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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.
Recent Bing incorporates an advanced version of artificial intelligence (AI) similar to Google’s search engine on the internet, which is eye-popping, yet frequenting limitations and biases of AI. 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 wherein 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, increase 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 Haghyeghi, 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 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 romantally.

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 letting 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?”

[page 22 please]
Alaskans to be chosen for Walking College fellowship

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS
For Senior Voice

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 Steppers” 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.
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 cognitive function 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 to learning.

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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 Prote- onix. The milder medicines (Tums, Rolaid, Alka Seltzer) bind up acid which is produced in your stomach at the beginning of your meals, whereas stronger medicines are 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 Ranitidine (Famotidine), Prilosec (Omeprazole), and Nexium (Esomeprazole). Prescription only PPIs include Prote- onix, Dexlent, AChexiph, and high dose Famotidine and Omeprazole. The anti-acid market was “valued” at $3.5 billion in the U.S. in 2022. That’s a lot of heartburn.

Stomach acid is necessary

There is a very important reason why 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 with- out being properly broken down by stomach acid, the food tends to stagnate, and eventually rot. That causes smelly farts, not to speak of gastrointestinal 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-en-vironments. 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 malodigestion.

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.

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 as 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, this is 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 his 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, having to move 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 contribu-
tions 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 neigh-
borhood, 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, improves 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 for the development of a public health response to aging.

It is important to take into account not only the

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 crutch- es, 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

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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 907-269-7680; 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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**Medicare continued from page 5**

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**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 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

**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;
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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://argaddictionresourceguide.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 for free. 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.

Upcoming health fairs and affordable blood tests

Walk-ins are welcome at all events. We recommend that you make an appointment online for a faster service at 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 1 p.m.

April 18, 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 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.

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 devices 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 for all ages welcome, Pioneer Park Civic Center, 2300 Airport Way, 8 a.m. to noon.

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Keni 395-0352 or (855) 395-0352
Ketchikan 225-6420 or (877) 525-6420
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Additional information is available at:
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www.alsc-law.org

*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.

Senior Voice, April 2023
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, 1,939 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.
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 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 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 vitamin 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 APOE4 gene, known to present a higher risk for Alzheimer’s dementia, compared to non-carriers. The authors suggest that people who carry the APOE4 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.

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**Send your news tips and event items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.**
Learn

continued from page 4

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 much space can a person read in 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 consciously 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 the time pass more slowly. Give it a whirl.” (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@karencasanovas.com.

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

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, Tytoyak 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 meet- ings around the state, including: Anchorage, Eagle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau/Southeast, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Wil- low, Call 1-800-278-1080 for details. ARA also hosts a state-wide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 1 to 2 p.m. For information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

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

Senior Voice is on Facebook!

Search for “Senior Voice Alaska” then click on over! You can also follow Senior Voice on Twitter: @seniorvoiceak

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For more information, or an application, please call the main BBHA office at the toll free number, 1-888-484-8233 or the direct number at 907-842-5958 and ask for Stephana Kapotak or Tatiana Olsen.

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King Salmon | Taiga View, 2 and 3 Bedroom
Togiak | Togiak View, 2 and 3 Bedroom
Dillingham | Forest View, Muklung Manor, Cottonwood 1, 2, 3 and 4 Bedroom

Elder Housing

Tuyuryarmiat Tegganritta Eniit | Togiak
Qiivularia | New Stuyahok
Southwest Elders Home | Naknek

Apartments and Elder Housing managed by BBHA are built in partnership with local entities and various financial institutions. ForestView. General Partner: Limited Partners: Key Bank-Muklung, General Partner BBHA and Limited Partner Wells Fargo. Topika View and Manokotak View’s General Partner BBHA and Limited Partner Enterprise Inc., Southwest Elders Home partners include the Bristol Bay Elders Action Group, General Partners for Southwest Alaska Home Associates. Special Limited Partner BBHA and Limited Partner Wells Fargo. Qiivularia and Tuyuryarmiat Eniit owned by Bristol Bay Housing Development Corporation and managed by the Bristol Bay Housing Authority.
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 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 recommends 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.

Free health education classes, with Q&A

Join our Alaska Health Fair Health Educator and RN to learn about important health topics, ask questions and get answers about health. All you need is a phone and 30 minutes of your time to participate. Visit www.alaskahealthfair.org and see the announcement above schedule to RSVP.

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.

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.

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

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Fair
continued from page 7

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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 aged 55 and older who support school readiness and improvements 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 La-nie 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: 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. “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 eldermentors@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’ graduations 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 bedrooms, closed in 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.

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 we had a 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 we had a 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.

A whole new way to get healthy

By Maraley McMichael

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

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There’s no cost to adult residents of Alaska if they are eligible and at risk for type 2 diabetes.

Learn more:

omadahealth.com/alaska

For more information, email diabetes@alaska.gov
opportunities with the museum. For more information, call 907–929–9270 or email volunteer@anchoragegenealogy.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 Gelinus. 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 Graves in 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 microscopic 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
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 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.

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.an-choragegenealogy.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; Digitalizing 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. Bersh 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 Voyager” 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 907-458-9545.

April 9 Worldwide Easter

April 10-16 Juneau 8th 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.

AGS Spring Seminar 2023

Saturday April 22
9 AM to 4:30 PM • ChangePoint Church
Devon Noel Lee of Family History Fanatics
$60.00 ($55 member);
Half-Day $30.00 (AM or PM).
Walk-ins Welcome
Register: www.anchoragegenealogy.org or mail the form & check.

Senior Voice, April 2023 | 15
The same year, the entrepreneurs opened Carr’s Quality Food Center in Kenai.

In 1956–68, 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.
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 9 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 bicycle 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, fished 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 – “high maintenance.” One advantage was the offical pancake maker, while I did the eggs and sausage. He was also checked out on everything 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 we 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!”

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

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A hunk, a hunk of burning litigation

By KENNETH KIRK
For Senior Voice

A long 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 there is a significant trust for her.

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

As proof, Priscilla points to the following: the signature on this 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 will happen is that handwriting experts who will be critical witnesses at trial.

Incidentally, I don’t think that the 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 witnessed or notarized. In California, as in Alaska, an amendment to a trust does not have to be witnessed or notarized. That became fairly critical due to 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 to 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. You’ll get it all right, mama.

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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 issues on iPhone. One is “Storage Almost Full” and the other is “Cloud 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 appearing. Some of your email is read once and then deleted, or new podcasts stop appearing. 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.

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 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 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 quietly categorizing. 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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Senior Voice, April 2023 | 19
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 Yaquina Head Outstanding Natural Area is home to one of the west coast’s largest nesting colonies of common murres. 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, Newport’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 can walk through a clear tunnel surrounded by water and sharks, stingrays and more. The Oregon Coast Aquarium is also home to a large aviary with tufted puffins, pigeon guillemots, common murres 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 Chowder 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.
**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 heart and lungs from the guts. Hernia means any intestinal tissue (in this case the top of the stomach) pouching through a muscle. So, the

to wrestle with the fact that a fire crew has 20 firefghters 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.’”

That’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 the 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.
AI
continued from page 2
It responded, “Hello, this is Bing. Seniors and AI 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”.

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-humans.” 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.
“Hotpot.ai: 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.”
“Talk to Books: 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 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.

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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 I S T L E | S T O P | O R T |
| N I A | O A T | P E E P S |
| S P O T S | W E L L |
| A S I S | Y O G A | L I R A |
| P E S T I T | D O T S | G O B |
| E G O | G R O | A C T | H U E |
| T I P | N U D E | H O S T E D |
| A S S T | C A B S | P A S S |
| S A N K | B A R O N |
| S H I E S | N A V | S H E |
| E C O | S T O P | T H E | S H O W |
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Senior Voice, April 2023
22
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.

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.