sit and turn
without straining or having
to twist the body. Many
swivel seat cushions are
also much softer, making
cars rides more comfortable.

The Sojoy iGelComfort
Deluxe Gel Swivel Seat
Cushion has a 16-inch
diameter and memory
foam inside for increased
comfort.

Vehicle support handle.

A portable support handle
is kept in the car or a
bag. It hooks into the door’s
latch to support users while
pulling themselves up
to rise from their seat and out
of the vehicle independent-
ly with less risk of injury
or strain.

The Able Lift Auto Cane
Vehicle Support Handle is a
small pound, 6 5-inch long
support handle. It stores
easily in the car and works
in any door latch.

Buckle release aid.

Pushing the small release
button on the seatbelt can
be difficult for those with
arthritus or limited hand
or finger strength. Release
aids are designed to reduce
the force and fine motor
skills needed to un buckle.

Bucklebee is a small
release aid that can stay
on the seatbelt for conve-
nience.

Buckle cover. Alterna-
tively, if you have con-
cerns about someone with
dementia, Alzheimer’s, or
another disability who may
try to escape from the car,
you don’t want it to be easy
for them to un buckle.

Buck bee covers

There are buckle covers
that require a small device
to slide through a slot to
press the release.

BuckleRobot is a univer-
sal and simple seatbelt cov-

er with a release key that
can attach to a keychain.

Kimberly Blaker is a free-
lance writer living in Michigan.

Password

continued from page 2

using, it’s even harder for
them to guess which lyrics
you’re using.

Use a “passphrase.” In stead of using a single word, use a passphrase. Your phrase should be around 20
characters long and include random words, numbers and symbols. Think of something that you will
be able to remember, but others need help to come
close to guessing, such as
PurpleMilk@367JeepDog$.

Use multiple pass-
words. Using different pass-
words for different accounts is also important. While it
can be easier to remember one password for every ac-
count, it’s much easier for
hackers to break down one
account rather than multiple
accounts.

If hackers can figure out one password, even if
it’s to something harmless
like your Instagram account, they have
a strong password to secure
the information within your
password manager.

Select security questions
only you know the answer
to. Many security questions
ask for answers to infor-
mation available in public
records or online, like your
ZIP code, mother’s maiden
name, and birthplace. That
information can be obtained
without questions with a
limited number of responses
that attackers can guess, like the color of your
first car.

While the game show
is in the rearview mirror,
passwords are still giving
us reason to tune in when it
comes to safety. Having an
effective password or pass-
phrase keeps your personal
information secure on the
internet and keeps you win-
ing at the password game.

Roseann Freitas is public
relations and communications
manager for the Better Busi-
ness Bureau Great West and
Pacific Region.

Senior Voice, August 2023 | 13
Camping with Elder Mentor Anna Mae Andrew

**RurAL CAP Elder Mentor Team**

Hi, my name is Anna Mae Andrew and I am 76 years old. My maiden name is Anna Mae Walcott. I have lived in New Stuyahok for more than 50 years—I moved here in 1968. I grew up in Eeok, where it is beautiful all year long. I got married in New Stuyahok to a local named Moxie S. Andrew. My hobbies include sewing, knitting and crocheting cultural things, and also artwork. I love to travel on a boat to my fish camp and camp outdoors up the river, and I love subsistence fishing. Splitting fish during the summer for winter, too. I also like to go outdoors to pick cultural medicines. Berry picking is the best. There is nice wilderness here and beautiful places to camp. What I love about New Stuyahok is that it is a great place to raise a family, the lovely scenery and friendly people. And I cherish my work with the students.

During the day after they split fish, I go to the smokehouse and check on the fish smoking all day. My family doesn’t want me to work too hard, so I do some cooking and washed dishes. We get our drinking water from one hill; it’s nice, cold spring water. It takes about an hour to get there then we fill up our jugs. We don’t drink the river water.

We have our own food out to camp. We have eggs, hash browns and pancakes in the morning. I love to drink coffee with milk and sugar, sweet, not black. As I get older, I like to have sweet coffee. I used to drink it black, but no more. I do the afternoon cooking for lunch. I love to cook fresh fish from the bay. Sometimes on a nice, hot day, we cook on the beach roasting the fish over the fire. I love my king salmon fish heads and tail. I boil them with water and salt, and we eat them with cut-up raw onions. I haven’t seen many birds this summer because of the weather, but we see lots of swallows, eagles, seagulls and cranes. I love reading and doing word puzzles while I sit by the bank and watch the smokehouse. I tell my boys, “take me up river, I wanna go riding on Nushagak River,” for a picnic and the kids swim. So we go and camp. This year no blueberries, which I love to pick. Maybe next year.

I started off as a special education aide and retired in 2000, then decided to start volunteering and get back in the schools as an Elder Mentor. I love working with people. I’ve been an Elder Mentor for most likely 23 years. Our schools in New Stuyahok have plenty of resources with helpful staff, and there are a variety of cultures in which we can learn from each other.

I have so much fun volunteering with the children at our elementary school. Our village respects Elders, and when the children see us, they show that respect to us and carry on with their schoolwork. I enjoy helping students practice a traditional subsistence lifestyle, teaching them cultural ways and helping them do different activities. I knit and sew, and teach the kids how to do it during our cultural week. I also tell stories and read stories.

Volunteering as an Elder Mentor with RurAL CAP has been great. It gives me something to look forward to every day. It would be so helpful to have more Elder Mentors.

“Anna Mae Andrew has been working with students during our E-Week and daily lessons,” says Tatiana Andrew, Chief Ivan Blunka School Site Supervisor. “It’s really nice to have Elders in our class. I enjoyed working with her.”

Make sure you visit this same article on the Senior Voice website for Anna Mae Andrew’s Tundra Tea and Blueberry Jam recipes.

Join the Elder Mentor program

The Elder Mentor Program is currently accepting applications for the coming school year. Benefits for qualifying seniors 55+ include paid time off, a tax-free stipend, paid holidays, free meals and travel assistance. Please call for more information and to apply: 907-865-7276, and check out the online application and learn more at https://eldermentor.org. Reach the team via e-mail at elmentors@ruralcap.org.

Search “Elder Mentor” on Facebook.

The Elder Mentor program volunteers and staff wish Tatiana Andrew a happy retirement. She has been a site supervisor for the program for several years. Thanks for all you do.

**Anna Mae estimates she has been volunteering in the classroom for around 23 years.**

This summer has been cold. Every morning at 5 a.m., I wake up and light the wood stove to get it going for the day. My son gets up and goes to check the net when the tide comes in. I watch the stove and get it warm in there. My daughter-in-law cooks breakfast.

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**Senior Voice Proud Member**

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14 apartments on a secured floor dedicated to Memory Care and Special Needs
RN/s on staff during business hours and on-call 24/7 to triage resident/staff concerns
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Activities Coordinator w/ on and off-site recreational opportunities
Restaurant-style dining room professionally ran by NANA
Wi-Fi in common area, Basic Cable, and all Utilities Included
Person-centered care-planning provided by Administrator/RN

With 20 years at the community and daily lessons,” says Tatiana Andrew, Chief Ivan Blunka School Site Supervisor. “It’s really nice to have Elders in our class. I enjoyed working with her.”

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Matrimonies, memories and celebrations

By MARALEY MCMICHAEL
Senior Voice Correspondent

My son, Patrick, proposed to his girlfriend of three years, Brandi, on March 30, and of course she said yes. It was a shocking surprise to all involved because of his insistence that he would never marry again after the devastating end of his first marriage in 2011. But, Brandi made him happy and he realized that he would be foolish not to “put a ring on it.”

Brandi is a very loveable, family oriented woman. During the phone call telling of their engagement, she asked me if I had anything from my wedding that she could use in their wedding. She explained how she planned to incorporate the lace from her mother’s wedding dress into her dress. That got me to thinking. After my marriage, my mother had put my wedding dress in a box to save for me. Years later, I finally rescued it from family storage and combined it with my husband Gary’s wedding attire (which was hanging in our closet, but no longer fit), along with the collection of 128 cards we’d received, and put it all in a box labeled “wedding memories.” With Brandi’s question, I knew right where to look for any possible momentos to share with her.

In the meantime, Gary’s and my 50th anniversary was rapidly approaching. My life was overwhelmingly busy dealing with medical and financial issues but every once in a while I would let my thoughts wander to the momentous occasion coming up on May 26. In 2008, Gary and I attended a fabulous 50th anniversary party of long-time family friends in Anchorage. It was as big of a deal as a wedding, with Gary and Maraley McMichael’s 50th anniversary cake with 50-year-old plates and napkins. Maraley McMichael photo decorations from our 1973 wedding. They never threw anything away, so it really wasn’t too surprising.

Since all that stuff had been saved those many years, I decided I wasn’t yet ready to throw it away. I brought the box home and put it on the top shelf in our shop, along with the other box labeled “wedding memories.” With Brandi’s question, I knew right where to look for any possible momentos to share with her.

In the meantime, Gary’s and my 50th anniversary was rapidly approaching. My life was overwhelming—busy dealing with medical and financial issues, but every once in a while I would let my thoughts wander to the momentous occasion coming up on May 26. In 2008, Gary and I attended a fabulous 50th anniversary party of long-time family friends in Anchorage. It was as big of a deal as a wedding, with
limited, so sign-up asap. Call 907-688-2677. Also in Chugiak, the senior center is hosting a “Music is Medicine Event,” Aug. 31 at 6 p.m. in the main dining hall. This drumming circle will be guided by Gail Jackson, a professional Global Drum Circle Facilitator Trainer and owner of Creative Rhythms sound therapy. No prior musical experience is necessary, drums provided. Or bring your own. Also welcome are rattles, ukuleles, pans, singing necessary, drums provided. Or bring your own.

In the anniversary aisle, staring at that package of balloons for 10 minutes, I had a change of attitude. Perhaps I could be agreeable to having a party at the Pioneers Home. I already had all the paper plates and napkins I needed, leftover from our wedding.

When I paid for the package of balloons, the clerk said the helium was free with purchase. I replied that I didn’t want them filled, because the event was over two months away. On the drive home, I wondered if the Pioneers Home had a helium machine, since they have at least one party a month, along with appropriate themed decorations.

The next day, even before I went to Gary’s room, I popped into the activities director’s office to ask if they owned a helium machine and tell her my ideas for a possible 50th anniversary party. No machine, but when we checked the calendar for the day of the week and learned it was Friday, we both got excited. Fridays from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. are always ice cream socials. I could supply the cake to go along with the ice cream. After 15 minutes of discussion, a party plan seemed to fall into place. For the first time, I looked forward to our 50th anniversary celebration.

For the next couple of months, there were more phone conversations with Patrick and Brandi about the usual planning details involving anniversaries and weddings: Clothes, food, decorations and so forth. How unusual to be involved in planning both a 50th anniversary and a son’s wedding at the same time.

The May 26 anniversary party went very well. Many people (who were actually not strangers) both residents and staff came up to Gary and me to share a few words of congratulations and look at our wedding photo. The Palmer Carrs-Safeway baker did a wonderful job decorating the cake and it tasted delicious, too. Although unplanned, the Pioneers Home administrator, Joshua Shaver, a talented musician, played his guitar and sang love songs in our honor.

Then on June 25, Patrick and Brandi’s Denver wedding went fantastically well, with some of their (over 200) friends commenting that it was the “wedding of the year.” Patrick and Brandi sipped champagne from two small 50-year-old ceramic flower vases during the “toast-ing,” but that is a story for another time. Still to
Teleconference will focus on senior services grants

By JON HAGHAYEGHI
Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is hosting a teleconference focusing on Nutrition, Transportation and Support Services (NTS) grants. Subject experts Ellen Hackenmuller and Kristin Cox of Senior and Disabilities Services will explain the mechanics of NTS grants in Alaska. Grant recipients have been invited to participate in regional focus groups alongside our experts to assist the commission in understanding the growing needs of the state.

The efforts made during this teleconference will assist ACoA commissioners in gathering information to guide recommendations issued to the governor and legislature. The public is invited to attend. Participation will be limited to a public comment period at the end of the teleconference. For more information on this teleconference, please check the Alaska Online Public Notices at https://bit.ly/456Hrz9. This teleconference is the first of several teleconferences offered quarterly. For more information, contact ACoA’s Executive Director, Jon Haghayeghi at 907-465-4793.

Senior Voice recognized in national awards contest

Senior Voice Staff

Older Persons Action Group, Inc., earned honors for its monthly, statewide publication Senior Voice in the 32nd annual National Mature Media Awards Program. The program, presented by the Mature Market Resource Center, recognizes the nation’s finest marketing, communications, educational materials and programs designed and produced for older adults.

OPAG and Senior Voice won three awards: Merit Award in the Best Newspaper/Newsletter category for the April 2022 edition; Merit Award in the Best Newspaper/Newsletter category for the January 2022 edition; Merit award to correspondent Maraley McMichael for her essays on life in Alaska.

Older Persons Action Group has been publishing Senior Voice for 46 years. Some funding is provided through a federal and state grant managed by the State of Alaska.

Calendar of Events

Aug. 5 Salcha Salcha Senior Center 50th anniversary celebration, noon to 5 p.m. at the senior center, 6073 Salcha Pioneer Court. Potluck picnic – bring side dish or dessert. 907-488-1066

Aug. 5-13 Fairbanks Alaska International Senior Games. Annual event brings together people from all around the United States and several countries to compete – you must be age 50 or older – in everything ranging from ice hockey, pickleball and track and field events, to archery, table tennis, bowling and golf. Activities you can enjoy, whether a casual athlete, serious competitor, or spectator. Schedule and other details at www.alaskaig.org.

Aug. 11-13 Ninilchik Kenai Peninsula Fair at the tairgrounds. Fair food, rides, pig races, rodeo, live music, “stilt circus”, petting zoo, exhibits, more. Senior day is Aug. 11, $3 admission. Kenaipeninsulafair.com

Aug. 17 Wasilla Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. board meeting, 9:30 a.m. in the senior center meeting room. 907-206-8800

Aug. 18 Seward “Virtual Dementia Tour” at Seward Senior Center, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska presents simulation experiences that provide insight into what day-to-day life is like for a person living with Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia. Each virtual tour is 30 minutes and free, but space is limited. Register at 907-224-5604.


Aug. 19 Chugiak Combat Vets motorcycle event at Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center, 10 a.m. in the front lobby. The Combat Vets Motorcycle Association will visit and offer rides to seniors, weather permitting. Free. 907-688-2677

Aug. 19 Homer Homer Senior Citizens, Inc. Alzheimer’s Fundraiser, 3 to 6 p.m. at Homer Senior Center. Food, wine, beer, and live music from Tim Fitzgerald Chicago Jazz Band Quarter. Proceeds to go the center’s new Alzheimer’s wing. Tickets, $100, available at the center or online, www.homerseniors.org

Aug. 25 Ninilchik Annual fundraiser Dinner and Auction at Ninilchik Senior Center. Food, wine, beer, and live music from Tim Fitzgerald Chicago Jazz Band Quarter. Proceeds to go the center’s new Alzheimer’s wing. Tickets, $100, available at the center or online, www.homerseniors.org

Send us your calendar items
Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503
editor@seniorvoicealaska.com
Deadline for September edition is August 15.

In-person and Zoom classes for curious learners age 50+

Senior Voice advertising representative
Anne Tompkins can help you reach our readers.

Email her at A.Tompkins@seniorvoicealaska.com or call 907-276-1059 toll-free 1-800-478-1059

www.OleAnchorage.org or (907) 231-0095

In-person and Zoom classes for curious learners age 50+

Opportunities for Lifelong Education

Fall, Winter & Spring Terms
By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

Before he became well-known around the country, one of America’s most famous prison inmates dug gold nuggets out of a mine in Juneau during 1908.

But justice proved swift and sure after he killed a man on Jan. 18, 1909. A coroner’s jury convened the evening of the murder, and after hearing testimony from the various parties, returned its verdict thatched release for him. Charles F. Damer met his death at the hands of the rival suitor for the affection of a woman named Kitty O’Brien. The jury included O’Brien as an accomplice.

The man who killed Damer was now working as a part-time bartender instead of digging for gold, and he and O’Brien were charged with murder and arraigned on Jan. 21. Authorities later dropped the charges against O’Brien, and the bartender pled guilty to a charge of second-degree murder. He was sentenced to serve seven years at the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island near Tacoma, Wash.

While the convicted killer served his sentence in Washington, his mother and sister continued to work in Alaska, spending most of their earnings on attempts to have him pardoned or paroled.

 Authorities transferred him to the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan., in 1912, where he kept to himself at the maximum-security federal institution and gained access to facilities, books and laboratory equipment. His nickname, “The Birdman of Alcatraz,” came from his habit of the rock. He died there in 1963, after 55 years as a prisoner. His monumental work, “Stroud’s Book of Bird Diseases,” published in 1942, still is regarded as an authoritative source.

Inmate No. 594’s Alaska connection

Federal maximum-security prison Alcatraz, where the Birdman spent a great portion of his life, sits on an island near San Francisco. Courtesy National Park Service

Crossword answers on page 26

ACROSS
1 Deadly snake
6 Gala gathering
10 Heroic deed
14 Became an issue
15 Multivitamin supplement
16 Cuba’s ____ of Youth
17 Final provocations
19 Commuter line
20 Part of T.G.I.F.
21 Presidential monogram
22 Bar order, with “the”
23 Piano note (Var.)
26 Certain apartment
28 Bibliographical abbr.
29 Long-legged web-footed black-and-white shorebirds
33 Nobility
36 “Born Free” lionness
38 Viva-voce
39 Night fliers
40 Perceive
41 Gay Talese’s “____ the Sons”
42 Change states, in a way
43 Lexicographer
44 Partridge
45 Source of strength
46 Get ready
52 Get last name in
53 In spysdom
54 Halftime lead, e.g.
55 Emma Peel, e.g.
56 Pottery fragment
57 Expose, in verse
58 Mens ____ (criminal intent)
59 London favorites
60 Do something you didn’t really want to do
65 Get the pot going
66 That is to say
67 W.W. II gun
68 Casket
69 Back street

DOWN
1 Bona fide
2 Foaming at the mouth
3 Western group
4 “____ la vie!”
5 __ judicata
6 Murder judgment, at times
7 “Hoc ____ in votis”
8 Service station offering
9 Coast Guard officer (Abbr.)
10 Close family member
11 Old Testament twin
12 Others, to Ovid
13 Rossini subject
18 Neighbor of a Laotian
22 Amateur video subject, maybe
24 How an author might write
25 Weight abbr.
26 Novel ending, usually
27 Egg cells
30 Sea eagles
31 British poet laureate
32 Place on the schedule
33 Ceremonial splendor
34 Decorative pitcher
35 Model Macpherson
37 Pacific ring
38 Work unit
40 It often follows you
41 Elaborate
42 Allegie as fact
43 Dogs do it
44 Bone-chilling
45 Threadbare
46 Watering holes
47 Offended
48 Proficient
49 Bone (Prefix)
50 Big pooch
51 Black cuckoo
52 Capt.’s guess
53 Peruvian coin

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This column features tidbits found in Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.aunthistory.com.
Gary Puckett's powerful voice still delighting fans

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

Currently traveling the U.S. on the 2023 “Happy Together Tour” with classic pop acts such as The Turtles, The Cowsills, and Little Anthony (see www.happytogethertour.com), Gary Puckett never tires of performing the songs made famous with his Union Gap bandmates.

The hugely popular five-man pop-rock group, remembered for their string of late 60s hits including “Woman, Woman,” “Lady Willpower,” and “This Girl is a Woman Now,” now features all new members but retains one of the most distinctive musical sounds of the era with Puckett delivering his characteristic soaring vocals infused with emotion and perfect pitch.

Famous for often performing in Civil War Army costumes and named after a town near where Puckett once lived in Washington state, the original Union Gap disbanded in 1971 but Puckett says the current group creates a sound as close as possible to the classic songs.

“The original recordings featured string and horn sections, but there’s just four of us in the group now so our keyboard player is tasked with recreating those sounds,” said Puckett while traveling to New York from his home in Florida. “I think we’ll give fans what they want to hear.”

Turning 80 last year, Puckett says he was around age eight or nine when his family realized he could carry a tune.

“My folks would get a tape recorder and we would sing songs and record Christmas messages to my grandparents,” he recalled. “Then they would make a record.”

The record became their first hit, “Woman, Woman,” one of several hits that established him as a singer.

That record became a country song,” recalled Puckett. “So he added a 30-piece string, horn and rhythm section and turned it into the pop record that established me as a singer in the music world.”

The band amassed six gold records in the space of about three years during the late 60s. But musical tastes were changing as the 70s began closing in and for a decade there was little interest in the group’s music.

“Then in the early 1980s, radio stations began proliferating throughout the United States and featuring 60s music once again,” said Puckett. “I started getting calls from disc jockeys who were playing our songs and promoters who wanted us back on the road giving concerts.”

Puckett has continued to tour either solo or with the band ever since, releasing another nine solo albums over the years (see www.garypuckettmusic.com). Interacting with audiences remains a joy for the singer who is usually available at concerts to meet with fans to sign items they may bring along.

“I love to get out with the fans, it’s always great to see them smiling and enjoying the music we created way back when,” he says. “They are still appreciative of it all and the fact that they are there just honors me and the music.”

The lineup for today’s Gary Puckett and the Union Gap, left to right: Woody Lingle, Gary Puckett, Jamie Hilboldt and Mike Candito.

Provided by Gary Puckett

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.
Savvy Senior

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior: What retirement planning tips can you recommend to single women? I’m a divorced 58-year-old woman with a teenaged son and have very little saved for retirement.

— Financially Vulnerable

Dear Vulnerable: It’s an unfortunate reality, but many single women—whether they’re divorced, widowed or never married—face much greater financial challenges in retirement than men.

The reasons behind this are women tend to earn less money, about 5 cents for every dollar that men make, on average, and they have shorter working careers than men due to their responsibilities for children and/or caring for aging parents. And less money earned usually translates into less money saved and a lower Social Security benefit when you retire.

In addition, women live an average of five years longer than men, which requires their retirement income to stretch further for living expenses and healthcare costs. And, according to some studies, women tend to have less confidence about financial issues than men, which means they don’t always manage their money as well as they should.

Because of these issues, it’s very important that women educate themselves on financial matters and learn how to save more effectively. Here are some tips and resources that may help.

Start saving aggressively

If your employer offers a retirement plan, such as a 401K, you should contribute enough to at least capitalize on a company match, if available. And if you can, swirl your contribution even more. In 2023, you can save as much as $22,500 in a 401(k), or $30,000 to those 50 and older, due to the catch-up rule.

If you don’t have a workplace plan, consider opening a Traditional or Roth IRA. Both are powerful tax-advantaged retirement savings accounts that let you contribute up to $6,500 annually, or $7,500 when you’re older than age 50. And if you’re self-employed, consider a SEP-IRA, SIMPLE-IRA and/or a solo 401(k), all of which can help reduce your taxable income while putting money away for retirement.

Also, if you have a high-deductible health insurance policy (at least $1,500 for self-only coverage or $3,000 for family coverage), you should

next page please

Social Security Administration

Social Security is committed to reducing barriers and ensuring people who are eligible for our benefits receive them. We provide income security for the diverse populations we serve. This includes people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and their families.

Many parents and caretakers of children with disabilities look for work while they manage their children’s care needs. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides monthly financial support to low-income families with children who have developmental and behavioral disabilities.

These include ASD — and physical impairments. For more information on SSI, please visit www.ssa.gov/ssi.

People with ASD may have questions about how SSI affects their employ-/ment options. They may also see their SSI as a barrier to employment. Employers have started to recognize that many people with ASD can bring a variety of skills and strengths to the workplace. Our Ticket to Work Program supports career development for people ages 18 through 64, who receive Social Security and want to work. The Ticket Program helps get vocational rehabilitation, training, job referrals and other employment support services. For more information about this program please read www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10061.pdf.

We recognize the need to support, understand, accept, include, and empower those on the autism spectrum. Please share this information with friends and family and help us spread the word on social media.

Medicare

continued from page 5

have your non-emergency ambulance ride covered:

One, you are confined to your bed. This means you are not able to get up from your bed without help, unable to walk, and unable to sit in a chair or wheelchair.

Or two, you need vital medical services during your trip that are only available in an ambulance. For example, you may need medications administered during the trip or need your vital functions monitored. Medicare may also cover scheduled and regular non-emergency ambulance transportation. To get this kind of transportation covered, your doctor must send the ambulance supplier a written order. The written order needs to state that the transport is medically necessary. It must also be dated no earlier than 60 days before the trip. In some situations, ambulance suppliers must also receive prior authorization from Original Medicare before providing multiple scheduled, non-emergency ambulance rides within a brief period of time (such as within one month).

Transportation by air

Medicare Part B covers medically-necessary emergency air transportation by air ambulance. An air ambulance is a fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft that has medical equipment and is staffed by medical professionals. Medical necessity means that you require immediate and rapid ambulance transportation that could not be provided by a ground ambulance. More specifically, air transportation must be needed either because ground ambulance cannot get to you where you are, there is a great distance to travel, or another obstacle involved in getting you to the nearest appropriate facility which occurs across Alaska.

Red flags

Ambulance fraud, errors, and abuse can take various forms. Here are just a few potential examples:

An ambulance was ordered for you, even though one was not medically necessary, and a wheelchair van or other automobile could have transported you safely.

You were transported in an unapproved ambulance like a taxi or rideshare.

Your ambulance was not properly staffed. This normally means that it was not staffed by two emergency medical technicians (EMTs) or paramedics.

You were transported from your house to a non-covered destination like your doctor’s office, a community mental health center, a psychiatric facility (outside of a hospital), or an independent lab not connected with a hospital or skilled nursing facility.

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 Improvements for Patients (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program. If you are part of an agency or organization that assists Seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

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

YOUR NEXT PURCHASE OF $30.00 OR MORE

"Quality you can count on, because we care about your health..."
Retirement

consider opening a health savings account (HSA). This is a triple tax advantage tool that can be used to sock away funds pre-tax, which will lower your taxable income; the money in the account grows tax-free; and if you use the money for eligible medical expenses, the withdrawals are tax-free too.

Pay off debts

If you have debt, you need to get it under control. If you need help with this, consider a nonprofit credit-counseling agency that provides free or low-cost advice and solutions, and can help you set up a debt management plan. To locate a credible agency in your area, use the National Foundation for Credit Counseling website at www.NFCC.org (800-338-2227), or the Financial Counseling Association of America, https://FCAA.org (800-450-1794).

Find help

To help you educate yourself on financial matters like retirement planning, saving and investing, health care, annuities and more, a top resource is the Women’s Institute for a Secure Retirement at https://WisetWomen.org.

And to help you get up to speed on Social Security, visit www.SSA.gov/people/ women. This web page, dedicated to women, provides helpful publications like “What Every Woman Should Know,” along with links to benefit calculators and your personal Social Security account to help you figure out your future earnings at different retirement ages.

You should also consider getting a financial assessment with a fee-only financial advisor. Costs for these services will vary from around $150 to $300 per hour, but this can be very beneficial to help you set-up a retirement plan you can follow. See www.NAPFA.org or www. GarrettPlanningNetwork.com to locate an advisor in your area.

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

Video assistance with Social Security questions

Social Security Administration

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

The video service locations are available at:

› In Nome, Norton Sound Health Corporation, located at 1000 Greg Kruschek Ave. Video service is available for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

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

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

The agency strongly encourages people who can to use its online services at www.socialsecurity.gov, call on the phone, or use the video service option when possible. These service options can save people a long trip to a busy office. Most Social Security services are available to the public online and with a my Social Security account, or by telephone. And most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create their My Social Security account, a personalized online service, at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccout.

If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, request a replacement SSA-1099, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account. People not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized Social Security Statement, which provides their earnings information as well as estimates of their future benefits. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services.
New reporting guidelines and your LLC

By KENNETH KIRK
For Senior Voice

Two months ago in this column, I wrote about the new Corporate Transparency Act. Don’t worry, you don’t need to dig that issue out from the bottom of the birdcage, I’ll summarize it here.

Starting next year, nearly every Limited Liability Company (LLC) for short and corporation, other than the really big ones, will have to periodically file reports with the federal government, showing among other things the ownership of the entity. They exempted the big companies, but not the small ones. If you have, say, a small LLC to hold your rental property, or a one-owner corporation you use for your ‘side hustle’, you have to file electronic reports with FinCEN. And there are very serious criminal penalties and fines for failing to do so.

With that in mind, you might be wondering whether it makes sense to create an LLC in the first place or, for that matter, to continue one that you already have. Should you close it down? Should you keep the business in your own name as a sole proprietorship?

Let’s think this through.

First of all, you should be aware that most of the information the Feds will be collecting, is already required for corporations and LLC’s in Alaska. If you have either of these types of entity, the state of Alaska requires you to file a report, every two years, which includes the identity of the shareholders (with an LLC those are called “members”). Anybody who has a computer can look that up online. Granted the federal requirements will go a little beyond that, but the biggest thing that a lot of people are concerned about keeping private, the ownership of the business, is already public information in Alaska.

Also the federal government promises that they will keep all of this information confidential and only use it for legitimate law enforcement purposes. Of course if you have been around for a while, you can probably remember any number of cases where someone’s confidential information—tax returns for example—was released by some government employee for political purposes.

But you have to balance that against the purpose for which you might need that entity.

Here’s an example of how an LLC works: let us imagine that you have a rental property. It is a duplex in Anchorage, worth about $500,000. On the advice of someone you trust (your attorney, accountant, brother-in-law, or whoever) you create an LLC, and deed the property into the LLC.

Years pass, and then one day a tragedy happens. Your tenant’s teenage daughter trips on a nail that was sticking out at the top of the stairs, and tumbles down. She was a pretty cheerleader with a scholarship to Bryn Mawr in her pocket, and now she is paraplegic. She sues for negligence, and a sympathetic jury gives her a judgment for $10 million.

The problem is, you only have $2 million insurance coverage on the property. The insurance company hands over a check for the “policy limits” and walks away. You hand over the title to the property, which was worth $500,000. And you try to walk away too—but not so fast.

The plaintiff has now collected $2.5 million on a $10 million judgment, and her lawyers would really like to get the other $7.5 million. After all, they are on a contingency fee and they get paid 1/3 of what they collect. So the plaintiff’s lawyers now file motions with the court to allow them to “pierce the corporate veil” as they call it. If they are successful, they can get at the rest of your assets, which would mean you lose your home, investments, cars, other rental properties, and pretty much everything else you own (except IRA’s, which are protected).

But as long as you properly managed the LLC, they won’t be successful. Yes, you will lose the duplex that is in the LLC, but you won’t lose the rest of your life savings. Of course if you have been sloppy with the LLC, that is another story. I have seen a lot of these situations where someone has set up the entity, but then pretty much ignored it after that. They mixed business expenses with personal expenses, didn’t keep proper records, didn’t file biennial reports, and so forth. In those cases the judge will often let the plaintiff’s lawyers get at the personal assets. But not if you’ve been careful.

So what it comes down to, is a balance. If you create an LLC or corporation, you’ll have to file paperwork with the state and federal governments, and there will be a bit more bookkeeping than you would have had otherwise. But if you don’t, and something goes wrong within that business, you could lose everything.

To LLC or not to LLC, that is the question.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. I usually include a clever bon mot here to get you to read this last paragraph, but there’s a writer’s strike on.

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the event begins at 8 a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast provided. The next date is Aug. 9, at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, hosted by the Law Office of Constance Aschenbrenner.

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.

542 W. 2ND AVENUE ANCHORAGE, AK 99501 (907)276-1617 (800)270-1617 www.akeyedoc.com
Online photo frames, social media meltdown, iPhone Magnifier

By BOB DELAURENTIS
Bob’s Tech Talk

Q. I want to gift someone an online photo frame and update it myself remotely. Is that possible?
A. Yes, it is possible, but you will need luck and perhaps some patience. The frames that I have experience with are from a company called Nixplay (nixplay.com), and I recommend them without reservation.

Online photo frames require wireless internet, obviously. Make sure the recipient already has a Wi-Fi network.

When connecting a new device to Wi-Fi, there is always a chance that it will not work at first. Ideally, you can deliver your gift in person. That way, you can troubleshoot any difficulties directly. However, connection and setup problems are less likely nowadays, so don’t shy away from trying a remote setup with a less tech-savvy friend.

Nixplay has a feature called Preload that will allow you to set up a new frame with your photos. With luck, all the recipient needs to do is turn on the device, then enter your gift code and their email address.

If the recipient shares their Nixplay account information with you, it’s possible for you to log into their account in a web browser and make changes.

I have had a Nixplay frame on my desk for nearly three years. Since then, a number of other family members have added Nixplay frames to their households. They are a great way to share memories.

Q. What is happening in the world of social media?
A. Twitter, the social network that depended on short text messages, was sold in late 2022 and became a privately held company. Since then, it has undergone significant changes. Management has changed, the business model has changed, and many of the apps that used to work with Twitter are no longer supported.

In late July, they replaced the Blue Bird logo with the letter X, as part of the company’s new identity, X.com.

Twitter (X) is not alone. This year the entire social network space is going through a period of rapid change.

Facebook renamed itself Meta a few years back, but everyone still calls it Facebook. Nevertheless, Facebook, which also owns Instagram, used Instagram as the launchpad for a new service similar to Twitter called Threads.

Meanwhile, Mastodon and other less well-known social networks vie for attention and new users. I do not know how social media is going to look in a few years, or even a few months. Clearly the upheaval will result in more disruption in the coming days.

My advice for now: Try to ignore it and wait to see how the dust settles. If this summer’s social media meltdown has taught me anything, it’s that the connections we build on these platforms can disappear or become something entirely different in the blink of an eye.

Q. My eyesight is not what it was, especially in darker places. Can I use my iPhone as a flashlight?
A. Not only does the iPhone make a great flashlight in a pinch, it can also transform into a powerful lighted magnifying glass. The light may be off by default, but all you need to do is tap the flashlight icon on the right to bathe the subject in light.

This setup is perfect for reading a restaurant menu or deciphering the small type on a medicine bottle. If your hands are not steady, tap the large double circle icon to “hold” the viewfinder still.

These suggestions will get you started. I have added a link in the box with tips on how to do more with iPhone’s built-in magnifier.

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

iPhone Magnifier Tips
A list of tips and tricks you can do to customize and quickly access the iPhone Magnifier app.

support.apple.com/en-us/HT209517

Old School Web Directory
Remember the early days of Yahoo? It’s like that, except for quality blogs.

ooh.directory

Rotating Sandwiches
The whimsy makers online still have fun occasionally. Caution: might whet your appetite!

rotatingsandwiches.com

Wander the Web
Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

iPhone Magnifier
A list of tips and tricks you can do to customize and quickly access the iPhone Magnifier app.

support.apple.com/en-us/HT209517

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rotatingsandwiches.com

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Palmer Senior Center
1132 South Chugach Street, Palmer
Aug 7 | 9:30–11:30 a.m.

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Have you protected them?
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• Remain home without stress on the family
• Give control to those you trust when you’re not able
• Maintain control of assets for the sake of the family
• Additional stress on your family
• Losing control
• The need for long term care arise
• Additional stress on your family
• The need for long term care arise

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• Additional stress on your family
• Loss of what you spent a lifetime building

Proper Planning Ensures You:
• Maintain control of assets for the sake of the family
• Give control to those you trust when you’re not able
• Remain home without stress on the family, should the need for long term care arise
• Keep family business private

Senior Voice, August 2023 | 23
Alaska Railroad notes a century of operation
Multi-mode railway a boon to Alaska economy

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS
Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

“That the Alaska Railroad was ever built is astonishing,” writes Alaskan author Steven Levi in his rollicking history of the Alaska Railroad in “A Rat’s Nest of Rails: Tun-dra, Ice, Mosquitoes and Permafrost Saga of the Alaska Railroad” (signed copies available at https://authormasterminds.com/steve-levi).

It was a feat of engineering and pluck, resulting in 100 years of carrying freight and tourists, much to the benefit of Alaska.

“It was constructed over the most treacherous terrain in the world during the most violent political era in U.S. history,” Levi continues. “The workforce included anarchists, Bolsheviks, socialists, syndicalists, and labor union organizers against the backdrops of the First World War, Spanish Influenza, the Russian Revolution, American troops in Siberia to keep Russian socialism from our shore, Japan’s relentless gobbling of colonies from Southeast Asia to Siberia, and the Great Red Scare.

“It was built by the United States military to supply the United States Navy with coal and, in the process, closed coal mining in the Territory of Alaska—to the great anger of the private sector.

“Then there were the scavengers, land speculators, Natives and their land claims, blacks and discrimination, sedition, wages in scrip, permafrost freeze up/breakup, ration stamps, and environmental damage.”

Miles and miles of milestones

With the swing of a hammer President Warren G. Harding drove the last spike in Nenana on July 15,1923, decades before Alaska even became a state. The line ran 470 miles from Seward to Fairbanks.

But so much planning and sweat went into that day, driven—as so many projects in the state—by the desire to access potential mineral extraction.

With that in mind, in 1914, the federal government gave $35 million to begin its build and operation.

In the 1940s, World War II gave the Alaska Railroad a huge financial boost as it moved military supplies to strengthen Alaska’s defenses against threats from the Pacific sector of the war.

1943: Two tunnels are built through the Chugach Mountains to allow rail access to Whittier, a military port and fuel depot necessary to support the war effort. A new Anchorage passenger depot is completed in December.

1947: The inaugural run of the Aurora, a blue and gold steamliner, marks a new level of passenger service between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

In 1962, the first car-barge service is established in Whittier, followed by train–ship service in June 1963. This revolutionizes Alaska, enabling rail cars from the Lower 48 to be shipped to any point along the coastline.

Railroad CEO takes a look back and forward

Alaska Railroad President and Chief Executive Officer William G. O’Leary

William G. O’Leary has served as president and chief executive officer for 10 years and is responsible for the daily management and operations of the Alaska Railroad Corporation. Here he gives his thoughts on the railroad’s past and its future.

Looking back on the history of the railroad, what do you think were the most important decisions made that made the railroad so successful?

One of the pivotal moments in Alaska Railroad history was its purchase by the state and federal government in 1985. The late former Governor Bill Sheffield had great foresight into the opportunity that the $22 million purchase would mean for Alaska. That combination of grit, forethought and belief in the potential of the railroad helped make it what it is today. That decision set the railroad on a new track for infrastructure improvements and economic growth.

Another decision that has proven critical to the railroad’s success is the model put in place after the purchase by the state. Establishing the Alaska Railroad Corporation as a self-sustaining enterprise wholly owned by the state, but with a separate existence from the state with a charge to act similar to a private business, has permitted the ARRC to respond to a competitive marketplace in a timely fashion.

As for the future, are there any plans for expansion of rail lines within the state or connecting to other rail lines to access the Lower 48?

There are three expansion projects at various stages of development. In the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Port Mackenzie Rail Extension adds 32 miles of new rail line to connect to the borough’s Port Mackenzie. Mat-Su Borough is a project sponsor and while much of the foundational infrastructure is complete, substantial capital is needed to complete the project—approximately $200 million.

Further north, the Northern Rail Extension would extend the rail line just over 80 miles from North Pole to Delta Junction. Phase 1 of the project was completed in 2014, building the Tanana River Bridge. Current estimates to complete the additional phases to Delta Junction is in the $1.5 billion range. While the Department of Defense and the State of Alaska were the main funding sources for initial planning and Phase 1, a public–private partnership may be explored as a future funding option.

Finally, the Alaska Canada Rail Corridor is a proposed rail network between Alaska and Canada. A private sector company recently invested significant funding in feasibility and detailed engineering phases for the project; however, the estimated rail corridor cost is around $30 billion. There are no current investors for this project.

What is your favorite part of your job?

It is knowing that the Alaska Railroad and its employees serve as a driver of economic growth for the state and its residents. We get the opportunity to provide visitors a window into the vastness, beauty and hospitality that is Alaska, while also ensuring residents receive the transportation, resources and commodities they need to continue developing their projects and businesses. Getting to be a part of that growth is my favorite part of this job.
**Centennial celebrations**

### All Aboard: The Alaska Railroad Centennial

On view May 5, 2023 – Feb. 18, 2024, Anchorage Museum Atrium, first floor. Opening in the centennial year of the completion of the Alaska Railroad, this exhibition created in collaboration with Alaska Railroad historians and experts looks at the history, impact and legacy of the railroad through archival images, objects and ephemera. Examining three key eras of railroad history spanning the 20th and 21st centuries, the exhibition highlights crucial moments, technological innovations, and human stories connected to the railroad and its operations in Alaska. “All Aboard” includes public programs presented in collaboration with the Alaska Railroad, community clubs, and railroad enthusiasts, also referred to as “foamers,” so called because they are thought to foam at the mouth at the site of a steam train.

**Limited Edition: Centennial Special**

12 days/12 nights, available late May – early September 2023

Ride the Coastal Classic, Glacier Discovery and Denali Star Trains the full length of the Alaska Railroad’s historic main line; entry to the Anchorage Museum’s special exhibit; a wildlife cruise in Kenai Fjords National Park; Spencer Glacier float trip; and a Denali wildlife tour. $6,175 GoldStar Service or $5,155 Adventure Class. Value Season pricing available for September departures.

**Alaska Railroad open house in Fairbanks**

Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023

The Alaska Railroad’s community open houses have returned, just in time to celebrate the railroad’s 100-year anniversary in 2023. The event provides Alaskans with a unique opportunity to interact with railroaders and to learn about the state’s railroad, with train rides, static displays of railroad locomotives, and many more family-friendly activities. Free to all.

**Train art**


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**Railroad**

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The Alaska Railroad. This integrated system of hauling goods off ships for distribution across the state currently earns approximately 44 percent of its revenue, according to ARRC.

In 1964, the Good Friday Earthquake hits Alaska on March 27. At a 9.2 magnitude, it is the most powerful quake recorded in North America’s history. Railroad damage from the quake estimated at $30 million. In an amazing turnaround, freight service from Anchorage to Fairbanks is restored on April 6, passenger service on April 11, and freight service to Whittier resumes April 20.

In the early to mid-1970s, the Alaska Railroad supports construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline by receiving shipped pipe and storing it on railroad land in Valdez, Seward and Fairbanks. The railroad also hauled pipe from Valdez and Seward to Fairbanks, where it was then trucked to the North Slope. The railroad workforce increased to more than 1,000 between 1970 and 1975.

In the mid- to late 1970s, the Federal Railroad Administration sought to transfer its ownership of the Alaska Railroad. With this in mind, railroad personnel prepared for some kind of transition to be sold, transferred or dissolved. The railroad endured an infrastructure-poor and equipment-strapped era as investments declined while options were mulled.

In 1984, the Alaska Railroad develops new passenger services with the cruise industry, accepting contracts to pull new web-based passenger reservation system is implemented; and the railroad initiates a program to install auxiliary power units and software technology on locomotives to reduce diesel emissions and noise.

In 2007, the Alaska Railroad Corporation and U.S. Forest Service introduce a new Whistle Stop Service to the Chugach National Forest.

How you can contribute to the Centennial

Help the railroad capture your unique stories about the Alaska Railroad with its new storytelling project, “Tales from the Rails,” that will gather anecdotes, memories and milestones. Email stories to AKtales-fromtherails@gmail.com and further instructions will be sent.

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**Into the Chugach Mountains on a trip from Whittier to Seward.**

Dimitra Lavrakas photo

**President Harding drives in the golden spike that completed the Alaska Railroad, Nenana, July 15, 1923.**

Weeks later after he left Alaska, Harding died—some say from bad seafood eaten in either Haines or Skagway, but most opine a stroke.
maintain their nutritional value up to a year after being frozen, some can last up to 18 months.  

Berries are outstanding sources of a variety of nutrients, including vitamin C, potassium and magnesium. They also can benefit the stomach as microbiome-promoting natural fiber and other bioactive plant compounds like anthocyanins. A review of 23 randomized controlled trials found that berry intake is linked with beneficial effects on markers of heart disease risk, such as blood pressure, cholesterol, artery function and blood sugar.

Beyond those at the supermercator, there are many berries unique to certain locations and climates and not as widely known, like elderberries or goji berries. Nutrition experts at Tufts University in Boston, Massachusetts report that there are more than 25 different types of berries around the world, and more than 400 different species of varying colors, sizes, flavors and nutritional profiles.

Berries and brain health

Eating more fruit and vegetables, including berries, seems to protect the brain. Compounds found in berries not only protect the brain from oxidative stress, but also counteract other factors linked to Alzheimer’s disease. In addition, studies suggest berries may help protect against the negative effects of a high fat diet and help boost a person’s mood and decrease the risk for developing depression. Most of the controlled human trials that have been published used blueberries. It is hypothesized that other berries, including raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries, also have many of the bioactive compounds that improve brain health.

Care and storage

Summer is the perfect time to enjoy a variety of fresh berries and explore varieties unique to where you live, such as lingonberry. Berries can spoil relatively quickly, wasting money, nutrients, and environmental resources. Storing them correctly can significantly lengthen their life.

Nutritionists recommend you refrigerate un-washed berries in their packages or in a single layer in a spacious container with a loose-fitting, breathable cover. If they begin to spoil, transfer them to the freezer. They are then ready for smoothies, oatmeal topping, baking, or sauces whenever you want them.

Serving ‘sweet spot’

Buying your berries frozen is a good option all year long, according to Taylor C. Wallace, who is an adjunct professor in the Dept. of Nutrition and Food Studies at George Mason University in Washington, D.C. “Frozen berries are generally picked at peak ripeness, when they are most nutritious. Once harvested, they are washed, packaged, and frozen within a few hours,” said Wallace. “Many ‘fresh berries’ in the grocery store are picked before they are fully ripe, which can affect their nutritional content and they have less time to develop the full range of vitamins, minerals, and bioactives. I actually personally prefer frozen berries for the taste and nutrition.”

Wallace said the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that the average adult consume two servings per day of fruit. The majority of clinical studies show that two servings per day of fresh berries is really the “sweet spot” when it comes to preventing disease and long-term health maintenance.

“We see this with both cognition and heart disease. Many of the foods we consider to be heart-healthy are also healthful in helping to prevent cognitive decline later in life. I personally love berries and consume them raw almost every day,” said Wallace, who grows blueberries, blackberries and strawberries in his backyard.

Fresh berries are at their seasonal best right now, and a good time to add them to fruit salads and green salads. Pureeing them and freezing them into popsicles can be as fun as well. Wallace recommends using them as a sauce for chicken, fish or any dish in need of a punch of flavor.

Nutrition expert Taylor Wallace grows blueberries, blackberries and strawberries in his backyard but says he prefers frozen berries for their taste and nutrition. Photo courtesy Taylor Wallace.

Diverse

continued from page 4

environment that supports the mental well-being of everyone, regardless of racial or ethnic background. Raising awareness about the unique mental health challenges that minority communities face is another crucial step. National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month serves as an opportunity to elevate the conversation about the unique struggles faced by these communities, but it is important to elevate the conversation every month. It’s time to educate ourselves and others about the disparities in mental health care, how systemic racism contributes to these disparities, and what we can do to help.

Lastly, we need to advocate for inclusive mental health support. This can take the form of pushing for policies that ensure access to culturally and linguistically competent mental health services; supporting organizations that are working toward the same; and consciously including minority mental health in our conversations about overall health and well-being. Here are some proposed federal legislative changes you can support:

- Comprehensive Care for Alzheimer’s Act
- Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act
- HCBS (Home and Community-Based Services) Access Act

This article is part of an ongoing series by the Diverse Elders Coalition, examining different senior demographic groups.

Smart shopping

Nutritionists say you can increase your berry intake and stretch your berry buck by shopping seasonally. Prices are lowest when fresh berries are in season and long after general, berries don’t ripen much after picking. Dietitians recommend fresh berries that are richly colored, firm, plump, and dry, without mold, bruises, dents or blemishes.

Frozen berries, which are available year-round, are often less expensive. They tend to be just as tasty and nutritious, and have a long storage life.

Berries and sugar

One of the relatively unique things about berries is that we eat both the fruit and the seeds, which is a potential reason for greater health benefits, as well as antioxidants. If you’re concerned about the high sugar content in most berries, there is no need. Scientists have found that the sugar in berries is contained within the intact structure of the food, greatly slowing the speed of digestion. Other compounds in berries, such as the fiber, slow digestion and offset potential harmful effects of the natural sugar. Studies suggest that adults who eat more fruit, including more berries, have a lower risk of developing diabetes.

Crossword answers from page 18


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Crossword answers from page 18

**Muscles**  
*continued from page 5*

This is a reliable indicator of bone density, and considerably less expensive than DEXA scans. The way to keep bones strong is movement – every day – and also supplementing vitamin D3 to keep serum levels in the 50 to 90 ng/mL range. If you don’t know your vitamin D3 level, get that checked. You can go to a health fair or order a home kit for $45 online.

Multiple factors contribute to age-related muscle loss and this typically starts as early as in our 30s, accelerating after age 60 to as much as 10% per decade. Losing strength can be frustrating but don’t give up. Muscle is very dynamic tissue and “turn-over” (creation of new muscle cells) happens continuously until death.

The loss of skeletal muscle (the source of our strength) was classified as a disease fairly recently. Sarcopenia involves the long slender muscle cells becoming less contractile, like a rubber band losing elasticity, as well as mutations occurring at the neuro–muscular junctions, where the muscle cells connect to the nervous system and where brain signals to initiate movement take effect. Mutations can build up over time but there is a remedy for reducing them – eat a diet high in vegetables, lean protein and unprocessed carbs.

**Diet and hormones**

Poor diet will absolutely exacerbate diminishing re-pair of mutated (less functional) muscle cells. Make every bite count. There are zero health benefits for refined/processed/packaged foods, especially the array of refined carbohydrates, such as store bought pizza crust, crackers, cookies, chips, candy, etc., including the ultimate refined carb, alcohol.

Hormone changes are another contribution to age-related muscle loss and hormone supplementation may be a worthwhile consideration for you. This is a highly personal decision to be made with your health care provider.

Nevertheless, the main driver for loss of muscle mass is a decrease in physical activity. Whether you use a walker or are in a wheelchair, or can still climb stairs, plan to get moving every day. Your muscles need it, and so does your spirit. Good diet helps everything, but maintaining muscle comes down to continued movement. Maintain your gardening, or take it up; use your bicycle or install a stationary bike at home; find a senior dance class or yoga class, walk the dog daily, even if you don’t have one.

Muscle loss is a contributor to severe falls and accidents, which precede physical disability in older adults. You don’t need bulky muscles; regular movement will improve strength even if muscles don’t get bigger. So get moving to improve the quality of your life.

**Emily Kane is a naturopathic doctor based in Juneau. Contact her online at [http://www.dremilykane.com](http://www.dremilykane.com).**
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907-343-7770 www.muni.org/adrc

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

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

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

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

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

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