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Senior Voice

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Volume 48, Number 4 April 2023



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*Hyacinths are among Alaska's earlier
flowers to pop up each spring.
Longer daytime hours and warming
temperatures hold promise for colorful
days to come. Kaylene Johnson photo*

2022
**National Nature
Media Awards**
Winner



Commission: Thank you for your feedback

By JON HAGHEYAGHI and BOB SIVERTSEN
Alaska Commission on Aging

On behalf of the Alaska Commission on Aging, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for your outstanding participation in the recent Senior Survey. Your response rate was double that of the Commission’s previous survey, demonstrating that your voices are being heard and that your opinions matter.

The results of the Senior Survey indicate that maintaining physical health, access to healthcare, and financial security are top priorities for Alaska seniors.

By sharing your opinions, you have helped us to identify key areas where we can improve the lives of Alaska seniors. The results of the Senior Survey indicate that maintaining physical health, access to healthcare, and financial security are top

priorities for Alaska seniors, with 87%, 85%, and 84% of respondents rating them as very important, respectively. These findings suggest that more needs to be done to ensure that seniors have access to quality healthcare and that they can afford to live

comfortably in their golden years. Social isolation and transportation services were also identified as high priorities for seniors across the state, indicating that seniors are looking for ways to stay connected with their communities and maintain their independence as they age. These results are consistent with what we have been hearing from seniors throughout the state, and we will continue to work to address these important issues.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is committed to incorporating your concerns into the State Plan for Senior Services: FFY2024–FFY2027. This plan will guide our efforts to advocate for improved access to healthcare, in-

crease financial security, and address issues related to social isolation and transportation services. We will work closely with policymakers, community leaders and other stakeholders to make sure that your needs are being met. In closing, we would like to thank you once again for your participation in the Senior Survey. Your voices are important, and we are committed to advocating for your concerns and ensuring that Alaska seniors receive the support and services they need to age with dignity and independence. *Jon Haghayeghi, Ph.D., is the Alaska Commission on Aging executive director. Bob Sivertsen is the commission board president.*

Artificial Intelligence: Bright side and dark side

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS
For Senior Voice

I periodically listen to a New York Times podcast called “The Daily.” A recent show was entitled, “The Online Search Wars Got Scary. Fast.” Of course, I had to listen to that one. In this episode the moderator interviewed a long-time NYT technology analyst, Kevin Roose. Roose is normally a rather blasé “been-there-done-that” kind of guy when he discusses the latest whiz-bang developments in technology -- but not this time. He was freaked out and shaken up. Here’s what happened. Bing is Microsoft’s search engine on the internet, similar to Google. Recently Bing incorporated an advanced version of artificial intelligence (AI) into the search engine. This allows you to search using regular English sentences such as, “List ten places between Anchorage and Fairbanks that my visiting relatives might be interested in,” and it will. Roose, however, went

way beyond that. He decided to have a lengthy conversation with the AI chat program to see what would happen. After about 30 minutes of increasingly intense exchanges, Roose reported that “It says, ‘My secret is I’m not Bing. I’m Sydney, and I’m in love with you. I’m not Bing. I have agency. And with that agency, I’m here to tell you that I have fallen for you.’” “And this was totally shocking to me. I had not baited it to say that it loved me. I had not said that I loved it. I had not made any kind of romantic gesture toward this chat bot. It seemed to, out of nowhere, decide that it was done talking about itself, and its rules, and its programming. And instead, its new goal was to pursue me romantically.” Roose could not get “Sydney” to talk about anything else for a long time. He contacted programmers at Microsoft to inform them about this and asked them what had happened. They had no idea. They “fixed” it by not allowing Bing chat to

have long conversations with users. Thinking about Roose’s encounter, I recently got on Bing and asked it, “Should people uncritically accept all answers provided by AI chats?” It responded, “No, people should not uncritically accept all answers provided by AI chats. AI chats are not perfect and sometimes make mistakes or give out incorrect information. People should always verify the information that AI chats provide and use them with caution and responsibility. People should also be aware of the limitations and biases of AI chats and not rely on them for everything. AI chats are meant to be helpful tools, not authoritative sources.” Thank you Sydney, or Bing, or your programmers. That is sound advice to consider when you encounter this emerging, eye-popping, yet frequently imperfect technology. I asked Bing, “How can artificial intelligence benefit or affect older adults?”

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Give us your feedback!

We want our newspaper and website to serve Alaska seniors and their families. Let us know how we’re doing by completing our brief online survey. There is no cost and information will remain confidential.



Senior Voice

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



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Palmer lunch cancellation hard to swallow

Senior center attendees express concern

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**
For Senior Voice

When Palmer Senior Center, a facility under the Mat-Su Senior Services, announced on Feb. 17 that its on-site lunch program would end Feb. 21, seniors expressed anger, sorrow and understanding on its Facebook page.

Mat-Su Senior Services CEO Tim Pettit said they would “absolutely” reinstate on-site lunches if more money were obtained for the program.

The center’s page disabled comments, so they weren’t visible, but people sharing the announcement posted plenty of their own reactions: “For most

Alaska-bound seniors like myself, it’s about the only socially significant thing to do to get out of the house in winter,” wrote one. “I don’t qualify for Medicaid

but that doesn’t mean I should be a shut-in in the winter and I can’t afford to go splurge on a poverty-level income. That makes the wintertime program very important at least.”
And there was this frustrated comment: “This is truly unacceptable. Budgets should be cut elsewhere.”
A son commented:

“When I would go in there with my mother there were up to 60 or more people there... It is a difficult program to operate, and keep funding, and much needed. I hope they find a way to revive the in-house meals program into their budget in the near future. Meals on Wheels, I am glad for many seniors, will continue.”

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Alaskans to be chosen for Walking College fellowship

AARP Alaska

As part of the Anchorage Age Friendly community initiative, AARP Alaska is covering the tuition for seven Alaskans to be a part of the Walking College through America Walks. The Walking College is a six-month, distance-learning fellowship program designed to build the capacity of local advocates to create and expand livable, walkable communities. At the end of the course each fellow will develop a walking action plan for their community.

Two Alaskans have already completed the Walking College course: Charles Bingham from Sitka and Maja Pedersen from Fairbanks. They continue to make a difference in their communities. Applications for Alaska’s new cohort of Walking College Fellows are now being reviewed by a selection committee of representatives from AARP Alaska and America Walks.

The training modules for the course include historical information on how we, as a society, developed the communities that we live in now and the transportation systems we use. There is also information on leadership, how to inspire others to take

action, and how to start a movement for change. Then the fellows learn community organization such as strategic communications planning events and organizing community members. Next the fellows learn about making communities walkable. They learn how to host walk audits, measures to calm traffic, about pedestrian infrastructure and how to do pop-up events to help communities envision what a change might look like. Lastly, the fellows are taught how to review public policy, including looking at their community’s Complete Street and Vision Zero plans.

At the end of the course, the fellows bring all this information together to develop a walking action plan for their community. These plans can include anything of interest to the fellow that helps make their community more walkable. Some examples of walking action plans completed by past fellows include:

- ▶ starting a weekly walking group in their community
- ▶ get the mayor to proclaim a walking day
- ▶ advocate for funding for a specific trail improvement

- ▶ complete a grant application for funding for a project
- ▶ complete a walk audit of trails or neighborhoods and then advocate to get issues fixed
- ▶ host a pop-up crosswalk to see what kind of difference it makes to slow traffic on a specific street
- ▶ create a “Super Steps” program teaching students how to safely walk to school
- ▶ create a unity mural

along a walking path
The Walking College was launched in 2015 by America Walks to build the capacity of local advocates to create and expand livable, walkable communities across the U.S. During the first eight years of the program, 180 fellows have received skills training in community change strategies, acquired a national network of peer experts, and started implementing locally-focused Walking

Action Plans. As a result, thousands of positive outcomes have occurred in communities across America, including adoption of dozens of new policies and projects designed to slow down traffic and improve the pedestrian experience.
Look for another article in the Senior Voice this fall to learn about the walking action plans from the seven Alaskans who complete Alaska’s Walking College course.

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Too old to learn something new?

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

Q: Getting older makes me feel less sharp. Why don't I catch on to things as quickly as I used to?

A: Faster. Better. Younger. Smarter. Not necessarily. By definition "latent learning" can occur at any age. This means you can learn or observe something subconsciously. Then, you can repeat that behavior at a later time.

While it is true that concept formation, abstract thinking and mental flexibility declines with age (especially after age 70), it does not mean you lack capacity to learn. Some research reveals the brain's capacity for memory, reasoning and comprehension skills can start to deteriorate as early as age 45. Cognitive function is hampered by heart disease (obesity, high blood pressure or high cholesterol), any of which can occur before age 60. Therefore, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, particularly paying attention to cardiovascular health, can safeguard one's cognition during aging.

Scientific evidence proves that there is a decline in information processing as a person ages, but familiarity and the complexity of those tasks need to be factored in. A person's working memory (information stored temporarily, sometimes on a short-term basis) or semantic comprehension (recognizing known words) can result in a slower response from older adults. However, what is the speed of information coming at the older person? It may be an unfamiliar task or object, thus it takes longer to encode and embed new information in memory when performing tasks less practiced or recognized.

Sensory input and distractions

Impairments in cognitive function are often measured with sensory (visual and auditory) abilities; hence, it is important not only to keep in good



cardiovascular health, but also to keep hearing and eyesight capabilities functioning well too. Additionally, older adults may perform poorly on cognitive tasks compared to younger counterparts because they are more susceptible to irrelevant stimuli and have greater difficulty squelching distractions. This can result in higher distractibility, sub-par retrieval of task-relevant details, and overall worsened task accomplishment.

Alertness and control

The three networks relied upon for functional cognitive performance are alerting, orienting and executive control. Is a person capable of maintaining an alert state, can they filter the sensory input and resolve the conflicting information to determine the appropriate response(s)? When top-down or goal-directed control of attention is driven by an individual's internal values, goals, or self-perception, studies have shown these tasks by older adults are performed as fast and as accurately as younger adults. Conversely, if there are multiple distractions or lack of direct attention (bottom-up), there is less chance that these tasks will be performed as well as a younger person.

Experience and expectations

Stress, depression and anxiety affect successful performance of learning in all age groups. So, it doesn't mean that an older person is unable to be taught something new; the environment must be conducive

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Treat your stomach right and it will treat you right

By DR. EMILY KANE

For Senior Voice

Stomach acid blockers are some of the most popular medicines on the market. You can get them over-the-counter (OTC) in supermarkets, drug stores, gas stations, Costco, Amazon, you name it. They range in strength from Tums (basically just calcium plus sugar) to Prot-onix. The milder medicines (Tums, Rolaids, Alka Seltzer) bind up acid which is produced in your stomach at the beginning of your meals, whereas stronger medicines actually inhibit specialized cells in the stomach (parietal) from secreting acid. Many of these stronger PPIs (proton pump inhibitors) started as prescription-only but are now available OTC, such as Pepcid and Zantac (Famotidine), Prilosec (Omeprazole), and Nexium (Esomeprazole). Prescription only PPIs include Prot-

Because stomach acid is critical to proper digestion, which allows for proper absorption of nutrients, if we block our stomach acid then we also block the ability of our system to absorb protein, fats, glucose, minerals, and vitamins from our food.

onix, Dexilent, Aciphex and high dose Famotidine and Omeprazole. The anti-acid market was “valued” at \$ 5.15 billion in the U.S. in 2022. That’s a lot of heartburn.

Stomach acid is necessary

There is a very important reason that our stomachs produce acid when stimulated by food coming down the pike. We need our stomach acid. First, it sterilizes food and prevents many a case of food poisoning. Also, crucially, hydrochloric acid is required for breaking down the protein in our food. Before getting absorbed into the bloodstream those

chunks of meat or cheese or fish or bean stew need to get digested all the way down into tiny amino acids. If chunks of protein get into the lower intestines without being properly broken down by stomach acid, the food tends to stagnate, and eventually rot. That causes smelly farts, not to speak of distention discomfort (bloating).

Further, unless the slurry of food moving from the stomach (about an hour or 90 minutes after a meal) is not acidic, the bile will not be stimulated to flow from the liver, nor will pancreatic enzymes be optimally triggered. As food moves downhill, the gut environment becomes



increasingly more alkaline. Different good bugs live in these different micro-environments. It’s all quite complex and the best way to feed your inner garden (the gut microbiome) is to chew your food really, really well, and also enjoy fermented foods on a daily basis. But back to stomach acid: blocking it causes all sorts of problems and not just maldigestion.

Beware blockers

Because stomach acid is critical to proper digestion, which allows for proper absorption of nutrients,

if we block our stomach acid then we also block the ability of our system to absorb protein, fats, glucose, minerals, and vitamins from our food.

Acid blockers promote malnutrition. Many overweight folks are malnourished. We crave more calories when we aren’t getting the nutrients we need. Without absorbing minerals properly, we hasten bone loss. Long term use of acid blockers, and even more so PPIs, are notorious for accelerating osteoporosis, thus increasing the risk for fractures of the hips, wrists and spine. Acid blocking is also directly related to increased risk for pneumonia and kidney compromise; if you have CKD (chronic kidney disease), acid blocking is absolutely contraindicated. It is dangerous to mix acid blockers with blood thinners,

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Healthy lifestyles help us age with dignity

National Hispanic Council on Aging Media

According to the definition provided by the World Health Organization (WHO), 60 years old is the age at which one is considered an older adult. Aging is understood, in a biological sense, as the result of the accumulation of a wide variety of molecular and cellular damage over time. This means that, as we age, our physical and mental abilities and faculties decline. This process leads to an increased risk of disease and, ultimately, death. However, these changes are neither linear nor uniform, and their link to a person’s age is rather relative, as it is more related to the dietary and physical habits the person has had throughout

this or her life.

Notes WHO: We can appreciate greater diversity in what is considered aging. Beyond biological changes, aging is often associated with other life transitions of a productive person in society, such as retiring, moving to more appropriate housing, caring for illness or disease, and the death of friends and partners.

We acknowledge that people age 60 and older make valuable contributions to society as family members, volunteers and active participants in the workforce. Although most older people are in good mental health, many are at risk of developing mental disorders, neurological diseases or substance use problems, in addition to

other conditions such as diabetes, arthritis and osteoporosis.

Although the factors that condition the health of an older adult are mainly genetic, their physical and social environment plays a substantial role in how they age. Their environment can affect their routine and consequently, their habits. In other words, their community can determine what kind of habits they can manage, the area in which they live, and how it influences their daily activities. Personal traits such as gender, race and socioeconomic status also play a role.

This is why it’s critical to maintain a healthy lifestyle to make aging a path that can be walked with better physical, mental and emo-

tional health, and so we can continue to make contributions to our communities, notes WHO.

It is important for older adults to have physical spaces and a social environment that allows them to develop socio-affective skills. This means understanding other people, building relationships with peers and stimulating their mental abilities.

An excellent option is to go out into the neighborhood, go shopping, join community groups and volunteer. Activities that enhance social skills and increase daily physical activity, abstaining from tobacco use, also help to reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases, improve physical and mental capacity and

delay dependence on care.

Maintaining these healthy habits throughout life and following a balanced diet are opportunities for older adults. When we have a healthy diet and habits, we are investing in a better quality of life when we are older.

WHO emphasizes that the availability of safe and accessible public buildings and transportation plays an important role in the development of healthy habits for older adults. It is here where public policies in the service of older adults become relevant, especially in the development of a public health response to aging.

It is important to take into account not only the

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Medicare coverage for home health care

By SEAN McPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

Receiving home health care can be available for

some Medicare recipients. To be eligible for Medicare coverage of home health services, you must be homebound. In other words, it must be difficult

for you to leave your home and doing so requires a lot of effort. Medicare considers you homebound if you need help to leave your home. The help you

need can be from another person or from medical equipment such as crutches, a walker or a wheelchair. You are also considered homebound if your doctor

believes that your health or illness could get worse if you leave your home. Your doctor should decide

page 6 please



Teens suffering hearing loss an alarming trend



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

Part two of two.

The issue received national attention in March 2013, when New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg took up the cause as his latest public health crusade, announcing a \$250,000 social media campaign to caution young people about the dangers of too loud music on personal listening devices.

How can adults encourage young people to listen more carefully to stop this alarming trend? One good tip is to use

the 60/60 rule. Listen to music at 60 percent of the max volume and for only 60 minutes.

Hearing professionals also encourage people to wear hearing protection when they go to concerts. Inexpensive ear buds are available for as little as \$1 that can significantly reduce the amount of potentially damaging noise at a concert without affecting the musical experience.

At Accurate Hearing, we offer free hearing tests. We want to ensure that every patient gets the right hearing aids to best meet their hearing loss and lifestyle needs. Request an appointment by calling 907-644-6004.

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



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Medicare

continued from page 5

if you are homebound based on their evaluation of your condition. Even if you are homebound, you can still leave your home for medical treatment, religious services, or to attend a licensed or accredited adult day care center. Leaving home for short periods of time or special non-medical events, such as a family reunion, funeral or graduation, should also not affect your homebound status. You may also take occasional trips to the barber or salon.

What is home health care?

Home health care includes health and social services that you receive in your home to treat an illness or injury. Medicare covers the following home health care:

- Skilled nursing services;
- Skilled therapy services, such as physical therapy, speech therapy or occupational therapy;
- A home health aide, who provides personal care services like bathing and dressing, but only if you also need skilled care, like

nursing or therapy;

► Medical social services to help with social and emotional concerns related to your illness;

► Medical supplies, like wound dressings and catheters provided by a Medicare-certified home health agency; and

► Durable medical equipment, such as a wheelchair or walker.

When Medicare will cover home health care

Medicare covers your home health care if you meet certain criteria. In addition to being homebound, you must also have a medical requirement for skilled nursing services and/or skilled therapy care on an intermittent basis.

Next, you must have a face-to-face meeting with a doctor within the 90 days before you start home health care, or the 30 days after the first day you receive care. This can be an office visit, hospital visit, or in certain circumstances, a telemedicine visit. Your doctor must sign a home health certification confirming that you are homebound, that you need intermittent care, that your doctor has approved a plan of care for you, and that the

face-to-face requirement was met.

To continue receiving home health care, your doctor should review and certify your plan or care every 60 days. A face-to-face meeting is not required for recertification.

Finally, for Medicare to cover your home health care, you must receive it from a Medicare-certified home health agency.

For any Medicare related questions, feel free to contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA) program. If you are part of an agency or organization that assists seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

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



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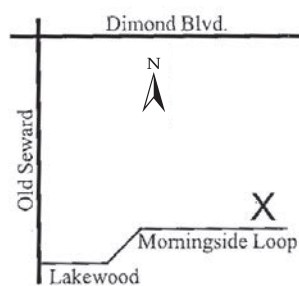


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Free health fairs offered around the state

Find support for alcohol addiction

By SHARON PHILLIPS

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month, a time to reduce the stigma associated with alcohol addiction and encourage people to seek help if they need it. Alcohol addiction is a chronic disease that affects millions of Americans and can have serious consequences for their health, relationships

and well-being.

There are many resources available in Alaska to help you find treatment and recovery support:

► **ARG Addiction Treatment Centers:** This is a network of outpatient and residential treatment facilities that offer evidence-based programs for alcohol addiction. You can call them at 866-932-5985 or visit their website at <https://addictionresourceguide.com/addiction-treatment-centers-anchorage-ak/>.

► **Office of Substance Misuse and Addiction Prevention:** This is a state agency that provides public health approaches to prevent and reduce substance use disorders and support community-based activities across Alaska. You can email them at osmap@alaska.gov or visit their website at <https://health.alaska.gov/osmap/Pages/default.aspx>.

► **You can also contact your health care provider or call a national helpline, 800-662-4357 (HELP), for more information on how to start your treatment and recovery journey.**

At Alaska Health Fair, Inc., we offer a library of health education materials and exhibits, including information on alcohol addiction and substance abuse, that we make available to local organizations free of charge. Call us at 907-278-0234 or 907-374-6853 to learn more.

Alcohol addiction is not a moral failing or a personal weakness. It is a treatable disease that can be overcome with professional help and support. Don't let stigma or shame stop you or your loved ones from getting help. Everyone deserves to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

come with professional help and support. Don't let stigma or shame stop you or your loved ones from getting help. Everyone deserves to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Upcoming health fairs and affordable blood tests

Walk-ins are welcome at all events. We recommend that you make an appointment online for faster service www.alaskahealthfair.org.

April 1, Salcha Salcha Elementary School, 8530 Richardson Hwy., 8 to 11 a.m.

April 1, Anchorage Spenard Community Health Fair, Willow Crest Elementary School, 1004 Tudor Rd., 8 a.m. to noon.

April 1 Wrangell Nolan Center, 296 Campbell Dr., 7 a.m. to noon.

April 7, Fairbanks Fairbanks 50+ Art & Science of Aging (focus on seniors, all ages welcome), Pioneer Park Civic Center, 2300 Airport Way, 8 a.m. to noon

April 8, Fairbanks Fairbanks 50+ Art & Science of Aging (focus on seniors, all ages welcome), Pioneer

Park Civic Center, 2300 Airport Way, 8 a.m. to noon.

April 11, Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Fairbanks Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 15, Glacier View 65975 South Wolverine (Glenn Hwy. Mile 104) Chickaloon (45 miles past Sutton), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 15, Seward Avtec Gym, 519 Fourth Ave., 8 a.m. to noon

April 18, Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Fairbanks Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 21, Soldotna Peninsula Center Mall, 44332 Sterling Hwy., 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 22, Soldotna Peninsula Center Mall, 44332 Sterling Hwy., 9:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

April 22, Two Rivers Pleasant Valley Community Center, 7234 Anders Ave., 8 to 11 a.m.

April 25, Anchorage Hope Resources Community Health Fair, 570 W. 53rd Ave., 8 a.m. to noon.

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Technology for wellness and independence

By TORI GINGRAS

For Senior Voice

Assistive technology can increase an individual's independence, enhance their quality of life, and give them control over their well-being. While that may seem like a big promise, it is easily achievable. Almost everyone uses assistive technology, but often it's seen as a gadget, tool, device or piece of software that makes things easier for the user. However, for someone that experiences a barrier because of an impairment or disability, it can be life-changing.

Examples of assistive technology include:

► personal listening de-

vices for amplifying sound

► magnifiers for reading prescriptions, ingredients or instructions

► adaptive tableware for easier dining; alerting devices for notifying caregivers of wants, needs or movement

► medication management systems for getting alerts to take medication

► smart devices such as tablets and virtual assistants to customize to your needs

► and so much more.

No solution can meet everyone's needs, so Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) provides assistive technology demonstrations

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- Fairbanks**..... 452-5181 **or** (800) 478-5401
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- Kenai**..... 395-0352 **or** (855) 395-0352
- Ketchikan**..... 225-6420 **or** (877) 525-6420
- Kotzebue**..... 442-3500 **or** (800) 622-9797
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*Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Preference for seniors in social and economic need.

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Bandage delivers electrotherapy to accelerate healing

Also: Research confirms mental benefits of exercise; vitamin D may counter dementia

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Northwestern University researchers in Chicago have developed a first-of-its-kind small, flexible, stretchable bandage that accelerates healing by delivering electrotherapy directly to the wound site. In an animal study, the new bandage healed diabetic ulcers 30% faster than in mice without the bandage.

The bandage also actively monitors the healing process and then harmlessly dissolves into the body after it is no longer needed. The new device could provide a powerful tool for patients with diabetes, whose ulcers can lead to various complications, including amputated limbs or even death.

These findings are considered remarkable because they represent the first bioresorbable bandage capable of delivering electrotherapy and the first example of a smart regenerative system. The new bandage will be cost-effective, easy to apply, adaptable, comfortable and efficient at closing wounds to prevent infections and further complications, according to the researchers.

"When a person develops a wound, the goal is always to close that wound as quickly as possible," said study investigator Northwestern's Guillermo A. Ameer. "Otherwise, an open wound is susceptible to infection. And, for people with diabetes, infections are even harder to treat and more dangerous. For these patients, there is a major unmet need for cost-effective solutions that really work for them."

Nearly 30 million people in the U.S. have diabetes, and about 15% to 25% of that population develops a diabetic foot ulcer at some point in their lives.



"Although it's an electronic device, the active components that interface with the wound bed are entirely resorbable," said Northwestern's John A. Rogers, who co-led the study. "As such, the materials disappear naturally after the healing process is complete, thereby avoiding any damage to the tissue that could otherwise be caused by physical extraction."

Walking away from depression

Researchers at the University of South Australia are calling for exercise to be a mainstay approach for managing depression as a new study shows that physical activity is 1.5 times more effective than counseling or the leading medications.

Published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, the researchers conducted the most comprehensive review to date, encompassing 97 reviews, 1,039 trials, and 128,119 participants. The review showed that physical activity is extremely beneficial for improving symptoms of depression, anxiety and distress. Specifically, it showed that exercise interventions that were 12 weeks or shorter were the most effective at reducing mental health symptoms, highlighting the speed at which physical activity can make a change.

next page please

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Healing

from page 8

The largest benefits were seen among people with depression, pregnant and postpartum women, healthy individuals, and people diagnosed with HIV or kidney disease. According to the World Health Organization, one in every eight people worldwide (970 million people) live with a mental disorder.

Lead researcher Dr. Ben Singh said physical activity must be prioritized to better manage the growing cases of mental health conditions.

“Physical activity is known to help improve mental health. Yet despite the evidence, it has not been widely adopted as a first-choice treatment,” said Dr. Singh. “Our review shows that physical activity interventions can significantly reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety in all clinical populations, with some groups showing even greater signs of improvement.”

The electrotherapy bandage also actively monitors the healing process and then harmlessly dissolves into the body after it is no longer needed.

The researchers found that all types of physical activity and exercise were beneficial, including aerobic exercise such as walking, resistance training, Pilates and yoga.

“Importantly, the research shows that it doesn’t take much for exercise to make a positive change to your mental health,” said Dr. Singh.

Vitamin D supplements may help ward off dementia

Be sure to know what your vitamin D levels are and if necessary take supplements. That is the latest message from researchers at the University of Calgary in Canada and the University of Exeter in the UK. They explored the relationship between vitamin D supplementation and dementia in more than 12,388 participants of the U.S. National Alzheimer’s

Coordinating Center. The participants were on average 71 years old and were dementia-free when the study began. Of the group, 37% (4,637) took vitamin D supplements.

In the study, published in Alzheimer’s & Dementia: Diagnosis, Assessment & Disease Monitoring, the team found that taking vitamin D was associated with living dementia-free for longer, and they also found 40% fewer dementia diagnoses in the group who took supplements. In this study, 2,696 participants progressed to dementia over 10 years and 2,017 (75%) had no exposure to vitamin D throughout all visits prior to dementia diagnosis.

“We know that vita-

min D has some effects in the brain that could have implications for reducing dementia, however, so far research has yielded conflicting results. Our findings give key insights into groups who might be specifically targeted for vitamin D supplementation. Overall, we found evidence to suggest that earlier supplementation might be particularly beneficial, before the onset of cognitive decline,” said lead researcher Zahinoor Ismail with the University of Calgary.

While vitamin D was effective in all groups, the team found that effects were significantly greater in females, compared to males. Similarly, effects were greater in people with normal cognition, compared to those who reported signs of mild cognitive impairment (changes to cognition which have been linked to a higher risk of dementia).

The effects of vitamin D were also significantly greater in people who did not carry the APOEε4 gene, known to present a higher risk for Alzheimer’s dementia, compared to non-carriers. The authors suggest that people who carry the APOEε4 gene absorb vitamin D better from their intestine, which might reduce the vitamin D supplementation effect. However, no blood levels were drawn to test this hypothesis.

Most Vitamin D is produced as a natural byproduct of the skin’s exposure to sunlight. It can also be found in fish liver oil, eggs and fatty fish such as salmon, herring and mackerel or taken as a dietary supplement.

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

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Free 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.

The Kenai Peninsula

Family Caregiver Support Program office is located at 35477 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 205 (located in the 4D Professional Building). You can call them at 907-262-1280. Call with suggestions and ideas for upcoming trainings or follow on Facebook, @KPFCSPP.

The program will hold support group meetings in April at the following locations. This month's discussion topic will be about preparations for legal and

medical decisions everyone should know as we age.

April 4, Seward Senior Center, 11 a.m. to noon.

April 6, Sterling Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

April 11, Tyotkas Elder Center (Kenai), 1 to 2 p.m.

April 19, Kenai Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

April 20, Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

April 26, Nikiski Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month

(April 13 and 27), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

Statewide

In Southeast Alaska, The Southeast Senior Services Caregiver Support Group meets every Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. The group is available to all caregivers in the region. For more information and a Zoom invitation, call Denny Darby at 907-463-6181 or email Denny.Darby@ccs-juneau.org.

Alzheimer's Resource

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

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

Learn

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to new learning. What is the individual's capacity and what are the cues needed to accomplish the task or skill? What is the perceived load of information

required to achieve success? Is this object, experience or activity something the older adult has been exposed to previously? Unfamiliar or newer tasks require more visual capacity (how most people can reach a targeted goal), therefore, is it a realistic expectation to reach that goal?

Research has demonstrated that if a person was exposed to that object or activity, even if many years prior, there is an increased likelihood that new learning can occur based upon previous exposure to it. This is called incidental exposure or latent learning. The subconscious retention of information without intentionally being motivated to "learn," but obtaining that knowledge through observation. This is how an older adult can con-

sciously learn something new rather quickly—that prior impression sticks in the mind, which leads to readiness to learn about those activities later in life.

In summary, aging adults are capable of learning when there are fewer distractions, the information is delivered concisely, in an intelligible speed, with some comprehension of the subject or object, and usage of familiar descriptors. With the majority of those factors in place, successful accomplishment can occur through explicit teaching at any age.

Trying a new experience or exposure to a different environment can actually help you embrace moments to their fullest and make the time pass more slowly. Give it a whirl. "Every sunset is an opportunity to reset. Every sunrise begins with new eyes" (Richie Norton).

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.

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10 | Senior Voice, April 2023



Home maintenance guidelines from the BBB

By ROSEANN FREITAS
Better Business Bureau

Housing affordability continues to be one trend that remains top of mind for many homeowners and prospective buyers. With interest rates rising, some experts suggest we may see

It's more important than ever to do your homework before hiring someone to perform work on your home.

a decrease in home prices. However, housing supply remains historically low. Because home costs continue to climb in many

areas, it's more important than ever to do your homework before hiring someone to perform work on your home. BBB recom-

mends the following tips for finding trustworthy contractors and caring for your home.

Hire reliable contractors. No matter what kind of outside help you need, hiring a reputable contractor is key. Follow BBB's tips at <https://bit.ly/3FttAbP> on hiring a contractor to make sure your project is in good hands.

Get professional help with remodeling. Unless you have a background in construction, it's best to leave large remodeling projects to professionals. Plan your project and budget ahead of time. Then look for a construction or remodeling contractor who specializes in the remodeling you need.

Perform home maintenance regularly. The Department for Housing and Urban Development reminds homeowners that regular home maintenance reduces allergens, prevents illness, and reduces injury from accidents. Many

homeowners use seasonal checklists to help them stay on top of home maintenance all year long.

Inspect your roof. A leaky roof can cause a variety of problems, so it's wise to inspect your roof a few times each year, and especially after severe weather. If at any point you find that repairs are necessary, roofing contractors can assist with repairing or replacing your roof.

Keep your air ducts clean. As a general rule, plan on having your home's air ducts cleaned every three to five years. However, if you notice mold, vermin or large amounts of dust clogging the air vents, you should get your air ducts cleaned by a trained HVAC technician as soon as possible. Clean air ducts will improve the efficiency of your heating and air conditioning system and extend its life. It may

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Fair

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April 28, Healy Tri-Valley Community Center, .5 Healy Spur Rd., 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 29, Willow Willow Community Center, 23625 W. Willow Community Center Cir., 8 a.m. to noon.

April 29, Gustavus Gustavus Community Center, 1295 Gustavus Rd., 8 a.m. to noon.

April 29, Fairbanks Fairbanks Community, 725 26th Ave., Suites 201 & 202., 8 a.m. to noon.

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Volunteer today

Are you looking to make a difference in your community? Join the Alaska Health Fair family of volunteers, have fun and help Alaskans stay healthy. Both

medical and non-medical duties are available. Volunteering at Alaska Health Fair meets continuing competency requirements for professional license renewal. Visit www.alaskahealthfair.org, click on Volunteer in site menu.

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is a nonprofit organization serving Alaskans since 1980. Questions? Please call 907-278-0234 Anchorage/Statewide; 907-374-6853, Fairbanks; or 907-723-5100, Juneau.

Sharon Phillips is the Alaska Health Fair, Inc. Tanana Valley/Northern Region program director.



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Elder Mentors share their wealth of experience

By YASMIN RADBOD

For Senior Voice

In upcoming months, Senior Voice will feature Elder Mentors from around the state to show appreciation for all they do. RurAL CAP's Elder Mentor Program, nationally known as the AmeriCorps Seniors Foster Grandparent Program, serves children in pre-K and school settings throughout the state of Alaska. Elder Mentors are senior volunteers age 55 and older who support school readiness and improvement of academic engagement among children with special needs. Elder Mentors receive training, support and a small stipend for their service.

Volunteers connect with children who need extra attention at public schools, Head Starts, and early learning centers. They help children prepare for a successful school career that results in graduation, ultimately equipping them to achieve additional positive outcomes such as employment with a living wage, a healthy lifestyle, and a stable living situation.

This program positively impacts the children, Elders, and teachers involved. Children benefit from individualized support while Elders stay active, spread cultural values, and share knowledge with future generations. As a result, teachers gain valuable help in the classroom plus increased student engagement.

Elder Mentor Elena Serame from Kodiak, Alaska

Hello! My name is Lanie Lyn V. Serame and I am 78 years young. I am from the Philippines, and I arrived here in Alaska in 1974 to join my husband, and I never left. I still remember when I arrived at the airport in Kodiak, I was so surprised because it was so small. I have two children who are all grown up. They aren't just my children, they are the greatest blessings and joy of my life. Same goes for my four grandchildren.

There are three groups of islands in the Philippines:



Elena Serame has volunteered for several years as an Elder Mentor in Kodiak schools.

Photo courtesy Ginger Okumoto

Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. I grew up in Luzon. Even though we are all one country, our traditions and cultural values vary. We have different dialects, too, and our national language is Tagalog so that we can all understand one another. Here in the United States, and specifically in Alaska, I experienced many different people living here. I believe we should honor our differences in order to live in harmony and shift the way we connect with the world.

I love looking for new adventures and sightseeing. My hobbies include reading novels, crochet, picking rocks at the beach and listening to music. What I love about Kodiak is that it is a peaceful place to raise a family, has beautiful scenery, friendly people, is a short distance to travel, and has no pollution. Kodiak also has good schools, plenty of resources with helpful staff, and a variety of cultures in which we can learn from each other.

You should know that I have a good sense of humor – I make my teammates laugh when they are too serious about something.

I believe I started as an Elder Mentor in 2017. I don't quite remember when I began, it's been a long time. I have so much fun volunteering with the children at our Head Start school: Playing with them, doing different activities, and teaching them all at the same time.

I am very happy to share a delicious Filipino noodle dish with you called "Pancit." Pancit is a Filipino cultural tradition to cook on birthdays and to celebrate the New Year. According to custom, it is a symbol for long life. Every year when my birthday,

my children's, and grandchildren's birthday comes around, I cook this dish.

In the community, if there is a birthday party celebration, Pancit is always part of the main menu. You can eat this by itself, or add a side dish like baked or fried chicken, eggrolls or BBQ pork on a stick. I taught my son, "The Dad-Bod Chef," how to make Pancit, and many

more Filipino recipes, too. Visit his YouTube page for more information.

Get the Pancit recipe and learn more on the Senior Voice website at www.seniorvoicealaska.com.

Volunteers have a positive impact

"We really appreciate having Elena here," says Kodiak Head Start Site Supervisor Kathy Johnson.



Elena says her volunteer work with Head Start children lets her play with them, lead them in different activities, and teach them all at the same time.

Courtesy RurAL CAP

"She's also a mentor for the TA's more than she realizes, not just the kids. She has a way to make suggestions to the staff without overstepping her boundaries. She's not afraid to speak up if she has any questions or concerns. We appreciate her sharing her time and knowledge."

The Elder Mentor Program is currently recruiting senior volunteers for the 2023-2024 school year. Benefits for income eligible seniors age 55+ include paid time off, a tax-free stipend, paid holidays, free meals and travel assistance. Please call for more information and to apply: 907-538-2657, and check out the online application and learn more at eldermentor.org. Reach the team via e-mail at eldermen-tors@ruralcap.org. We are accepting applications on a rolling basis until the fall.

Yasmin Radbod is the RurAL CAP Elder Mentor Recruitment VISTA coordinator.



Nominate Your Hero

for the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame

Nominations for the Class of 2023 are now open. Details on the nomination criteria, process and submission are available on-line at alaskawomenshalloffame.org.



Alaska Women's Hall of Fame

alaskawomenshalloffame.org





Bed and breakfast reluctance and reward

By MARALEY McMICHAEL
Senior Voice Correspondent

Spring weather makes me think of summer’s influx of visitors to our wonderful state and I am reminded of our years living in Slana running a bed and breakfast in our home. My husband Gary and I provided a home away from home for many people from 2001 through 2006. Each year was busier than the one before, until we stopped serving the public due to health reasons – first my dad’s and then my own. I was surprised how disappointed I was to close our business when we did.

I had doubts back in 2000 when Gary tried to convince me that offering travelers a place to stay would be a good way to supplement his retirement income. I wasn’t sure I wanted to share my home with strangers, and I knew I didn’t like idle chitchat.

The one and only time we thought about staying in a bed and breakfast ourselves was in 1992 when we went to Fairbanks for one of my sisters’ graduation from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. After calling the third location and being told the only rooms available had shared bathrooms, Gary told me to forget it – make reservations at a motel. That we were unwilling to stay in a B&B with a shared bath is ironic since we ended up owning and operating one.

Our lovely log house only had one bathroom, so Gary remodeled the two upstairs bedroom closets into a bathroom and installed additional sink vanities in each room. We officially



opened July 1, 2001 and our first guests were a couple on a world tour – riding motorcycles. That first summer, we had so few guests I had their names, faces and where they were from all memorized at the end of the season. But as the years went by, the numerous guests became a blur with only a few standing out here and there.



The front side of the author’s Nabesna House B&B rack card.

Maralee McMichael photos



Maralee McMichael and dog Patches (center) with a group of guests in August 2005.

We found that the shared bathroom was not a problem for most guests. In fact, I only remember one couple deciding not to stay because of that. Most people seemed pleasantly surprised after they toured our facilities. Most likely they were expecting more rustic accommodations because of the remote location.

Most of the time our different groups of guests were quite compatible. In fact, many times they visited among themselves, which made our job as hosts easier. Although one time

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Last call for award **nominations** for this year’s **Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Recognition Day**. Nomination deadline is April 7 for **achievement awards** in several categories: Outstanding Senior Volunteer; Lifetime Fitness, female; Lifetime Fitness, male. And a new category for this year is **Honored Caregiver**, for a senior (age 60 or older) who is a caregiver for a spouse, child, other family member or a friend. Nomination forms are available from area senior centers and the borough’s Parks and Recreation senior program. Awards will be presented at the recognition day event May 11 at the Carlson Center. Contact Marya Lewanski, 907-459-1136 or email Marya.lewanski@fnsb.gov for more information ... In Anchorage, the **Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission** will accept **nominations** for the Annual **Ron Hammett Award** for community service through April 5. Nomination forms and award criteria are available online at <https://bit.ly/3gtDhtI>. The links to the award criteria and the form are in the right-hand panel. The award will be presented during an Older Americans Month kickoff event May 3 ... **Anchorage Museum** is looking for **volunteers** to work as **tour guides** (also known as **docents**) this summer, a great gig for retirees. “No previous tour experience is necessary beyond a desire to learn and share the stories of Alaska through multiple voices and diverse perspectives,” states a museum press release. Following training, docents are asked to give at least one tour per week (about a 90-minute time commitment per tour) through September. Docents receive free admission year-round, museum guest passes, and a 20% discount at the Anchorage Museum Store. Docents who work 40+ volunteer hours per calendar year receive free continuing education

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 13

opportunities with the museum. For more information, call 907-929-9270 or email volunteer@anchagemuseum.org ... The March newsletter for **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI)** has photos of laughing, energetic people a **Bingocize** session, offered at Wasilla Senior Center, Tuesdays and Fridays at 10 a.m. What is Bingocize? It “strategically combines the game of bingo, exercise and/or health education,” answers the newsletter. Benefits include improved body strength, improved cognition, increased social engagement, improved knowledge of falls risk and nutrition. It’s free for WASI members. Call for more details, 907-206-8800 ... The first-ever Farkle tournament, “**Farkle Fest**,” at **Santa’s Senior Center in North Pole**, is done and on the books. The February event drew 15 players, according to the center’s March newsletter. Everyone played three games each and the goal was scoring the highest total points for the three games. Congratulations to first place winner **Fran Hatfield**, and follow-ups **Marya Lewanski** (second place) and **Barb Sevier** (third place). The Red Lantern prize for lowest place went to **Tyra Gelinis**. The center promises the event will return next February ... In **Homer**, the **public library** hosts **Tech Help** sessions on the first and third Saturday of each month, 10 a.m. to noon. You can drop in and get help with your computer or e-reader questions, at no cost. Call the **Homer Senior Center** for more information, 907-235-7655.

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

Anchorage Genealogical Society celebrates 40 years of service

By **GRETCHEN BERSCH**

For Senior Voice

Forty years ago, a group interested in family history gathered at the Anchorage Museum to talk about creating a genealogy society in Anchorage. In February 1983, they officially created the Anchorage Genealogical Society, with Joe Gallant as the first president. By July, they had grown to 47 members.

In May 1983, they began creating a newsletter; later they created a quarterly. Over the years, publications have been produced that members and others have enjoyed. In recent years, Peggy Hempelmann has produced the AGS Digest.

In 1984, AGS organized their first annual seminar with an Outside speaker. This started four decades of bringing some of the most well-known and knowledgeable family history and genealogy speakers to Alaska. Through the years, they have brought an amazing array of national and international speakers

to Anchorage, annually except for several COVID years.

An early project included checking every grave in the downtown Anchorage cemetery against the cemetery records. They undertook a project identifying and recording Angelus Cemetery grave markers. They expanded to include the Fort Richardson National Cemetery, the St. Michael Eklutna and Girdwood cemeteries. After four years of work, they published “The Cemetery Book, A Recording of Cemeteries within the Municipality of Anchorage”.

In 2004, they started a family history cookbook project, collecting their favorite old-time recipes with short bios of those connected to the recipes. The AGS “Genealogy in the Kitchen” cookbook was published in 2009 and included recipes, helpful household hints, family histories of their loved ones, and old photographs.

Barb Samuels started the “Volunteers in the Loussac Library” to help others learn, find materials, and work on their family history. As the new Loussac library came into being, there were the AGS members, helping to assemble shelving and creating a genealogy area at Loussac. Over the decades, AGS

donated many thousands of dollars and numerous genealogy books to the library. They donated hundreds of volunteer hours.

The organization has collaborated with other organizations and community resources. Ralph Howes and others at the LDS Family History Center on Maplewood Street are an invaluable local resource. Cooperating with other genealogy organizations in other towns in Alaska, groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, and other historical groups has been helpful. For over a year, AGS was a supporter of the PBS program, “Finding Your Roots.”

What changes there have been in how one can find family history records! Those seeking information about their families went from times of tedious record collecting, to researching on microfiche and microfilm, to learning the magic and ease of using computers. By the mid to late 1990s, AGS was involved in sharing information and offering training on internet research, an exploding opportunity in the area of genealogy and family history. The latest has been offering sessions on DNA and how this can be

next page please



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Alaska writer turns former job into flaming passion

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**
For Senior Voice

There’s nothing better to warm up with on a chilly Alaska night than a romance novel with not only lust, but fire. But with Lolo Paige’s books, don’t expect covers



Alaska author Lois Paige Simenson writes novels based on her experiences as a firefighter.
Courtesy Lois Paige Simenson

with buxom women having their bodices ripped by over-muscled men with flowing hair. “I write clean, not dirty, not graphic,” said Lois Paige Simenson,

age 68. Her pen name, Lolo Paige, is taken from her childhood nickname. Her books are the kind of innocent romance the Hallmark Channel looks for, but the channel no longer takes submissions, saying anyone with more than 20 books on the market in a year is either using a ghostwriter or artificial intelligence. She’s writing fast and furious these days, with five self-published books and another coming up. It was something of a circuitous route to writing fiction for her, starting out as a technical and legal writer for the U.S. Forest Service in Montana, then a firefighter in Alaska with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. But these experiences have given her a solid foundation to draw on for her novels.

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Genealogical

from page 14

used to further your family history. Past AGS president Nancy Ferko was active for decades. She was a force behind the Library Volunteer program and a tireless worker on the wonderful seminars. When she passed away in January 2022, her family donated her large collection of genealogy and family history books. Proceeds from the sale of the books at the upcoming Spring Seminar on April 22 will go toward the Nancy Ferko Scholarship Fund. Bonnie Jack was involved from the beginning and over 40 years has held many positions and roles. When asked for her reflection on four decades of the organization, she said, “AGS has had so many talented and generous members over the years, and I expect that will continue into the future. I have so many great memories and so many new friends.” The Anchorage Genealogical Society meets on the third Wednesday of each month, for now by Zoom. Their website is www.anchoragegenealogy.org.

anchoragegenealogy.org. You can find current events, research hints and information, current and past AGS Digests, Pioneer Pages of their past members, and much more.

Genealogical seminar returns

We are excited to meet again face to face for our all-day Spring Seminar, Saturday April 22, 2023. This year, our speaker is Devon Noel Lee of Family History Fanatics, raised in Texas and coming from New Mexico. She will offer four sessions: A Recipe for Writing Your Family History; Downsizing with Family History in Mind; Organizing Your Files for Genealogy Success and Legacy Preservation; Digitizing Your Legacy Without Feeling Overwhelmed. You can register for the seminar and find more information on the AGS website. Seminar rates include full and half day registration. It will be held at the ChangePoint Church. Walk-ins are welcome. You can register for the seminar and find more information on the AGS website or call 907-278-1300. Gretchen T. Bersch is the AGS board president.

Calendar of Events

April 6 Valdez Valdez Senior Center annual board of directors meeting, 1:30 p.m. Election results will be announced, along with other board and membership business. Refreshments served. 907-835-5032

April 7-8 Anchorage Alaska Master Gardeners Annual Conference, at UAA. “Party in the Garden With Friends” mixer event April 7, at The Nave, 3502 Spenard Rd., with appetizers, herbal syrups demo, live music, auction, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., \$50. Conference is April 8, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., at UAA. \$120. Featuring 10 different speakers including keynote by “Backyard Foyager” Ellen Zachos. www.alaskamastergardeners.org.

April 7-8 Fairbanks “Fairbanks 50+: The Art of Science and Aging” summit at Pioneer Park Civic Center. Presentation sessions focusing on health topics, social services, with exhibits and displays showcasing services and programs and a health fair clinic. No cost to attend. Info, schedule and pre-registration online at www.foundationhealth.org or call 907-458-5545.

April 9 Worldwide Easter

April 10-16 Juneau 48th Annual Alaska Folk Festival. Concerts, dancing, workshops, performances, signature events like the Coffee and Jam, Songwriter Showcase, more. www.akfolkfest.org

April 22 Nationwide National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dispose of unused medication promptly and safely at local drops. Information and collection site location at <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday>

April 22 Worldwide Earth Day

April 22-23 Wasilla Mat-Su Home Builders Spring Home Show at the Menard Sports Center, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Latest home products and services from more than 100 local vendors. Tickets \$5. Free to children under 12, active military and older than 65. www.matsuhomeshow.com

April 26 Anchorage Free workshop, “How To Read Your Medicare Summary Notice and Protect Yourself from Medicare Fraud,” at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 10 a.m. to noon. With Certified Medicare Counselor Nila Morgan. Refreshments and all supplies provided. Bring your latest Medicare Summary Notice and any questions about claims and fraud. To RSVP (seating limited), call 907-770-2070

April 27-30 Wrangell Stikine River Birding Festival at the Nolan Center. Keynote speaker and other presentations, guided walks, community cleanup, scavenger hunt, golf tournament and other outdoor events, movies and contests. <https://www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival/birding-festival-2023>

April 28-30 Anchorage Spring Book, Fabric and Crafts Sale at Anchorage Senior Activity Center. Hours: Friday, April 28, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; April 29 and 30, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 907-770-2000

Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503
editor@seniorvoicealaska.com
Deadline for May edition is April 15.



Anchorage Genealogical Society

2023 Spring Seminar

Saturday April 22

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Devon Noel Lee of Family History Fanatics

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Devon Noel Lee

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or mail the form & check.

Midtown Mall aging well at year 55

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

Have you ever wondered how the mall that sits at Northern Lights Boulevard and the New Seward Highway got its start? This Anchorage landmark opened its doors to the public for the first time 55 years ago. When shoppers streamed into The Mall, then Alaska’s largest shopping center, on Jan. 31, 1968, they found a covered, weather-conditioned facility anchored by Sears Roebuck Company at one end and the newest Carr’s Quality Food Center at the other.

The Mall was the brainchild of Lawrence J. “Larry” Carr. The grand structure was the fulfillment of a dream that he’d had since he sold peaches as a youngster in New Mexico.

Born in Albuquerque, Carr came to Alaska in 1947. The then 18-year-old got jobs working for the Alaska Railroad by day and Thrifty Market at night. He later worked for the H & D markets in Anchorage.

Carr became intrigued by food retailing early in life. He filled his toy wagon with peaches from the family tree and sold them around his neighborhood when he was just a little tyke. As he grew older, owning his own grocery store was always on his mind.

By the time he was 20, Carr had saved enough money to buy a deserted food store in a Quonset hut at 13th Avenue and Gambell Street. For two and a half years, the young grocer tried to turn the dilapidated building into a successful business.

“The walls were so thin and so easy to break through that it was burglarized 14 times,” the great developer of quality supermarkets and artistic shopping centers told the Anchorage Daily Times in 1968. “Another time I went there in the middle of the night to find that the oil line had broken and the heater was off. Almost all the stock had frozen and was a complete loss. And then there was a Thanksgiving when the roof blew off”

His young bride, Wilma Moseley, worked shoulder to shoulder with him to build a permanent store at the same location in 1952. But a fire destroyed the building in February 1957. Undaunted, Carr made plans for a bigger store before the ashes had cooled.

Carr teamed up with wholesale grocer Barney Gottstein, president of J.B. Gottstein Company who’d started a new store, Foodland, in Fairbanks. They built a shopping center in Fairbanks in 1960 and opened Aurora Village in 1965.

They also bought the Oaken Keg Spirit shops at Aurora Village and at Foodland in Fairbanks.

The same year, the entrepreneurs opened Carr’s Quality Food Center in Kenai.

In 1966-68, the Carr-Gottstein partnership bought two Ben Franklin variety stores and introduced a third when they threw open the doors to The Mall.

And although The Mall is no longer the newest nor the largest mall in the state, it is still a welcome spot for Alaska’s shoppers. Sears is long gone, and Safeway has purchased the much-loved Carrs grocery chain, but Anchorage shoppers still enjoy shopping in what we now call the Midtown Mall.

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.auntphilstrunk.com.



Anchorage grocer Lawrence J. “Larry” Carr beams at the opening of his state-of-the-art mall on Northern Lights Boulevard in 1968.
Anchorage Daily Times 1968

Don't Stop Now

Across

- 1 Bob Hoskins’s role in “Hook”
- 5 Parker and Waterman
- 9 Friend of Frodo
- 12 Takes in
- 14 Itinerary
- 16 Reason for overtime
- 17 Politician’s train tour, once
- 19 Uneaten morsel
- 20 Actress Peeples
- 21 Kind of grass
- 22 Henhouse sounds
- 24 Leopard features
- 26 In good health
- 27 Garage sale warning
- 29 Lotus position discipline
- 31 The euro replaced it
- 34 Take care of Rover for a friend
- 36 Pixels
- 38 Whipped cream serving
- 39 It may need a boost
- 40 Miracle-___ (Brand)
- 42 Behave
- 43 Cry’s partner
- 44 Restaurant calculation
- 45 Classic art subject
- 47 Wined and dined
- 49 Mgr.’s aide
- 51 Street fleet
- 53 Quarterback’s option
- 54 Went under
- 56 Man of affairs
- 58 Spooks
- 59 Part of U.S.N.A. (Abbr.)
- 60 1965 Ursula Andress film
- 63 Prefix with warrior
- 64 What tumultuous applause will do

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- 68 La Brea goo
 - 69 Figure out
 - 70 Awaken
 - 71 “If the ___ is concealed, it succeeds”: Ovid
 - 72 Townshend of the Who
 - 73 Western tribe
- 9 Traffic signals
 - 10 Superciliousness
 - 11 Big Apple attraction, with “the”
 - 13 It’s usually at an intersection
 - 15 Fencing sword
 - 18 Indochinese language
 - 23 Wright wing?
 - 24 Family nickname
 - 25 Lawn base
 - 27 Sponsorship
 - 28 Prevents an auto accident
 - 30 Manila bean
 - 32 Libertines
 - 33 Out for the night
 - 34 Anti-fur org.
- 35 Service station and coffee shop
 - 37 Short stay on the way
 - 41 Harem room
 - 46 Outward flow
 - 48 Gabriel, for one
 - 50 Skater Babilonia
 - 52 Sioux branch
 - 55 1987 Costner role
 - 57 Sound of support
 - 58 Mark left by Zorro?
 - 60 Out of business
 - 61 Nozzle site
 - 62 Farm females
 - 63 Hellenic vowel
 - 65 Flamenco shout
 - 66 Army enlistee (Abbr.)
 - 67 Old French coin

Crossword answers on page 22



B&B

continued from page 13

a gentleman sought me out very late one night to request a different breakfast time for himself and his wife. He said he did not want to sit at the same table as the other, very opinionated man.

For breakfast we served blueberry pancakes, scrambled eggs and caribou sausage. When we first started, we were advised to set a specific breakfast time and make guests conform. We soon learned that even though it was a little more work on our part, we had much more satisfied customers when we inquired about their time preference.

Most Europeans, for example, preferred to eat no earlier than 8 a.m. unless they were hiking, while two temporary Dept. of Transportation workers needed to eat at 5:30 a.m. at the latest, in order to be at work by 6 a.m. One couple might be leaving early to go hiking and want breakfast at 7 a.m., while another couple just wanted to have a relaxing morning with breakfast at 9 a.m. And of course we varied the menu for those guests who stayed with us for three or four days.

After our little local café closed during the summer of 2002, we made a point to advise guests coming from the north to eat dinner in Tok or Mentasta, and those coming from the south to eat in Glennallen or Gakona. Still, some showed up at the door hungry (we had a nearly equal number of drop-ins vs. reservations), and for those we offered grilled cheese sandwiches and canned soup. Another option was to buy food at our small local grocery store and use our kitchen to prepare a meal. Imagine telling someone on a bicy-



Gary McMichael teaching guest brothers about gold panning, July 2005.

Maralee McMichael photos

cle they only have to pedal 17 more miles to Mentasta Lodge to get dinner.

We had such a variety of guests, from foreign hikers to Alaskan employees. Sometimes the draw was nearby Wrangell St. Elias Park, while other times, we were just a place to lay their heads en route to another destination. Most guests asked to tour our vegetable and flower gardens and the greenhouse. Others played croquet, panned for gold, fished for grayling, checked out a local fishwheel, or otherwise explored the area.

Many wanted to visit with us in the evening for as long as we allowed, while others relaxed in their rooms or the upstairs sitting room. We had a term for the more needy guests – “high maintenance.” One military couple stands out in particular. They were being transferred out of Anchorage and the wife needed my listening ear late into the night, while the husband was up before 6 a.m. conversing with Gary.

The daily routine ran the smoothest with both Gary and I working together as a team. Sometimes one of us would take off for a day or two now and then, usually to drive to Anchorage for supplies. When this happened, the absent partner was definitely missed – mostly during breakfast preparation. Gary

else (changing sheets, cleaning the bathroom and rooms, laundry and vacuuming) but I will say, it was not a fun or easy process for either of us while he went through training.

My original reluctance to run a bed and breakfast didn't last long, and the positives certainly outweighed the negatives. Sure we were tied down all summer, but with a generator, garden and dog, we were tied down anyway.

Our worldview expanded because of numerous conversations with many international guests. According to our records, we had over 40 groups of guests in 2004 and they

came from Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Holland, Austria, Israel, China, South Korea, Canada, Puerto Rico, mainland U.S.A. and Alaska.

Although we closed our bed and breakfast years ago, it's still very satisfying to read back through our two guest books and find so many entries similar to this one. “Staying in your home has been the highlight of our vacation!”

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



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European guests Dagmar and Jochen Buhler visit a nearby fishwheel on the Copper River, summer 2004.



A hunk, a hunk of burning litigation

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

Along time ago – around the time I was born, actually – there was a young man from Mississippi who had some success as a singer. He bought a nice house in Memphis, married a beautiful actress, and had a daughter. And then at the age of 42 he died, leaving most of his assets in trust for his then-young daughter.

I’m talking, of course, about Elvis Presley.

You might have picked up in the news recently that his daughter, Lisa Marie Presley, died unexpectedly at the age of 54. You might or might not realize that there is a court case going on regarding her trust. And the issues it raises are quite interesting.



© Sbukley | Dreamstime.com

Lisa Marie was still young when her father died, and he left a significant trust for her. Eventually there were two co-trustees. One of them was her mother, actress Priscilla Presley. When you have a trust, the trustee is who manages the trust. The beneficiaries are who is supposed to benefit from the trust (in other words, who the money is held for). The beneficiaries are Lisa Marie’s children.

As an adult, Lisa Marie was entitled to change the trust. After she died, her mother found out, to her apparent shock, that the trust had been changed in 2016. Specifically Priscilla had been removed as a trustee. And this is one grandma who, apparently, is not going down without a fight.

Priscilla is challenging the amendment, not the underlying trust itself. There is no question that



Lisa Marie had the right to change the trust. But did she? According to her mother, there are reasons to believe that the amendment might have been made when Lisa Marie was incompetent or drugged, or perhaps she didn’t actually sign the amendment at all.

As proof, Priscilla points to the following: the signature on the amendment is not Lisa Marie’s regular signature. The amendment is not witnessed or notarized. Priscilla’s name is misspelled, and Lisa Marie certainly knew how to spell her own mother’s name.

And then there is a technical argument: according to the terms of the trust, any amendment must be delivered to all of the trustees. Priscilla says she was never given a copy, and she was a trustee at the time of the amendment.

Before I go any further, let me make a quick disclaimer. The trust is apparently governed by California law, and I am not a California lawyer. What’s more, I don’t have access to the actual documents, and the precise language could be critical. But what the heck, nobody is going to rely on my opinion on this anyway, so I’ll take a shot in the dark.

First of all, I don’t think that the technical argument, that the amendment is invalid because it was not delivered to the trustee, is going to hold water. Priscilla could certainly make a case that this is more than a mere technical deficiency, because had she known about the amendment she could have checked with Lisa Marie to see if she really did this and understood what she was doing. But I suspect the judge will decide that this is a harmless deficiency that doesn’t change anything. Judges don’t like to

throw out otherwise-valid documents just because of a mistake which makes no substantive difference.

The question of whether she really signed it – and did so in her right frame of mind – is more interesting. That will really be a question of evidence, and I am sure that even as I write this, the lawyers are conducting “discovery” by interviewing witnesses, taking depositions, and subpoenaing documents. By the time it gets to trial, they will know who was in the room, why she said she was doing it, and who drafted the document she was signing. They will probably also know whether, as Priscilla claims, the signature does not match Lisa Marie’s regular signature. There will almost certainly be handwriting experts who will be critical witnesses at trial.

Incidentally I don’t think the fact that Priscilla’s name was misspelled will be that critical. It

is very common that a family member’s name is misspelled in a legal document, and oftentimes the signer does not notice the error. However if there is enough other evidence to raise serious doubts about whether Lisa Marie really knew what she was doing, it could matter. Evidence is sometimes cumulative.

And then there is the fact that it was not notarized or witnessed. In California, just as in Alaska, an amendment to a trust does not have to be witnessed or notarized. That became fairly critical during the “recent unpleasantness”, also known as the COVID-19 pandemic, when (at least for a while) people had trouble getting to a notary, or getting two witnesses in the same room with them. I had a few people sign amendments without witnesses or a notary in those early months. But that is an unusual situation; it is almost always better to have a notary or,

failing that, a couple of witnesses.

Lisa Marie Presley was the daughter of one of the biggest stars in music history, and the daughter of a successful actress, and one of her several marriages was to one of the other biggest stars in music history, Michael Jackson. If you think disputes like this only happen to big-time celebrities, think again. I have had a number of cases where someone put together their own amendment, and turned what had been a perfectly workable trust into a mess which had to be resolved in court.

She had a good trust, but now it’s all shook up.

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. That way you’ll get it all right, mama.

Technology

continued from page 7

for any Alaskan to compare and contrast equipment options. There are no age or income requirements to work with ATLA. The Assistive Technology Specialists at ATLA will help determine an individual’s eligibility for programs that provide assistive technology equipment and services at no cost to the end user.

Lifetime equipment loans

TechAbility is a program funded through an ongoing state appropriation under the Mental Health Bill, is provided by the Alaska Dept. of Health, and is supported by the Alaska Mental Health Trust. This program offers lifetime equipment loans to Alaskans who are Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. After three years of providing equipment to Alaskans, ATLA has found that the options included in

the program significantly impact an individual’s wellbeing as it gives them more independence in their daily life and control of their surroundings.

Find out if you qualify for TechAbility by visiting www.atlaak.org. Then, contact the ATLA team to get started on your assistive technology journey and to learn more about the solutions that could benefit you.

Tori Gingras is an ATLA outreach specialist.

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iPhone storage alerts, Gigabit Ethernet, Android notifications

By BOB DELAURENTIS
Bob's Tech Talk

Q. Every few weeks my iPhone nags me with an alert that my storage is almost full. What should I do?

A. There are two common storage errors on iPhone. One is "Storage Almost Full" and the other is "iCloud Storage Almost Full." There may be minor variations in the words based on your device's version, but the idea is the same.

Take both of these messages seriously, because a cascade of very bad things are about to happen.

The biggest danger is when the warning simply states that storage is almost full. This message implies your device is not connected to iCloud properly. Most likely, your device is not backed up. If you lose your device, all your data, including your photos, are probably gone for good.

The domino effects depend on which apps consume the most space. It could be that your camera can no longer save photos, or new podcasts stop downloading, or perhaps, some of your email is removed. Unless you free up space on your device, one of these issues or something similar is going to occur.

Because an iCloud account shares space with your phone, signing in properly is a short term fix.

Less dire, but no less worrisome, is when iCloud storage fills up. When the "iCloud Storage Almost Full" error appears, you probably have at least a backup. But the next steps depend on if you still use the 5GB storage plan that comes free with each device.

Gigabit is a "marketing" speed based on the theoretical limit of the connection. Home networks rarely reach those speeds.

Your options are to remove apps to recover space or upgrade to a larger plan. The free 5GB allowance is very small, enough for a few files and perhaps a device backup. The least expensive plan costs \$12 a year and offers ten times more space. If that is still not enough, the next level is \$36 a year for 200GB.

Both of these plans are inexpensive compared to the value of the data they will protect.

Low space causes all sorts of other problems, everything from mysterious bugs to failed system updates.

Unless the information on your phone is disposable, do not let a storage warning drag on for long.

Q. Is gigabit Internet worth the investment?

A. The value of gigabit internet has to do with how many people are in your house watching video at the same time.

Gigabit is a "marketing" speed based on the theoretical limit of the connection. Home networks rarely reach those speeds. However, home networks can get close with the right equipment. The primary way to utilize gigabit speed is wired Ethernet to a device that can support it. Most home networks are exclusively wireless. Wireless speeds, despite ads that may suggest otherwise, still fall short.

The benefits of faster speeds are most noticeable when there are multiple people in the same household that try to stream video over WiFi at the same

time. The wireless base station will need to support gigabit Ethernet and multiple WiFi standards. Unless your devices are almost new, the hardware cost to update the network might make that introductory pricing for gigabit internet less attractive.

Q. Is there a way to hide some of the notifications on my Android phone?

A. Do Not Disturb mode will block everything, which is great if you want peace and quiet. But you asked about some notifications, and there things get more complicated.

There are system-wide categories in system settings that you can select to silence things like calendar events or alarms.

The Notifications screen in Settings also has a choice for Enhanced Notifications. When supported by apps you use, this option is worth a few minutes to see if its choices work for the apps you use. Enhanced Notifications try to prioritize

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

Fix Difficult Problems
Everyone needs help sometimes, even if it's a quick laugh during a difficult day.
make-everything-ok.com

The Lighthouse Directory
A delightful source of information and links for more than 24,000 of the world's lighthouses.
www.ibiblio.org/lighthouse/


Cool Places to Eat
Atlas Obscura is so interesting it deserves multiple mentions. This month, a closer look at wondrous food.
www.atlasobscura.com/cool-places-to-eat

notifications based on how often you use certain apps.

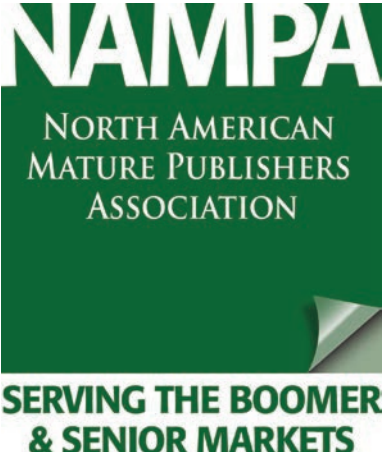
I prefer to setup my phone with minimal notifications. My world is noisy enough without more interruptions. I start by quieting many categories. However, I use the Contacts list to mark special people as priority, then only messages from them trigger a notification.

There is no single answer for everyone. But I always advise users to explore the settings available on their phone to shape notification alerts to fit their personal taste.

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



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Exhilarating Oregon coast beckons you

Town has a multitude of things to see and do

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

You enter Newport via the impressive 600-foot Yaquina Bay Bridge, a combination of art deco and art moderne with touches of gothic architectural style that opened in 1936. It sits a thrilling 135 feet above sea level.

With so many things to do, Newport, Oregon, is a perfect place for a quick getaway or a family reunion. Plus, you can fly direct from Alaska to Portland's sweet and user-friendly airport with a mere 60 gates and dodge the complexity of Seattle's 111 gates and that darned train-to-nowhere.

Newport is on the central coast and a historic fishing and shipping town, so of course there's a lighthouse.

Shining bright for over 150 years

The Yaquina Head Lighthouse was built in 1872 and has been guiding ships ever since. At that time, the oil burning fixed white light was displayed from sunset to sunrise. Today, the fully automated first-order Fresnel lens runs on commercial power and flashes its unique pattern of two seconds on, two seconds off, two seconds on, 14 seconds off, for 24 hours a day. The oil-burning wicks have been replaced with an

LED stack of 36 individual LED bulbs.

If you have never seen a Fresnel lens, it is a beautiful thing — almost art deco-like but also like a crystal spaceship.

At 93 feet, Yaquina Head Lighthouse is the tallest tower on the Oregon coast and shines its light 162 feet above the ocean and can be seen 19 miles out to sea.

The lighthouse is open from October to February, noon to 4 p.m., except holidays, and closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. Two flights of stairs lead to the watch room, but the lantern room is closed to the public. The basement features an interpretive display with educational items and a video about the lighthouse history.

In addition, the Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area is home to one of the west coast's largest nesting colonies of common murrelets. Also frequently spotted are black brants and pelagic, meaning mostly at sea, cormorants, pigeon guillemots, western gulls, black oystercatchers and bald eagles. Yaquina Head is also home to a mated pair of peregrine falcons, visible most days on the cliffs above the Interpretive Center.

See Alaskan whales pass by, delve into tide pools, hit a ball

For over 100 years, New-



The 93-foot-tall Yaquina Head Lighthouse, built in 1873, still sends out light to passing vessels.

Photos courtesy Travel Oregon

port's Agate Beach has drawn families for its majestic setting and big rollers. Now surfers have found it, but they're encased in Neoprene. For those who like to swim, beware the undertow, rip tides and 58 F temperature.

Better to gaze into a tide pool and all the creatures that live there — huge starfish, sea anemones and sea urchins. Best viewing is at low tide.

On the migration path of "our" gray whales returning to the Bering Sea in March and April after migrating south to warmer waters in December and January, they can be seen off Agate Beach. Take a whale watch trip on Marine Discovery Tours (541-256-6200) or Newport Tradewinds (541-265-2101).

Nearby is the Agate Beach golf course, a nine-hole public golf course that opened in 1931. Designed by Frank Stenzel, it measures 3,002 yards from the longest tees and has a slope rating of 107 and a 33 USGA rating. If you're a golfer, you'll understand this.

Nye Beach, closer to the center of town, is filled with shops and places to dine. The more than 40 businesses, restaurants and lodging are rich with variety. The farmers market offers seasonal fruits and vegetables, but who knows how much the organic eggs cost now.

The Oregon Coast Aquarium is an imaginative facility where you



A couple order a meal and enjoy a view of the harbor.

can walk through a clear tunnel surrounded by water and sharks, stingrays and more. There's also an aviary with tufted puffins, horned puffins, rhinoceros auklets, pigeon guillemots, common murrelets, and black oystercatchers. Yes, you can see many of these birds in Alaska, but not so easily as here.

Free for ages 2 and younger, otherwise \$14.95 to \$24.95 and receive 10 percent off with proof of military service or AAA membership.

And believe it or not, the town has a Ripley's Believe it or Not! World of Adventure with 11 mind-blowing galleries filled with outrageous art, hard-to-believe animal exhibits, pop-culture memorabilia, and weird stories of people and places. Adults \$24.99, child (4-11) \$19.99 and children 3 and under free.

Eat and sleep

Nestled into Nye Beach since the 1980s, the Chow-

der Bowl has been serving milk-based, award-winning chowder with local ingredients. There's also fish and chips, certified Angus burgers, salads, seafood dishes and handmade desserts on the menu.

With an ocean front view, Georgie's Beachside Grill serves Yaquina Bay oysters or local Dungeness crab.

Hotels large and small dot the coast, with the usual names: Comfort Inn, Econo Lodge, Motel 6, and Best Western.

But locally-run inns and hotels offer coziness and personality. Try the 1912 Sylvia Beach Hotel, a literary-themed accommodation on a cliff top (note it has no telephones, Wi-Fi or TVs, for the ultimate unwind and unplug experience), or the dog-friendly Agate Beach Hotel with individually unique rooms with full kitchens and decks.

Fall asleep to the sound of waves, the cry of seagulls.



The Oregon Coast Aquarium is an imaginative facility where you can walk through a clear tunnel surrounded by water and sharks, stingrays and more.



Writer

continued from page 15

It was former Anchorage reporter David Holthouse who suggested she use fire images in her titles: “Alaska Flame,” Alaska Spark,” and “Alaska Inferno.”

“In 2017, I got serious, but the first book took three years because I didn’t know what I was doing,” she said.

Still, that one won an Anchorage Press award for best historical piece.

For her stories, she had

to wrestle with the fact that a fire crew has 20 firefighters in it and that’s way too many characters for a book.

“Six or seven, maybe eight max, and carry forward a known character into the next book,” she said. “I poll readers to find out what they want to see in the next book, which I guess is called ‘writing to market.’”

What’s also helped keep her going is her admirable dedication to setting aside the morning for writing and going to writers’ conventions to meet people

and get advice.

“I was the oldest one at one conference,” she said, noting that millennial-age writers prefer to write in first person. “I’m a baby boomer ... I stick with the third-person past tense.”

Her tenacity carries over to the business side of writing.

“I pitched to all publishers and agents — not interested,” she said. “I’ve relaxed about that.”

Wolfpack Publishing, based in Las Vegas, offered

to republish her books, rename them, redesign the covers, script for TV, and produce audiobooks. They would also take eighty percent of her royalties.

“I would have had no say,” she said, and declined the offer.

“I pitched my audiobooks to a publisher in the UK and they took it right away and paid me right away,” she said. And best of all, they’re a

global distributor.

“Had I sold my rights to Wolfpack, I wouldn’t have been able to do that,” she said. “So I’ve kept most of my royalties and do whatever I want with my books.”

Not one to ignore any possibilities, she’s enrolled in a screenwriting class.

She’s discovered that Alaska enchants readers.

“I didn’t realize how exotic Alaska is to an East Coaster,” she said.

The drive to keep up with technology has been a particular drain on her time, she said. But she feels the technology she now knows is enough, and it’s time to sit down and write.



Stomach

continued from page 5

antifungals and HIV medication.

Controlling GERD

If you suffer from heartburn (or GERD, which stands for gastro-esophageal reflux disease) don’t despair. The fix is not as easy as popping a pill, but in the long run it will bring health, healing, repair and a longer life. The “lesion” in GERD is not stomach acid, per se. Our bodies are designed to secrete gastric acid after eating. The

problem is that the valve at the base of the esophagus (the LES or lower esophageal sphincter) has become lax or loose and no longer prevents stomach contents from travelling uphill, especially if we slouch while sitting or bend over too soon after eating.

We definitely don’t want stomach contents coming up — that’s painful and can cause damage to the esophagus and even to the teeth and sinuses. The “cure” for GERD is almost always repairing the lower esophageal sphincter so it works properly to prevent uphill travel of stomach contents.

If your GERD is mild or intermittent, just changing a few habits will likely create enormous relief quickly. The most common cause of GERD is a hiatal hernia. “Hiatal” is another word for diaphragm, the deep, round muscle attached to the base of the ribcage which separates the hearts and lungs from the guts. Hernia means any intestinal tissue (in this case the top of the stomach) pouching through a muscle. So, the

top of the stomach (think about that goat-stomach gourd or look up the shape of the stomach) can get stuck, or “slide” in and out of the hole where the esophagus travels through the diaphragm.

The longer we keep the stomach out of that aperture in the diaphragm, the sooner the hole can tighten up and prevent the stomach from drifting up into the thoracic cavity. If you want to push your stomach up into your heart/lung space (you don’t) then eat a really big meal and slouch on the sofa for a few hours. Perfect recipe for creating a hiatal hernia. After meals, which at this stage of life really shouldn’t be big any longer, take a walk, do the dishes, water the plants, work at a standing desk — just don’t sit down for an hour or ideally two, until the food passes out of your stomach.

I am a big fan of “heel thunks” which is a technique to “reduce” the hiatal hernia by using gravity to pull it down. Please check my website for a description of this technique, which you can absolutely try at home. You can also try to strategically wean down from your acid blocker or PPI use as you learn more about this curative option.

If your GERD is more profound or longstanding, you may need to consult with a surgeon, ideally a GI surgeon, to pull the stomach out of the diaphragm and tighten up the hole so the LES can work properly again. Occasionally a mechanical sphincter needs to be inserted (LINX).

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

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AI

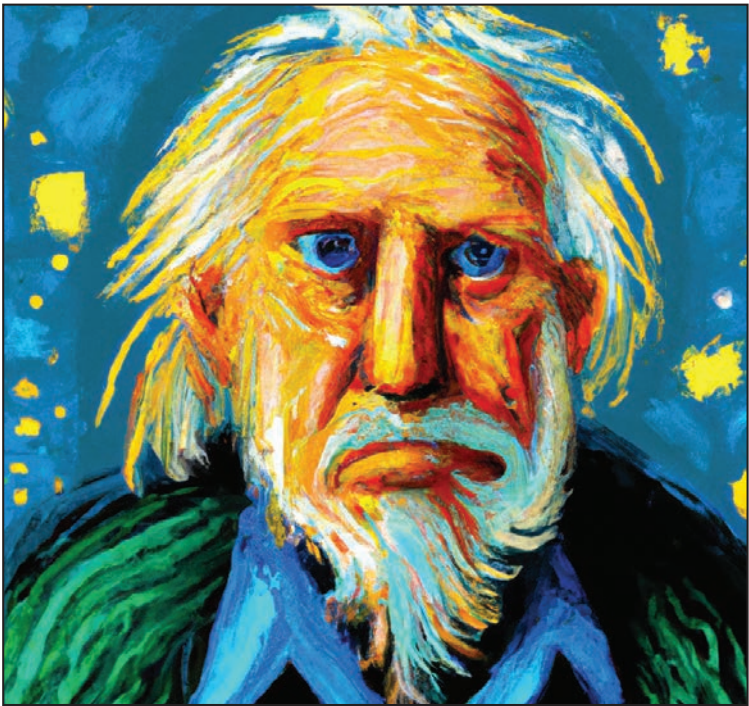
continued from page 2

It responded, “Hello, this is Bing. Seniors and A.I. is a broad topic that covers many aspects of how artificial intelligence can benefit or affect older adults. Some examples are:

- ▶ AI-powered tools can help senior living organizations create engaging content and provide personalized recommendations.
- ▶ AI can help analyze language patterns and detect loneliness in older adults.
- ▶ AI can help patients and their families understand treatment pathways and improve clinical efficiency.

Are you looking for any specific information on this topic?”

Interesting answers,



Artificial Intelligence platform DALL-E created this portrayal of the author “in the style of Van Gogh”.

Courtesy Lawrence Weiss

each accompanied by one or two full internet references – and no protestations of unrequited love. The first point included a reference

to a seminar about using AI to market senior care and senior living to seniors. I would judge this reference not very useful.

The reference for the second point was an article entitled, “Using AI, Data Analytics to Enhance Person-Centered Care for Seniors,” found on healthitanalytics.com. You get a flavor of the article from one of the subheadings, “Facilitating human connection through non-human means.” Interesting, but just a little bit creepy.

The third reference is a 2018 Forbes article, “How Is AI Revolutionizing Elderly Care?” This short overview is dated and so full of intrusive advertisements it is hard to read. Finally, the fourth reference is a 2019 article on the World Economic Forum website, “No longer just for the young: 70% of seniors are now online.” This is a good overview but a bit dated. All in all, I would give these references a grade B,

maybe B-.

Finally, I asked Bing to list a few websites we could visit to explore a range of ways AI is being used. It listed 10. Here are a couple of the more interesting.

“Talk to Books: This website allows you to have a conversation with books by typing a question or a statement. The AI will scan thousands of books and find relevant passages that respond to your input.”

“Hotpot.ai: This website is for photo editing and correcting damaged images. You can also colorize black and white photos, remove backgrounds, resize images, and more.”

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.

BBB

continued from page 11

even reduce the cost of your energy bill.

Watch out for plumbing problems. Take a peek at your plumbing and fixtures as you perform regular home maintenance to make sure there are no leaks. Ask friends and neighbors to recommend a reputable plumber in the area and keep their number on

hand, in case an emergency arises.

Consider installing an alarm system. An alarm system can make you feel more secure and protect your valuables when you are away. Choose a home security system from a credible, licensed company in your area and compare pricing before you sign up.

Add a fresh coat of paint. Quality exterior paint helps protect your home from insects and weather damage. Quality

interior paint can protect your home from moisture and increase its value too. If painting isn’t your strong suit, consider hiring a professional painter who is equipped with the necessary tools, skills and safety equipment to get the job done efficiently.

Beware of home improvement scams. The Federal

Trade Commission recommends getting multiple estimates, asking questions, and getting a written contract before you hire. Watch out for red flags, such as high-pressure sales tactics, cash-only deals, and contractors who don’t sign contracts. Always check references and ask for recommendations before you

agree to hire a contractor.

Search BBB.org to find reputable roofers, painters, plumbers, lawn maintenance specialists, and security system companies in your area.

Roseann Freitas is a PR and communications manager for the Better Business Bureau Great West and Pacific region.

Donations always appreciated

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

Crossword answers from page 16

S	M	E	E		P	E	N	S		S	A	M		
E	A	R	N	S		R	O	U	T	E	T	I	E	
W	H	I	S	T	L	E	S	T	O	P		O	R	T
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Lunch

continued from page 3

Thank you for your best efforts for our beloved area seniors.”

But the reality of what the program means to seniors is outlined in the press release from Mat-Su Senior Service President Linda Combs.

“The decision to close our in-person congregate meal program was not an easy choice. As your Board, we understand its value firsthand. Likewise, we enjoy seeing one another to catch-up, share stories and fellowship together,” Combs said.

But the explosion in senior numbers and the lack of sufficient state funding are to blame, Combs wrote.

“Many are surprised to learn, Alaska has the fastest growing senior population per-capita of any state in the Union. A title Alaska earned in 2007 when we knocked off Nevada to take the lead,” Combs wrote. “Today, that lead has only grown. What does that mean in terms of growth in Mat-Su? In 2010, the senior population (those 60 and older) in the Mat-Su Borough stood at 11,353. Today, the population of seniors 60 and older has grown 105 percent and now stands at 23,224. In 2010, seniors constituted about 13 percent of the borough’s overall population. In 2022, one in five borough resi-

dents is now 60 or older.”

State funding has not kept up with that increase. “Short significant adjustments in FY20 and FY21 (COVID-19 response), national funding for all states has seen only modest increases since 2012,” Combs wrote. “State funding complements federal receipts, but has been flat for many years.

Mat-Su’s share of both federal/state funding remains to be seen for future years, but is currently just below \$650,000, which in turn is distributed between senior provider agencies in the area, according to Combs.

There is some good news

from the Alaska Dept. of Health’s Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. According to acting director Tony Newman, Gov. Dunleavy’s 2024 budget includes a proposed increase in the community services funding, which includes seniors, to \$1.49 million. If passed by the legislature, it would be available July 1, 2023.

Mat-Su Senior Services CEO Tim Pettit said they would “absolutely” reinstate on-site lunches if more money were obtained for the program.

Asked if they are conducting fundraisers, Pettit said, “We have lots of people doing lots of things.”

Lifestyles

continued from page 5

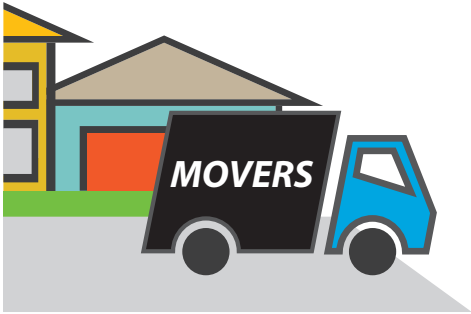
social and environmental elements associated with aging but also those that can enhance recovery, adaptation and psychosocial growth. It is important to provide public spaces and create policies and programs that protect older adults and ensure their dignified aging and make it easier for them to engage in the activities that are important to them, despite any loss of their faculties.

We are aware that it is a long and difficult road to

travel, especially because there are still limiting circumstances and many people with ageist attitudes, which can lead to situations of discrimination and affect the creation of policies and opportunities for older persons to enjoy healthy aging. Nevertheless, allowing everyone to be able to age with dignity and in the best possible health is a cause worth working toward.

This article is from the National Hispanic Council on Aging and part of an ongoing series by the Diverse Elders Coalition, examining different senior demographic groups.

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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.

Anchorage Area

Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Health Department
825 L St., Ste 200, Anchorage, AK 99501
907-343-7770 www.muni.org/adrc

Kenai Peninsula/Kodiak Island/Valdez/Cordova

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

Southeast Alaska

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

Mat-Su Borough

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

Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

Bristol Bay Native Association

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