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Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons
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Volume 45, Number 1 January 2022

STATE OF THE ART FITNESS

Technology has
evolved. Let's use it.

- page 5

See for yourself why
pickleball is
so popular.

- page 13

Swimming pools are
open and fantastic.

- page 5

2021
National Mature
Media Awards
Winner

Right: Gail Byers performs a weight and balance exercise during a 'Bone Builders' class at the Lake Otis YMCA in Anchorage in early December. The class features stretching, weights and aerobic routines designed to improve balance, increase muscle strength and bone density, and help fight osteoporosis. Along with the many physical benefits, researchers are finding fitness activities also improve brain health and can reduce the risk of dementia. See the story on page 5.

Photo by Michael Dinneen for Senior Voice.

TRAVEL

Creating a 'Safe Travel' account to visit Hawaii. Also, Canada border crossing restrictions are back. - page 24





Commission on Aging summit affirms priorities

Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging met with partners December 8 for a day long summit to discuss priorities for the upcoming year. Denali Daniels facilitated the meeting with Jordan Marshall providing support as well as his expertise about the ‘lay of the land’ for the upcoming legislative session.

The morning session was dedicated to hearing from partners, but the main theme was consistent: Older Alaskans do better when they are able to remain in their homes and communities, but Alaska’s infrastructure to support seniors is lacking.

The need for increased transportation and senior housing was at the top of the list, followed by the need for more trained workforce and support for caregivers and individuals with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementia (ADRD).

Many seniors receive home delivered meals, transportation and other supports paid for with a combination of state and Older Americans Act funds, but these grants have not kept up with inflation or the increasing senior population.

During the afternoon session, commissioners considered information they heard and narrowed their focus to four top priorities.

1) Ensure older Alaskans have access to critical services to meet their basic needs by matching the increasing senior population and cost of living with increased resources. Core services such as home delivered meals, transportation, health promotion, caregiver support and other supportive services are proven to allow seniors to remain in their homes longer. Better access will require increasing knowledge about where to get help for senior services; ensuring

infrastructure funds for transportation are used; enhancing transportation options for seniors; ensuring infrastructure funds for broadband reach rural Alaska and include training for seniors.

2) Support Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver and Community First Choice programs to increase access to care coordination and address the needs of individuals with ARDR

3) Support capital funding for Alaska Housing Finance Corp.’s Senior Housing Development fund.

4) Maintain senior benefits

Although these priorities are not new, the commission wants to work with state agencies and legislators throughout the year and not just during the legislative session to move these initiatives forward.

Zoom conferences provide updates on senior bills

Senior Voice Staff

Keep track of senior-related bills, budget decisions and other issues by attending the Alaska Commission on Aging Legislative Teleconferences. Available by toll-free call-in, the teleconferences provide a convenient forum for seniors and advocates across Alaska to share information about issues and specific bills of concern, including Medicaid, state budget and funding, senior assistance, retirement, Pioneer Homes and more.

Zoom conferences are scheduled 9:30 to 11 a.m. every other Thursday and weekly during the last month of session. The 2022 meeting dates are Jan. 27, Feb. 10, Feb. 25 (a Friday), March 10 and 24, April 7, 14 and 21.

Draft agendas will be available to print from the state Notices website at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>. The website will also have the Zoom address and phone numbers (for non-computer attendees).

Individuals who require special accommodations to participate should contact Lesley Thompson at 907-465-4793 at least two days prior to teleconferences.

How about pairing home health with the postal service?



ANALYSIS

By ALAN M. SCHLEIN

Senior Wire

Kaiser Health News editor Elisabeth Rosenthal, in a recent opinion column, argues that two of America’s toughest problems can be tempered with one solution. Older people, many isolated, are ill-equipped to meet people or even have their health monitored at their homes. Meanwhile, the U.S. Postal Service, has

A lot would need to be worked out. But as many of us get older, and live alone, this is potentially a very useful idea.

gone \$160 billion into debt, in part, as digital communications have replaced old-school mail.

Rosenthal suggests having letter carriers spend less time delivering mail, much of which these days involves fliers and unwanted solicitations, and instead, include in their responsibilities home visits and basic health checks on the growing population of frail and elderly seniors.

Something like this is al-

ready being done successfully and profitably in other countries like France and Japan. If the USPS could get more involved with home health services, filling a need and earning money at the same time – a move that was actually suggested by the agency’s

own inspector general last March – that, she says, would be a win-win. Think about it. Postal

workers are already on virtually every block of

America, six days a week and most of us know and trust our postal workers too.

Perhaps they could deliver mail, say, every other day instead of every day, and on the off days, they could, with proper train-

ing, become a new on-the-ground home health workforce.

They could do home visits, redress the epidemic of loneliness among older homebound seniors and

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Vision statement:

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



OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

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Social Security COLA lags rising costs

The Senior Citizens League (TSCL)

Editor’s note:
This press release was received on Dec. 8, 2021.

If the annual Social Security cost of living adjustment (COLA) did a better job of keeping pace with Medicare Part B premiums, benefits over the past decade would be 42 percent higher in 2022, according to a new analysis by The Senior Citizens League (TSCL).

“Medicare Part B premiums are the fastest growing cost that most older Americans face in retirement, but those costs aren’t fairly accounted for by the method used to adjust Social Security benefits for inflation,” says Mary Johnson, a Social Security and Medicare analyst for The Senior Citizens League (TSCL).

The Social Security Administration reports that most beneficiaries will receive a COLA high enough in terms of dollars to cover the Part B increase. “But the failure to account for this expenditure in the COLA has been a major source of erosion in the buying power of Social Security benefits,” Johnson says.

Social Security benefits will increase 5.9 percent, effective with the check received in January of 2022. But despite it being the highest COLA in four decades, the Medicare Part B premium increase is even greater, 14.5 percent — about 2.5 times faster.

“Surely there are many others like me who wonder how much higher Social Security benefits would be if our benefits were tied to the percentage of increase in Medicare Part B premiums instead of the consumer

price index.” Johnson said.

The new analysis by Johnson found that, had Social Security COLAs equaled the percentage of increase in Medicare Part B, from 2013 to 2022, a benefit of \$1,155 would be about \$593 per month higher in 2022 (\$7,116 more for the year). Had the COLA equaled the increase in Part B premiums, retirees with an average benefit of \$1,115 per month in 2012 would have pocketed an extra \$32,608 from 2013 through 2022.

The 2022 Medicare Part B premium will increase by \$21.60 per month from \$148.50 to \$170.10 in 2022. As high as this premium increase is, Medicare premiums routinely have increased about three times faster than COLAs over the past decade. From 2013 to 2022 the COLA increased benefits by 18.8 percentage points while Medicare premiums grew by 57.2 percentage points. This was the case even though

Part B premiums did not increase at all three times during the past decade and by just 1.1% in 2019.

Ignoring increased premiums

“Our annual COLA is shortchanging and failing the very people it’s supposed to protect,” Johnson says. The Social Security COLA is provided to protect the buying power of benefits, but the COLA doesn’t account for Part B premiums. The annual inflation adjustment is based on the price changes of goods and services used by working adults younger than age 62, and does not include price changes experienced by retired Americans who receive Medicare.

According to research by Johnson, Social Security benefits have lost 32 percent of their buying power, over the past 21 years. “We expect that loss to deepen, particularly if inflation continues into 2022,” Johnson says.

The Social Security Administration announced it is in the process of mailing out notices to Social Security recipients that explains the amount of the individual’s benefit increase in 2022, and the amount of Part B premium that will be deducted from benefits. For those who want to know their new benefit amount sooner, that information can be obtained online by setting up or checking your existing mySocialSecurity account.

The Senior Citizens League has proposed a one-time \$1,400 stimulus check for Social Security recipients to better help people living on fixed incomes cope as costs and prices continue to rise. The online petition and has over 93,000 signatures. The organization launched a national mail campaign to supporters and is collecting signatures that way as well.

For details, visit www.SeniorsLeague.org.

The benefits of yoga at Age Smart forum, Jan. 11

Senior Voice Staff

“Age Smart – Let’s Talk”, the series of forums sponsored by AARP Alaska, Older Persons Action Group and the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, returns Jan. 11, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Events are currently held virtually on the internet, using Zoom.

This month’s presentation is “Let’s Talk the Benefits of Yoga.” Do you have a new year’s resolution to work toward improving your overall health and fitness? This one-hour presentation will help you learn how yoga can improve the mind, body and overall wellness using simple techniques.

The “Age Smart – Let’s

Talk” series is a monthly forum on a topic of interest and importance to Alaskans who want to be thoughtful about how to make good choices as they grow older. The series is developed to provide working age adults with information necessary to plan and fulfill a secure, healthy and satisfying life after 60 (all ages are welcome). Each month the series highlights a particular topic with a variety of formats, including issue experts, panel discussions, interactive presentations, and plenty of time for questions.

Admission is free and open to everyone. Presentation begins at 6:30. To sign up, go to AARP’s event page at <https://aarp.cvent.com/ASJAN2022>.

Send us your letters

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Worker shortage? Then make it easier to apply

By ARTHUR VIDRO
Senior Wire

Help Wanted signs have sprouted up all over. Without enough workers, businesses can't stay open.

The day after Thanksgiving – the day when all chain stores start clamoring for everyone's gift-buying dough – I stopped at the nearest dollar store for some paper towels. The store was closed. On the day after Thanksgiving.

Why? The sign on the door vaguely cited "staffing shortages." A supervisor later explained to me a lot of workers had been out sick. Seems nowadays "staffing shortages" can mean a lot of workers are out sick but the store doesn't want to tell the public that the workers are out sick. Which makes me wonder about the nature of the illness.

Back at the dollar store with the Help Wanted sign, I asked for a job application to take home. (I'm not looking to work there, but I wanted to understand the process.) I was refused.

"You do that online," I was told dismissively.

So there you have it. Even in stores with Help Wanted signs practically begging for help, the supervisors won't let you apply for a job unless you apply electronically. Which is not everyone's cup of tea. Not everyone has a home computer. Not everyone has a telephone with an internet connection. Still, a lot of people, I'm willing to wager, would fill out job applications if they could do so on paper.

Some of the stores that require you to apply online have, to their credit, set aside a computer in the store to make it easier for the applicant. But most stores haven't.

Job applications online vary from user-friendly to impossible.

If you want to work for the post office, you have to apply online. The website warns you the process will likely take several hours, so don't begin until you have time to complete it.

No wonder they're not getting enough applica-

Hey, if you want my Social Security number, first make me a job offer. I advise not divulging your Social Security number on an application that might eventually be hacked.

tions. One recently retired postal worker confided, "If I had to apply by computer today, I wouldn't. It's too difficult."

Many applications ask for way too much information. One local supermarket requires all applicants to go online, where the application requires a Social Security number. If you leave that line blank, you can't apply.

Hey, if you want my Social Security number, first make me a job offer.

I advise not divulging your Social Security number on an application that might eventually be hacked. Anyone I know who wants to work in a supermarket, I steer them to a different supermarket where you are still allowed – heck, required – to apply on paper. It's a very simple

two-page form. You don't even have to ask for the form. They're kept on a table by the exit.

One local bank, when I applied in person on their computer, required not just the name of my college and the year of graduation, but the school's address (with ZIP code) and phone number. More than 35 years after graduating, I didn't know the phone number. Without that number, the application stalled. One was not allowed to leave the line blank, and I wasn't going to put down a false answer.

If the application were on paper, I would have written "Will find out for you by the time you interview me." But that's not how things are done in the computer age. The computer dictates how you must answer. If you waver

from the expected norm, you are rejected.

I'm also stumped by applications asking for phone numbers of all my former supervisors. Most places I worked have either gone out of business or moved to a different location without telling me, and my former supervisors are probably long since retired or deceased. The computers don't care. They routinely reject my applications for not including all the information demanded.

Would these prospective employers have telephoned my school or former supervisors if I provided the numbers? I doubt it. It's just greed for information.

It would be interesting to see if mom-and-pop shops, which tend to be more receptive to non-electronic applications, are suffering the same staffing shortages as big chain corporations.

Many employees are quitting, often without having something else lined up. They are tired.

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Identifying vulnerable adults and options for reducing threats

By KAREN CASANOVAS
For Senior Voice

Q: What threats do older adults face, and what increases people's exposure to threats? How can I help?

A: The concept of vulnerability first emerged in the environmental sciences, specifically in the study of natural disasters such as flood, fire, earthquake, drought, or hurricanes. But, in the wake of those disasters, not everyone suffers equally.

Vulnerability in disaster studies was initially defined as the 'potential for disruption or harm', and the type of hazard, severity of damage relative to magnitude, rapid onset, duration or frequency, which put in place strategic, monitoring and forecasting systems.




Vulnerability faced by older adults goes beyond natural disasters, but includes homelessness, food insecurity, unsafe environments (non-potable water, none or inconsistent heat, proper ventilation, mold/mildew, violence), chronic disease, viruses, verbal threats or physical harm. Vulnerable adults

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Healthy habits strengthen your heart and your head

By **LESLIE SHALLCROSS**
For Senior Voice

Most Americans over age 60 are fearful of age-related health decline and disease. According to one survey, the fears of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease top the list. These fears are not without cause — the most recent statistics estimate that 6.2 million older Americans are living with Alzheimer’s dementia which accounts for 60 to 70% of dementia cases.

Dementia is a general term for cognitive problems that interfere with daily living. It can result from or with other conditions such as Parkinson’s disease, stroke or head trauma. The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer’s disease and vascular dementia.

In 2019, Alzheimer’s disease was the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States, significantly behind heart disease and

cancer. Though rates of death due to heart disease and cancer are higher, their rates are decreasing while Alzheimer’s disease rates have increased more than 145% since 2000. Currently, 11.3 % or one in nine people age 65 and older has Alzheimer’s dementia.

Just as with most chronic diseases in older individuals, advanced age is the single greatest risk factor for developing dementia or Alzheimer’s disease. Given that this is not a risk factor most of us want to change, it’s time to plan for not just a longer lifespan but a longer healthspan with healthy brains.

Lifestyle over genetics?

Individual genetics certainly play a role — if no one in your family had dementia, you’ve leaped past one hurdle. But the majority of cases do not have an identifiable, single genetic cause. This may



Researchers are finding links between lifestyle choices and dementia, from staying hydrated to getting enough sleep.

© Can Stock Photo / dolgachov

mean that researchers have not identified the genes responsible, but it may also mean that predisposing genes are potentially modifiable through lifestyle. In 2020, it was suggested by the Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention, Intervention and Care, that up to 40% of dementia

cases could be prevented or delayed through modifiable risk factors. The commission suggests a focus on the following: Physical activity, smoking, education, staying mentally and socially active, blood pressure and diet.

Looking at the list, it is easy to see that heart-

healthy habits are likely to impact brain health. There are a few others that have emerged as promising for delaying or preventing Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. Research points to healthy habits in middle adult years (ages in the 50s

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Put technology to work for your fitness



Why pay extra for treadmills and stationary bikes with gigantic screens when smart watches and tablets can perform the same functions, and are portable from machine to machine?

Senior Voice/David Washburn

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**
Senior Wire

I am 25 pounds lighter than I was just a few months ago, and my blood pressure is far lower. A better diet and generous amounts of exercise were key ingredients, but the tool that helped me most was fitness related technology.

Fitness is a multi-billion dollar industry, and I do not have the space to cover even a fraction of its landscape. Nevertheless,

in my quest for a healthy lifestyle I explored many different products.

Accurate measurements are vital. They create a feedback loop over time to help you make better choices. Record keeping is tedious, exactly the kind of mundane daily task that I would prefer not to think about. And yet smartphones excel at tedious tasks. It is a perfect match.

I switched to a bathroom scale and a blood pressure cuff that automatically track each use to my smart-

phone. I wanted to keep things simple, so I chose a single vendor for both products, Withings Health Solutions.

The Withings Health Mate app on my phone collects the measurements without any effort on my part, and I can check my progress over time. The scale and cuff can be used independently by multiple people. The initial setup was a challenge, but after the setup was finished they

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Swimming toward a better tomorrow

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

You could say swimming pools in Alaska in the time of COVID are doing swimmingly. Keeping healthy with a safe workout through water aerobics or lap swimming does more than build muscles, it keeps many older adults connected during the dark winter

months. This year there will be many swimming options all across the state.

“Swimming is one of the best forms of exercise that an older adult can participate in,” said Larry Parker, chief executive officer at YMCA of Alaska. “Aquatic activity works the heart muscle, it’s easy on the joints, it increases your metabolism, can help

maintain and build muscle mass and strength, and is a great way to recover from an injury or surgery.”

Swimming can help older adults maintain balance and coordination and lower their risk for a fall. Swimming, water aerobics, and water walking are among of the safest activities an older adult can do during the winter in Alaska when

there is so little sunlight, Parker said. “A fall on a treadmill while you are walking could result in a serious injury. A fall while you are walking in the pool may result in a little water up your nose and a chuckle at your expense from your workout partner.”

COVID has had a significant impact on all YMCA programs. However, in

comparison, it has impacted swimming activities the least. “For aquatic fitness classes, distancing can be achieved and some participants still choose to wear masks. Some activities, like lap swimming, makes wearing a mask much more challenging and in some cases dangerous so that

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Talking to a loved one about hearing loss



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

Part two of two.

When discussing hearing loss with a loved one, don't be surprised if you get resistance. Unlike eyesight, when hearing goes, people are in less of a hurry to do something about it — with many waiting five to seven years before seeking treatment. Be prepared for these responses:

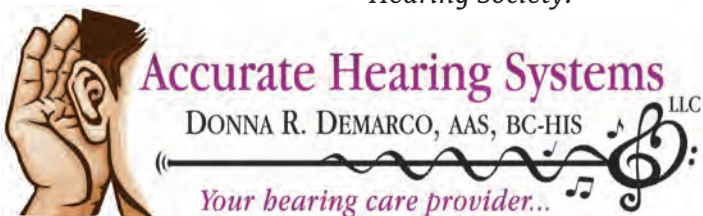
My family doctor would have told me if I have hearing loss. Not true — less than 20% of physicians routinely screen for hearing loss during physicals.

Wearing a hearing aid will make my hearing loss obvious. Today's hearing aids are sleek, stylish and less noticeable than if you constantly ask people to repeat themselves, inappropriately respond to them, or don't respond at all.

Hearing loss is no big deal. The fact is, studies have linked untreated hearing loss to big deals like stress, depression, social rejection, increased risk to personal safety, reduced earning power and more.

Hearing test is the best first step. If you know someone who could benefit from help, suggest they get a hearing test. Call Accurate Hearing for a free hearing test, 907-644-6004.

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



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

Medicare covers some genetic testing

By **SEAN MCPHILAMY**

For Senior Voice

Medicare may include coverage of diagnostic-level genetic testing for patients when the test is ordered by a physician, as long as certain requirements are met. Genetic tests of this sort are performed in order to help identify medical traits which may be cancer-related. The development and availability of genetic tests continues to evolve, especially in the diagnosis and early treatment of many diseases. Tests of this sort may be able to confirm or eliminate an appropriate diagnosis, far beyond just a written record of a patient's family history of related diseases.

Most genetic testing procedures are as simple as swabbing the inside of the patient's cheek, some tests do require a blood sample. These diagnostic tests do not catalog a person's entire genome, nor do they quantify a patient's entire medical history. The intended purpose of a genetic test is to identify the presence of specific markers associated

with pre-selected diseases or hereditary conditions. Taken alone, the test does not provide exact answers. But the physician may be able to utilize the genetic testing results in order to treat the patient more holistically since early detection and treatment can avoid unneeded complications later.

Medicare only began covering laboratory diagnostic tests using next generation sequencing (NGS) a few years ago. Only certain patients with known cancers initially met the specific criteria required for Medicare to pay for this testing. Since then, additional coverage guidance has been approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which sets the policies on how and when Medicare will pay for these prescribed procedures. Over-the-counter genetic tests are not covered by Medicare.

Beware scams

Unfortunately, situations have happened where scammers have offered genetic testing services to unsuspecting Medi-

care beneficiaries. Unscrupulous telemarketers, door-to-door salesmen, and even helpful-seeming people manning the booth at a local health fair often target senior citizens, claiming that Medicare will pay and that the test will be free. Don't fall for it. Don't hand over your Medicare card. And don't agree to pay if the test is not prescribed by your doctor. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you have been sent a kit or approached about genetic testing, contact the Alaska Medicare Information Office and report it.

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

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



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Try this natural regimen for healthy skin

By **DR. EMILY KANE**

For Senior Voice

Hello! I have been a primary care provider in Juneau Alaska for nearly 30 years, as well as a health writer, yoga enthusiast and instructor, musician, and lover of the great outdoors. My professional focus is on wellness. I particularly enjoy helping patients achieve good health, with minimal or no medication if possible. “Anything that can be healed by judicious diet and lifestyle should not be treated any other way” is a wise maxim attributed to Hippocrates (460–370 BC, Greek).

This new column will serve as an introduction to the principles of naturopathic medicine, which predate pharmaceutical approaches to healthcare by several centuries.

This month’s topic introduces some basic techniques for skin care. The skin is the largest organ of the body and provides a highly effective barrier between the outside environment and internal structures such as the subcutaneous fat, blood vessels and nerves, and the digestive organs and glands. Skin is by nature

lipophilic, which means it loves fat, making it “water proof.”

Luckily, skin is constantly renewing itself. Most of the house dust in your home is from the shedding of the uppermost surface of the skin, the epidermis. That’s great — we are constantly growing new skin and that’s why it can last a lifetime. But skin gets thinner and more vulnerable as we age.

My purpose as I, and my patient population, inevitably ages, is to promote graceful longevity. Here are the two wellness tips for today.

Dry skin brushing. This is absolutely the finest bath for your skin. Soap is actually fairly irritating — the natural chemicals in soaps (saponins) work by being a bit abrasive.

Minimize your use of soap. Just the hairy parts, a few times a week, should suffice. Unless you stepped into a mud puddle or spent the afternoon working on a greasy engine without wearing gloves (not advised), soap is generally not needed other than for frequent hand washing. Skin brushing is a little less intuitive for men, because of having more body hair, but

you can all start your day with brushing your skin, dry, with a long-handled brush. This is one reason I look younger than my age today. Plus, it feels great.

I start naked in the bathroom with circular strokes

the buttocks to shoulder blades. Next the legs. I lift one foot to scrub the sole, or be seated on the edge of the tub for this part if it feels more secure. Up the legs, four to five strokes to cover around the front

“wake up” feeling that will stay with you for hours.

I enjoy running a shallow cold bath while skin brushing every morning, then walking in place in the cold water for 60 seconds while using a smaller fin-

We are constantly growing new skin and that’s why it can last a lifetime. But skin gets thinner and more vulnerable as we age.

on my abdomen. Looking down, it’s a clockwise motion (to the right from just above pubic bone), mimicking the direction of the large intestine. Next, sweeping up under the breasts and from the sides of the breasts forward. Women, this is a good time to do a quick check in with breast tissue: symmetrical lumpiness is almost always normal. Next, brush up each arm, including the hands (gentle on the very sensitive dorsal side, which is the opposite of the palmar side) and then use the long handle to gently scrub down the back from the tops of the shoulders, then up the back from

and back, and maybe a little extra on the butt to get it a bit pink. This whole routine should take about five to seven minutes.

Contrast hydrotherapy. This is a fundamental part of naturopathic medicine and involves stimulating the circulatory and lymphatic systems with alternating hot and cold water. Always end with cold. If you don’t have time in the morning to take an ankle-deep cold foot bath, you can chase your shower with 30 seconds of cold at the end, every time. This closes the pores, which helps protect the immune system in your skin, as well as providing a bracing

er-bristled brush to brush my face: Up under the chin and upward strokes along jaw and cheeks, and out from the center of the brow as though smoothing out the central furrow lines.

If you feel unsteady about standing in the tub either use a grab bar or sit on the edge of the tub with your feet in the cold water. Once you have adopted this habit and want more, sit down in the cold tub for a brief “sitz bath” that will really get you going.

Enjoy.

Emily Kane is a naturopath doctor based in Juneau. Contact her at dremilykane@gmail.com.

Alaska Health Fair is turning 42 in 2022

By **SHARON PHILLIPS**

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

We wouldn’t have achieved this milestone without the support of many Alaskans who use our affordable blood draw services, those who come to us to access free health screenings or to generously donate their time or money. We can’t thank you enough for your loyalty and support, especially through these recent, difficult years. We hope that your new year is all that you are wishing for with health, happiness and personal goals part of your overall achievements.

We are continuing with our modified version of health fairs in Spring

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

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Promising research on kidney stones, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

New handheld technology is ushering a new approach to treating kidney stones

Physicians may be able to maneuver small kidney stones to the ureter so they can be expelled naturally. Patients dealing with small kidney stones that persist after surgery may soon have options to “push” the stones from their body, rather than face another invasive procedure.

A clinical trial at the Kidney Stone Center at the UW Medical Center in Seattle is testing the ability of ultrasound waves to dislodge and move small fragments left behind after surgery so they can naturally be expelled. So far, the results have been good, according to Dr. Mathew Sorensen, a UW Medicine urologist.

“All the surgeries that



we do to treat stones have the potential to leave fragments behind,” Dr. Sorensen noted. “Some of those fragments, especially if they’re small, usually clear pretty quickly. But the ones that stay and hang out, especially if they stay in the bottom of the kidney, they have the potential to grow and lead to another event such as surgery or an unpleasant emergency room visit down the road.”

The ultrasound procedure being tested does not

require anesthesia, just one or two clinic visits of about 30 minutes each. NASA is particularly interested in this technology. For astronauts on long missions in a weightless environment, kidney stones are a real concern because no surgical option exists to treat the condition in flight.

More than 30 astronauts have reported kidney stones within two years of space flight, so NASA assumes a similar situation could develop during a trip to Mars or the moon. Kidney tissue samples from UW Medicine were recently flown to the International Space Station to observe kidneys’ function in space. Dr. Sorensen’s group also is exploring using ultrasound to break larger stones into small pieces, and then use this handheld device to push and expel the fragments to help resolve a painful event. This may allow treatment of stones

A new study by researchers at the Cleveland Clinic is suggesting that sildenafil (Viagra) may be a promising drug candidate to help prevent and treat Alzheimer’s disease.

without anesthesia and pose an attractive option for at-risk patients, such as those with spinal cord injuries.

Sildenafil may help combat Alzheimer’s disease

A new study by researchers at the Cleveland Clinic is suggesting that sildenafil (Viagra) may be a promising drug candidate to help prevent and treat Alzheimer’s disease. The research team used computational methodology to screen and validate FDA-approved drugs as potential therapies for Alzheimer’s disease. Through a large-scale analysis of a database of more than

7 million patients, they determined that sildenafil is associated with 69% reduced incidence of Alzheimer’s disease, indicating the need for follow-up clinical trial testing of the drug’s efficacy in patients with the disease.

Without the development of effective new treatments, Alzheimer’s disease is set to impact 13.8 million Americans by 2050, underscoring the need for rapid development of prevention and treatment strategies. Drug repurposing (use of an existing drug for new therapeutic purposes) offers a practical alternative to the costly and time-consuming

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Research

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traditional drug discovery process.

"This paper is an example of a growing area of research in precision medicine where big data is key to connecting the dots between existing drugs and a complex disease like Alzheimer's," said Dr. Jean Yuan, program director of Translational Bioinformatics and Drug Development at the National Institute on Aging (NIA) in Bethesda, Maryland, part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which funded this research. "This is one of many efforts we are supporting to find existing drugs or available safe compounds for other conditions that would be good candidates for Alzheimer's disease clinical trials."

The research team has found that understanding subtypes of neurodegen-

erative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease may help to reveal common underlying mechanisms and lead to the discovery of actionable targets for drug repurposing.

The buildup of beta amyloid and tau proteins in the brain leads to amyloid plaques and tau neurofibrillary tangles are hallmarks of Alzheimer's-related brain changes. However, no FDA-approved, anti-amyloid or anti-tau small molecule Alzheimer's treatments currently exist. Tragically, the clinical trials for such treatments have failed in the past decade. Recent studies show that the interplay between amyloid and tau is a greater contributor to Alzheimer's than either by itself, according to the researchers.

Using a large gene-mapping network, researchers integrated genetic and other biologic data to determine which of over 1,600 FDA-approved drugs could be an effective treatment

for Alzheimer's disease. They pinpointed drugs that target both amyloid and tau as having higher scores compared to drugs that target just one or the other. The current study showed sildenafil, which has been shown to significantly improve cognition and memory in preclinical models, according to the investigators.

Combating Parkinson's disease in a new way

A new agent is showing promise for minimizing erratic movements in Parkinson's patients. A study from Texas Biomedical Research Institute (Texas Biomed) and collaborators has identified a promising drug candidate to minimize uncontrolled, erratic muscle movements (dyskinesia) associated with Parkinson's disease.

The small molecule, called PD13R, reduced dyskinesia by more than 85% in an animal model of Parkinson's disease.

The animals experienced much better sleep taking this compound compared to another drug often prescribed for dyskinesia. The results, which were published in the journal *Experimental Neurology*, showed this agent could be highly valuable to individuals with Parkinson's disease.

Dyskinesia is a common side effect in patients with Parkinson's disease. It is not a symptom of the disease itself, but typically emerges about five years into taking levodopa, the leading medication used to restore balance, reduce shaking, and manage other motor control issues patients experience.

"Levodopa is amazing. It works like magic, but it has side effects. If we can eliminate these side effects, it could change the life of patients with Parkinson's," said lead study author Marcel Daadi, an associate professor at Texas Biomed in San Antonio, Texas.

Designing drugs for Parkinson's and its side effects is notoriously difficult. This is in part due to the progressive nature of the disease as neurons deteriorate, and because it involves the neurotransmitter dopamine. There are five types of dopamine receptors, all with different functions, yet very similar structures. Finding a compound that only interacts with the desired receptor is a major challenge.

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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Caring for a person with dementia can be all consuming

Researchers have found that a person who provides care for someone with dementia is twice as likely to suffer from depression as a person providing care for someone without dementia. Not only do caregivers spend significantly more hours per week providing care, but they also report more employment problems, personal stress, mental and physical health problems, lack of sleep, less time to do the things they enjoy, less time to spend with other family members, and more family conflict than non-dementia caregivers.

As stressful as the deterioration of a loved one's mental and physical abilities may be for the caregiver, dealing with dementia-related behavior is an even bigger contributor to developing depression. Dementia-related symptoms such as wandering, agitation, hoarding, embarrassing conduct, and resistance or non-cooperation from the loved one makes every day challenging and makes it harder for a caregiver to

get rest or assistance in providing care. The more severe the case of dementia, the more likely the caregiver is to experience depression. It is critical for caregivers, especially in these situations, to receive consistent and dependable support and respite.

Lack of sleep contributes to depression. While sleep needs vary, most people need eight hours a day. Loss of sleep as a result of caring for a loved one can lead to serious depression. The important thing to remember is that even though you may not be able to get your loved one to rest throughout the night, you can arrange to get much needed sleep. Hiring a respite worker or engaging a friend to be with your loved one while you take a nap, finding a day care center, or scheduling a stayover with another family member for a few nights, are a few ways to keep your caregiving commitment while getting the sleep you need.

- Dani Kebschull, Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support program

Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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

The program will hold caregiver support group meetings in January at the locations below. Training is from 1 to 2 p.m., with support group meetings following, 2 to 3 p.m. This month's training features a presentation of "The Misunderstood Epidemic: Depression," a PBS DVD exploring the difficulties faced by those coping with varying levels of depression. Twelve Americans from all walks of life explain, in their own words, the realities of living with depression: the symptoms, thoughts of suicide, the stress it

puts on families and relationships, the loss of ability to work, the stigma associated with it and the pros and cons of different treatment methods.

Jan. 6
Sterling Senior Center

Jan. 14
Soldotna Senior Center

Jan. 18
Kenai Senior Center

Jan. 26
Nikiski Senior Center

Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. Call with suggestions and ideas for upcoming trainings or follow on Facebook, @KPFCS.

The Homer Area Care-

giver Support Group has resumed its monthly meetings in the Homer Senior Center multi-purpose room. For more information, call Pam Hooker at 907-299-7198 or Janet Higley at 907-235-4291.

Statewide

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

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

Coronavirus updates
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Juneau.....	586-6425 or (800) 789-6426
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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Pill splitting: When it's safe, and when it isn't

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: When is it safe, or not safe, to split pills? I have a cousin who cuts almost all her pills in half in order to save money, but I'm wondering if she's going overboard. What can you tell me about this? – *Curious Cousin*

Dear Curious: Pill splitting – literally cutting them in half – has long been a popular way to save on medication costs, but

your cousin, if she hasn't already done so, needs to talk to her doctor or pharmacist because not all pills should be split.

The reason pill splitting is such a money saver is because of the way drugs are manufactured and priced. A pill that's twice as strong as another may not be twice the price. In fact, it's usually about the same price. So, buying a double-strength dose and cutting it in half may allow you to get two months' worth of medicine

for the price of one. But is it safe? As long as your doctor agrees that splitting your pills is OK for you, you learn how to do it properly, and you split only pills that can be split, there's really no danger.

Ask your doctor

If you're interested in splitting your pills, talk to your doctor or pharmacist to find out if any of the medicines you use can be safely split. It's also important to find out whether

If you're interested in splitting your pills, talk to your doctor or pharmacist to find out if any of the medicines you use can be safely split. It's also important to find out whether splitting them will save you enough money to justify the hassle.

splitting them will save you enough money to justify the hassle.

The pills that are easiest to split are those with a score down the middle. However, not every pill that's scored is meant

to be split. Pills that are most commonly split are cholesterol lowering drugs, antidepressants and high blood pressure medicines.

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Technology

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have been trouble free. (Hint: avoid Bluetooth and use Wi-Fi instead.)

In the world of exercise equipment, Peloton has a fanatical fan base, and I can see why. They sell high-quality integrated products that record progress and offer videos with trainers to lead you through your workout. If you like the best, start there. But be prepared for sticker shock — Peloton products are expensive.

More affordable products require careful choices to insure they are compatible with each other.

Options for tracking

There are three ways to track progress with fitness equipment: manual tracking, using an app that records data similar to the way a BP cuff does, or wearable sensors.

Manually entering numbers into an app requires the most effort and is the easiest to avoid.

Mostly because of compatibility and pairing complexity, workout apps that connect to fitness equipment are my least favorite options.

The third option is a wearable device like a Fitbit or an Apple Watch.

Of these three methods, a wearable device is the most flexible and the most reliable. It can work in any context. Wearables will track activity all day, not just your workout. Plus, some wearables can monitor heart rate and

breathing.

In general, wearable technology seems like the best overall solution for fitness tracking.

Finding your virtual coach

Fitness coaching is the flip side of fitness tracking. It spans everything from basic tracking apps all the way up to personal trainers on video, and everything in between.

Some fitness equipment manufacturers make their own apps, but with the exception of Peloton I was not impressed with the ones I researched. As always, your experience may not match mine.

My lukewarm feeling toward connecting a workout app to an exercise machine is based on years of experience with other technologies where future software upgrades left perfectly good hardware behind. A typical treadmill will last years, but there is so much churn in the app and

services world that long-term support is unknown.

If your gym has equipment that talks to your phone, great. But when it came time to choose a home treadmill I avoided one with extra software features or a video screen.

Alongside my preference for wearable sensors, I prefer using a smartphone or tablet for training subscription services. This keeps fitness coaching and tracking portable, providing maximum long-term flexibility.

There are countless fitness tracking apps and a considerable variety

of subscription coaching services available. There have been so many feature changes to different products recently that it is easy to get lost in the details or encounter out-of-date reviews.

Ready, set, go

For me, in addition to the Withings devices I added, I chose a Horizon Fitness treadmill sometime during the middle of the pandemic. We had one when our son still lived at home, and it performed admirably for

over a decade.

Because I already own an iPhone, the Apple Watch was a perfect wearable device. Early on, when I was walking at a fairly slow pace, it did not always accurately record the distance I walked compared to the treadmill's readout, but the other features such as exercise intensity,

mapping outdoor walks, sleep tracking, and fall detection make it my number one choice for a fitness product.

My final bits of advice

are probably the most important: when purchasing a home exercise machine, consider an iPad or Android tablet rather than a built-in screen.

Keep in mind that what works for me is not the only way to accomplish fitness goals. The next step is to discover what works best for you.

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



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Swimming

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has never been a part of the safety protocol,” said Parker.

Swimming in the winter in Alaska is about much more than just exercising. “The social interaction begins once the toes hit the water and continues into the member lounge for coffee and conversation after class and often you see groups leave the Y for continued fellowship over lunch,” Parker told Senior Voice.

There is simply no way to 100% eliminate the risk. However, carefully crafted hygiene programs have been put in place. The YMCA follows the mandates as determined by the Municipality of Anchorage. It does not inquire about immunization status, but it has hosted vaccination clinics for its members and the general public. “As senior citizens are the most vulnerable during this pandemic, it is very

important for them to exercise extreme caution for their physical and mental well-being. The Y will help in that regard as much as we can,” Parker said.

Michele Cateson is the assistant director of recreational programs at Alaska Pacific University (APU) in

APU community. It sprayed down high touch areas and bathrooms before and after each swim time with a disinfectant. It also recorded basic contact information in the event it needed to do contact tracing.

“Swim classes are smaller than before, this



Swimming is a great activity for the winter and while COVID has made it trickier, many pools are open and offering class schedules.

© Can Stock Photo / halfpoint

Anchorage and said in the beginning of the pandemic it adhered to strict daily temperature taking of all staff and swimmers, and it was closed to the non-

allows for social distancing,” Cateson told Senior Voice. “Now, we require face masks in all common areas, except while swimming or showering.

We also continue to clean the showers, bathrooms and common areas with a disinfectant, to reduce the transmission of any bacteria or viruses.”

Older adults tend to have joint complications, muscle imbalances, and balance issues in general. Aquatic programs for older adults are extremely beneficial because they can help improve flexibility, pain, and provide a sense of well-being, Cateson said. “Swimming and aquatic aerobics offer older adults a place to be part of a community, and to take care of their minds and body. At APU, we offer two one-hour aquatic aerobic classes a week, as well as lap swimming hours, and adult swim training taught by seasoned instructors.”

Masks are required in all areas except while showering or actively swimming, Cateson said. Patrons, staff and lifeguards are asked to wear their mask onto the pool deck and then they are allowed to take them off when in the wa-

ter. APU requires all staff and students to either be vaccinated or have weekly testing reported.

“A properly chlorinated pool area has very little chance of transmission of any COVID variant,” Cateson said.

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough implemented limited capacities in both the pools and saunas when in high risk status during 2020. Now that vaccinations have become available, the Borough follows CDC guidelines and does not limit capacities, according to Eryn Brooks, aquatics supervisor at the Ketchikan Gateway Borough.

Swimming is vital to the older population in Ketchikan and this swimming center does not require masking and/or immunizations from either staff or customers. There is a designated swim time for seniors giving them an option if they have any concerns with larger groups.

Check out the pools near you:

Anchorage

Southside YMCA at Dimond, Dimond Center Mall, 344-7788. Lap swim, water exercise, arthritis water exercise, private lessons, more.

Anchorage Community YMCA, 5353 Lake Otis Pkwy., 563-3211. Lap swim, water exercise, arthritis low impact water exercise, more.

University of Alaska Anchorage Public Pool, 3211 Providence Dr., 786-1231. Lap swim, open swim

H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark, 1520 O’Malley Rd., 522-4420. Lap swim, Riverwalk, water exercise

Moseley Sports Center at Alaska Pacific University, 4400 University Dr., 564-8314. Lap swim, water exercise, adult training classes.

Alaska Club East (membership required), 5201 E. Tudor, 337-9550. Lap swim, water aerobics, private swim lessons.

Alaska Club South (membership required), 10931 O’Malley Centre, 344-6567. Lap swim, les-

sons, more.

Buckner Physical Fitness Center Bldg., 690 D St., Fort Richardson, 384-1308. Lap swim, water exercise.

Highschool pools: Contact city Dept. of Recreation, 907-343-4402, for pool schedules, activities.

Fairbanks

Alaska Club Fairbanks South (membership required), 747 Old Richardson Hwy., 452-6801. Lap swim, water exercise.

Mary Siah Recreation Center, 805 14th Ave., 459-1081. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim.

Hamme Swimming Pool, 931 Airport Way, 459-1086. Lap swim, open swim.

Patty Pool in Patty Center at University of Alaska Fairbanks, Tanana Loop. 474-7744. Lap swim, open swim

Juneau

Augustus Brown Pool, 1619 Glacier Ave., 586-5325. Lap swim, water exercise, aqua aerobics.

Dimond Park Aqua Center, 3045 Dimond Park Loop, 586-2782. Lap swim, water exercise, swim lessons, sauna

Around the state

Barrow Barrow High School Pool, 1684 Okpik St., 852-8950. Lap swim

Bethel Yukon-Kuskokwim Regional Aquatic Health and Safety Center, 267 Akiachak Dr., 543-0390. Lap swim, water exercise

Eagle River Alaska Club Eagle River (membership required), 12001 Business Blvd., 694-6677. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim

Cordova Bob Korn Memorial Pool, 609 Railroad Ave., 424-7200. Lap swim, open swim

Craig Craig Aquatic Center, 1400 Watertower Rd., 826-2794. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim, sauna

Haines Haines Pool, 274 Haines Hwy., 766-2666. Lap swim, senior aquatics class, open swim

Homer Kate Kuhns Aquatic Center, Homer High School, 600 E. Fair-

view Ave., 235-4600. Lap swim, senior exercise class, open swim.

Kenai Kenai Central High School, 9583 Kenai Spur Hwy., 283-7476. Lap swim, open swim

Ketchikan Gateway Aquatic Center, 601 Schoenbar Rd., 288-6650. Lap swim, senior swim, open swim

Kodiak Kodiak Community Pool, 800 Upper Mill Bay Rd., 481-2519. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim

Naknek Kvimarvik Pool, School Road, 246-7665. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim

Nikiski Nikiski Pool, 55525 Poolside Ave., 776-8800. Lap swim, open swim

Ninilchik Ninilchik School Pool, 15735 Sterling Hwy., 714-0351. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim

Nome Nome Beltz Jr./Sr. High School, 2920B Nome-Teller Hwy., 443-5717. Lap swim, open swim

North Pole Wescott Pool, 300 E. 8th Ave., 488-9402. Lap swim, water exercise, open swim

Palmer Palmer Pool,

1170 W. Bogard, 861-7676. Lap swim, swim lessons

Petersburg Community Center, 500 N. 3rd St., 722-3392. Lap swim, swim exercises, open swim

Seward Seward Jr./Sr. High School Pool, 2100 Swetmann Ave., 224-3900. Lap swim, swim exercises, open swim

Sitka Blatchley Pool, 601 Halibut Point, 747-5677. Lap swim, swim lessons, open swim

Soldotna Soldotna High School Swimming Pool, 425 W Marydale Ave., 262-7419. Lap swim, swim exercises

Unalaska Unalaska Aquatics Center, 55 E. Broadway, 581-1649. Lap swim, swimming lessons

Valdez Valdez Swimming Pool, 319 Robe River Dr., 835-5429. Lap swim, therapy swim

Wasilla Wasilla Pool, 701 E. Bogard Rd., 861-7680. Lap swim, swim lessons, senior swim, open swim

Wrangell Wrangell Pool, 321 Church St., 874-2444. Lap swim, arthritis swim, water aerobics, open swim

See for yourself why pickleball's so popular

By **JIM LAVRAKAS**
For Senior Voice

When I turned 65-years-old, I stopped playing pick-up basketball at the local high school here in Homer. I was just getting too beaten up. Not by the 20 and 30-something youngsters I was playing with, but by my failing body parts.

I had heard about “pickleball,” but the name sounded goofy and “not my style”. I can’t remember who made me come watch, but the first time I saw a game played I understood that this was going to be my next sports addiction. I realized that I could bring into this simple game the wisdom of my aging athletic brain, the foot skills I had from years of playing tennis in my teens, and the hand/eye coordination I had learned in playing countless games of ping-pong in college. Plus, nobody was going to knock

me down.

Pickleball was invented in 1965 by Joel Pritchard, a congressman from Washington state and Bill Bell, a local businessman, at Pritchard’s home on Bainbridge Island, Wash. By 1990 pickleball was being played in all 50 states. In 2005, the USA Pickleball Association was established. And in the U.S. it’s now estimated that about 3.3 million people play pickleball. That’s 1% of the country!

This first column is going to introduce you to the basics of the game and help you find someplace to play or, at least, go watch. Or Google “pickleball” and see any number of tutoring videos and game action.

A pickleball court, at 44 feet long is 66% shorter than a tennis court. And at a mere 20 feet wide, playing doubles (which people of a certain age like to do) makes the effort needed



A selection of pickleball paddles ranging in price from \$35 to \$150.

Jim Lavrakas photo

to move to the ball much easier. I like to tell newcomers that “you can work as hard as you want to in this game”. Meaning, you can designate yourself to chase down lobs, or lunge

for the ball when needed. Or not.

But, that said, one of the main reasons I’ve discovered for playing the game is that it is a highly social gathering, where all

players are welcome to play with others, no matter their skill level (players can be rated from a 1 to 5 proficiency). It’s true, that players in the 3.5 to 4.5 skill set level like to play against one another (playing against a better player only makes you better), but generally, an established group will welcome new players.

My wife and I have met a more diverse set of people, and made lasting friendships from being involved in this great game. We really love that aspect of it.

Another difference in pickleball: Unlike tennis, where you can volley from anywhere, in pickleball a non-volley zone extends 7 feet back from the net on each side, commonly called “the kitchen”. Players move to the kitchen when they can to start a “dinking game”, which is soft back-and-forth drop

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Pandemic tales: Bread machines and submarines

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS
For Senior Voice

The pandemic has created a nation of baking maniacs. To wit:

- ▶ According to Bookscan, 200,000 more bread cookbooks sold in the U.S. in 2020 than in 2019.
- ▶ by April, and continuing through July 2020, retail shelves were cleared of yeast products within hours of stock replenishments, as reported by Food Business News.
- ▶ Eater.com reports King Arthur sold a lot of flour in 2020, growing by over 50 percent compared to the previous year.
- ▶ Research firm Stackline found that bread machine sales were up an astounding 652% in March 2020 compared to the same period in 2019

I was oblivious to this kitchen excitement because I don't bake much that you would want to eat. Just don't have the patience for it. But then, serendipity. Or perhaps, kismet. In any case a couple of months ago a friend asked me if I would like a bread machine that she no longer used. I thanked her and took the machine. I have been something of a pandemic hermit in need of the occasional entertaining diversion. Moreover, I was fascinated by the idea that I could just dump a bunch of stuff into it, push a button, and fresh bread would magically pop out. How cool is that? It's like having your own "replicator" from Starship Enterprise.

The machine turned out to be a 25-year-old Welbilt Model ABM6200 with the tag line "The bread machine with patented auto eject system." After a little poking around I discovered that Welbilt as a corporate conglomerate still exists, but apparently stopped making bread machines a few years ago. Its parent company, Manitowoc, manufactured submarines during World War II. Maybe that inspired the "auto eject system."

The machine itself is white plastic, short and squat, and replete with lots of buttons and blinking lights. I think it looks like a



Author Lawrence Weiss displays his first home-made loaf made with a vintage Welbilt bread machine (below).
Courtesy Lawrence Weiss



prop from the original Star Trek. A less charitable and mean-spirited friend said it looked like a "toddler's training toilet." It'll be a cold day in hell before he gets a home-baked loaf.

My first project was a loaf of "crusty rye bread" straight out of the included Welbilt recipe and instruction book. I had in mind the fabulous, fragrant seeded rye of my childhood that mom used to buy at the bakeries on the streets of Fairfax, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood in Los Angeles. However, that wasn't what emerged from the Welbilt.

The recipe called for "Bread Flour, 2 cups." I didn't have "bread flour," but I did have all-purpose flour. "Close enough," I figured. It also called for "Rye Flour, 1-1/4 cup." Didn't have that either, but I did have whole wheat flour, so I used that. I figured I could kind of compensate for the flour switcheroos by tossing in extra caraway seeds. I dumped it all in the machine and pressed the button.

Three and a half hours later a bell rang announcing that the baking was done. A few minutes after that a periscope-like tube slowly emerged from the body of the machine, pushing back the lid. Then the

loaf slowly rose up from inside the machine, finally coming to a rest halfway out of the top. It had been "ejected" by Welbilt's patented system as if it were a slow-motion torpedo. I am guessing that when the

military contracts ended, management put some of the redundant submarine engineers to work designing Welbilt bread machines.

On the plus side the loaf smelled good, like warm caraway seeds, and it had a nice color to it. On the other hand, the loaf had kind of collapsed on one end, so it was shaped more like a rounded wedge. It was very dense and tasted like whole wheat bread stuffed with caraway seeds

– which I guess is an accurate description of what it actually was. I thought that, as a concept, it had lots of "potential."

Since then I have created a few more loaves of various types with the Welbilt. In between these bread experiments I have done some bread-baking research and watched scads of instructive YouTubes. It has been mildly entertaining and diverting, but I learned a lot. The most important lesson: bake small-loaf bread experiments. They take up less room in the freezer if they have lots of "potential."

You can buy a new highly-rated bread machine for under \$100. It might be just the ticket for the occasional respite during stressful times. Note, however, that you won't find any more submarine-inspired bread machines on the market. You'll just have to make do.

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.



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Winter fishing adventure was smooth as ice – for locals

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

“Whoa!” Grandpa McMichael exclaimed as my husband, Gary, drove down the boat launch at Finger Lake Campground near Palmer, right out onto the lake ice. We were only 30

Various size bubbles a foot deep and more were visible in the crystal clear ice.

Our family of four had already tested the ice when we had been out fishing the week before. Hindsight, I’m sure Grandpa assumed we would park in the campground and pack the gear

I decided to skate.

The opportunity for skating on lake ice that nice had not occurred for years. Since everyone was content with their activities and safe, I took off on my own, skating part way around the perimeter of the lake; only falling once when



Grandpa McMichael ice fishing on one of the family visits to Finger Lake, February 1986.

Courtesy Maraley McMichael

feet offshore when Grandpa demanded, “You turn this car around and take me back to shore, right now. I’m not kidding!”

Gary’s mom and dad were up from California spending the Christmas holiday with us. This was not their first trip to Alaska, and they were always ready to go adventuring with us no matter where in Alaska we lived.

We got up that morning with the plan to go ice fishing on Finger Lake. After a hearty breakfast, we loaded our little AMC Eagle with extra warm gear, thermos bottles of hot chocolate and coffee, snacks, ice skates, the ice auger, fishing gear and lawn chairs. By the time Grandma and Grandpa, Gary and I, our two children and the dog got in, the car was plumb full.

That winter of 1984 had already been very cold with not much snow. What little snow we did receive had been blown off the ice, leaving the whole lake like a gigantic skating rink.

out to the fishing spot. No one thought to warn him.

Hearing the fear and panic in his dad’s voice, Gary stopped the car. “Grandpa, the ice is plenty thick. Get out. I’ll show you.” He walked around and opened the door for his dad, who would not get out. The kids and I piled out, but Grandma and the dog wouldn’t leave the car either.

Getting out the ice auger, Gary then started drilling a test hole; never hitting water of course. He pointed out other vehicles and ice-fishing parties further out. Finally Grandpa was convinced it was safe. We all got back in the car and drove about a quarter mile before setting up camp.

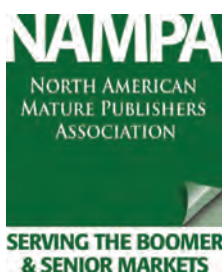
It didn’t take long to make a hole with Gary’s gasoline powered ice auger. By that time the kids had helped Grandma and our Springer spaniel out of the car and the dog was learning to use her toenails to get around. After taking a turn fishing, the kids and

one of my blades caught in a pressure crack.

By the time I returned, a couple of land locked salmon had been caught, the food and drinks enjoyed, and everyone was about ready to pack up and go home - ending a thoroughly enjoyable ice fishing adventure. There were more ice fishing trips in years to come, but that first time driving out onto Finger Lake with Grandpa McMichael, was permanently etched into family lore.

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

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Congratulations to Norman “Koolie” Heyano, named **AARP Alaska’s** 2021 **Andrus Award** winner. Norman, in his 70s, is the volunteer fire chief in **Dillingham** and has served the community throughout the pandemic responding to medical emergencies driving ambulance with a small team of volunteers. The Andrus Award is AARP Alaska’s most prestigious volunteer award for community service, given annually to an Alaskan volunteer who embodies AARP founder **Ethel Percy Andrus’** belief in the power of service, notes an AARP Alaska press statement ... **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc.** is offering a **HAM radio class** on the second Thursday of each month (Jan. 13), 2 p.m. at the **Wasilla Senior Center**. The classes are sponsored by the **Matanuska Amateur Radio Association**. Call for more information, 907-206-8800 ... **Anchorage Senior Activity Center** will hold **nutrition education sessions** on Monday, Jan. 10 and Jan. 24 at 10 a.m., via Zoom. Join registered dietitian **Amy Urbanus** for tips on what you can eat to help you live a healthy lifestyle. The webinars are free and open for everyone. Email Amy for information, aurbanus@anchorageSeniorcenter.org or call 907-770-2002 ... Thank you to **Kevin Barrett**, who has been returning to the **Soldotna Senior Center** on Fridays during the pandemic to play music. “He has performed for the seniors for many, many years,” notes the Soldotna Area Senior Citizens, Inc. December newsletter. “We look forward to him, as the seniors love his music. Kevin, you rock!” ... **Santa’s Senior Center** in **North Pole** is planning to start hosting **Socrates Café** meetings beginning in January. These gatherings, notes the center’s December newsletter, “invite people to get together and exchange philosophical perspectives based on their experiences, using the version of the Socratic Method developed by founder **Christopher Phillips**.” Member **John Spitzburg** has volunteered to facilitate the meetings, which the center expects will take place twice a month, probably

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

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on Thursdays. Call the center’s office and let them know you are interested, 907-488-4663 ... **Homer Senior Center** thanks all who have donated to its **Fire Alarm System fundraiser**. As of December, \$29,115 had been raised, according to the center’s newsletter. The goal is \$36,000. To add your support, call the center at 907-235-7655 ... **The Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Citizen Advisory Commission** is conducting a **survey** in an effort to improve local transportation services. Let them know about your transportation needs and suggestions for improvements by completing the online survey at <https://arcg.is/1T988v0>. If you would prefer a paper or telephone survey, call the Fairbanks Senior Center at 907-452-1735. All completed surveys are due no later than Jan. 31, 2022 ... **Kenai Senior Center** plans to start publishing **writings** from members in its monthly newsletter, **The Centerline**. These can be on any topic, humorous or serious, and up to 300 words in length. Entries are due by the third Wednesday of each month. Do not put your name on your entry, only its title, with the required submission form attached. Get one at the center. Call for info, 907-283-4156.

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

Pickleball

continued from page 13

shots to one another to try to move their opponent out of position for a winning shot. The game can speed up and slow down very quickly at this point, and I’ve found eye/hand coordination improves over time. The regulation ball is a form of Wiffle ball – a hard plastic with holes in it – and doesn’t sting a lot when you get “tagged” by mistake.

Paddles are specific to the game but look like oversized ping-pong paddles and can range in price

from \$35 to almost \$200.

Scoring happens only when the serving team wins a point. Games are generally played to 11 points. Each side’s players get one service each (not two serves like in tennis) and when a side uses its serves, play becomes a “side-out” to the other team, who then begin their effort to win points.

There are more rules, of course, and the best online resource for reviewing them can be found at the Pickle-Ball, Inc. website, the corporation that Joel Pritchard and friends started back when the sport was invented. Go here to

learn about the rules and more history on the game. www.pickleball.com/

To find places to play near you, the best online resource I’ve found is www.places2play.org.

Or you can ask around your town, your local rec center, or you may have already heard a friend raving about this game with the goofy name.

Next month: Playing in Hawaii.

Jim Lavrakas has lived in Alaska for almost a half century. The self-proclaimed “squirrel man” has found a lively outlet in the pursuit of pickleball. You can reach him at FarNorthPress.com.

Promote your event

On the new Senior Voice calendar of events, posting is easy and free.

Go to seniorvoicealaska.com and click the “calendar” tab on the upper right, near the magnifying glass.



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Anchorage Pioneer Home opens specialized addition

Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is announcing plans to open a “Complex Behavioral Neighborhood” serving people age 60 and older who experience complex behaviors related to dementia. The addition, on the newly remodeled fourth floor of the Anchorage Pioneer Home’s Southside Building, will serve up to nine elders and is expected to accept its first residents in early 2022.

The Anchorage Pioneer Home is one of six licensed assisted-living homes owned and operated by the State of Alaska Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes. The new neighborhood, which will be one of four distinct living communities or “neighborhoods” in the home, makes it possible for the Pioneer Homes to serve residents requiring the highest level of dementia care.

Features of the Complex Behavioral Neighborhood include high staff-to-resident ratios, as well as on-site primary care provider visits and behavioral consultations, activities for people with dementia, and specialized nursing services—all of which are designed to provide a higher quality of living

Features of the Complex Behavioral Neighborhood include high staff-to-resident ratios, as well as on-site primary care provider visits and behavioral consultations, activities for people with dementia, and specialized nursing services.

for elders. In addition to routine dementia care training, staff will attend specialized continuing-education trainings in person-focused care, learning how to recognize and work with residents’ changing abilities, as well as techniques for avoiding and de-escalating conflict.

“Dementia can cause people to feel fearful, confused or frustrated, and that’s often the source of ‘complex behaviors,’ such as agitation,” said Anchorage Pioneer Home Administrator Richard Saville. “Specialized trainings will give our staff tools to help de-escalate such behaviors and to achieve the goal of residents that are living as independently as possible.”

Alaska Pioneer Homes have been providing elder Alaskans a home and community since 1913.

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

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

currently meets virtually online via Zoom. The January meeting is Jan. 12, hosted by Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA). Begins at 8 a.m.

RSVP by calling Older Persons Action Group, Inc. for more information on these events or to be added to our e-mail reminder and Zoom invitation list, 276-1059.

Call 1-800-478-1059 to subscribe to Senior Voice

Calendar of Events

Jan. 1 Statewide Application period opens, Jan. 1 through March 31, for Permanent Fund Dividend. Information and online application at <https://pfd.alaska.gov>.

Jan. 2 Fairbanks Open hours for indoor walking and jogging at the Big Dipper Ice Arena, Monday-Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Walking is free – do not come if you are experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19. Face masks recommended but not required. Call 907-459-1070.

Jan. 6 Seward Alaska Sealife Center offers free admission to all Alaska residents on Thursdays through February. Information at www.alaskasealife.org or call 907-224-7908.

Jan. 7 Worldwide Orthodox Christmas

Jan. 17 Nationwide Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 15 Seward 37th Annual Polar Bear Jump, 12:30 p.m. at the small boat harbor. Jumpers plunge into the frigid waters of Resurrection Bay to raise funds for the American Cancer Society. www.alaskapolarbearjump.org

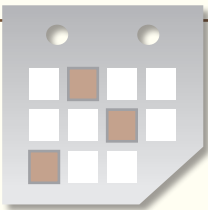
Jan. 15 Kodiak Application deadline for Kodiak Island Borough senior property tax exemption. For information, call borough assessor’s office, 486-9395.

Jan. 25 Soldotna Soldotna Senior Center board of directors monthly meeting, 1 p.m. Teleconference is available; new ideas welcome. Call for information, 907-262-2322.

Jan. 29-Feb. 5 Cordova 2022 Cordova Ice Worm Festival. Annual arts and crafts show, food fair, fireworks, variety show, Iceworm Parade, Tail Hunt and more. www.icewormfestival.com for events schedule and information.

Jan. 26 Anchorage Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission meets, 10 a.m. to noon. Meeting is virtual via Microsoft Teams. For more information and to receive the link, contact Judith Atkins at 343-6590 or Judith.atkins@anchorageak.gov.

Jan. 31 Valdez Annual deadline for Valdez Senior Center membership application and renewals. Dues are \$25 per year per person. Mail or hand-deliver completed applications to the senior center. Forms are available at the center or can be downloaded at www.valdezseniorcenter.org. Call 907-835-5032 for information.



Send us your calendar items

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Enterprising cook mines Nome's miners

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

Fired with the romance of the undertaking and inspired by exciting rumors, thousands thronged to Nome's beaches in 1900 after gold nuggets were found in the sand. Lured by the siren's cry of "gold," prospectors who'd not had luck elsewhere in Alaska came in the hopes that Nome's sand would become their pay dirt.

But several adventurers, like A.F. Raynor, swarmed to the Seward Peninsula to mine the gold-mad prospectors.

Raynor, a port steward for the Blue Star Navigation Co., was working in Saint Michael when he heard the news of Nome's riches. He immediately resigned his post and joined the stampede. His goal: to make "easy money" off the miners by feeding their stomachs.

Along with a stock of groceries, he purchased a large range and an assortment of crockery that had never been claimed for a hotel up the Yukon River. Raynor also bought a 30-by-40-foot tent.

He piled his provisions onto the schooner Hera and sailed to Nome, where he was put ashore in between heavy surfs. Once he'd hauled his outfit to safety, he found the only lumber dealer and picked up enough wood, at \$1 per board (\$1 in 1900 equals about \$33 today), to build a lunch counter and a few crude stools.

The tent city housed about 2,500 people, and every steamer arrival boosted Nome's population more. Raynor quickly set up his cook tent opposite "Tex" Rickard's saloon and gambling house, which was the largest in the camp.

It didn't take long for Nome's population to swell to about 20,000 and become the U.S. Postal Service's largest general delivery address in the entire United States.

He kept his menu simple, offering dishes like beans for \$1 a plate; ham and eggs for \$2.50; evaporated potatoes for 50 cents an order; and black coffee for 25 cents a cup.

When a man with a cow walked into Raynor's café two weeks after it opened, Raynor ordered a gallon of milk to be delivered daily for \$1 a quart. He then slapped up signs announcing "Fresh Milk."

But after the first order was delivered, he learned the man had contracted to deliver 50 gallons of "fresh" milk a day to others in the community from this one remarkable cow. Raynor quickly tasted the gallon that he'd just purchased and canceled his contract. He told the "dairyman" he could make a

better batch by mixing a can of evaporated milk with water.

A few days later, the man offered Raynor the beast because he couldn't get feed for it. Raynor bought the cow, skinned and dressed, but soon learned that its steaks were too tough to eat.

"I will always believe that the cow never met her death at the hand of a butcher, but just laid down and died from malnutrition," he said later. "Such a scrawny array of bones as I had to work with I never saw before and never expect to see again."

Raynor put the carcass through a meat grinder and still made a tidy profit on hamburgers and stew.

This column features tidbits found among the writings of the late Alaska historian, Phyllis Downing Carlson. Her niece, Laurel Downing Bill, has turned many of Carlson's stories – as well as stories from her own re-

search – into a series of books titled "Aunt Phil's Trunk." Volumes One through Five, which won the 2016 gold medal for best nonfiction series from Literary Classics International



Seeing a cow in early Nome must have been quite a sight. But within a few years of gold being discovered on its beaches, the Alaska Dairy Company and Poultry Yard had been established, as seen in this photograph taken by Frank H. Nowell on Aug. 11, 1905.

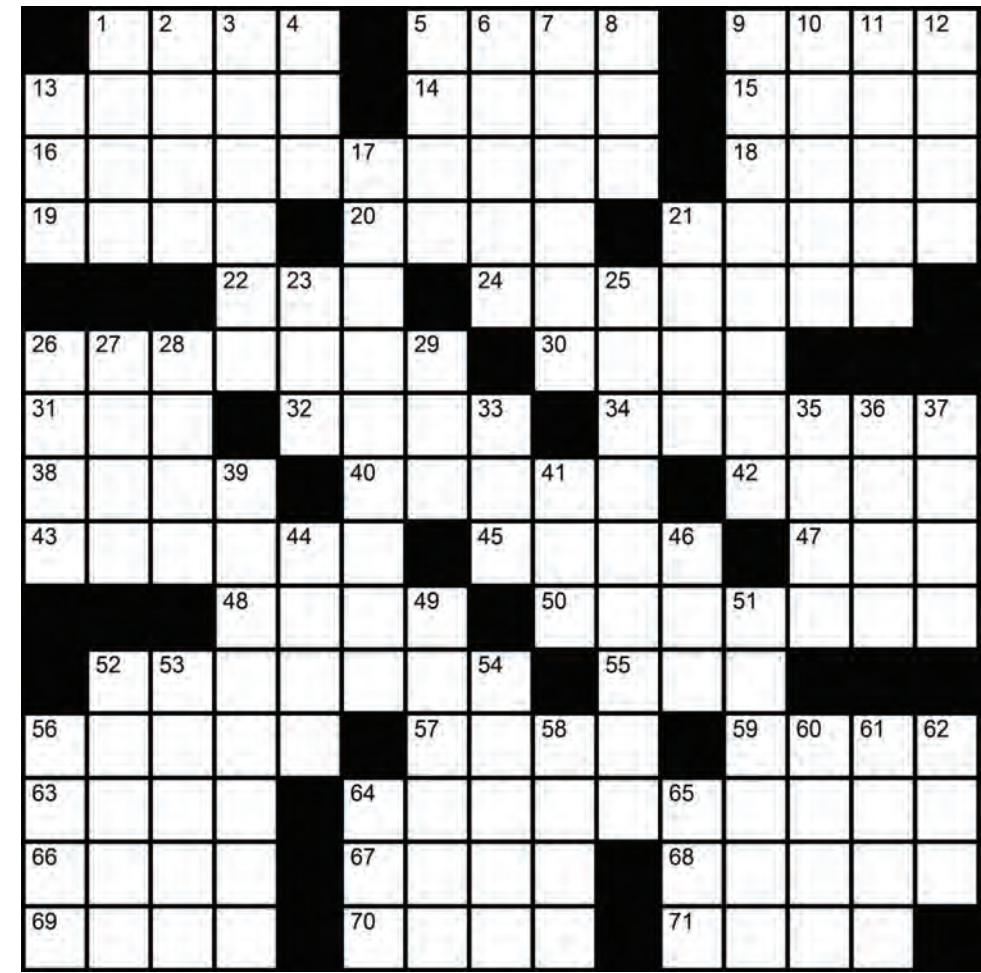
Aunt Phil's files

and voted Best of Anchorage 2020, are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com and Amazon.com.

Hot Stuff

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Ring in the New Year with some Marx Brothers

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

It's a personal resolution I observe every January: celebrating the New Year with duck soup, animal crackers and, of course, the cocoanuts.

No, it's not some strange private culinary ritual. It's a tradition to welcome the New Year with some old-fashioned Hollywood madcap merriment by viewing several Marx Brothers films including, but not limited to, three of my favorites: "Duck Soup," "Animal Crackers," and "The Cocoanuts."

And at some point this January, I'll also enjoy the next episode of the "The Marx Brothers Council Podcast." It's a series of monthly podcasts co-hosted by three arts and entertainment veterans who are also noted authorities on the legendary 1930s/40s movie comedy team of Groucho, Harpo, Chico and, Zeppo Marx (see www.marxbrotherscouncilpodcast.com).

The podcast is an off-

shoot of the Marx Brothers Council Facebook group which evolved from Matthew Coniam's blog, "The Marx Brothers Council of Great Britain," launched a dozen years ago, where Noah Diamond and Bob Gassel became regular contributors.

To date, some 40 episodes have aired. Each is generally led by one of the hosts with the others chiming in as the trio deep-dive into one of the films or some aspect of the Marx canon often joined by special guests. The hosts examine the films and lives of the Marx Brothers in astonishing academic detail but remain entertaining and amusing.

"I am just a big fan who often tries to hide my lack of expertise by making smart-ass remarks," said Bob Gassel (on Twitter @bobgassel), a career video

editor based in Fairfield, Conn., who is also tasked with recording, editing and publishing the podcast.

While the brothers only appeared together in 13 movies from 1929 to 1949, dedicated fans throughout subsequent decades have helped maintain the comedy team's popularity. So why their continuing appeal? It's their absurd humor and dangerous

manic energy, explains author Matthew Coniam from Bath, England, who published "The Annotated Marx Brothers" in 2015 (see www.marxcouncil.blogspot.com).

"It's low comedy for people with highbrow tastes," claimed Coniam. "That kind of dexterous verbal humor, that's very, very sophisticated yet shot through with a joyous foolishness."

"Their motivation is joy," added Noah Diamond, a writer and performer based in New York City (see www.noahdiamond.com). "Yes, they're anarchic comedians but they're not angry."

indicating the group's Facebook membership is over 5,000. "We must be doing something right."

With all past episodes archived on their website, the holiday season is a great time to check out the informative podcast fun. And while you're at it, remember you can also enjoy "A Night at the Opera," "A Day at the Races," and even a "A Night in Casablanca" without ever leaving home.

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, Ala., and has written features, columns, and interviews for many newspapers and magazines. See www.getnickt.org.



The Marx Brothers Groucho, Harpo, Chico and Zeppo, in "Monkey Business". Their genius lives on in fans' podcasts, blogs and Facebook pages.

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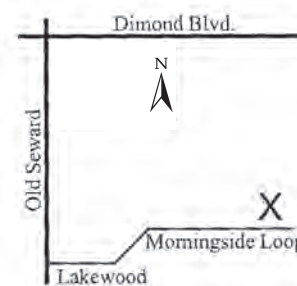
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Tracking down financial assets for retirement

By KAREN TELLEEN-LAWTON

Senior Wire

I grouse about how my husband loses things, but he's also a great finder. He uncovers

his keys, his glasses, and his wallet nearly every week. Recently, though, he found a 25-year-old retirement account. It wouldn't have changed our retirement, but any more money in the bank is nice as we check the last boxes for retirement.

We began our final financial review with our online Social Security statements. We had checked them periodically, of course, but

this time were a little more thoughtful. My husband remembered a small 401(k) his consulting partner set up back in the 1990s. The senior partner couldn't set aside funds for himself without setting up an account for my husband, so it was opened with a small contribution. He changed jobs a couple years after that. "Whatever happened to that little account?" he now wondered.

Finding and consolidating individual and retirement accounts is an important part of retirement preparation. Your main sources of future income will be familiar by this time, but you may have

lost track of retirement accounts from employers in your early years. This is the time to take a detailed trip down memory lane to discover errant funds so that you can simplify and combine accounts for your retirement years.

Did you work summers as a student where you or your employer contributed to a retirement account? Have you moved at some point and forgotten about or given up on an insurance or other sort of payment that was owed you? Who might be holding your funds?

A good first step is accessing the Social Security website, where you can

view the official list that the federal government is using to track your earnings and contributions. Check out any missing years or employers. Summer or part-time jobs may no longer be relevant for your Social Security check alongside a long career record, but they may spark a memory of other retirement contributions. I received a letter from Social Security titled "Potential Private Retirement Benefit Information" which prompted me to check on any pension with my first post-college employer.

With your complete list of lifetime employers in hand, review your retire-

ment assets and match accounts to employers and careers. The relative convenience of online records may allow you to do some tracking online that would have required months and dozens of letters and phone calls in our early working years. For instance, you may be able to trace a rollover from an old to new employer by when the newer account bumped up significantly.

If you find a gap, you can work methodically to discover the dispensation of funds. For an errant 401(k) account, start with that employer. Schwab

page 21 please

Pill splitting

continued from page 11

Use a Pill splitter

Having the right equipment is very important too. Don't use a knife or scissors to cut your pills in half. This can cause you to split them unevenly, resulting in two pieces with very different dosages, which can be dangerous. Purchase a proper pill cutter that has a cover and a V-shaped pill grip that holds the pill securely in place. You can find them at most pharmacies for \$5 to \$10.

For convenience, you

might be tempted to split the whole bottle of pills at once. But it's best to do the splitting on the day you take the first half, and then take the other half on the second day or whenever you are scheduled to take your next dose. That will help keep the drugs from deteriorating due to exposure to heat, moisture or air. It will also help ensure that any deviation in the size of one dose is compensated in the next. It's also important to know that pills are only safely split in half, and never into smaller portions such as into thirds or quarters.

Don't split these drugs

Some pills should never be split. Drugs that are time-released or long-lasting and tablets that contain a combination of drugs probably shouldn't be split, because it's difficult to ensure a proper amount of active ingredient in each half. Pills with a coating to protect your stomach, and pills that

crumble easily or irritate your mouth shouldn't be split either, along with chemotherapy drugs, anti-seizure medicines, birth control pills and capsules containing powders or gels.

Again, your doctor or pharmacist will know which drugs can and cannot be split. If you're taking a medicine that can be split, you'll need to get a pre-

scription from your doctor for twice the dosage you need. Then you can start splitting and saving, safely.

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

Health

continued from page 2

also, perhaps, check to see that some seniors have adequate supplies of food, medicine, are checking and recording their blood pressures, blood sugars, maybe even administer pills.

A lot would need to be worked out. But as many of us get older, and live alone, this is potentially a very useful idea. In some parts of the U.S., there is a voluntary program called Carrier Alert, in which the Postal Service notifies the United Way, Red Cross, or the local Agency on Aging, by placing a decal on people's mailbox. Carriers

than pay more attention when they see a sudden accumulation of mail to look for accidents or illness and notify appropriate officials. Sometimes that involves calling police to do local wellness checks as well.

In France, since 2017, families have been able to pay the postal service a fee to have home check-ins for older relatives. Rosenthal is not suggesting, however, that the Postal Service lose their essential function — delivering the mail.

"Why not instead redeploy some of the U.S. Postal Service's vast supply of human resources to deliver a service our aging population — and our country — desperately needs?" she argues.



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Tracking

continued from page 20

describes the process when the employer no longer exists: "Contact the plan administrator. If you don't know the name of the plan administrator, search the Department of Labor website for the company's Form 5500 (5500search.dol.gov), which will list their contact information." You can also search for unclaimed pensions at: Pensions from Former Employers.

Sometimes insurance companies hold money from disbursements when they can't locate the owner. Perhaps you are owed money from a personal lawsuit, or you were a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit whose payout never found its way to you.

When financial institutions cannot find the owners of accounts within three years, they

are required by federal law to relinquish the money to the appropriate state.

You can pay someone to seek unclaimed property for you, but the information is available for free on the government's Unclaimed Money website. This site provides leads on uncovering VA insurance claims, FHA mortgage funds, tax refunds, bank failure deposit money, treasury bills, unclaimed bankruptcy funds, and much more.

The federal government does not maintain a database of unclaimed funds. Each state holds the funds according to its own rules. According to SmartAsset.com, "New York State had by far the largest total of unclaimed property, and its rate of unclaimed property per capita was nearly twice that of the number two state, Massachusetts."

You can pay someone to seek unclaimed property for you, but the information is available for free on the government's Unclaimed Money website. This site provides leads on uncovering VA insurance claims, FHA mortgage funds, tax refunds, bank failure deposit money, treasury bills, unclaimed bankruptcy funds, and much more.

You can start a general search with the National Association of Unclaimed

Property Administrators. Links on the site point you to various states' unclaimed property sites as well as the VA, IRS, and other potential sources. Since rules vary by state, carefully note the detailed instructions on each application.

In the case of my hus-

band's missing 401(k), a little sleuthing resulted in the anticlimactic answer that he had rolled it over into a larger tax-deferred account in a previous consolidation effort. Nevertheless, I was grateful that he searched. In his advancing years, his frustrating track record of losing stuff

is now matched by his unerring ability to find them, eventually.

As I age alongside him, I find myself using his finder services to great effect. Whether it's an iPad, an earring, or a bank account set up to take advantage of an offer of free flight miles, he will track it down. It's a job from which I hope he never retires!

Karen Telleen-Lawton is a retired financial planner and advisor and writes about economics, finances and the environment.

Volunteer for the Long Term Care Ombudsman

Senior Voice Staff

If you love visiting with seniors and want to speak up for them, join the dedicated volunteer advocates of the Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman program.

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living homes and long-term care facilities.

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Unalakleet, Valdez, Wasilla and Wrangell.

Apply today at <https://akoltco.org/volunteer/>.

Or call Mikki Easley, Deputy Ombudsman/Volunteer Coordinator, Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman, 907-334-2535 or 1-800-730-6393.

Adults

continued from page 4

age 65 years or older, who are at high risk for death or functional decline, have self-rated health limitations, physical capability and functional restrictions. These factors place individuals on the vulnerable scale.

Under the Older Americans Act, Title VII authorizes the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program as well as elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation prevention programs. For FY2021, these programs are funded nationally at a total of \$23.7 million. The majority of Title VII funding (\$18.9 million, or 80%, in FY2021) is directed at the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, which investigates and resolves complaints of residents in nursing facilities, boarding and care facilities, and other adult care homes.

Group housing, large living complexes, crowded facilities, locations with insufficient or fresh food sources, unsanitary

conditions, or buildings with inadequately trained staff in high-crime neighborhoods are threats to the older population. A person's risk of suffering harm—their vulnerability—are those distinct, but related risks, being exposed to that threat, the risk of a threat materializing, and lack of defenses against that threat.

What is the susceptibility to threats?

Exposure factors influencing risk can be ambiguous. At times the risk can occur in small increments, or perhaps suddenly because of unexpected financial or personal loss. Vulnerability to poverty could occur after retirement, or childlessness, and unavailability of services. Or, in a wider context, vulnerability may be due to social exclusion, gender or ethnic inequalities, mental capacities, cultural patterns and historical unsatisfactory wellness systems. Past outcomes determine present exposure and coping mechanisms.

What is a person's coping capacity to threats?

A set of assets and relationships that allows people to protect themselves from a 'bad end' or to recover from a crisis includes labor assistance, human capital, productive assets, household relations and social capital. What makes a person vulnerable is their individual capacities in addition to other relationships and assets they bring to that event or crisis.

A person's individual

wealth, education, skills, physical and mental health guide coping outcomes. Fully successful coping capacities rely heavily on social networks and resources of support, rather than relying solely on an individual's capacity.

What can we do

Reducing older adult vulnerability requires examination of the size and composition of people's networks, but also the quality of relationships, and understanding changes will occur over time to

those personal interactions and community supports. Keeping family, friends and voluntary associations intact, while offering financial support, companionship and advocacy, can reduce older adults' vulnerability to threats, external dangers or harm.

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



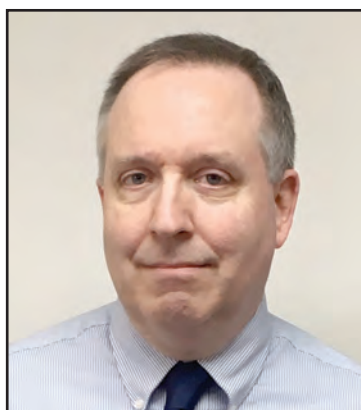
Honey, I think we need a prenup agreement

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

*If you ain't no punk
Holler "we want prenup!
We want prenup!"
It's something that you
need to have
'Cause when she leave
your ***
She gonna leave with half.*

—Kanye West



This month's column is about prenuptial agreements. If you read the news, you probably think that is something a billionaire uses to keep his fourth wife from getting half of his fortune, but it's more than that. Bear with me.

Most people get married without a prenup, and that's fine. Not everyone needs one. There are laws which provide for those situations. The divorce laws cover property division and alimony when people split up, and the inheritance laws address the rights of surviving spouses and heirs.

But sometimes those laws don't adequately address a particular situation. This is more common with older couples getting married, since they may already have significant assets they earned before the marriage. They may have children from prior relationships to whom they want to leave some of their assets when they are gone. And if they are approaching, or beyond, the end of their working years, they may be worried about losing assets they were relying on for retirement.

Older couples are much more likely to need prenuptial agreements, than younger ones. So let's talk about what is needed for a prenup to be valid.

Alaska does not have any statute regarding prenuptial agreements. The only "law" on the subject is a few Alaska Supreme Court cases. We can parse out, from those few cases, some basic requirements.

The agreement must be objectively fair; It doesn't have to be exactly what a judge would have done in a contested case, but it can't be overly one-sided. There also has to be full disclosure of assets, debts

and other relevant financial circumstances between the parties. It should not be done at the last minute, right before the wedding. Neither of the parties can have been under duress. And finally, each party should have his or her own attorney to negotiate the terms.

The recent case of Andrew B. v. Abbie B. is an almost perfect example of what not to do. The night before a destination wedding, when the bride was intoxicated, the groom suddenly presented her with a prenuptial agreement. It was a remarkably one-sided agreement, and she had no opportunity to consult with an attorney. On top of that the agreement itself was sloppily written. The couple eventually split up (who would have seen that coming?), and it is pretty likely the agreement will be thrown out completely.

So it needs to be done right if you're going to do it at all. But it can be worth doing. While the divorce laws do address premarital and inherited assets, and allow them to be kept separate, those situations can be messy. For instance, one of the parties comes into the marriage with a rental property, and the rents from that property cover all of the expenses. But during the marriage the owner-spouse wants to refinance the mortgage, and the lender insists that the spouse sign off on the new mortgage. Does that mean that the property is marital property if they divorce? There is not always a clear-cut answer.

And prenuptial agreements are not just about divorce. As I have mentioned in previous columns, the laws prevent you from completely disinheriting

your spouse. The spousal elective share laws, the statutory probate allowances, presumed joint ownership of household goods, and the pretermitted spouse law give the surviving spouse a lot of rights, regardless of what the will says, how the assets were acquired, or whether there is a probate case.

Unless, that is, you have a prenup. The spouse can waive those rights in the agreement.

There are at least three things which should be covered in a prenuptial agreement, and two of them are divorce and death. But the agreement should also address how income and expenses will be handled during the marriage, otherwise the couple will inevitably end up undermining the agreement.

Which brings us to "The Joy Luck Club".

In this novel and movie, one of the vignettes involves a couple who agree that they will share all of the marital expenses equally, and each of them can do whatever he or she wants with their respective

Alaska does not have any statute regarding prenuptial agreements. The only "law" on the subject is a few Alaska Supreme Court cases. We can parse out, from those few cases, some basic requirements.

leftover funds. The problem is, the husband's earnings are much higher than the wife's, and their lifestyle is fairly expensive. The result is that after paying his half of the expenses, the husband has plenty of money to go off on vacations by himself, and otherwise enjoy the good life, but the wife doesn't even have enough to go out to lunch with her friends. They have an unhappy marriage because they had not thought through how all of this was going to work in practice.

So if you are contemplating marriage and think you might need a prenup, talk to a lawyer to see if you really do. Whether you do or not, talk to your intended about how you are going to handle finances during the marriage.

One final note: I couldn't resist starting this column

with the song "Gold Digger". Please don't go look up the rest of the lyrics. They're terrible, and besides that the song completely misstates the law. You can't address child support in a prenuptial agreement. Apparently legal accuracy is not a requirement for a popular rap song.

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. Then you can make it to a Benz out of that Datsun. Hey, I told you not to look up those lyrics.



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Turning off auto-play; PhotoStick; home inventory

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Senior Wire

Q. When I visit certain web pages, a video starts playing automatically. Is there a way to disable this annoying behavior?

A. The simple answer is yes, there is probably a setting you can adjust to stop most videos from automatically playing. Where things can get messy is finding the right setting. Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari each have preferences that block video auto-play everywhere, and they can also selectively block auto-play on specific sites. These options can be found in the browser's preference (settings) screen, under the heading Privacy or Media, depending on the browser.

The story for mobile devices adds another wrinkle. Mobile devices are usually on cellular data plans. Videos, even short ones, can consume your data allowance fast. In addition to the advice above about web browsers, also look for options to prevent loading video while using cellular networks.

Annoying auto-play behavior is not limited to browsers. Apps like Facebook and Instagram can consume tremendous amounts of data by automatically showing video

and high-res photos. These kinds of apps usually have settings that let you trim their appetite for data, with the

added benefit of stopping most auto-play behavior.

The bottom line is that most videos can be silenced automatically. But it will take some patience to configure the right settings for your device.

Q. I have an older smartphone I no longer use, but it has photos that I would love to see again. Can I copy the images to a new phone?

A. Check out the PhotoStick line of products. They have models that work with computers and smartphones. The smartphone versions are available at getphotostickmobile.io.

The phone cannot be too old. And it has to turn on and hold a charge long enough to copy the photos off it. It also requires a compatible connector, such as iPhone's lightning port or USB on Android. If these requirements are met, you can insert a PhotoStick into the phone's connector and it will make a copy of all the photos on the device.

PhotoStick is reusable, which is handy if you have more than one smartphone.

One mild downside is that PhotoStick will copy every image. So it might sweep up odd images you

For me, I want to be able to look back and see what my house looked like in 2022. I want help to keep track of my belongings. And as a bonus, detailed records are a life saver for insurance claims. There are a number of apps available to create home inventories.

do not want. It avoids making duplicate copies of the same image, and there is always a chance that an image might be missed. But overall it is a reasonably easy to use tool that can rescue photos from an out-of-date phone.

Q. Do any of your New Year's resolutions relate to tech?

A. After years of pairing the best of intentions with middling outcomes, I avoid New Year's resolutions. However, this January I do have an important new

goal: take a photo and video inventory of the contents of my home.

There are so many good reasons to do this. For me, I want to be able to look back and see what my house looked like in 2022. I want help to keep track of my belongings. And as a bonus, detailed records are a life saver for insurance claims.

There are a number of apps available to create home inventories. An app that guides you through the

page 27 please

Anchorage Senior Activity Center

New Meal Program:

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Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

A Site for Curious People

For 20 years this unique news and information site has entertained and informed readers. The archives bulge with topics with everything from history to pop culture.

www.mentalfloss.com

Weapons Grade Weather App

This app for both Android and iPhone is arguably the most entertaining weather app available anywhere.

www.meetcarrot.com/weather/

Awkward Family Photos

This site keeps turning up fresh batches of cringe-worthy images. Consider it a recuperative respite from the holiday season.

www.awkwardfamilyphotos.com

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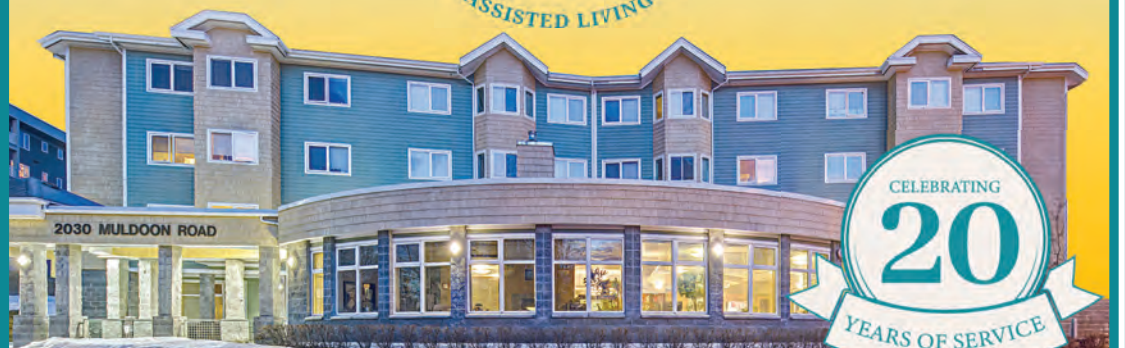
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Travel possible, but sometimes questionable

Also: COVID-19 variants and border rules disrupt Canada crossings

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

The recent COVID-19 variant Omicron is affecting travel as the pandemic shows no sign of waning. And for Alaskans, with winter coming on, the need for sun and fun as well as cultural stimulation poses the classic question: “Should I stay or should I go?”

Hawaii, our kissing cousin on almost any map of the United States, is our main source of Vitamin D and fresh fruit in the dark

Once you create your Safe Travels Hawai‘i account, enter your traveler information and trip details on its application form.

It’s important to get the correct COVID-19 test and upload the correct form or vaccination record document.

Visit Safe Travels Hawai‘i Help for answers to questions about the online application form. If you need assistance with login or technical issues, call the Safe Travels Program at 1-800-GOHAWAII (1-800-464-2924), 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hawaii Standard Time.

Wait, there’s more!

Hawaii visitors ages five and older who want to bypass quarantine and who choose not to participate in the vaccination exception program will be required to take a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test

from the last city you leave before arriving at a Hawaii airport (if your travel is from Chicago to Seattle to Honolulu, the departure time to look at is your flight from Seattle).

Once you receive your negative pre-travel test result, you need to upload the result to your Safe Travels Hawai‘i account. This step is crucial, as it will be the only means for airport officials to verify your Safe Travel Hawai‘i information on your arrival in Hawaii.

If the correct form is not uploaded to the Safe Travels Hawai‘i account prior to departure and or have a hard copy in hand when arriving in Hawaii, you must quarantine for 10 days upon arrival. The State of Hawaii will also accept vaccine records that are digitally validated by Digital Health Pass Partners.

If you receive an indeterminate result or incon-

either on paper or on your mobile phone, along with a legally valid photo ID.

If you receive a negative result while in quarantine, you still need to remain

All incoming domestic trans-Pacific Hawaii travelers from the U.S. will receive temperature checks upon arrival. Photos will be temporarily retained only



A view of the Skagway border crossing high above the Skagway River, taken from a White Pass & Yukon Route Railway train.

Dimitra Lavrakas photos

in quarantine for 10 days or the length of your trip, whichever is shorter.

If you receive a positive result while in quarantine, you are required to go into isolation until you recover and at least 10 days have passed since the start of symptoms or positive test, and at least 24 hours have passed without a fever without the use of fever reducing medicine. Health services guidance will be provided to you by the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH). If you are traveling with others, they will be required to quarantine in Hawaii for 10 days since their last contact with you, plus an additional 10 days after you are cleared from isolation if staying together.

for persons with elevated temperatures of 100.4 F degrees and above for identification and additional assessments by airport representatives.

All incoming domestic trans-Pacific travelers from the U.S. arriving with a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher, displaying COVID-19 symptoms, and/or providing answers on the Mandatory State of Hawaii Travel and Health Form requiring additional testing will be required to complete a secondary screening at the airport performed by trained health care staff.

Travelers who violate the terms of the 10-day mandatory self-quarantine will be prosecuted and may face fines of up to \$5,000 and one year in prison.

If you are not in quarantine, there are no restrictions or requirements for inter-county travel. Each county has its own COVID-19 guidelines, so familiarize yourself with each county’s rules.

Plus, there’s this: Hawaii Gov. David Ige declared a state of emergency for the entire state on December 6 and urged residents to prepare for major flooding, landslides, road closures and damage to homes.

All of this is hard to take in and deal with, but a week

next page please



On December 6, Hawaii Gov. David Ige declared a state of emergency for the entire state and urged residents to prepare for major flooding, landslides, road closures and damage to homes. What that means for Alaskans’ winter vacations is anybody’s guess.

time. We can still go there but there are rules.

As you know, Hawaii defends its environment from invasive species and plants because its native species have been so affected by historic intruders. We’re all used to filling out those declaration forms of what animals and fruit and vegetables we’re bringing in before we land.

Now, like the State of Alaska, you must create an online user account on the State of Hawaii Safe Travel website.

from a certified Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment lab in order to bypass the State of Hawaii’s 10-day mandatory quarantine. This applies only for domestic passengers from the U.S. and its Territories.

The state will only accept test results from AZOVA, CLEAR and CommonPass labs.

The test needs to be taken no more than 72 hours before your flight departure time. If you have a multi-city flight itinerary, the departure time is

clusive result prior to departure, you will be placed in 10-day quarantine upon arrival.

Once you have created your account and entered your trip information, you will need to complete the mandatory health questionnaire available in your account 24 hours prior to departure. A QR code will be emailed to you. Prior to boarding or when you deplane in Hawaii, you will be asked to present your QR code and your negative test result to airport personnel



The Seattle Airport never ceases to amaze me with its attention to every detail of travel — including your pet or support dog. As you walk off the train that takes you from the different terminals you’ll see a designated Pet Relief Area, where your dog can relieve itself.



Travel

continued from page 24

or two in Hawaii makes the winter fly by when you return to the frozen north. Still, my head just blew up.

Canada reinstates its travel ban

Temporary border restrictions and measures to address COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern for fully vaccinated travelers arriving by air or land, who have been in any country

other than Canada and the U.S. in the 14 days prior to entry to Canada, will now be subject to arrival testing and enhanced public health measures. Travelers arriving by air may take connecting flights to their place of quarantine.

The new regulations are very complicated.

Because of the new variant, those who have been in Botswana, Egypt, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe,

within 14 days before arriving in Canada, will be subject to arrival testing and enhanced public health measures.

Foreign nationals are not permitted entry into Canada — including a United States citizen.

dian Act, also known as the Jay Treaty, are subject to enhanced pre-entry and arrival testing, screening and quarantine measures.

The Jay Treaty is an agreement signed by the United States and Great Britain in 1794 to allow Ca-

Travelers, fully vaccinated and unvaccinated, are required to stay at a designated quarantine facility while they await their arrival test result.

A resident of Alaska who enters Canada via the Yukon Territory to get to another place in Alaska, or to return to their place of residence may do so as long as they remain in their vehicle while passing through Canada

But what about border towns?

Good question! An “integrated trans-border community,” like Akwesasne in New York state that is on both sides of the border, is an example of where a resident of that community can enter Canada if necessary for carrying out everyday functions such as buying groceries or gas when the

community access is in Canada.

I cannot pry out of the Canada Border Services Agency which towns in Alaska qualify as “trans-border.” I imagine Hyder does because its only road out is into Canada.

Go to www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html for more information.

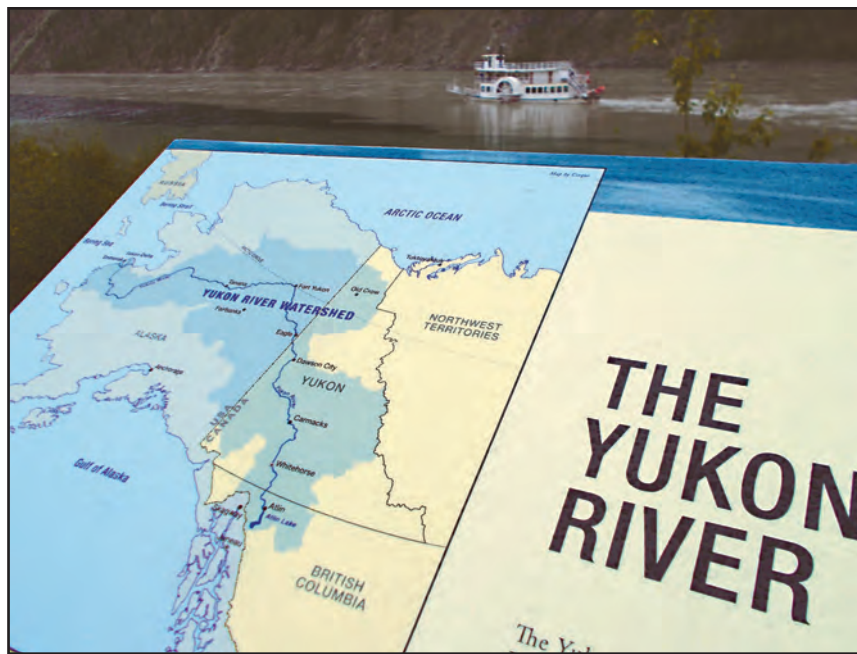
Pandemic fatigue

The difficulties of travel in the time of this pandemic has exhausted people. Travel writers are throwing up their hands, and I surely am one of them.

I say the best thing is for Alaskans to discover their own state. There's so much to see and do here.

These safety procedures are to save lives and make sure the virus doesn't change our way of life forever.

So travel safe, get immunized, wear a mask, and practice social distancing, and hopefully soon we'll all enjoy the world we knew once, once again.



Thinking of taking a trip into Canada's Yukon Territory? Think again.

Dimitra Lavrakas photos

Canadian citizens, permanent residents, people with status under the In-

nadian born Native Americans to travel freely across the U.S.-Canadian border.

for carrying out everyday functions such as buying groceries or gas when the

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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.





Habits

continued from page 5

and 60s) as most effective for delaying or preventing dementia. So, where to start?

Get cataract surgery (if needed) and address poor hearing. Poor hearing, poor sense of smell and poor vision have all been associated with increased risk of dementia. It has been unclear whether these are causes of dementia or whether they occur as a result of dementia-caused brain changes.

Hot off the press in December 2021, published research showed that cataract surgery (lens replacement) reduced risk of developing dementia by 30%. This effect persisted for at least a decade after surgery. The study didn't investigate the mechanism by which the risk was reduced but suggested that higher quality sensory input after lens replacement may be responsible.

One investigator hypothesized that, after surgery, retinal cells receive more blue light stimulation which helps to regulate sleep and cognition.

Hearing loss is associated with cognitive decline, depression and increased risk of falls. Just as with vision, it appears that poor sensory input affects parts of the brain involved with hearing and individuals with greater hearing loss seem to have greater risk of developing dementia.

Hearing is considered a modifiable risk factor for dementia and hearing loss should be addressed to stop cognitive decline, social isolation and falls, which can lead to traumatic brain injuries and other serious injuries.

Exercise more. Regular physical exercise is one of the best things that you can do to prevent dementia. Aerobic physical activity can increase brain-derived neurotrophic factor supporting formation of new neurons and protects existing ones. Increased blood flow and oxygen delivery to the hippocampus, one of the brain's memory centers, has been shown to

decrease hippocampus decline. Even small amounts of physical activity can be helpful and can improve cognitive test performance for individuals with or without dementia.

The amount of physical activity recommended is the same as for general population fitness – a goal of 30 minutes per day of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity. This level improves brain health and heart health. Resistance exercise at least twice per week can help increase mobility, reduce blood sugar and improve sleep, all of which are important for heart and brain health. Standing more and moving at least every 30 minutes are necessary to maintain best health.

Lower blood pressure, blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels. The brain relies on a healthy heart to provide the very high levels of oxygen needed for the brain's energy production. Researchers sum it up this way: "A healthy heart ensures that enough blood is pumped to the brain, while healthy blood vessels enable the oxygen- and nutrient-rich blood to reach the brain so it can function normally".

High blood pressure or prehypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes and prediabetes can damage and block blood vessels and impair blood flow to the brain and all are associated with higher risk of dementia. Clinical trials show that medical treatment to reduce blood pressure can safely decrease the occurrence of mild cognitive impairment and dementia. Keeping track of and lowering blood sugar and blood pressure with medication and lifestyle changes should be part of your heart and brain health plan.

Drink more water. Dehydration, often documented in older Americans with dementia, may play a part in the development of dementia, though this is not well established. We know that dehydrated adults experience fatigue, depression and poorer cognitive function. In one study, chronically dehydrated adults were more likely to develop Alzhei-

mer's disease and vascular dementia. It has been hypothesized but not proven that low cell and tissue fluid levels may cause brain proteins to become misshapen and may contribute to poor brain functioning and neurodegenerative disease.

Recommendations from longevity researchers suggest that women should drink between 8 and 11 cups daily and men should drink 10 to 15 cups. Some medical conditions and medications require restricting water; if you have been told to limit water, follow your medical provider's advice.

Get more and better sleep. Sleep has lots of benefits including lower blood pressure and healthier blood sugar levels and lower body weight – these may all improve heart health and brain health.

Sleep is also essential for the normal removal of toxins from the brain. Research in 2019 showed the effect of deep sleep "slow" brain waves accompanying cerebrospinal fluid washing toxins out of the brain. These slow waves are known to be important in memory and brain disease. People with Alzheimer's dementia often have sleep disturbances decreasing the number of "slow brain wave wash cycles" which result in accumulation of beta-amyloid (a toxin associated with Alzheimer's disease). This seems to perpetuate poor sleep, creating a vicious cycle.

Study findings released in early 2021 showed that people in their 50s and 60s who got less than six hours of sleep per night were 30% more likely to develop dementia than those who

got at least seven hours of sleep per night.

According to the CDC, about 70 million Americans have chronic sleep problems.

If you have sleep apnea or frequently have poor sleep, put correcting these on your to-do list for better heart and better brain health. The amount of sleep needed for most adults is between seven and nine hours per night.

Reevaluate your food choices. Eating well and maintaining a healthy body weight during mid-life are likely to help prevent and delay dementia. This is another area in which "what is good for the heart is good, is good for the brain".

The current U.S. dietary recommendations and eating patterns are effective for improving heart health. The MIND Diet (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) combines elements from the recommended Mediterranean and the DASH diets and focuses on berries, leafy greens and other vegetables, nuts, beans, whole grains, olive oil, seafood, poultry and wine. The diet is also very low in processed and red meat, sugar and fatty foods. A prospective study published in 2021 showed that older adults who adhered most closely to the MIND diet had slower cognitive decline and a 53% reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's dementia.

The differences in the MIND pattern from earlier heart healthy patterns is incorporation of foods that have demonstrated brain protective and antioxidant effects, such as berries. As you plan your revised heart

health and brain health diet, consider a few other tweaks such as including naturally fermented food, more spices like turmeric, cardamom and basil, high-nutrient leafy greens like arugula and watercress, broccoli and other cruciferous vegetables. Stick to whole natural foods instead of processed foods.

Stay in touch. The brain and heart are connected in ways that have not been described here. And, staying socially engaged and challenging the brain with new experiences has always been considered important for brain and heart health. The past two years of COVID-19 has interfered with healthy levels of human interaction. Reach out to others and take care of yourself, your family and your community in whatever ways you are able for better brain and heart health.

No matter who we are, aging comes with some inevitable changes. Research on aging contains many contradictions and controversies. But, slowly, theories are being tested and can lead us to a better understanding of the controllable factors contributing to a longer life with good brain health. Dementia does not have to be one of the inevitable changes.

For more information about these recommendations, call or email Leslie Shallcross at 907-242-6138 or lashallcross@alaska.edu.

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

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Tech

continued from page 23

steps needed to make a list of everything is undoubtedly useful, but be cautious. Will the app continue to receive updates in the future? How can you backup or export the data you have collected?

There are services that cover these contingencies and, depending on your circumstances, one of them may be right for you. For example, check out sortly.com, binaryformations.com (iPhone), and memen-todatabase.com (Android, plus Windows, Mac, and Linux).

While dedicated apps and services intrigue me, they are not especially budget friendly.

To keep it simple and inexpensive, I plan to use my smartphone's built-in features. I will make an album in the photo library for each room in the house to organize images. I will note vital info in the photo's title and caption fields and keep related notes and receipts in a word processing document. Because my data is stored in the cloud, it will be safe if something happens to the device.

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

Worker

continued from page 4

They have been put upon in the pandemic. They have been stressed by unappreciative customers, frequently changing hours, and low pay for robot-like duties.

Some businesses are raising wages to attract workers. But look carefully. The local McDonald's has a sign out front trumpeting they are hiring and paying "up to \$14 an hour." But you have to sidle up close to read the "up to" section. From a distance, it looks like "\$14 an hour." But it isn't.

Hey, all you stores that

are suffering, we customers and workers have some compassion. But if you want to attract or retain workers for the long term, then try something bold – such as

providing health insurance or a profit-sharing plan. Then you'll receive tons of job applications.

If that's too rich for your budget, then at least allow for paper applications

Arthur Vidro worked for a decade in the stock industry. Before and after, he wrote newspaper articles and edited a few books. He has served as treasurer of theater and library organizations.

He's been cautious with money ever since a dollar was worth a dollar.

Crossword answers from page 18

	S	A	R	A		N	A	S	A		F	A	T	E
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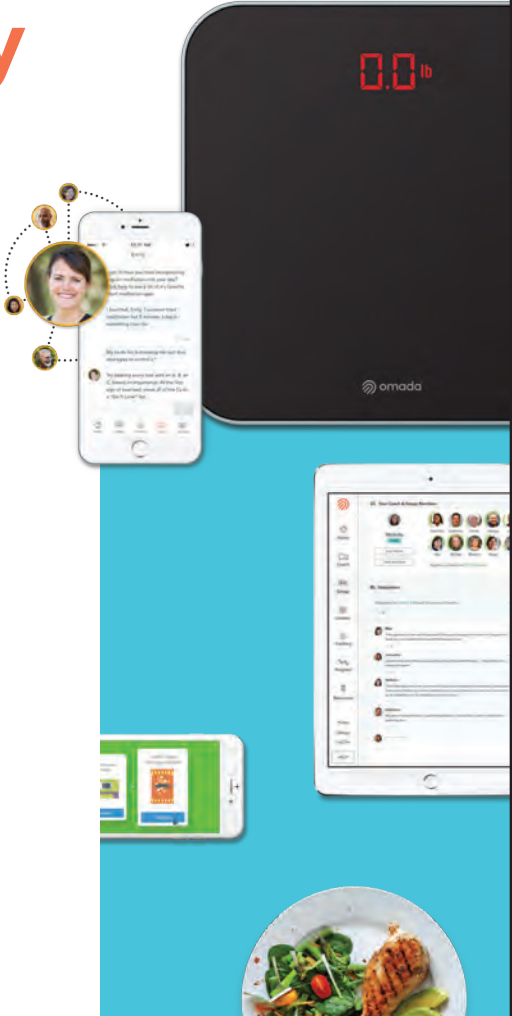
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