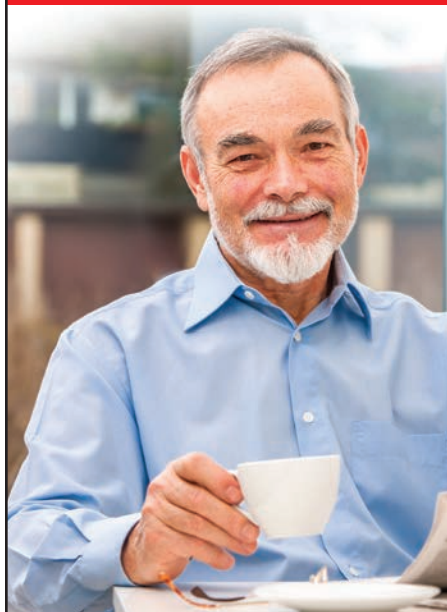
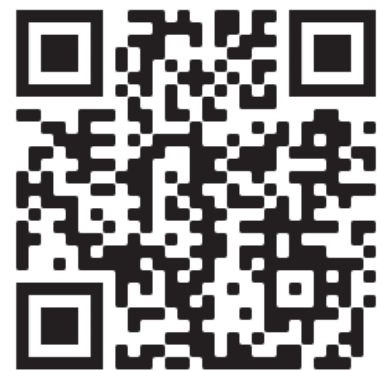


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# Senior Voice

A publication of  
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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978 Volume 48, Number 10 October 2025

Your estate plan  
deserves a careful  
reading — or two. - page 22

Abandoned mine yields  
haunting stories. - page 20

What's in store for  
Alaska after passage  
of the One Big  
Beautiful Bill. - page 12

Adak is like no other  
place and deserves  
exploration. - page 26

Maralee McMichael says the bike she got for \$50 on sale is the best investment in exercise equipment she's ever made. This month, she explores the pleasures of bike-riding and the practical fashion choices she makes while cycling.

Photo by Jeanette Pedginski







# 103-year-old Esteline Moe finds the good life in Alaska

By YASMIN RADBOD

Alaska Commission on Aging

Esteline “Estie” Moe, who has lived in Alaska since 1947, turned 103 this summer, celebrating her birthday with neighbors and family. When asked what the key to a long life is, she simply says, “You have to milk cows.” Estie was raised on a farm in northern Minnesota, the eldest daughter in her family, and did chores alongside her father and two brothers. With 40 cows on the farm, she would milk ten cows every morning before breakfast and every night after school, shovel manure, and stack hay.

Like other rural families in those days, her family used a “biffy,” or outhouse, pumped their own water, and cooked on an oil stove. She says that upbringing prepared her well for life in Alaska. Later, while working as a waitress in Minneapolis, Esteline met her husband Alvin. It didn’t take him long to figure out that she



Esteline “Estie” Moe  
Photo by Yasmin Radbod

was a keeper. Shortly after they were married, he was sent overseas for military service. She joked, “we had 40 days and 40 nights together, and then he was gone.” Alvin was on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean for almost three years. During that time, Estie roomed with his female cousins and continued working. She lived on her earnings, saving her husband’s monthly paychecks. Eventually those savings would pay for their first

house in Anchorage. When Alvin returned, he asked his wife where she wanted to live. When she replied, “anywhere but northern Minnesota!” he suggested, “how about Alaska?” and she agreed—“but only for two years.” The young couple found a small log cabin for \$3,500 in what is now the Fairview neighborhood, then on the outskirts of town. Life on the farm had prepared them both for living in Anchorage in 1947. They had no indoor plumbing or running water, just an outdoor pump and buckets of water to carry inside, and no electricity, just drums of oil for lighting and heating. Every morning, Estie’s first task was to turn up the heat; then she went back to bed to warm up again before starting the day. Within their first month in Anchorage, Alvin and Estie found a church home at Central Lutheran Church. Although they told the pastor they would stay for only two years, Estie has now

been a member for seventy-eight years. For forty of those years, Alvin was head usher and Estie made coffee for the congregation’s coffee hour. During the Alaskan winter, the outdoors was the refrigerator and freezer, but in the summer, the old federal building downtown had a cold storage area where moose meat and other perishables could be kept. When Estie went there to retrieve meat for dinner, she could also pick up the family mail. Estie worked as a checker at Northern Commercial Company before she and Alvin started their family. Later she opened a day-care at home to supplement the family income, while caring for their own four little ones. Alvin worked in construction with his two brothers, finishing concrete in the summer. Back then, you couldn’t pour cement in the winter, so Alvin spent his winters building houses. Estie often helped and has not-so-

fond memories of holding sheetrock in place while he fastened it. Together, they built the house she still lives in today, as well as four others in the neighborhood. Her favorite place to volunteer was Bishop’s Attic, where she sorted clothing in the back with wonderful friends and lively conversation. An avid reader, for years Estie read a book every day. She is also a master embroiderer. After the 1964 earthquake, she joined a pottery club whose instructor collected clay from Cook Inlet for their projects. “It’s been a very good life. It’s what you make of it, of course. My parents taught me never to spend what you don’t have. That was probably the best advice.” When asked if she would have done anything different in life, she said, “I wouldn’t have milked so many cows.” But maybe it’s a good thing she did! Yasmin Radbod is the Rural Outreach Coordinator at Alaska Commission on Aging.

## Older Persons Action Group, Inc. Annual Meeting Monday, Nov. 24, 2025

Online via Zoom <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/82305144805?pwd=SoVldzNCWEo3Z2prMFk4V1ozWUwyZz09>  
The OPAG board of directors meets at 12:30 p.m., followed immediately by the annual meeting.

### Send us your letters

Send letters to the editor to Senior Voice, 401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102, Anchorage AK 99503. Maximum length is 250 words. Senior Voice reserves the right to edit for content and length. Space may be made available for longer opinion piece essays up to 400 words. Contact the managing editor at [editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com) to discuss this. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

### OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

#### Mission statement:

“To work statewide to improve the quality of life for all Alaskans through education, advocacy and collaboration.”

#### Vision statement:

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

### Corrections

A person’s name might only appear in print once in their life unless they become famous—or infamous. We had the opportunity to get Esteline “Estie” Moe’s name correct in the September issue, but we flubbed it. I committed the cardinal sin in editing: I introduced an error.

I tell my journalism and communications students to get it right, and to use accuracy checklists to help them do so. Then, in the same week I delivered that lecture, I found myself with a writer justifiably upset that I had changed her copy for the worse. Since Estie might not have another chance to get her name in print, we are rerunning the story without the error. It’s here on page 2.

We also erred in the byline in the print version of a story about the Haa Yatx’u Saani Kin Support Program. It should have been attributed to Holly Handler, co-director/kin legal advisor at Haa Yatx’u Saani.

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Editor ..... Paola Banchemo  
[editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)

Correspondents.....Laurel Bill, Dimitra Lavrakas  
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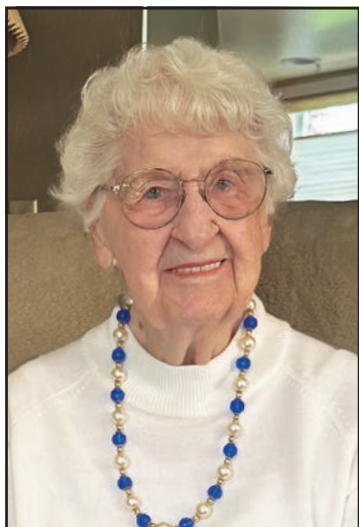
# Norma Alderfer is looking forward to her 102nd birthday

*Editor's Note: National Centenarian's Day was Sept. 22. The day honors those who've celebrated 100 birthdays or more. We're publishing several profiles of people who have hit this milestone this month and in following months. The Alaska Commission on Aging is working with the Governor's Office, Pioneer Homes and Long Term Care Ombudsman to celebrate Alaska's centenarians. This interview was made possible thanks to the Alaska Commission on Aging.*

By **PAOLA BANCHERO**

Senior Voice

A visit to Norma Alderfer's home shows a woman who is meticulous—in her recollections, her style, her graciousness. She welcomed two visitors on a sunny day in July dressed in blue pants and a cream-colored sweater with a matching necklace, her red lipstick on and a neat stack of letters and mementos ready to share.



Norma Alderfer

Photos by Yasmin Radbod



Norma Alderfer left southern Kansas to marry her hometown sweetheart. Her parents saw her off that day.

## From Kansas to Alaska

At 101, Norma can tell you all about her childhood in Arkansas City, Kansas, the beloved only daughter of a couple who raised a daughter to be a doer.

She worked in telecommunications in Kansas City, Missouri, and then came to Alaska to marry her first husband. She discovered that the territory afforded women greater independence and freedom.

"If you were willing to work hard, whether it be housework or an office or digging ditches, you had an opportunity," Norma said. "You were given that, and you took it if you wanted it. Most of the people I have known have taken advan-

tage of that opportunity, in particular, the women. I know some great women."

She recalls being one of the first people to learn that Alaska's efforts to become a state had been successful when Congress approved statehood in 1959. At the time, Norma was working for Midnight Sun Broadcasting.

She can also tell you about her married life, and the joy of being considered like an aunt to children who lived near her in Barrow (now Utqiagvik) when she and her second husband, Clifford, worked at the Arctic Research Laboratory, at the time about 5 miles from the town center. They lived in a half

Quonset hut during that time. Those grown children look in on her, call her and keep the connection going many decades later.

She can tell you about the birthday party organized at the Captain Cook Hotel for her 100th birthday. A big group of friends commemorated the day with her, and she was written up in the newsletter of the Alaska Teamsters Local 959. Gov. Mike Dunleavy also sent her birthday greetings.

"I don't know as I have made a footprint but I know that I have been helped through disasters, like a fire and losing my husband," she said. "You can't do it alone. All you

have to do is pick it up and go from there. And don't feel sorry for yourself. Thank the good Lord that he is there for you."

## Norma's present

Living near the heart of Anchorage, Norma enjoys the company of friends who seek out her companionship.

Her home, with its immaculate furnishings, is a welcoming space, reflecting her taste and her long life in Alaska. She likes doing puzzles and being social.

"I've never met a person I didn't like," Norma said.

"They've had to change my mind."

A large hutch with family mementos stands in the living room. She shows off some items that she carried with her from Kansas or that her parents brought to her over the years. One item displays her sense of humor. It's a fork with bent tines, except for the middle one. It's supposed to be used if you're on a diet.

Norma keeps a file of letters and acknowledge-

ments she has received for various service activities. She also has a photograph of her parents on a side table, a constant reminder of the people who loved her and launched her into the world.

A centerpiece in her kitchen she credits to her father. He salvaged a cabinet from a shuttered hospital near her hometown. She brought it to Alaska, painted it and it serves as a kind of "island" in her kitchen, where she stashes the ingredients and accessories of martini making.

"I've had a great life. I still like a good martini in the evening with cheese and crackers or hors d'oeuvres," Norma said. "I'm well known for my Grey Goose martinis. And I have friends who join me in that respect."

## Norma's future

Although many of Norma's friends have passed, she is still active in Pioneers of Alaska, a fraternal organization founded in Nome. She also belongs to a mother's club, made up of women who support each other and actively volunteer in the community. She has regular visits and phone calls from loved ones.

"Like I say, I don't know as I'll leave a footprint, but I hope so."

Norma is looking forward to turning 102.



A fork with bent tines tells guests exactly what Norma thinks about dieting. It's an item in her living room hutch, reminders of her full life.



Norma's father repurposed a cabinet from a shuttered hospital. Later, Norma brought it with her to Alaska. It has become her martini-making island in her kitchen, displaying her immaculate taste.





# Navigating hearing loss: Encouraging evaluations and understanding impacts on brain health

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

**Q: My dad's hearing loss is leading to miscommunications with my mom, causing family frustration because he refuses to get a hearing evaluation. What can we do?**

**A:** Hearing loss can lead to significant misunderstandings within families, particularly for older adults who may struggle with communicating their thoughts and feelings. In many cases, this situation is compounded by a parent's reluctance to undergo a hearing evaluation, which can cause frustration for family members. Understanding the underlying reasons for this reluctance is key to fostering better communication and encouraging proactive steps toward addressing hearing loss.

Many older individuals fail to recognize or accept that they have hearing loss, often denying the issue altogether. This denial can stem from various fears: a diagnosis may signify aging or declining health, and the stigma surrounding hearing aids can lead to embarrassment or avoidance. Previous negative experiences with health care appointments can also deter older adults from seeking evaluations. Additionally, worries about costs, the complexity of the evaluation process, perceived necessity, and influences from family or friends can contribute to their hesitation.

To facilitate productive conversations around this topic, families can employ several strategies. Initiate calm dialogues about the importance of hearing health, sharing specific examples of how hearing loss impacts family relations. Taking the time to understand their concerns and involving a trusted family member in discussions can provide supportive context. Highlighting the benefits of improved hearing, such as enhanced communication and social interactions, can encourage individuals to reconsider their stance.



Suggest starting with a preliminary consultation as a less intimidating step, and introducing assistive listening devices may mitigate discomfort over evaluations. Furthermore, educating individuals on the consequences of untreated hearing loss—like isolation and cognitive decline—can evoke motivation to seek help. Lastly, teamwork is crucial; extending an invitation to accompany them to the evaluation can ease fears while encouraging emotional connection.

## The impact of hearing loss on brain health

Understanding how hearing loss affects brain health is crucial when addressing this issue with older adults. Behavioral science presents several theories that highlight the connection between sensory loss and cognitive decline.

*Cognitive load theory* suggests that when the brain receives diminished sensory input or compensates for impaired signals, it expends extra cognitive resources. This increased demand can lead to cognitive fatigue, depleting the necessary resources for tasks such as critical thinking, problem-solving and memory retention.

Similarly, *cascade theory* explains how sensory loss results in a "snowball effect" of social withdrawal and inactivity. Individuals experiencing hearing loss may shy away from social situations, leading to isolation that further exacerbates cognitive decline due to the lack of engagement and stimulation.

*Common cause theory* posits that sensory and cognitive declines often

***By addressing sensory loss—be it through hearing aids or vision correction—individuals can alleviate cognitive load, re-engage underactive brain regions, and ensure mental engagement. Therefore, effectively managing sensory health is crucial for supporting cognitive vitality for aging adults.***

share underlying factors related to aging or neurodegeneration. Such losses may indicate broader neurological issues affecting both sensory function and cognitive health.

Other factors contributing to cognitive decline include changes in brain structure linked to hearing loss—specifically atrophy in brain areas responsible for sound processing and memory. Additionally, the risk of depression, frequently exacerbated by sensory impairment, plays a significant role in cognitive decline.

Regular hearing and vision assessments are vital for maintaining cognitive health, as untreated sensory impairments elevate the risk of cognitive decline,

dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. When hearing and vision are impaired, the brain must work harder to process degraded sensory information. Early detection and intervention can effectively mitigate these risks.

By addressing sensory loss—be it through hearing aids or vision correction—individuals can alleviate cognitive load, re-engage underactive brain regions, and ensure mental engagement. Therefore, effectively managing sensory health is crucial for supporting cognitive vitality for aging adults.

In conclusion, by understanding both the barriers to seeking hearing evaluations and the significant cognitive impacts

of hearing loss, families and caregivers can better support their loved ones in navigating these challenges, fostering resilience and connection in the process.

In November 2025, Karen Casanovas will release a co-authored book with Jim Britt, titled "Cracking the Rich Code," Volume 19. This insightful work will be available for purchase online and in select stores. To pre-order your copy, please visit her website: [karencasanovas.com](http://karencasanovas.com).

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, CLIPP is a certified resilience coach, author, and speaker dedicated to empowering individuals and organizations with practical tools and strategies grounded in neuroscience, positive psychology, and cognitive-behavioral frameworks. With over 40 years of experience as an award-winning leadership executive in diverse cultural settings, she enables people to thrive amid stress and adversity. If you have questions write to her at [info@karencasanovas.com](mailto:info@karencasanovas.com).



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# How to be your own best friend

By Dr. EMILY KANE  
For Senior Voice

I have just retired after enjoying 32 years as a primary care provider. My clinical focus has been on creating wellness, rather than managing disease, primarily through good nutrition and positive self-care. I have observed that women, especially those born before the early days of legally bolstered equal rights, have often been made to feel that their role is to serve men. We are unfortunately seeing a persistence or revival of sexism at personal, community, state, and national levels. It is not selfish to take good care of yourself. It is the basis for a more functional and caring global society. Also, men, please step up your self-care. It is your responsibility. It feels really good to be good to oneself.

I've noticed over the years, in intimate conversations with patients, that they will say making healthy, sustainable lifestyle choices can feel great, or, if a new concept, can feel like deprivation.

"Why can't I just .... eat whatever I want to taste, or drink wine every night, or just watch TV (instead of getting outside for a walk)?" What I often heard about was the perceived uphill struggle to implement healthy choices, every day, and most of the



time. It is hard, at first. Our culture pressures us to buy junk food (bottled sodas are typically cheaper than bottled water at airports and schools, for example) and to work obsessively then need to "get wasted" (TGIF, and "happy hour"). Very little has been done to address the addictiveness of screens, which increasingly isolate us from really connecting, with depth, to ourselves and our fellow humans. True connection is only possible with self-compassion and gentle human to human encounters.

Uncompromised self-care flows from a curiosity about our highest self and why we uniquely were bestowed with the blessing of this one wild and wonderful life. When we commit to loving ourselves, to feeling good about who we are, and follow through with health-promoting lifestyle choices, then walking lightly uphill is less of a struggle. The high road does indeed require a bit more effort, but the view



A hike in the Chugach Range on a sunny day is definitely self-care. Travis Rector photo

is so much better.

I have found starting the day with meditation works wonders in setting the tone (to be good to myself and everyone I encounter). A meditation teacher once gave me the helpful mnemonic RPM: rise, pee, then meditate. Meditate first thing. Personally, after 10-20 minutes of meditation (the app Insight Timer is a great place to start) I really like to dry brush my entire body, starting with a big clockwise movement over the belly, following the direction of the large intestine. Then complete the rest of the body, stroking towards the heart and making sure to include palms and soles. I use a smaller, softer brush for my face. Then I do a few moments of cold water

walking-in-place in the bathtub (a big basin works well), followed by splashing armpits and whatever joints might be feeling a bit achy with that bracingly cold Alaskan tap water. If you are lucky enough to live by a stream or the ocean—go for it!

Another healthy aging tip is that after age 60 or so most folks do much better paring down to 2 meals a day with maybe a light snack in between. The daily fasting period should be a minimum of 12 hours (overnight) where only water is taken. Giving the gut a nice long rest every day is the only clinically validated method for promoting healthy longevity. The other top tip for extending the life of your skin and organs, especially the

brain, is to avoid alcohol.

By far the No. 1 factor in preventing cognitive decline as we age is optimal nutrition. All mammals are designed to burn both sugar and fat for fuel. Sugars (simple carbohydrates including grains, especially if processed into flour, and "sweets") turns into fuel quickly but also must be burned up metabolically within a few hours so as to not turn into triglycerides, a type of fat that is typically stored around the abdomen and eventually creates fatty liver, fatty heart, fatty lungs, and fatty guts none of which work as well. Fat is trickier to turn into fuel but can provide much more durable energy. This is why athletes can "carbo load"

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# Open enrollment period starts Oct. 15

By SEAN McPHILAMY  
Alaska Medicare  
Information Office

From Oct. 15 through Dec. 7, I encourage you to review and, if needed, change your **Prescription Drug Plan (PDP)** under Medicare's Part D coverage. Changes you elect will become effective on Jan. 1. Certified Medicare counselors across Alaska can help you as part of the Medicare Information Office's network of program Ambassadors, including through your local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). Give us a call, we would be glad to



answer your questions, guide you through the process, and even complete the review of your prescription drug plan with you.

### Take time to review your drug plan

Under Part D of Medi-

care, private insurance companies have established Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs). These plans meet the regulatory requirements of the national Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) along with complying with the State of Alaska's rules overseen by the Department of Commerce and the Division of Insurance. These private insurance companies set up agreements with both drug manufacturers (the pharmaceutical companies) and distribution networks (the retail pharmacies); under a tiered pricing system, PDPs provide access to a list of

prescription drugs, also known as their formulary.

Even if your current plan has been meeting all your prescription needs, you may be able to obtain a new plan at a lower overall cost to you. For many reasons, these private insurance companies revise their offered PDPs annually. What has worked for you this year may not work for you next calendar year. To review your options, you may go online to Medicare.gov, then find the link for **Health & Drug Plans**. Without needing to create an account, you may use this online tool to review the medication you currently

are prescribed, by entering the prescription's name, its dosage, and how often you take it. You can also compare costs through local retail pharmacies. And you may be able to save money by using mail order delivery of your medications.

### You may change to the plan of your choice

Once you have reviewed your options, you may elect to change to a new plan. The goal when searching for a new plan which meets all your requirements is to obtain the lowest overall cost to you. Each plan may

page 6 please





ADVERTISEMENT

## Frequently asked questions about hearing aids

Part 2 of 2



By **DONNA R. DEMARCO**

Accurate Hearing Systems

**Do hearing aids use special batteries?** Hearing aids can have rechargeable batteries (Lithium ion) or use disposable batteries (zinc-air).

Rechargeable hearing aids come with a charger that plugs into an outlet or USB for you to charge your hearing aids overnight. However, the rechargeable batteries must be replaced every two and a half to three years.

Some hearing aids must be sent back to the factory to have batteries changed. For hearing aids with disposable batteries, the batteries can be purchased and changed by the user. Most of the zinc-air batteries need to be replaced every three to seven days depending on the battery

size and power drawn from the hearing aid.

Most hearing aid manufacturers are moving to rechargeable batteries only. The zinc-air batteries are going to be more difficult to find fresh. The batteries are available at most supermarkets, pharmacies, retailers, such as Amazon. However, with fewer people using these batteries now they are going to sit on the shelf longer. Make sure that when you buy them it's from a place that restocks them regularly, or they will not last as long, or might even be dead right out of the package.

I hope this was helpful. If I missed a question or you would like me to write about a topic, please email your question or suggestions to support@accuratehearingsystems.com

Make an appointment at Accurate Hearing for a free hearing examination and consultation. Request an appointment call 907-644-6004.

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



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## Medicare

continued from page 5

contain specific rules regarding your prescriptions, so read these notations carefully. The estimated annual cost is calculated by adding up the plan's monthly premiums along with the cost-share of the prescriptions you anticipate obtaining during the year. While PDPs offer a variety of deductibles, premiums, and cost-shares, pay attention to the total estimated cost rather than one individual factor. During the open enrollment period (beginning Oct. 15 through Dec. 7), you may even make multiple changes—the last change you make by Dec. 7 is the one which will become effective on Jan. 1, 2026.

### Out-of-pocket costs

Your annual out-of-pocket Part D costs are capped at \$2,100 in 2026. This includes what you pay for your prescriptions' copays or coinsurance during the year (including the plan deductible). This does not include the monthly drug plan premiums, nor does it include any medications which you purchase "outside" of your prescription drug plan, such as that through drug discount cards. After meeting the out-of-pocket limit, you pay \$0 for covered Part D drugs for the

rest of the year.

You also have the option to sign up for a payment plan for your Part D out-of-pocket costs. This program is called the **Medicare Prescription Payment Plan**, and you may also hear it referred to as "smoothing" costs. It lets you spread your drug costs out throughout the year. If you sign up, your Part D plan will send you a monthly bill, and you will pay \$0 at the pharmacy. The payment plan does not reduce your out-of-pocket costs, but it can help people with high drug costs concentrated in the early months of the year manage their monthly expenses for the rest of the year. To sign up for the payment plan, contact your Part D plan.

### Summary of things to consider

Ask yourself the following questions before choosing a Part D drug plan:

- Does the plan cover all the medications I take?
- Does the plan have restrictions on my drugs (i.e. prior authorization, step therapy, or quantity limits)?

- **Prior authorization** means that you must get approval from your Part D plan before the plan will pay for the drug.

- **Step therapy** means that your plan requires you to try a cheaper version of your drug before it will cover the more expensive one.

- **Quantity limits** restrict the quantity of a drug you can get per prescription fill, such as 30 pills of Drug X per month.

- How much will I pay for monthly premiums and the annual deductible?
- How much will I pay at the pharmacy (copay/coinsurance) for each drug I take?
- Is my pharmacy in the plan's preferred network? (You pay the least if you used preferred network pharmacies.)
- Can I fill my prescriptions by mail order?
- What is the plan's star rating?

To discuss your options when choosing a Part D Prescription Drug Plan, or to ask any questions regarding your specific situation, please 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 Act (MIPPA) program. If you are part of an agency or organization that assists Seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our Ambassador program.

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

## Medicare counseling by phone

By **LEE CORAY-LUDDEN**

For Senior Voice

I am a Certified Medicare Counselor working

under SHIP. My office is in the Soldotna Senior Center, and I serve the state via phone. If you are local, I can help you as a

walk-in. I am here Mondays through Thursday, 8 am to 3:30 pm. Call with your Medicare questions, 907-262-2322.

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# Health Fairs

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair events offer a chance to learn about important health topics in an informal setting. Attendees can receive free basic screenings, obtain information and resources, and have their questions answered by health, wellness and safety professionals. Health fairs are also a great way to connect with local health resources. Most importantly, events feature comprehensive, affordable blood tests. Obtaining blood screenings at health fairs is a great way to get quick, accurate results at a frac-

tion of the cost. Alaska Health Fair works with the same leading clinical laboratories that are serving local providers and hospitals, making comprehensive blood screenings available to all Alaskans at nonprofit pricing. Please note that although blood testing is a great tool that can help identify problems early, only your health care provider sees a complete picture of your health. Sharing your test results with your doctor is recommended. For more information, visit [www.alaskahealth-fair.org](http://www.alaskahealth-fair.org). Making an appointment online is quick and easy.

## Here are the dates for October:

- Oct. 4 Anchorage** Enlaces Community Health Fair Bilingual Spanish/English, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 3900 Wisconsin St. 8 a.m. to noon.
- Oct. 4 Anchorage** Make it Alaskan Community Health Fair, Egan Civic & Convention Center, 555 W 5th Ave. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Oct. 10 Soldotna** Community Health Fair, Soldotna Regional Sports Complex, 538 Arena Drive 8:30 a.m to 1:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11 Soldotna** Community Health Fair, Soldotna Regional Sports Complex, 538 Arena Drive 8:30 a.m to 1:30 p.m.
- Oct. 11 Palmer** Mat-Su College Community Health Fair, 8295 E College Drive, Palmer 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Oct. 11 Girdwood** Community Health Fair, Girdwood Community Center, 250 Egloff. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Oct. 11 Delta Junction** Community Health Fair, Elementary Gym, 2659 Nistler Road. 8 to 11:30 a.m.
- Oct. 15 Anchorage** HOPE Community

- Resources Health Fair, 570 W 53rd Ave. 8 a.m. to noon.
- Oct. 18 North Pole** Community Health Fair, North Pole Plaza Mall, 301 N. Santa Claus Lane. 8 to 11 a.m.
- Oct. 18 Juneau** Community Health Fair, Thunder Mountain High School, 3101 Diamond Park Loop. 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Oct. 21 Fairbanks** Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201 (Food Bank Bldg). 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Oct. 25 Fairbanks** Community Health Fair at Hunter Elementary Gym, 1630 Gillam Way. 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Oct. 25 Wasilla** Community Health Fair, Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc., 1301 S Century Circle. 8 a.m. to noon.
- Oct. 25 Anchorage** THREADS Community Health Fair, Z.J. Loussac Library on 3600 Denali St. 8 a.m. to noon.
- Oct. 25 Ketchikan** Community Health Fair, Ketchikan Nazarene Church, 2631 Second Ave. 8 a.m to noon.

# Alzheimer’s Resource Alaska updates its logo

Senior Voice staff

Alzheimer’s Resource Alaska, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting individuals and families impacted by Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, unveiled an updated logo in late August. The new logo, which now features the iconic forget-me-not flower, the official state flower of Alaska, embodies remembrance, community, and Alaska roots and is a symbol of memory, love, and care. This reflects Alzheimer’s Resource’s mission of serving all Alaskans facing the challenges of Alzheimer’s and related dementias. This visual



transformation represents more than just a design update; it is a renewed commitment to Alaskans, by Alaskans. “For over 40 years, we have been Alaskans serving Alaskans,” said Lisa Sauder, CEO, Alzheimer’s Resource Alaska. “Every dollar raised here stays here, and every service we provide is grounded in the

unique needs of our state’s communities. Our new logo reinforces that identity and our enduring promise to the people we serve.” In addition to the new logo, Care Coordination Resource of Alaska (CCRA), a program of Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska, has also received a logo refresh to complement the organization’s updated visual

identity. CCRA will continue to provide essential care coordination services to Alaskans with Medicaid waivers, ensuring that individuals across the state have access to the resources and support they need as they navigate the challenges of Alzheimer’s and dementia. While the visual identity has changed, Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska remains the same trusted organization that provides vital services across the state. This update aligns with the organization’s expanding vision, including the launch of a new outreach department and an ongoing focus on education and risk reduction. “New logo, same heart,”

said Kay Papakristo, Alzheimer Resource’s outreach director. “We’re simply refreshed to reflect our commitment to meeting the growing needs of Alaskans and the full scope of the work we’re doing today with a greater focus on brain health and reducing the risk of dementia through early intervention.” Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska has been serving the state for 41 years, providing education, support, and services to individuals and families impacted by Alzheimer’s disease, dementia, and other disabilities related to aging. The nonprofit has offices and outreach across the state.

## Senior Voice is on Facebook!

Search for “Senior Voice Alaska” then click on over!



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Many businesses offer a discount to seniors, but don’t advertise it.  
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## Alaska Native CARE Lab is recruiting for paid dementia caregiver focus groups

Senior Voice staff

The Alaska Native CARE Lab at the University of Alaska Anchorage will be conducting a focus group study exploring dementia knowledge, experiences, and needs in rural communities. This research project seeks to learn from Alaska Native people who care for or have cared for someone with memory loss. The goal is to better understand the current needs of families and to strengthen support systems.

- Two focus group events will be held in Anchorage:
  - October 24–25, 2025 (Friday & Saturday), 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
  - December 5–6, 2025 (Friday & Saturday), 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.
- At each session, participants will join two focus groups to discuss memory loss, brain health, and caregiving support needs.

**Who is invited:**  
► Alaska Native caregivers (current or past) of someone with memory loss

- Community members and service providers working with families experiencing dementia
- Support for participation:**
  - Flights and hotel accommodations will be provided for out-of-town participants
  - Participation gift cards will be offered to community members
- More information is available at <https://www.ancarelab.com/> or by contacting Steffi Kim, PhD: [smkim5@alaska.edu](mailto:smkim5@alaska.edu).





# Preventing cancer through a multipronged approach

By JOHN SCHIESZER  
Medical Minutes

Current research is showing that a healthy plant-based diet, along with regular physical activity, limiting alcohol, and maintaining a healthy body weight, can reduce breast cancer risk. Further, engineering combined with digital health may unlock a much better way to detect breast cancer.

The National Cancer Institute reports that one in eight women born in the U.S. today will develop breast cancer. Studies have consistently demonstrated that consumption of vegetables, fruits, and soy products, as well as increased fiber intake, is associated with reduced risk of post-menopausal breast cancer. Additionally, the National Cancer Institute, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Institute for Cancer Research, and other authorities have determined that individuals may reduce their risk of breast cancer incidence and/or mortality by maintaining a healthy body weight, limiting al-



cohol intake, and having regular physical activity.

Higher screening rates along with treatment advances have reduced breast cancer death rates by 42% in recent decades. However, it remains the second deadliest cancer among women in the United States. A 2025 study found more daily steps were associated with a lower risk of dying from any cause among post-menopausal women with a history of cancer. Women who took 5,000–6,000 steps per day reaped the greatest benefit, reducing their risk of dying by 40%.

### Breast cancer vaccines showing promise

Vaccines have long been explored to treat cancer.

**Conventional screening methods such as mammography, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are often hindered by high costs, limited accessibility, and patient discomfort. These limitations highlight the urgent need for non-invasive, cost-effective, and accessible technologies to complement existing diagnostic methods.**

Olivera Finn, who is a distinguished professor of immunology and surgery at the University of Pittsburgh and her colleagues are evaluating an investigational vaccine that primes the immune system to respond to malignant cells expressing a unique form of the cell surface protein MUC1. This is a protein found in glandular tissue. It is theorized that this type of vaccine may allow the immune system to detect and eradicate malignant cells before they are able to form a tumor.

While MUC1 is found on both normal and malignant cells, the sugar molecules bound to the protein adopt a unique pattern in the pre-cancerous and cancerous cells that form adenocarcinomas. To spare healthy cells, the vaccine developed

by Finn and colleagues trains immune cells to recognize MUC1 proteins with these cancer-associated molecular patterns.

The approach has already shown promise for those at high risk of colorectal cancer. Currently, the researchers are testing the vaccine's potential for preventing progression of DCIS (ductal carcinoma in situ). A phase 1 study is currently enrolling post-menopausal patients with newly diagnosed, hormone receptor (HR)-positive DCIS to receive neoadjuvant therapy either with or without the MUC1 vaccine. Tissue samples removed through surgery will be examined to determine if the MUC1 vaccine promoted immune changes to the tumor microenvironment.

This trial is one of many aimed at preventing or intercepting breast cancer with vaccines. At the University of Pennsylvania, a team is evaluating DNA vaccines to prevent breast cancer in BRCA mutation carriers, who have a particularly high risk of the disease. "Testing vaccines in the premalignant and in high-risk settings is feasible, and we would encourage retesting vaccines that have failed in therapeutic settings in a new setting of prevention and interception," said Finn.

### A move toward more personalized care

A first-of-its-kind, clinical trial has shown it's possible to identify breast cancer survivors who are at higher risk of their cancer coming back due to the presence of dormant cancer cells and to effectively treat those cells with repurposed, existing drugs.

While breast cancer survival continues to improve, thanks to advances in detection and treatment, when breast cancer relapses or returns after

initial treatment it is still incurable. For women who relapse, the only option is continuous and indefinite treatment, which cannot eliminate the cancer completely. Some breast cancers, like triple negative and HER2+, recur within a few years, and others like ER+ can recur decades later. Until now, there has not been a way to identify those breast cancer survivors who harbor the dormant cells that lead to recurrence.

In a randomized phase II clinical trial with 51 breast cancer survivors, existing drugs were able to clear dormant tumor cells from 80% of the study participants. The three-year survival rate without any disease recurrence was above 90% in patients who received one drug and 100% for patients who received both study drugs.

"The lingering fear of cancer returning is something that hangs over many breast cancer survivors after they celebrate the end of treatment," said principal investigator Dr. Angela DeMichele, who is with the University Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. "Right now, we just don't know when or if someone's cancer will come back."

Dormant tumor cells continue to lay in wait in some patients after breast cancer treatment. These so-called "sleeper cells" are also referred to as minimal residual disease (MRD). These cells can reactivate years or even decades later. Because they are not "active" cancer cells and can be scattered throughout the body, they do not show up on standard imaging tests that are used to watch for breast cancer recurrence.

It is theorized that this sleeper phase represents an opportunity to intervene and eradicate the dormant tumor cells before they have the chance to come back as aggressive, metastatic disease. Surprisingly, researchers recently discovered that certain drugs that do not work against actively growing cancers can be very effective against these sleeper cells.

page 26 please



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# How ARA's Art Links boosts brain health and joy

By **LISA SAUDER**  
*For Senior Voice*

Growing older doesn't mean slowing down creatively—and for those living with Alzheimer's and related dementias, the creative arts, and specifically the Art Links program offered by Alzheimer's Resource Alaska (ARA), can be a lifeline for memory, connection, and joy. Research consistently shows that engaging in creative activities can significantly improve health outcomes for older adults, while also supporting cognitive function in people at risk for or living with memory loss.

A landmark 2006 study led by Dr. Gene Cohen at George Washington University, called The Creativity and Aging Study, found that seniors participating in arts programs reported fewer doctor visits, less medication use, better physical health, and higher morale compared to non-participants. For those with Alzheimer's or related dementias, art can also provide a



safe, non-verbal way to communicate, triggering long-term memories even when short-term recall is impaired. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) reports that creative activities help reduce depression and loneliness while enhancing memory, attention, and emotional resilience—all essential for brain health.

Art Links, a program at Alzheimer's Resource Alaska (ARA), puts these findings into action. In each session, participants explore accessible art forms—from painting and collage to storytelling—while connecting with peers in a supportive, social setting. Activities are adapted so

everyone can participate, regardless of physical ability, cognitive changes, or experience level. For individuals living with dementia, the focus is on process rather than product—enjoying the moment, engaging the senses, and fostering a sense of accomplishment, connection, and community.

The benefits go far beyond the canvas. Creative work stimulates neural pathways and promotes neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to form new connections—which is vital in slowing cognitive decline. Studies have shown that older adults in regular arts programs demonstrate better problem-solving skills, improved mood, and greater resilience. For people living with Alzheimer's and related dementias, these benefits can translate into more meaningful interactions with loved ones, a stronger sense of identity, and moments of joy in daily life.

Art Links at ARA proves that creativity is ageless—

## The numbers behind creative aging *Why programs like Art Links matter*

- Less loneliness**  
70% of seniors in weekly arts programs report fewer feelings of loneliness  
*(National Endowment for the Arts)*
- Better health**  
Participants in Dr. Gene Cohen's Creativity and Aging Study had 30% fewer doctor visits over two years compared to non-participants.
- Sharper minds**  
Creative engagement can improve memory and attention by up to 15% in older adults  
*(NEA research)*
- Brighter moods**  
Regular arts activities lead to a 20% improvement in mood and reduced depression symptoms  
*(American Journal of Public Health)*
- Stronger connections**  
Group artmaking strengthens social bonds—linked to a 50% lower risk of cognitive decline  
*(Journal of Aging and Health)*



Photo by Megan Peratovich

Art Links, a program offered by Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska (ARA), encourages creativity, promotes social connection, and provides individuals at all stages of their dementia journey with meaningful opportunities to express themselves and share memories with one another and their care partners. This program is offered monthly in person at our Anchorage office, twice a month at our Mat-Su office, and once a month online, making it widely accessible to participants across Alaska. On Aug. 22, we were honored to welcome the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Elder Program—represented by Bobbie Carle (Elders Manager), Tina Svec, Elizabeth Solie, Kendra Charlie, and April Oglend—to our Mat-Su office. Together, they enjoyed designing quilt squares using fabric markers to depict Alaskan berries and flowers. These squares, along with others created in future Art Links sessions, will be assembled into a quilt to be auctioned at ARA's Amblin' for Alzheimer's Walk on May 2. During their visit, the team also had the opportunity to speak with Janice Downing, ARA Education Specialist and Art Links facilitator, about additional creative ideas to bring back to their program, as well as with Megan Peratovich, ARA's Rural Outreach Specialist, to begin exploring ways Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska can support their community efforts in the future.

and for Alaska's seniors, especially those facing memory challenges, making art together can be a powerful tool for healthy and joyful aging. By blending proven research with hands-on practice, the program offers not only a creative outlet but also a measurable boost to emotional, cognitive, and social well-being.

Schedule for Art Links at Alzheimer's Resource Alaska:

- Anchorage Office: First Friday of the month, 11 a.m.–noon.
- October date: Friday, Oct. 3
- Mat-Su Office: Second and fourth Fridays of the month, 1–2 p.m.
- October dates: Friday, Oct. 10 and Friday, Oct. 24

No registration is required, just drop in and create!

For more information, call 907-561-3313. [www.AlzAlaska.org](http://www.AlzAlaska.org)

Lisa Sauder is the CEO of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

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# Stay active year round: Your health depends on it

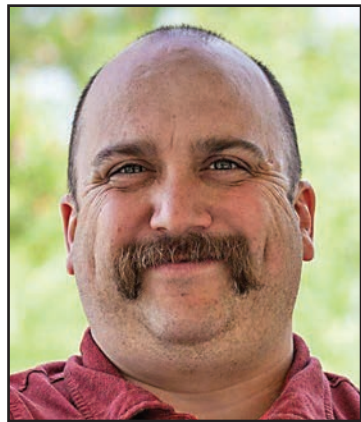
By CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY

For Senior Voice

As the days get shorter than the mercury in the old thermometer you still have outside, you may feel an urge to stay inside more. While it's natural to want to cozy up by the fireplace, too much sitting can seriously harm you. Let's talk about why staying active matters and how you can do it safely this winter.

When we sit for long periods, our bodies get weak. Our muscles get smaller, and our bones become brittle. Blood doesn't flow as well, which can lead to dangerous clots in our legs. Our balance is impacted too, making falls more likely. Even our minds can suffer when we don't move enough.

The good news is that small amounts of activity can make a big difference. You don't need to run a marathon or join a gym. Simple movements done



regularly work wonders. Try standing up during TV commercials and marching in place. When you're on the phone, walk around your home instead of sitting.

Indoor activities are perfect for Alaska winters. Dancing to your favorite music is excellent exercise and lifts your mood. Cleaning house counts, too. Vacuuming, dusting, and washing dishes all get your body moving. Even fidgeting helps more than staying perfectly still.

There are some senior-friendly activities out there. These include gentle yoga, water aero-

**Winter weather creates extra challenges, but don't let that stop you. When it's too cold or icy outside, focus on indoor movement.**

bics, and walking groups. Libraries sometimes host chair exercises. Senior centers are goldmines for safe, social activities that keep you moving.

Walking remains one of the best exercises, even in winter. If you have a mall nearby, find out if it opens early for mall walkers before stores open. This gives you a safe, warm place to walk when sidewalks are icy and snow covers trails. Walking the aisles in grocery stores works, too. Bring a buddy along for safety and to get them some exercise, too.

If you have health concerns, talk to your doctor before starting new activities. They can suggest safe options for your situation. Physical therapists can also teach you exercises that help with specific

problems like arthritis or balance issues. They can also help you stretch with resistance bands, which are lightweight, inexpensive, and perfect for strength training in small spaces.

Some other activities include standing on one foot while holding the back of a chair, walking heel-to-toe alongside furniture while holding onto it, walking up and down some stairs every day, and even indoor gardening.

Winter weather creates extra challenges, but don't let that stop you. When it's too cold or icy outside, focus on indoor movement. Keep comfortable shoes handy so you're ready to move anytime. Set reminders on your phone to stand up every hour.

Remember, any movement is better than none.

Start small and build slowly. If you can only stand for two minutes every hour, that's still progress. The key is consistency, not intensity.

For more information about staying active safely, contact your local area agency on aging. The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services website has resources for seniors. Your doctor's office often has pamphlets about exercise for older adults too.

Don't let winter turn you into a couch potato. Your body, mind, and spirit will thank you for staying active. Small steps today lead to better health tomorrow.

Christian M. Hartley is a 41-year Alaska resident with more than 26 years of public safety and public service experience. He is the public safety director of the City of Houston and serves on many local and state workgroups, boards and commissions related to safety. He lives in Big Lake with his wife of 21 years and their three teenage sons.

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# How to find a reliable, responsive handyman

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior,

What's the best way to find a good handyman or tradesman that can help with small jobs around the house? – *Almost 75*

Dear Almost,

It's a great question. Finding a good home repair/handyman can be a bit of a crapshoot. How do you find someone who will return your calls or texts, show up on time, do the job right and finish it, all at a fair price? Here are a few tips and resources that can help you search.

## What kind of help

While it may seem obvious, whom you call on for help will depend on what you need done. If, for example, you have an odd job or small home repair project that doesn't require a lot of technical expertise, a handyperson may be all you need. But if you have a job that involves electricity, plumbing, or heating or cooling systems, you're

better off going with a licensed tradesman. Bigger jobs like home renovations or remodeling may require a general contractor.

## Where to find a pro

Whatever type of work you need, the best way to find it is through referrals from people you trust. If your friends or family don't have any recommendations turn to professionals in the field like local hardware or home improvement stores, or even real estate agents.

If you don't have any luck here, there are a number of online resources you can turn to that can quickly connect you to a wide variety of skilled workers in your area.

If you need someone for a home chore or small job, a popular option is Taskrabbit ([taskrabbit.com](http://taskrabbit.com)), which lists thousands of freelance workers (called Taskers) that have undergone background checks. Here you can get help with things like furniture assembly; lifting or moving heavy



Several websites can help you find a reliable handyman. Know what you need done, how much you are willing to pay, and seek out what others recommend.

*Photo by Thijs van der Weide via Pexels*

items; mounting or hanging TVs, shelves or pictures; minor home repairs; cleaning services; yard work and more. Taskers set their own hourly rates, which are displayed on their website before you book.

Some other good options for locating handypeople are fix-it franchises like Ace Handyman ([acehandymanservices.com](http://acehandymanservices.com)) and Mr. Handyman ([mrhandyman.com](http://mrhandyman.com)). These companies vet and insure their staff, but they may be more expensive than Taskrabbit. Or, if you use social networking sites, you could also post a request for a

handyperson in your Facebook group or on Nextdoor ([nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com)).

If, however, you're in the market for specialist like a plumber, electrician, painter, roofer or carpenter as well as a handyperson, try Angi ([angi.com](http://angi.com)). They too, vet their independent contractors, and will let you request quotes from several candidates.

Thumbtack ([thumbtack.com](http://thumbtack.com)) is another good resource that's similar to Angi, but they offer more details like average response time, specifics about the work they do, and photos of past projects.

## Things to know

Once you've located a few candidates, here are some steps you can take to protect your money and ensure you're satisfied with the results. First, get a handwritten estimate or digital contract that list the tasks and the hourly rate or project fee.

Also, ask to see their proof of insurance, which covers any damages they may cause while working on your home, and ask for several references from past jobs.

You should also pay after the work is done, not before. But it's not unusual to be asked for a small deposit for material costs upfront.

And if possible, you should pay with a credit card, because you can dispute the payment if something goes wrong with the job. Checks and electronic payments like PayPal, Venmo and Zelle don't offer the same level of protection.

Send your questions or comments to [questions@savvysenior.org](mailto:questions@savvysenior.org), or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

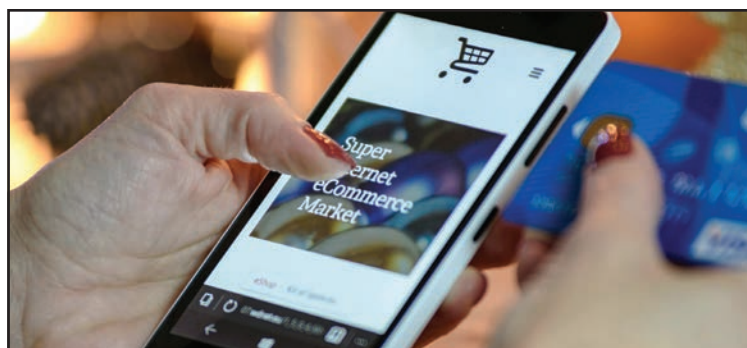
# Keeping yourself safe while online shopping

By MICHELLE TABLER

AARP Alaska Volunteer  
Fraud Education Expert

Everyone is doing more shopping online. But Alaskans especially increasingly rely on online platforms to find products not available locally. Sometimes we crave shopping in stores, touching the merchandise, trying on clothes, but you can't beat the convenience of going online any time of day or night and ordering exactly what you want for delivery to your front doorstep. Scammers know this and are targeting shoppers to obtain credit card and personal information. Watch for these red flags:

► Fake shopping websites: Look for copycat websites that mimic your favorite retailer. With AI technology, websites look more professional and use proper grammar (incorrect grammar used to be a dead giveaway of fake websites). Check the URL address to make sure you are on the correct site. Instead of



*Photo by AS Photography via Pexels*

**Online shopping may seem quick and easy but do your research to make sure you keep your credit card and personal information safe.**

clicking from an ad found in social media, it's best to type in the company name yourself. Using search engines can often result in links for companies that are paying for placement so it's best to avoid sites that indicate "sponsored."

► Too good to be true: Beware of sites advertising products at bargain prices. Scammers will tempt you with products priced far below their value. If you receive the merchandise at all, it may be a standard, shoddy knockoff. In

most cases, shoppers do not receive anything, and the scammers walk away with your credit card and personal information. Another scam: You receive a message that your card was declined. If you try another credit card, you'll find that both cards have been charged and compromised. Dispute these charges with your credit card company and as a precaution, change the passwords you used for your online shopping.

► Research: For unfamiliar companies, search the

name of the company with terms such as "scam," "complaint" and "reviews." Check to see if there is a physical address for the company and try calling the phone number to see if you can reach a customer service representative. Always pay by credit card so you can dispute fraudulent charges (never use your debit card). Scammers may require you to pay with a wire transfer or gift card. Never do that—that's a red flag for a scam.

► Reviews: Look at product reviews. Are the reviews provided by "verified purchasers" and for the same product? I've sometimes found that the product mentioned in the review is not the same as the product I am looking to buy. A newer scam, referred to as "brushing," occurs when sellers send an unsolicited package to an individual and then use that unsuspecting person's name in a fake review to boost product ratings. If you receive an unsolicited

package, avoid scanning any QR codes or clicking on any links included in the paperwork. You can report this mail fraud to the U.S. Postal Inspection Service online.

► Endorsements and free trials: Be aware of sites that have celebrity endorsements touting the product. These are usually scams. Search online with the name of the product and the name of the celebrity to verify. Watch also for free trial offers as they often lead to recurring charge subscriptions that you may not want and that are difficult to cancel. Your only recourse may be to file a dispute with your credit card company.

Online shopping may seem quick and easy but do your research to make sure you keep your credit card and personal information safe.

For more information, visit [AARP.org/money/scams-fraud/](http://AARP.org/money/scams-fraud/). The AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360 is also a free resource.





# Health care impacts of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act

By **MATTHEW SCHMITZ**

For Senior Voice

The Anchorage Pioneer Home is located in downtown Anchorage. It's one of a number of assisted living homes operated by the State of Alaska.

Brian Studstill, the communications director for the Alaska Department of Family and Community Services, said in an email that of the 164 residents in Anchorage Pioneer Home, 49 of them are eligible for Medicaid.

Medicaid helps pay for services not covered by Medicare, including long-term care. According to the Alaska Department of Health, the state paid \$96 million from Medicaid to assisted living homes last year.

## Federal spending on health care to decrease

Following the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act earlier this year, there are changes coming to Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act.

Studstill said Alaska Pioneer Homes are not expecting an impact from the bill or funding loss, but the changes are still under review.

According to KFF, a health policy research organization, Alaska is projected to lose \$2 billion in Medicaid spending over the next 10 years. <https://www.kff.org/medicaid/allocating-cbos-estimates-of-federal-medicaid-spending-reductions-across-the-states-enacted-reconciliation-package/>

Alice Burns is the associate director with KFF's program on Medicaid and uninsured. She said in an email that the estimate is based states' characteristics.

The Congressional Budget Office projects a reduction of \$991 billion in Medicaid spending across the U.S. over the next 10 years.

Burns said the Congressional Budget Office expects losses from people who cannot meet paperwork requirements for new Medicaid work requirements—even if they are working or have an exemption.



*The Anchorage Pioneer Home is one of several state-run assisted living facilities. According to the Alaska Department of Health, the state paid \$96 million from Medicaid to assisted living homes last year. The One Big Beautiful Bill Act, passed earlier this year, is destined to change Medicaid and Medicare.* Photo by Matthew Schmitz

Emily Ricci, the deputy commissioner for the Alaska Department of Health, said it's hard to estimate the actual impact of the bill on Alaska and they are working on their own analysis.

She said many of the Medicaid changes won't be immediate, either.

"I would not expect anybody to be going out of business right now," she said.

But Medicare, on the other hand, did have changes that went into effect with the passage of the bill.

There are about 118,000 people in Alaska using Medicare, according to KFF.

The bill pauses a requirement for nursing homes to meet minimum staffing levels. According to the University of Pennsylvania, increased staffing "would save approximately 13,000 lives per year." [https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter\\_from\\_researchers\\_to\\_sen\\_warren\\_070824.pdf](https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_researchers_to_sen_warren_070824.pdf)

There is also a pause to make it easier to enroll in Medicare Savings Programs and Medicaid. And the bill places restrictions on Medicare eligibility, affecting some lawfully present immigrants.

Ricci said the bill allows for the creation of waivers for home and community-based services, but the state won't be able to take advantage

of those until 2028.

## Affordable Care Act changes

Starting at the end of this year, there are changes

impacting the nearly 12,000 Alaskans who are 45 and older with an Affordable Care Act marketplace plan.

*next page please*



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OBBBA

from page 12

Ending are the enhanced premium tax credits, which allowed individuals with income above the normal limit to receive the credit.

While the premium tax credit will still be available for those who meet the income requirements, it will be a smaller amount for many, according to KFF. <https://www.kff.org/affordable-care-act/inflation-reduction-act/health-insurance-subsidies-what-is-their-impact-and-what-would-happen-if-they-expire/>

Also, the premium tax credit will be unavailable to lawfully present immigrants who cannot qualify for Medicaid.

Big effects coming to Medicaid

For changes to Medicaid, they are among the most sweeping in the bill.

There are about 41,000 Alaskans who are 50 or older enrolled in Medicaid about 11,000 who are dual-eligible for Medicare as well, according to the Alaska Department of Health.

One of the biggest changes are work requirements

for adults in the Medicaid expansion population. They will need to demonstrate they are working, attending school or participating in community service for at least 80 hours a month.

There are exemptions to the requirement and flexibility for people with seasonal work.

Ricci said they are still waiting for guidance from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services for a final determination on who is exempt.

Caregivers can get an exemption for the work requirements if they can show the person they are caring for has a disability, said Ricci, but whether that applies to caregivers for someone without a disability remains to be seen.

States must implement the work requirements by the end of 2026, but that deadline can be extended if states can show they are making a good-faith effort to enact changes.

Ricci said Alaska has applied for the extension.

Act will add to State of Alaska's workload

Another change: increased frequency of eligibility reviews.

The bill requires members in the Medicaid ex-

Alaskan Natives and people 65 and older are exempt from both the work requirements and six-month reviews.

pansion population to have their eligibility reviewed every six months instead of once a year.

Alaskan Natives and people 65 and older are exempt from both the work requirements and six-month reviews.

Ricci said there will be an increased workload for the department to verify applicants' eligibility with all the changes.

Alaska is already dealing with backlogs in processing applications for SNAP, adult public assistance and Medicaid.

According to the Anchorage Daily News, a judge ruled that the Alaska Department of Health was violating state law by not processing adult public assistance applications on time. <https://www.adn.com/alaska-news/2024/12/31/judge-rules-state-is-failing-to-process-timely-cash-assistance-for-hundreds-of-elderly-and-disabled-alaskans/>

Also, there was

a backlog of 30,000 Medicaid applications in July this year, according to Alaska Public Media, <https://alaskapublic.org/news/health/2025-07-21/paperwork-nightmare-thousands-wait-as-alaska-public-assistance-struggles-continue>

Ricci said the department was already working on a new system to address the backlog issues and there is funding in the bill to help update the state's Medicaid application system.

"The federal government would pay 90% of the cost for those activities, and the state would pay 10%," she said.

Ricci said they expect to have the final changes done by 2028, and they will be making new features available as they are ready.

More uninsured Alaskans predicted

Another impact of the bill is fewer insured Alaskans.

The Congressional Budget Office projects that 10 million Americans will lose insurance over the next 10 years as a result of the bill.

Sen. Cathy Giessel is the leader of the Alaska Senate Majority and vice-chair for the Senate Health and Social Service Committee.

Giessel said she heard the CEO of the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association, Jared Kosin, speak at a panel about Medicaid on Sept. 11.

"The Hospital Association is, of course, exceedingly concerned and very, very apprehensive about the losses of revenue," Giessel said.

Giessel said just because someone doesn't have insurance it doesn't mean they won't be using hospital services.

"That's where the burden is going to fall," she said, "It's going to fall on our hospitals."

Hospitals are required to provide emergency care whether a patient has insurance or not.

"Those folks who have insurance will now see their bills go up, because somewhere the hospital has to balance all this out," she said.

Alaska may see an in-

crease in some health care funding from the bill via the Rural Health Transformation Fund. According to an announcement from Sen. Dan Sullivan, Alaska could see \$200 million a year over the next five years. <https://www.sullivan.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/sullivan-shapes-one-big-beautiful-bill-to-unleash-alaskas-economy-create-good-paying-jobs-provide-historic-tax-cuts-for-working-families-and-strengthen-health-care>

The Alaska Department of Health is responsible for putting together applications for the funds.

Betsy Wood is the associate director of the office of health savings at the Alaska Department of Health. She said they requested feedback from partners across Alaska for how to use the funds.

"We have over 425 responses that we're working through to kind of build what I'm calling an idea laboratory," she said.

While direct payments to rural health providers is listed among possible uses for funds, states are not necessarily required to spend money directly on rural hospitals, according to Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy. <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2025/09/02/untangling-the-current-debate-around-federal-medicaid-cuts-the-rural-health-transformation-program-and-state-medicaid-budgets/>

Final approval of applications rests with the administrator of the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, Dr. Mehmet Oz.

In an interview with Face the Nation, Oz gave some indication of what the federal government is looking for in applications: "workforce development, right-sizing the system and using technology to provide things like telehealth," he said. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/dr-oz-cms-administrator-rural-hospital-fund-applications-medicaid/>

Matthew Schmitz is a UAA student, and the former editor of The Northern Light.

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# Bike riding is a passion; fashion is secondary

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**

Senior Voice Correspondent

“How to look chic while riding a bike...denim culottes are perfect for riding since there is plenty of legroom and the ‘Breton’ top gives it a Parisian vibe.” When I read those words several years ago in the caption under an internet photo news blurb, I almost laughed out loud. I’m an avid bike rider, but looking chic is not a priority while peddling through my Mat-Su Valley subdivision.

One time, a neighbor laughed and commented that he was glad I wasn’t a bandit wanting to rob his garage sale, when I rode up wearing my red plaid wool scarf over half of my face. (I have since learned there is such an item as a neck gaiter.) On the days the temperature dips into the low 40s, I have to wear something over my mouth to keep my teeth from getting cold, or they ache for hours. So much for giving off a Parisian vibe...

Sometimes I even wear clashing colors of clothing in my effort to get out of the house quickly once I’ve decided it’s time for my daily bike ride. I don’t ride on icy or snowy roads. Rain isn’t a problem, but wind frequently keeps me at home. My 45-year-old Helly Hansen raincoat and pants keep me dry, and I wear a rain hat under my helmet.

I still expect many decent bike riding days in October. With our mild temperatures and sparse snow several winters back, I was able to ride a good portion of January, February, and March—although it would have been hard to tell it was me under all those layers of turtleneck, down coat, long underwear under heavy jeans, stocking hat peeking out under my helmet, thick gloves, and that red plaid face scarf.

At the other extreme, temperatures were so hot at times during two past summers that I’ve worn a tank top and shorts and even then, on some days had to wait until late evening so I could ride without direct sunlight.

Bike riding has been my exercise of choice ever since our return to Palmer



*Maraley McMichael remembers receiving this bicycle around her 10th birthday. She remembers the huge basket made of metal was a weight and balance factor getting on and off when she would ride.*

*Photo courtesy of Maraley McMichael*



*As long as the roads aren’t icy or snowy, you might catch a glimpse of author Maraley McMichael on her bike. An orange vest makes her visible to motorists.*

*Photo by Erin McMichael*

in 2011. I believe it was instrumental in helping me return to good health, especially with my balance issues. The first two summers, I couldn’t lift my hand off the handlebar to return a wave from the driver of a passing car, for fear of crashing. Now I can take a glove off and put it back on while holding on with only one hand.

My classic bike has only one speed and the brakes are in the pedals. That’s what I learned on when I was a kid and what I’m most comfortable with. When my kids were young, I rode with them using a three-speed with handlebar brakes but never enjoyed it. Then for several years, I used a vintage red Schwinn boy’s bike, but it was always hard to get on and off. My current bike is the fourth I’ve owned and cost \$50 at a Camping World Black Friday sale in Colorado back in 2009

during our “snowbird” years. It’s the best money I’ve ever spent for exercise equipment.

Friends have suggested riding together, but I’ve found I prefer to ride alone. Without a set time, there is no stress when things come up, no consulting about time with someone else’s schedule commitments, and no deadlines. Once I was walking out the door with my helmet on, when a call came from my 5-year-old granddaughter asking if I could Skype with her. The bike ride was immediately put on hold.

Just getting outside every day seems to blow the cobwebs out of my head. It’s my thinking and praying time. Sometimes I use it for memory testing and try to remember three or four things I want to do or write down when I get home. If upset, it usually lowers my blood pressure. I also enjoy watching the changes of each season as they progress...from the greening up of springtime to the beautiful fall colors, and even the barrenness of prewinter. I watch for traffic and dog hazards, know-

ing which houses have loose dogs that like to bark and chase. Even so, I’ve had a dog take a bite out of my coat—very unnerving, but rare. My husband installed a rearview mirror for additional safety.

I enjoy watching both the domestic and wildflowers grow and bloom in neighbors’ yards. I notice when a house goes up for sale and when a new owner moves in. I’ve also come across unexpected garage sales and had to return home for money. I sometimes pick up litter and collect it in a plastic grocery bag which then hangs from the bike handles until I return home. The wicker basket I attached to the front of my bike comes in handy for hauling various things—warmer gloves, sunglasses, phone, and sweet pea bouquets or greenhouse produce for my neighbors.

Thinking of the basket, at a neighbor’s Fourth of July barbecue one summer, the hostess told me that she always thinks of the movie “The Wizard of Oz” when she sees me ride by her house. Stalling for time, I repeated the words “The Wizard of Oz”? while unsuccessfully trying to think of a connection. Another neighbor smiled and said, “You really don’t know whether that is good or bad, do you?” The hostess then laughed and said she admired my dedication for riding in all kinds of weather and the conversation

went in another direction.

For the next month when I rode by her house, I would remember the comment and wonder. I had never seen the movie but thought I knew the basic story and couldn’t recall any bike. Finally, I remembered to ask my daughter by email and she filled me in about Dorothy’s neighbor who stole Toto and put the dog in a wicker basket on her bike and then later turned into a witch. When I emailed back that I had attached a basket to my bike, she just laughed and said the profile fit...

I’m not going to go out and get a copy of “The Wizard of Oz” movie to check the comparison. I prefer to imagine myself as the movie star, Andie MacDowell, who played the part of a small-town judge in a soap opera type series on the Hallmark Channel a few years back. Her character rode her classic bike (with wicker basket) from home to work and around town...many times with a bouquet of flowers or a bag of groceries in the basket. She looked chic no matter how she was attired. Comparison to her is silly, though. She never wore an orange Alaska Fish & Wildlife safety vest...something I’ve started doing for additional safety the last couple of years.

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



*Author Maraley McMichael rides her bike frequently but doesn’t care a whit about what fashion statement she’s making.*

*Photo by Gary McMichael*



# Heritage Health: Quality care for all Alaskans

Heritage Health is a family-owned, Alaskan-operated care company dedicated to meeting people where they are in life—with respect, dignity, and compassion. Founded by longtime Alaska home builders Dave and Cody Hultquist, Heritage Health was created after recognizing the need for assisted living homes where each resident's voice matters and family involvement is welcomed. Since opening East View Assisted Living in 2022, Heritage Health has grown steadily, guided by the belief that everyone deserves not only a safe home, but also care providers who truly listen and value their story.

### Centering on you

At Heritage Health, residents are never treated as numbers on a chart. Every person is recognized as an individual with a lifetime of experiences, preferences, and needs. The leadership team brings over 112 years



*Heritage Health is a family-owned, Alaskan-operated care company. It has two residences in Anchorage.*

*Photo Heritage Health*

of combined experience, but it is their approach that sets them apart: listening carefully, responding thoughtfully, and always placing the residents' well-being at the center of care. From direct caregivers to administrative staff, the goal is the same, ensuring each client feels heard, respected, and cared for with genuine compassion.

### Connection in the heart of midtown

The Emerald building in midtown Anchorage reflects this philosophy. Renovated from a 1980s

office tower, it now provides warm, welcoming spaces filled with natural light and breathtaking views of the inlet, city, and mountains. Every residential floor has just four private suites, each with its own bath, allowing for close connections between caregivers and residents. A 1-to-4 caregiver ratio ensures staff have the time to sit, listen, and respond to each resident's unique needs.

Beyond residential care, Emerald's vibrant Adult Day Program invites seniors to stay active and engaged—through conversation, social activities, exercise, outings, and chef-prepared meals. Dedicated ADA-accessible transportation makes participation possible for all, while family caregivers gain peace of mind and essential time for themselves. The on-site restaurant and coffee stand open to the public offer yet another way for residents to remain part of the larger community.

### Sky Ridge: Comfort in South Anchorage

Heritage Health's newest community, Sky Ridge Assisted Living, conveniently located off O'Malley Road in south Anchorage, was designed to feel both functional and familiar. These ranch-style homes provide private rooms and baths for each resident, modern accessibility features, and large shared living areas to encourage conversation and companionship. Thoughtful touches—like heated garage access for safe pick-ups during Alaska winters—reflect the team's attention to both comfort and dignity. Sky Ridge also provides compassionate Memory and Hospice Care, delivered with respect for each family's journey.

### Supporting individuals with IDD

Heritage Health also extends its client-centered philosophy to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

The Emerald dedicates two floors to IDD residents, while Sky Ridge offers two homes designed and staffed specifically for this community. Caregivers support residents in pursuing their own goals, whether that means work, worship, health care, or social activities. With their own dedicated transportation and attentive staff, residents are empowered to stay engaged in the community and live with purpose.

### Walking beside you

At every Heritage Health location, the focus remains the same: listening to clients, honoring their choices, and supporting their independence. Families can trust that their loved ones are cared for by professionals who see them as individuals, not cases. Whether you are beginning a new chapter or seeking a provider who will genuinely appreciate your unique situation, Heritage Health is ready to walk beside you... every step of the way.



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# Honoring Elders and protecting legacies

## AFN Convention hosts two events for seniors

By **LEA McKENNA**  
For Senior Voice

This October, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention will once again shine a light on the wisdom and contributions of Alaska Native Elders. Two free special events—the **Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic** on Oct. 16, and the **Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic** on Oct. 17—will take place at the AFN Convention at the **Dena’ina Convention Center, Second Floor, Room 5 in Anchorage**, offering a blend of celebration of Elders and legal help for Alaskans. All are welcome at these free events and there is no admission fee to attend the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention.

### Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic – Oct. 16

Since 2011, the Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic (EPLC), sponsored by the Alaska Bar Association and other community partners, has offered **free drop-in legal consultations**, helping hundreds of Alaskans with civil legal questions. This year’s clinic will be held on **Thursday, October 16, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.** at the Dena’ina Convention Center. Volunteer attorneys will be available for 30-minute sessions covering a wide range of

non-criminal legal issues, including:

- ▶ Family law issues such as divorce, custody, adoption, and guardianship.
- ▶ Public benefits including Medicaid, Medicare, and SNAP.
- ▶ Housing and land concerns, from rental issues to foreclosure and allotments.
- ▶ Tribal legal matters such as Indian Child and Welfare Act issues and tribal justice.
- ▶ Probate, employment, and other non-criminal legal questions.

Volunteers at this clinic will also help seniors and families complete intake forms for the following day’s Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic, ensuring smooth access to free estate planning services.

### Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic – Oct. 17

The Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic, organized by the Alaska Bar Association and Alaska Commission on Aging with support from numerous community partners and donors, will be a one-stop hub for free senior care, resources, and estate planning legal help.

#### Resource Tables for Seniors

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., drop-in resource tables will provide seniors and their loved ones with direct access to information and referrals. Among the many

services available:

- ▶ **Memory screenings and dementia consultations** with specialists from the Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska.
- ▶ **Education and referrals** on dementia from the Alzheimer’s Association of Alaska.
- ▶ **Research updates and outreach** about dementia in Alaska Native communities from Alaska Native Community Outreach & Resources at UAA.
- ▶ **SNAP application help, appeals support, and case status** through Alaska Legal Services Corporation advocates and the Food Bank of Alaska.
- ▶ **Food pantry resources** from Food Bank of Alaska to support seniors and families experiencing food insecurity.
- ▶ **Long-term care support services** and person-centered intakes with Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) staff.
- ▶ **Senior benefits and heating assistance support** provided through ADRC and the Food Bank of Alaska.
- ▶ **General senior resources** shared by the Alaska Commission on Aging and other community organizations.

The clinic will also offer **pre-scheduled appointments** with volunteer attorneys who will draft estate planning docu-

ments for clients to sign before a notary public at the event. Clients will have the chance to prepare key legal documents including **wills, powers of attorney, and advance health care directives**. These documents help ensure that your wishes are clearly expressed—covering matters such as who should inherit property, who should handle your affairs after you pass, and who can make medical or financial decisions if you become unable to do so.

To secure an appointment, participants must complete an **intake form** by Oct. 16. Assistance with the form is available by calling the Alaska Bar Association at (907) 272-7469, visiting outreach booths in Anchorage, or by watching the recorded video presentation at [alaksabar.org/eawc](http://alaksabar.org/eawc) by estate planning attorney Chelsea Riekkola about the importance of these documents and how to choose who to name in the documents to carry out wishes. Seniors and individuals who are terminally ill will be given priority for legal appointments, though all are welcome to register.

To download the intake form and find out more details about where to get help in completing it, visit the Alaska Bar Association’s website at [www.alaskabar.org](http://www.alaskabar.org).

Completed forms can be submitted directly to the Alaska Bar Association by Oct. 16 or dropped off at the Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic on Oct. 16. Space permitting, walk-in clients may be able to get estate planning assistance by stopping by the Elder Appreciation and Wills Clinic on the morning of Oct. 17.

### Celebrating Elders, strengthening communities

Both events reflect the Alaska Federation of Native’s deep commitment to honoring Alaska Natives while addressing the practical challenges they face. This year’s AFN Convention theme is “Standing Strong, Standing United.” These events aim to further strengthen our community by addressing Alaskans’ current legal and social services support needs and helping them plan for the future.

“Honoring and helping our elders is a core value of all Alaska Native cultures. These types of services are not easy to access for most people, so we want to meet elders where they are at and help them preserve their legacies,” said Inupiaq attorney and Alaska Native Law Section co-chair Maude Blair.

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# Valley Charities seeks assistance with sorting growing donations



Volunteers from United Way's Day of Caring helped out at turn A leaf Thrift Store.

Photo by Janice Melvin, executive assistant at Valley Charities, Inc.

By **RANDI PERLMAN**

for Senior Voice

Just like the population of the Mat-Su Borough, the Valley's iconic turn-A-leaf (tAl) Thrift Store is growing all the time. The thrift store has become well-known and widely recognized throughout the Mat-Su, and the kindness and generosity of the Valley community is beyond compare. During six days of each week (closed on Tuesday), more than 100 cars come by to drop off donations. All sorts of fabulous items are donated throughout those six days. Whether it's clothing, household goods, furniture, recreational equipment, knickknacks, or anything else you might imagine, you can usually find it at tAl. These blessings bestowed on the thrift store by many loyal customers are returned to the community at large in the form of affordable prices, daily/weekly/monthly specials, and friendly, knowledgeable staff who can help you find that one-of-a-kind treasure you've been searching for.

Valley Charities, Inc. (VCI), the parent company of tAl, is extremely grateful for the generosity of spirit that provides the enormous amount of ongoing donations received regularly, and without which it could not operate. However,

that also presents an ongoing operational challenge which VCI is hoping those same loyal customers can help with. The huge quantity of goods received requires a large amount of manpower to manage. At least two hours per day must be spent moving pallets loaded with donated items so staff can get to their workstations to sort or hang clothing. All inventory received must be sorted, priced and stocked on the shelves. Both staff and some volunteers report a great deal of fun and camaraderie behind the scenes as they work on sorting, pricing, and stocking merchandise, along with a sense of pride and accomplishment. It is especially gratifying for them to witness a happy customer leaving the store with their chosen, affordably priced treasure, knowing that customer will likely return to shop in the future. VCI greatly appreciates the community support in the way of donations; now they sincerely need the community's assistance to process ALL those donations.

tAl needs volunteers willing to spend time providing a much-needed service to their many customers who may be friends, family, or neighbors. Any amount of time would be helpful for the tasks of sorting all incoming goods, hanging clothing, and

testing electrical and battery-operated items. No specific skills are needed other than a friendly attitude and a willingness to give of yourself and your time to assist a very worthy cause. Training will be gratefully provided and all are welcome, including those with special needs, if you are at least 16 years of age. A background check may be required. Perhaps you know of a group that would like to contribute to a meaningful project, such as the Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, a senior citizens group. Maybe you are part of a local Elders group, or missionaries, or a civic organization such as the Rotary or Lions who are seeking a way to make a positive impact throughout the Mat-Su. If your church or place of worship has

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## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

This month is packed with traditional fall events, such as the **Alaska Federation of Natives** convention. Make sure you make time to enjoy the golden light and the crisp temperatures ... The regular **municipal election** of the **Fairbanks North Star Borough** is **Oct. 7**. Borough Assembly seats B, C and I and school board seats C and D are on the ballot ... **Soldotna** an **acrylic art series** begins **Oct. 8** and continues each Wednesday until Nov. 5. The sessions are 1 to 2 p.m. in the community Room of the **Soldotna Public Library**. Learn about **acrylic painting** in this beginner-friendly series. The program is for adults 50+ and is made possible with the support of the **Rotary Club of Soldotna** and the **Soldotna Library Friends**. Register here: <https://soldotna.libcal.com/event/14556538?hs=a> ... The **Alaska Commission on Aging** is organizing a **webinar on ageism** from **noon to 1:30 p.m. Oct. 9**. <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/84388866103> It features **Kimberly Van Orden**, director of the Hope Lab at the University of Rochester Medical Center, Erin E. Emery-Tiburcio, co-director of the E4 Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health Disparities in Aging and the Rush Center for Excellence in Aging, and Alex Roider, special projects attorney at the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights

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- Medicaid
- Medicare Part D Extra Help and Savings Programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).



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# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 17

... **White Cane Awareness Day** is **Oct. 15**. Celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or visually impaired and the important symbol of blindness and tool of independence, the white cane. It was first marked by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 ... **The Alaska Disability and Aging Summit** is **Oct. 14-15**. The theme this year is “Blazing New Trails: Aging Well in Alaska.” The summit brings people together to identify the challenges individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities face as they age. Register at <https://specialolympicsalaska.org/disability-aging-summit/> ... There is a **webinar on Social Security** brought to you by the **Alaska Commission on Aging**. It’s with **Nathan Cole**, regional public affairs specialist on **Oct. 28**. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84369253624> ... If it’s spectator sports you’re looking for, **college hockey** is underway at **University of Alaska Fairbanks** and **University of Alaska Anchorage**. **Men’s basketball** begins this month at UAF with an **alumni game** at **7 p.m.** on **Oct. 25**. **North American Hockey League** action with the **Anchorage Wolverines** and the **Kenai River Brown Bears** has also started. The Brown Bears’ first match in **Soldotna** is at **7:30 p.m. Oct. 3**; the Wolverines’ first match in **Anchorage** is at **7 p.m. Oct. 9**. <https://nahl.com/schedule/> ... If you are more of a crafter, take a **Norwegian rosemaling** class **Oct. 3-5** from **9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** at **Viking Hall**, 8141 Briarwood St., Anchorage. The class costs \$150 for a Sons of Norway member, \$170 for a non-member. Call **Amanda** at 907-229-1235 or Gayle at 907-441-9358 to register.

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

# Charities

continued from page 17

a room available, tAl/VCI can bring items for sorting to your location, and your group can volunteer in place. There are countless different ways to volunteer, contribute, and serve your community.

Volunteering promotes a sense of belonging, creates a place to feel comfortable, enables one to do a job they can feel good about, allows for skills sharpening, and provides a purpose. By volunteering for an admirable mission, you can help yourself along with your community by doing something meaningful to both. Volunteering for your favorite charity also helps them by allowing revenue to be directed where it is needed most, enabling them to hold down personnel expenses. In the case of tAl, that translates to lower merchandise prices, thereby helping more people in need. According to the State of Alaska, a volunteer equates to \$30 per hour in value. This makes clear the value volunteers bring to the table, both to the organization itself and



**Donations to the turn-A-leaf (tAl) Thrift Store are increasing, and that means Valley Charities needs more volunteers to go through boxes of items.**  
*Photo by Janice Melvin, executive assistant at Valley Charities, Inc.*

to its ability to obtain grant funding.

Partnerships are key to any nonprofit organization in fulfilling its mission. VCI partners with United Way of Mat-Su, along with many other organizations, to help residents in our community. United Way’s Day of Caring allows volunteers to choose a nonprofit they care about, team up with others who feel the same way, and provide a day of service to that organization. This is a wonderful experience for both volunteer and the benefiting nonprofit. The need for committed volunteers at tAl is greater than ever, and if you can commit to just a few hours a week, your service would spread Valley-wide, and your reward would be bettering the lives of others and feeling good about doing so. We’d love to hear from you.

Valley Charities, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing life-changing programs and opportunities to Valley residents. VCI has been quietly serving the Mat-Su Borough for over 60 years. Through their Housing Assistance Partnership Program, Mat-Su Reentry Program, Medical Equipment Lending Program, and turn-A-leaf Thrift Store, alongside many strong community partnerships, VCI serves the needs of Valley residents and helps them thrive. These compassionate programs encompass and fulfill VCI’s vision to make the Mat-Su Valley a healthier and happier place to reside for everyone. For more information, visit [www.valleycharities.org](http://www.valleycharities.org) or call 907-376-5740.

# Alaska Veterans Museum fundraiser on Oct. 11

*Senior Voice staff*

The Alaska Veterans Museum is having a dinner and fundraiser Oct. 11. The event is at the AM-VETS Post 2, 855 E. 38th Ave. in Anchorage. You can get tickets in person at the museum, 411 W. Fourth Ave. or by mailing a check to Alaska Veterans Museum, PO Box 773364, Eagle River AK 99577 or by credit card by calling Jann Sherrill at 813-545-6957 or [jannsherrill54@gmail.com](mailto:jannsherrill54@gmail.com).

# UAS seeks CNA instructor

The University of Alaska Southeast Juneau campus provides local Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) courses for high school and community students and has an immediate opening for an instructor. This is a critical role in strengthening the health care workforce and addressing a long-standing gap in Juneau. Applicants must meet Alaska Board of Nursing requirements, hold RN or LPN licensure, have at least two years of nursing experience (including one year in long-term care), and demonstrate the ability to teach or supervise nurse aides. This full-time, term-funded faculty position includes a competitive salary and comprehensive benefits. The position remains open until filled. <https://bit.ly/3IzWhsj>

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Image: Ametefe Kukubor, *Buddies*, 2022. © Ametefe Kukubor





# Alaska Commission on Aging produces regular podcast

The Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is excited to share news about its new podcast, "Alaska Wisdom and Wellness." The show was created to share helpful information about aging with Alaska's seniors, elders, and the people who care for them. The podcast is hosted by Marty Lange and Pat Branson. Marty is the executive director of ACoA, and Pat Branson was the executive director of the Senior Center of Kodiak for 35 years before retiring. They will talk about the unique needs of older Alaskans and cover important topics like preventing falls, avoiding scams aimed at seniors, and understanding Alzheimer's disease. In each episode, they will interview experts to provide listeners with practical advice and useful resources. A new episode will be released every other month, with each show lasting between 30 and 50 minutes. The idea for "Alaska Wisdom and Wellness" came from the need to get information to seniors in

rural and remote areas, where many people still rely on the radio. The show is available on the YouTube Podcast platform. It is also being offered completely free to local radio stations all over Alaska, so they can play it for their communities whenever they like. "We are excited to bring this program to our seniors and caregivers," Lange said. "Our goal is to educate, inform, and support Alaskans as they handle the changes that come with aging, and to give them the information they need to live healthy, independent lives." You can find "Alaska Wisdom and Wellness" at <https://wisdom.alaska.gov> or by going to YouTube.com and searching for "Alaska Wisdom." The first few episodes are available now, with new ones coming out every other month. You can subscribe to the show on YouTube or visit ACoA's website for more information. This podcast is an important part of the Alaska Commission on Aging's mission to help all older Alaskans live with dignity and independence.

# Governor's Arts and Humanities Award winners to be celebrated

Senior Voice staff

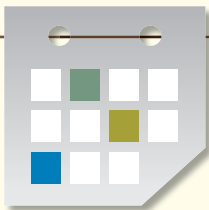
Organized by the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Alaska State Council on the Arts, the Anchorage Museum, and the Alaska Arts and Culture Foundation, the Governor's Arts & Humanities Awards recognize Alaskans whose noteworthy contributions to the arts and humanities have made a lasting impact on Alaska's social, economic, and civic life.

Since 1968, the awards have highlighted individuals and organizations that have helped strengthen communities by forging connections between people across Alaska, those who have furthered traditional Alaska Native language or culture; and contributed to a better understanding of the world, one another, and the human experience. Tickets available here: <https://www.akgovawards.org/attend>

Senior Voice Alaska.com

# Calendar of Events

- Oct. 1-31 National** Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- Oct. 1-31 National** ADHD Awareness Month
- Oct. 1-31 National** Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Oct. 1-31 National** Filipino American History Month. Alaska officially recognizes October as Filipino American History Month following the passage of legislation signed into law in 2023. To learn more about the contributions of Filipino Americans to the state, check out Mana Alaska, a digital storytelling project dedicated to this community. <https://www.manaalaska.com/>
- Oct. 4 National** Golf Lover's Day
- Oct. International** Off-road Day
- Oct. 13 National** Columbus Day on the second Monday in October is observed in the United States each year. The day signifies Christopher Columbus' arrival to America on October 12, 1492. It is a federal holiday, so expect banks and the U.S. Postal Service to be closed.
- Oct. 13 Alaska** Indigenous Peoples Day <https://www.uaf.edu/rural/partners-out-reach/events/indigenous-peoples-day.php> Increasingly, communities are marking Oct. 12 as Indigenous Peoples Day, a way of putting the focus onto the communities that made contact with Europeans in 1492 and continue to have vibrant cultural, economic, political influence. Alaska made October's second Monday Indigenous Peoples Day in 2015.
- Oct. 16-18 Anchorage** The 2025 Annual Alaska Federation of Natives Convention will be at the Dena'ina Civic & Convention Center in Anchorage. This year's theme is "Standing Strong, Standing United." The convention is a hugely important event to Alaska Natives and the rest of the state. It serves as the principal forum and voice for the Alaska Native community in addressing critical issues of public policy and government. The annual Elders and Youth Conference is right before AFN, Oct. 12-15.
- Oct. 15-Dec. 7 National** The annual Medicare Open Enrollment period, also known as the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), is from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7 each year.
- Oct. 17 Alaska** Alaska Day. The public holiday is celebrated on Oct. 17, but the official day is Oct. 18. Celebrates the anniversary of the formal transfer of territories in present-day Alaska from the Russian Empire to the United States, which happened on Friday, October 18, 1867. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alaska_Day)
- Oct. 31 International** Halloween. An annual holiday that is observed in many countries. It's the eve of the Western Christian feast of All Hallows' Day. This is a period dedicated to remembering the dead, including saints (hallows), martyrs, and loved ones who have died. It's a rite of passage for youngsters to dress up and ask for treats (or offer tricks). And events happen throughout the month, such as Palmer's Trick or Treat Street on Oct. 24 or Fairbanks' Trick or Treat Town Oct. 28 at Pioneer Park. Buy some treats and be ready for young goblins to appear on your doorstep.



## Send us your calendar items

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# Haunting stories swirl around Kennecott Copper Mine

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

Do the spirits of miners who once called the Kennecott Copper Mine home still linger in the crumbling structures and rusting machinery? Some say the remote and isolated mining town, nestled in the rugged Wrangell Mountains and abandoned decades ago, has been a hotbed of paranormal activity over the years.

The story of one of the richest copper mines in the world began in 1900 when prospectors Clarence Warner and “Tarantula Jack” Smith stumbled upon bright green cliffs on the slopes of the Kennicott Glacier. Samples from their “Bonanza Mine Outcrop” revealed up to 70% pure chalcocite, one of the richest copper deposits ever found.

Word of the copper ore discovery quickly spread. Mining engineer Stephen Birch secured rights to the claim and eventually partnered with the Guggenheim family and JP Morgan, who formed the “Alaska Syndicate” to develop the operation.

Once workers completed the infrastructure, ore was mined from deep inside the mountains and then carried down an aerial tramway in buckets to be sorted in the mill. The ore then was carried via Copper River and Northwestern Railway train cars to Cordova and shipped to smelters in Tacoma, Washington.

By 1916, the mine was producing more than 100,000 tons of copper per year and a town had grown to support it. The area was a bustling hub of activity, attracting miners and their families from all over the world. The mine’s rich copper deposits promised wealth and prosperity, and the town quickly grew into a self-sustaining community, complete with a school, store, dance hall, and barracks.

But the once-vibrant town was left to the mercy of nature following the depletion of resources and the Great Depression when copper prices plummeted. The departing residents left behind a ghost town frozen in time, with its buildings and machinery slowly crumbling under the weight of the harsh Alaska elements.

They also left loved ones in the Kennecott Cemetery, located a quarter mile south of the Kennecott Mill Town site. The cemetery, which contains 50 grave markers, was the main burial ground for those who lived and worked at Kennecott between 1908 and 1938. It represents those whose families could not afford to have bodies shipped back to their homeland or who lived in Kennecott and wanted their loved ones nearby.

The abandoned Kennecott Copper Mine has become the subject of countless ghost stories and



The Bonanza Mine in the Wrangell Mountains, seen here, yielded some of the richest copper deposits in the world and led to the building of the Kennecott Copper Mine complex. Alaska State Library

paranormal legends over the years. Visitors and park rangers alike have reported eerie occurrences, from disembodied voices echoing through the empty buildings to the sound of phantom footsteps in the deserted streets. Some say they’ve

glimpsed shadowy figures in the corners of the old mill and heard machinery clanking and groaning, as if the ghosts of the past were reliving their daily routines working eight-hour shifts, seven days a week, with only the Fourth of July and Christmas Day off.

Widespread stories of hauntings along the old railroad road track, Chitina, and McCarthy—a town that grew up near Kennecott that offered more “colorful diversions” than the mill town—flourished during the 1990s when state offi-

cials began developing a government housing tract along the old railroad track. Construction workers claimed to hear wailing from long-dead miners near tombstones in the wilderness. Some said they lost tools out of their toolboxes—sometimes

right off their tool belts. The state soon abandoned its plans.

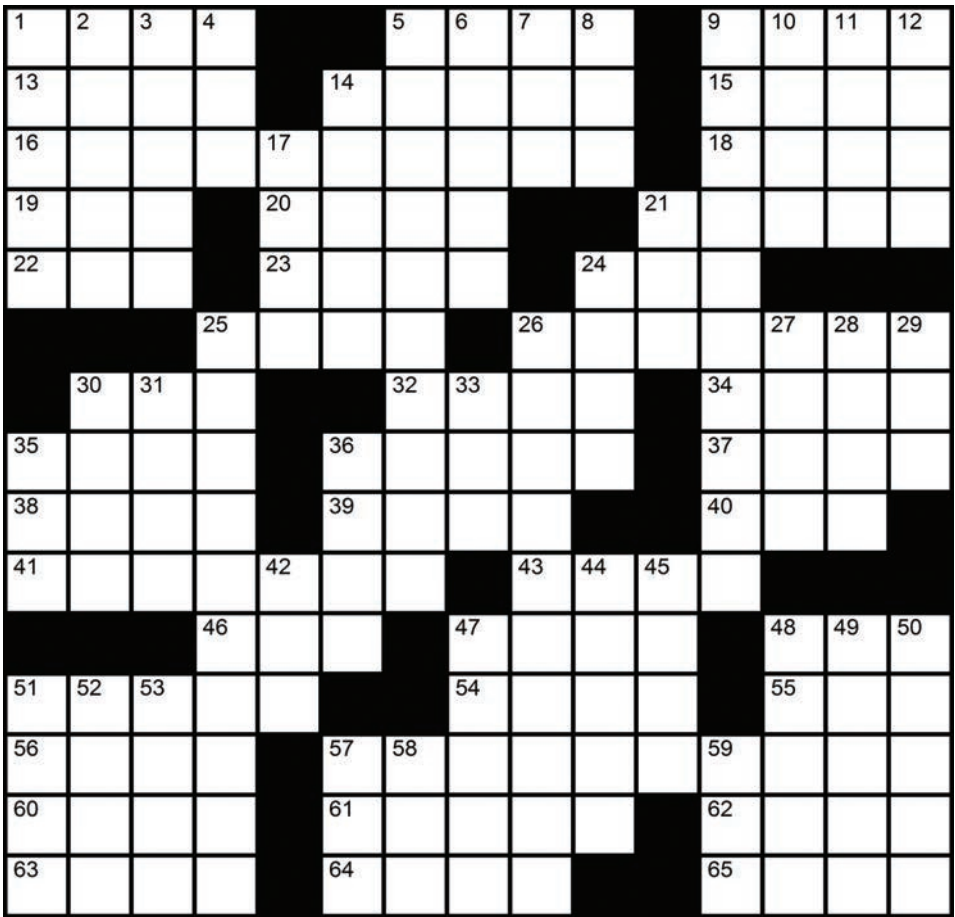
Whether one believes in ghosts or not, the Kennecott Copper Mine is a testament to the resilience and determination of miners who once called this remote corner of Alaska home. Its massive mills and machinery, slowly being reclaimed by nature, offer a haunting glimpse into the past. The mine’s legacy lives on as a National Historic Landmark, a reminder of the incredible feats of engineering and human perseverance that once took place in this remote corner of Alaska.

This column features tidbits found while researching Alaska’s colorful past for Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books, including the newest titled “Pioneers From Alaska’s Past,” are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphilstrunk.com](http://www.auntphilstrunk.com).

## It's All Nautical

### Across

- 1 Veil
- 5 Voiced
- 9 Bundles
- 13 Vaulted recess
- 14 Laughing \_\_\_\_
- 15 *Death in the Family* author
- 16 Ocean liner
- 18 That moment
- 19 Not him
- 20 Wager
- 21 Whiskers
- 22 Second sight
- 23 Realized
- 24 High rocky hill
- 25 Shakespeare’s King
- 26 Fishing vessel
- 30 King (Fr.)
- 32 Soft white cheese
- 34 Tiny amount
- 35 Ice floe
- 36 Supplies food
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- 40 Location finder (Abbr.)
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- 43 Mouth parts
- 46 Stitch
- 47 Possesses
- 48 Armed combat
- 51 Religious song
- 54 Rug cleaners, for short
- 55 Tiller
- 56 Hawaiian party



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- 57 Some warships
- 60 Elevator man
- 61 Germanic alphabet letters
- 62 Abominable snowman
- 63 Finished
- 64 Aces
- 65 Flair
- 7 Cuckoo
- 8 Circuit
- 9 Life preservers
- 10 Turk. title
- 11 Caribou
- 12 Transmit
- 14 Reddish brown dye
- 17 For Pete’s \_\_\_\_!
- 21 Scarf
- 24 Very (Fr.)
- 25 Tower beacon
- 26 Tsunamis
- 27 Coil
- 28 Gr. letters
- 29 Stadium cheer
- 30 US gambling city
- 31 Killer whale
- 33 ND indian
- 35 Napkin, of sorts
- 36 Resolute
- 42 Moray
- 44 Quechuan people
- 45 Attention getter
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- 59 Hurricane part

Crossword answers on page 22





# Take a hike to Crater Lake in Oregon

By **NICK THOMAS**  
*For Senior Voice*

Viewing Oregon’s Crater Lake for the first time caught me off guard—a massive impossibly blue expanse of water trapped within the shattered rim of an ancient volcano.

There was no hint of what lay ahead driving scenic Highway 62 toward the Crater Lake National Park western entrance, some 60 miles northeast of Medford. Even after pulling into the car park, along with hundreds of other cars, the lake remained largely hidden until we walked to the edge of the parking lot.

And there it was—huge, deep, still, and oh so blue, on a scale that was hard to grasp. Still ringed with layers of pristine winter snow, it was especially striking in early June.

Normally, I would avoid popular national parks from late spring to early fall between 9 am and 3 pm because of the crowds—and at Crater Lake they can be stifling – but I made an exception for this vibrant aquatic beauty. Early morning and late afternoon shade can creep over the lake, creating distracting shadows. So we arrived at noon, waiting in line for over 45 minutes to gain park entry. Of course, the view is gorgeous anytime of the day or year, but with the full sun beating down



*Crater Lake in Oregon was formed from a volcano that collapsed some 7,700 years ago.* Photo by Nick Thomas

midday to illuminate the water, it’s just all that more spectacular.

The easiest hike, or walk really, with great lake views follows the stone wall adjacent to the car park around to the right. Every few steps you’ll want to pause and absorb the view from a slightly different angle. The path is paved but may have snowy patches as it did when we visited. After the path dips down, you can then backtrack. Or, if you’re up for a challenge, continue on as the trail rises into a wooded area that begins an 800+ foot climb towards the rim.

While the gradient is not extreme, it can be a little strenuous since the climb is unrelenting. The path is also rocky in patches and can be heart-stoppingly

narrow in a few places where the drop off is several hundred feet. However, the views of the lake from the higher elevation are worth the effort. In fact, you don’t have to climb all the way to the rim because the partial lake views on the way up are still stunning.

Despite its name, Crater Lake was not formed from an extraterrestrial impact but from a volcano that collapsed some 7,700 years ago. Although it receives more precipitation than

it loses through evaporation, the lake level remains constant since some water seeps out through porous rock. The water is replaced only from rain or snow melt – no river flows in or out of the lake. This water purity contributes to its clarity and color. And with a maximum depth of almost 2,000 feet, it’s the deepest lake in the U.S.

The photo accompanying this article is the first I took, moments after seeing the lake for the first

time. It’s not the best of the hundreds I captured, but it will forever remind me of that stunning initial impression.

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and has written features, columns, and interviews for many newspapers and magazines. His hiking column describes short trails, hikes, and walks from around the country that seniors might enjoy while traveling. See [www.ItsAWonderfulHike.com](http://www.ItsAWonderfulHike.com).

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# Pore over the details of your estate plan

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

Here's a conversation I have had more than a few times. I'm talking to a new client, and she has decided to go with a living trust in order to avoid probate. I'm explaining a few things about the process, and I say "Along with your living trust, we'll be drafting a few other documents, including a power of attorney, a deed to put your home into the trust, a will..."

The client interrupts. "What do you mean, a will? I said I want a trust, not a will!"

"You're getting a trust," I explain, "but along with that you'll need to have what's called a pour-over will."

She's still not convinced. "You told me, and I am sure I heard you correctly, that one of the reasons I should get a trust is to avoid probate. And you also told me that the purpose of a will is to direct what happens with probate. So, if I am avoiding probate with a living trust, why do I even need a will?"

"You heard me correctly. You need a will," I tell her, "because even though we are trying to avoid probate with a living trust, there is no way to absolutely guarantee that there isn't something that ends up in probate."

Why is that the case? You have probably heard dozens of times that a living trust



avoids probate. Why do you also have a will, when you already have a trust?

First of all, I'm not talking about a normal will here. There is something called a "pour-over will." The analogy here is that the trust is like a bucket. In order for the trust to work, you must put your assets into the trust. In other words, you "pour" your assets into the bucket. But what if some of the water spills? You have a pan underneath the bucket to catch the spillage. When you are done pouring, you lift up the bucket, pull out the pan, and pour the water from the pan into the bucket.

In real terms, a living trust does not avoid probate. Not literally anyway. The trust diverts the assets that are in the trust away from probate, so that probate becomes unnecessary. But for that to work, the assets in question need to be in the trust. Any assets that miss the boat—sorry, I shouldn't mix metaphors here—miss the bucket—

***In real terms, a living trust does not avoid probate. Not literally anyway. The trust diverts the assets that are in the trust away from probate, so that probate becomes unnecessary. But for that to work, the assets in question need to be in the trust.***

are subject to probate, and that is where the will comes in.

When you have a living trust, instead of the normal type of will that spells out who gets what, your will says that everything goes to the trust.

Let me give some real-life examples. I have had cases where the person who passed away had died in an accident and there was a wrongful death claim, but they had to open a probate estate in order to collect the settlement. I have had others where the person had a claim in a class action such as the mesothelioma lawsuit or the Camp Lejeune (victimsexposedtocontaminated water) settlement. Or when the deceased was involved in a lawsuit that may have had nothing to do with how they died, but someone had to pick up their end of the case.

Or maybe they had an

asset that they had not actually received yet to put into the trust. That is very common, especially with probate cases. Those can often drag on for years, and until you actually receive the assets, there is no way to put that into your trust. So, for example, if my rich uncle dies and leaves me \$1 million, I am legally entitled to that inheritance if I survive him. If it takes several years for his estate to slog its way through probate, and I die before I actually receive those assets, my inheritance will have to go through probate. And that would be true regardless of the fact that I have a really good living trust that I could have put the money into, had I lived a bit longer.

Most of the things I just mentioned are things you cannot do a whole lot to control. Unfortunately, the most common reason a pour-over will ends up

being used, is that the person did not get all of their assets into the trust. They bought a new property and did not bother to tell the title company to put it into the trust. They didn't tell the estate planner about that remote property across the inlet. They got tired of dealing with this stuff and didn't bother to take care of that other credit union account. They didn't update their assets when their spouse died.

The whole point of a pour-over will, just like the point of that pan underneath the bucket in the analogy, is that it will hopefully never have to be used. To use a different metaphor, it is like the fire extinguisher. As the young'uns might say, if you have to use it, that's not a W.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning attorney. 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. But if you try to message me about the difference between a metaphor and an analogy, I will block you. Literally.

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# The pluses and minuses of Apple products

By BOB DeLAURENTIS

Bob's Tech Talk

**Q. My MacBook Air no longer starts up. During a recent system update the progress bar stopped mid-way through. I rebooted, only to be greeted with a giant circle with an exclamation point on the screen.**

A. Broken tech devices can trigger a wicked explosion of emotional upset. We pour so much effort into our devices. Failures are rare, but they do happen. So do mistakes, like accidentally deleting important information.

When an error like this occurs, the best thing to do is to take a deep breath and remember that you have options. All is not lost, yet.

The No. 1 bit of advice is to make sure your data is backed up. With good data backups, this kind of problem is an inconvenience rather than a catastrophe.

For every reader who has a working computer: If you are not sure of the last time it was backed up, stop reading right now. Backup your data. Seriously, do it right now. I'll be here when you return.

**For every reader who has a working computer: If you are not sure of the last time it was backed up, stop reading right now. Backup your data.**

There is a wide variety of hardware still in use, and the steps needed to fix an error during startup depend on the specific device.

See Wander the Web below for links to troubleshooting checklists.

If there is an Apple Store nearby, make a "Genius Bar" appointment and hope for the best. They will make it clear that any data that is not backed up may be lost, but there are less destructive steps they can take that might just revive your MacBook without any data loss.

**Q. Is there a standout feature in the latest round of Apple software updates?**

A. This is an easy question for me this year: live translation via iPhone and AirPods.

It works like something out of a science fiction movie. Certain models of AirPods will allow you to have a conversation with someone in a different language, and provide real-time spoken translation in your ear.

If both participants have

hardware that supports these features, it looks like science fiction come to life.

Not everyone you meet is likely to have AirPods, so in that case you can use your AirPods to hear a live translation, and your response will be translated into text on your iPhone that you can show the other person to read.

Hardware requirements limit this feature to certain devices; however, if your phone is new enough and you have the correct AirPods, you may already own supported hardware. See a link in Wander the Web before for details.

**Q. My phone prompted me to switch to AppleCare One. Is that a good idea?**

A. No. The "devil is in the details" is a useful cliché because it's nearly always true. Tech's own version of this phrase is the "devil is in the implementation." It means the same thing.

Regular readers know that I often recommend Apple products. It is for

## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

### If your Mac does not turn on

This checklist will walk you through the many different alternatives that can resurrect a seemingly dead Mac. Pay special attention to the link for what happens if the Mac boots partway and stops with an error message.

[support.apple.com/en-us/102623](https://support.apple.com/en-us/102623)

### AirPods Live Language Translation

This link has details on configuring your Apple hardware to provide spoken language translation in real time. [nerdschalk.com/ios-26-how-to-turn-on-live-translation-on-your-iphone/](https://nerdschalk.com/ios-26-how-to-turn-on-live-translation-on-your-iphone/)

### Weekend in New England

Check out this site for a close look at fall colors in New England. [newengland.com/foilage/](https://newengland.com/foilage/)

the same reason that mechanics revere Snap-On tools—they are usually the best value in the long run.

However, when it comes to AppleCare One, Apple's new service intended to save money for users who own multiple devices, the implementation is so poorly executed that I strongly recommend that you avoid this product.

AppleCare One is a trip into upside-down world. It is one of the most customer-hostile products that I have encountered in a long time.

Among its many design flaws, the worst is that the service will send you an email message threatening to discontinue the service

because of an "incorrect AppleID." The message gives you 24 hours to fix it or they drop your coverage.

I know many people who do not check email daily. Even a techie like me will take an email break for things like a vacation or illness. While I understand that Apple needs policies that protect them from disputes, 24 hours is unnecessarily punitive.

I will, of course, write more if things improve enough to change my recommendation. Until then, I strongly suggest avoiding AppleCare One.

Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at [techtalk@bobdel.com](mailto:techtalk@bobdel.com).



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<b>Juneau.....</b>	<b>586-6425 or (800) 789-6426</b>
<b>Kenai.....</b>	<b>395-0352 or (855) 395-0352</b>
<b>Ketchikan.....</b>	<b>225-6420 or (877) 525-6420</b>
<b>Kotzebue.....</b>	<b>442-3500 or (800) 622-9797</b>
<b>Nome.....</b>	<b>443-2230 or (888) 495-6663</b>
<b>Palmer.....</b>	<b>746-4636 or (855) 996-4636</b>

Additional information is available at:  
[www.alsc-law.org](https://www.alsc-law.org)

\*Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Preference for seniors in social and economic need.





# Adak is best explained through vignettes

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS

For Senior Voice

One day last June I got a rather curious call from a friend. He said that he and 10 other people he knew, mostly Alaskan artists of various types, had put together an expedition to Adak in August. They had rented both halves of a duplex and three rugged trucks. They were short one person to share expenses. Would I like to go? I could tell he expected me to decline the unusual offer. I thought, “I am nearly 80 years old. If not now, then never.” I said “Yes!”

At the time I knew absolutely nothing about Adak other than during WWII it was the focal point in the war against the Japanese who had invaded a couple of islands on the Aleutian Chain. Since then, I have learned a bit more.

Adak, about 1,200 miles southwest of Anchorage, is the second most rainy spot in the inhabited United States and is known for abundant ferocious winds. During the Cold War with the Soviet Union, Adak became a secret listening post to track Soviet submarines and a supply base for American subs. Thousands of soldiers and civilians lived there. Then, in the late 1990s, the military suddenly pulled out. They left behind entire neighborhoods of empty, decomposing homes and dozens of massive buildings around the island, often fully furnished but vandalized by humans and victimized by the weather. On a quiet overcast windy day, perhaps a loose shutter banging on a bit of remaining drywall—utterly postapocalyptic.

And the military left behind something else—an enormous, highly contaminated Superfund site. The 77,000-acre site includes the town of Adak, the adjacent airport, the port facilities, and other undeveloped lands. The Navy and the State of Alaska have been working to clean it up or at least stabilize it over the last few decades. It is a big project.

At the same time there is the astounding, overwhelming beauty of the



*Great Sitkin volcano blowing off steam about 30 miles to the northeast of town, as seen looking over Kuluk Bay. A Korean fishing tender is on the right.*

*Photos by Lawrence D. Weiss*



*Disintegrating neighborhood across the street from the Tundra Tavern.*

island. The tundra is so thick it bounces like a mattress when you walk on it. Rugged sculpted mountains are draped in a rich green velvety blanket

like a Dali pool table for the gods. Ribbons of fog gently caress the mountains or completely hide them in an impenetrable gray shroud. Perfect coves and inlets

nestle everywhere along the coast.

I have never been anywhere like Adak. It doesn't lend itself to a tidy discussion. It is like a collision of

extremes and contradictions. Go there. Bring food. Count on staying much longer than you planned.

*next page please*





# Adak

from page 24

You can hear the plane try to land in the fog, then fly off without you. Maybe it will come back in a few days. Meanwhile, there is more to explore on the island. There isn't a story. There are only vignettes...

~The mayor of Adak is a short, round, grandmotherly Native woman who radiates warmth and caring. She lives across the street from the duplex in which we were staying. Several days after our return flight had been fogged out we bumped into her. She asked how we were doing, and did we bring enough food since the town's only market had closed weeks earlier and there was no place to buy supplies. We told her our food was getting low as we waited for the next flight which we hoped would land in a few days. She said if we ran out of food to come over to her house and she would feed us. She confided that she had a trick to get her food shipped out to Adak and avoid expensive airfreight charges—Amazon Prime.



Old church near abandoned military buildings on hill overlooking town.

Photos by Lawrence D. Weiss

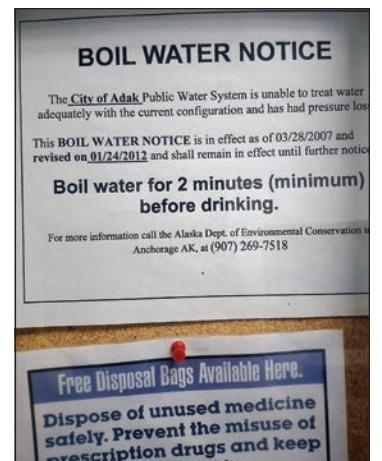
~People on the island wear a lot of hats. One evening I was enjoying beer and pizza at the Tundra Tavern when business was slow, so the two cooks came out of the kitchen to mingle. "Wow. They look

really familiar," I thought. Suddenly I realized who they were—the smartly uniformed TSA agents who greeted us when we landed. The charming young server looked familiar too. So where had

I seen her? Of course! She was the all-business airport ticket agent.

~The former high school has been repurposed as a library, clinic, community center, and city administrative office. Posters, notices, and brochures abound. My favorite was a coloring book entitled "Boomer the Otter and Pals Presents Adak Island Safety Featuring Grandma and Grandpa." One page, for example, advised the youthful reader, "If you see one of these signs, DON'T GO PAST IT – you could be hurt or even die." The sign shows images of a skull and cross bones and a bomb. The text reads, "DANGER. Unexploded ordnance. No trespassing."

~Overheard in the Tundra Tavern, the town's historic bar/restaurant:



Boil water notice posted at city office. It is still in effect.

On the island the red hats occasionally seen in the bar with "MAGA" emblazoned on the front stand for: "Make Adak Great Again."

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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Cancer

continued from page 8

“We want to be able to give patients a better option than ‘wait and see’ after they complete breast cancer treatment,” said Dr. DeMichele.

Patching up the problem

Engineering and digital health are being combined to improve breast cancer detection. Researchers at the University of Bristol in the UK have developed a convenient and cost-effective wearable patch to measure subtle temperature changes across the breast. It is hoped that a simple skin patch could in future be used to detect potential abnormalities

and cancerous tumors. Marah Allassaf, who is an inventor at the University of Bristol, United Kingdom, created an ultra-thin, flexible, non-invasive patch featuring nine flexible temperature sensors. The patch gently adheres to the skin and maps subtle temperature variations across the breast. Cancer cells often grow and spread rapidly, increasing blood flow and metabolism in the affected area, leading to a slight jump in temperature. “I designed and fabricated this patch from scratch to conform naturally to the body and provide real-time mapping of subtle temperature variations across the breast surface. While still in early development, the goal is to explore how this low-cost, skin-like sensor patch

could help broaden access to screening and complement existing tools,” Allassaf said. “In the long-term, it could support convenient at-home monitoring for higher-risk individuals, such as those with a family history or genetic predisposition.” Conventional screening methods such as mammography, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are often hindered by high costs, limited accessibility, and

patient discomfort. These limitations highlight the urgent need for non-invasive, cost-effective, and accessible technologies to complement existing diagnostic methods. “Thermal imaging, or thermography, has long been used to detect abnormal heat patterns in the body. However, it typically requires specialized infrared cameras and clinical environments. This is a convenient, non-invasive innovation,” said

co-investigator Dr. Faezeh Arab Hassani, who is also with the University of Bristol. “Although still in development stages, the introduction of a temperature-sensing patch has the potential to complement mammography, the current standard for breast cancer screening.” 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

AFN

continued from page 16

Zita Chikigak is a Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Volunteer at Alaska Commission on Aging. She said these two free events “strengthen the unity bond, emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually, for individuals, families, and services that are available through education and networking.” The Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic is sponsored by the Alaska Commission on Aging, Alaska Bar As-

sociation, ACLU of Alaska, and Alaska Legal Services Corporation with in-kind support from Foley & Pearson. The Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic is sponsored by the Alaska Bar Association, the Alaska Native Law Section, ACLU of Alaska, Alaska Legal Services Corporation, and the Alaska Native Justice Center. Both events receive in-kind support from the Alaska Federation of Natives and are supported by generous donations from local law firms and individual attorneys. Both events are free and

open to the public. Seniors, families, and community members are encouraged to attend, connect with resources, and join in honoring the essential role of Alaska’s seniors. Details on the events: ► Elizabeth Peratrovich Legal Clinic (EPLC): Thursday, Oct. 16, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m., Dena’ina Convention Center, Second Floor, Room 5. ► Elder Appreciation & Wills Clinic (EAWC): Friday, Oct. 17, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Dena’ina Convention Center, Second Floor, Room 5. Lea McKenna is the pro bono director of the Alaska Bar Association.

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Friend

continued from page 5

before an event and not gain weight, whereas folks with medium levels of activity will live longer if regularly going into mild ketosis. That means you are restricting carbs so that your metabolism is required to burn fat (including fat you already have stored on your body) as the fuel source. The only way to lose weight is to be in ketosis. It’s pretty easy to go into mild ketosis with 12-16 hours a day of fasting, and by recognizing the

ratio of carbs to fat at every meal. Unless you have reactive hypoglycemia, which is fairly rare, consider two meals daily, with about equal amounts of carb calories and fat calories. If you don’t want to weigh food and count calories, eyeball your plate as you are serving up: half your plate should be vegetables, mostly cooked, some raw, and the other half would ideally contain equal portions of some good fat (salmon, sardines and most of those tasty little tinned fishes, eggs, nuts, full fat dairy from happy cows, avocado, coconut) and some whole (not processed) carb

like a potato, or other root vegetable, brown rice, quinoa, corn, and legumes. Our bodies are mostly made of water. When you feel like snacking (but it’s not time for one of your meals) try drinking water. A little lemon squeeze can help. Water is often surprisingly satisfying. Organize your day around self-care and you will establish a foundation for durable reserves of energy to also be the friend/partner/community member that you want to be. Emily Kane is a retired naturopathic doctor based in Juneau.

Crossword answers from page 16

C	A	U	L		O	R	A	L		W	A	D	S
A	P	S	E		H	Y	E	N	A		A	G	E
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# Remembering boarding school survivors

By JOURDAN BENNETT-BEGAYE

ICT News via Alaska Beacon

**WARNING:** This story contains disturbing details about residential and boarding schools. If you are feeling triggered, here is a resource list for trauma responses from the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition in the U.S. In Canada, the National Indian Residential School Crisis Hotline can be reached at 1-866-925-4419. <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/healing-informed-resources-for-self-care/>

WASHINGTON—Ramona Klein admits she was “an instigator” at Fort Totten Indian Boarding School in North Dakota.

“We didn’t have toys. We didn’t have anything to play with. And we went to bed at 6:30 as little girls,” she told a crowd Tuesday, Sept. 16, at a National Day of Remembrance recognizing boarding school survivors and descendants.

Klein, who attended the school from 1954 to 1958, would wake up in the middle of the night and wake the other girls. They’d whip the scratchy, rough, Army-issued blankets on the floor while two girls sat on it and “we’d get sparks.”

“It’s like [the] Fourth of July. So we would laugh. That was fun,” she said. Then they’d get bored and slide down the stairs on the mattress.

The beatings that inevitably followed didn’t break her.

“I would not cry,” she told the crowd. “I distinctly remember saying, ‘You’re not going to get the best of me.’”

More than two dozen people gathered Tuesday on a rainy day in the nation’s capital for the event hosted by the National Native American Boarding School Coalition at the Indian Gaming Association. The organization, known as NABS, advocates for Native peoples affected by U.S. federal Indian boarding school policies.

The remembrance included a candlelight vigil, songs, and talks by survivors and their families.



*Dr. Ramona Klein, left, who attended the Fort Totten Boarding School in North Dakota, hugs Deborah Parker, the chief executive of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, after presenting her with a beaded NABS medallion on Tuesday, Sept. 16, at a National Day of Remembrance of boarding school survivors and families hosted by NABS. Charles Fox for ICT*

Since 2021, the organization has informally observed Sept. 30 as the National Day of Remembrance for those who attended U.S. federal Indian boarding schools, survivors, their communities, and their families. This year the organization recognized it a bit early to coincide with the National Congress of American Indians’ Tribal Unity Impact Days in Washington, D.C.

## ‘A little bit more joy’

Klein, the first vice president on the organization’s board of directors, uses her experience and voice to encourage other survivors to speak up.

The organization has been traveling around the country to permanently document the experience of boarding school survivors, the Oral History Project, as part of the U.S. Department of Interior’s Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative that was started by former Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, Laguna Pueblo.

Klein, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, recently traveled to the northwest for the project and witnessed five generations in one family speaking up, including the 90-something-year-old great-great-grandma.

“I think it’s the first time some of them really spoke with feeling, of their feelings with each other and helped understand some of what some people might call dysfunction,”

she said. “But I think we’re used to functioning that way. ... You know, it’s not necessarily dysfunction.”

It’s because of the U.S. federal Indian boarding school experiences and trauma that they are the way they are, she said. And to release that now, after so many years, is cathartic for many.

“To see people after they share their story, especially people who share their story maybe for the first time, they seem lighter,” she said. “There’s a little bit more joy.”

Ponka-We-Victors-Cozad, NABS director of policy and advocacy, said the organization is still advocating for legislation in the U.S. Congress to establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act. A bill proposing the commission was introduced in July 2025 by Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski, and Oklahoma Republican U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, Chickasaw, will be introducing one in the House soon. Victors-Cozad is Tohono O’odham and Ponca.

The Senate bill outlines that it will establish the Truth and Healing Commission and that the commission must investigate the impacts and ongoing effects of the Indian boarding school policies, under which American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children were forcibly removed from their family homes and placed in boarding schools.

The bill calls for the commission to develop recommendations on ways to protect unmarked graves and accompanying land protections; support repatriation and identify the tribal nations from which children were taken; and discontinue the removal of Indigenous children from their families and tribal communities by state social service departments, foster care agencies, and adoption agencies.

The Office of Army Cemeteries has begun the disinterment process at the former site of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, with 19 graves this fall—the highest in a year.

## Paving the way

Klein and Deb Parker, the organization’s outgoing chief executive officer, reminded everyone that the Day of Remembrance is a time of celebration “because we’re survivors.”

Parker, who is Tulalip, Yaqui and Apache, said as tribal nations are growing, it is important to remember those who paved the way to get there—those who survived and those who didn’t.

“That’s including those who were beaten if they spoke their language,” Parker said. “And yet, so many of those children wouldn’t give up their language. They kept speaking in corners. They kept speaking behind buildings,

so that they would never forget who they are. And so it’s because of those children we carry on with our culture, with our language, with our identity.”

She continued, “And so where it’s a time of reverence, a time of introspection, it’s also a time of celebrating those who made it home and honoring those who carried those teachings forward, so that we can be here today.”

Other events are set for Sept. 30, which is a national holiday in Canada now known as the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Canada’s remembrance started as Orange Shirt Day, named on behalf of a First Nations woman whose orange shirt, a gift from her grandmother, was taken from her when she arrived at residential school in Canada.

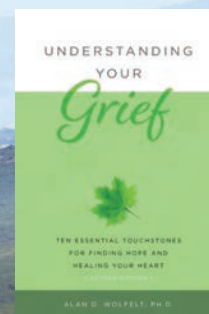
The use of orange shirts as a symbol of support for the boarding school students and their families has now spread broadly, and officials are encouraging people in the U.S. to wear an orange shirt to honor the survivors and support community healing.

*This story was originally published by ICT News, formerly Indian Country Today, see the story here. It was then published in the Alaska Beacon. Its stories may be republished online or in print under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0.*

## Grief Support Group

Meeting Friday’s 11:00AM - 12:30PM  
July 11<sup>th</sup> - September 26<sup>th</sup>

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### Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, Valdez-Cordova

Independent Living Center  
47255 Princeton Ave., Ste 8, Soldotna, AK 99669  
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### Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska Independent Living Center (SAIL)  
8711 Teal St., Ste 300, Juneau, AK 99801  
1-800-478-SAIL (7245) [www.sailinc.org](http://www.sailinc.org)

### Mat-Su Borough

LINKS Resource Center  
777 N. Crusey St., Ste 101, Wasilla, AK 99654  
907-373-3632 [www.linksprc.org/adrc](http://www.linksprc.org/adrc)

### Fairbanks North Star, Southeast Fairbanks, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, North Slope

ADRC North - Fairbanks Senior Center  
1424 Moore St., Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907-452-2551 [www.adrcnorth.org](http://www.adrcnorth.org)

### Western Alaska-Aleutian Islands, Lake and Peninsula, Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Bethel, Kusilvak, Nome, Northwest Arctic

Bristol Bay Native Association [www.bbna.com/our-programs/social-service-programs/elderly-services/](http://www.bbna.com/our-programs/social-service-programs/elderly-services/)  
1500 Kanakanak Rd., Dillingham, AK 99576  
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# 1-877-625-2372

The State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, administers the ADRC grant in partnership with the regional sites. Contact SDS at 1-800-478-9996 to learn about the grant program.



## Is it an online retailer... Or a scam?

Look for these **red flags** to avoid getting scammed while shopping online.

- Make sure you're on the official website. Ads from social media or "sponsored" websites on Google may be copycats.
- Beware of "too good to be true" prices. Scammers often try to tempt you with items priced far below their value.
- Never pay by wire transfer or gift card! Legitimate retailers will never require you to pay this way.



Visit [aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork](http://aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork) or call the AARP Fraud Watch Network at 1-877-908-3360 for more resources.