

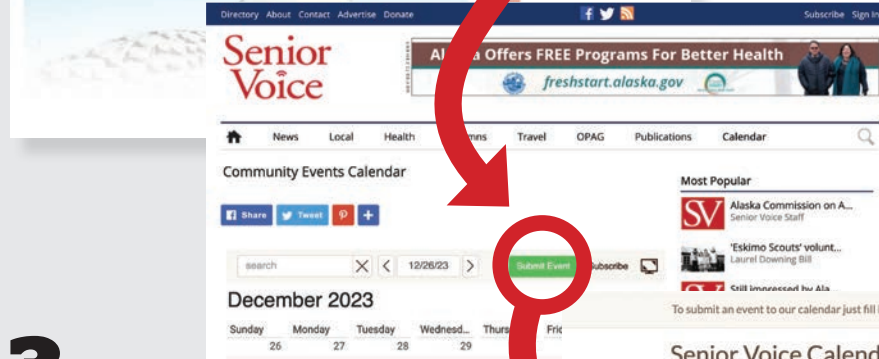
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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

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Travel: Alaska couple's South American journey takes them to the Amazon. – page 24

GETTING GOOFY AT THE GAMES

Left to right, Prudence McKenney, Fred McKenney and Kevin Fitzgerald celebrate the second day of the 36-hole golf tournament at last year's Alaska International Senior Games (AISG) in Fairbanks. Each went on to win gold medals in their age group. McKenney set a new AISG all-time record for the men's 70-74 age group. This year's Games take place Aug. 2-11, with a full schedule of sports and recreational events ranging from archery to pickleball to indoor shooting and bowling. For information, including volunteer opportunities, see www.AlaskaAISG.org.

Photo courtesy Alaska International Senior Games





Commission on Aging transportation teleconference and quarterly meeting

Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) has two important events coming up aimed at improving the lives of Alaska's senior citizens.

Senior Transportation Teleconference

Join the ACoA on Aug. 8 at 10 a.m. for a teleconference dedicated to improving transportation services for Alaska's seniors. The session will focus on gathering community feedback and developing recommendations for enhancing transportation accessibility across the state. The teleconference can be accessed at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89719043442>.

The teleconference will bring together ACoA com-

missioners, industry experts, service providers, and community members to share insights and discuss challenges seniors face in accessing reliable transportation. This inclusive event is an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to a better understanding of seniors' transportation needs.

Agenda highlights include:

- ▶ A brief presentation on the current state of senior transportation in Alaska.
- ▶ Breakout sessions for detailed discussions on regional challenges and solutions.
- ▶ An opportunity for public comments and suggestions.

Alaska's diverse geography and climate present unique challenges for senior transportation, ranging from infrastructure

limitations to limited public transportation options. This meeting is an opportunity for the community to come together and explore practical solutions, including expanding existing programs and introducing new services.

Quarterly meeting and Elder listening session in Kotzebue

The ACoA will also hold its quarterly meeting on Sept. 11 in Kotzebue. The meeting can be accessed via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81651990145>. There will be a designated time for public comment at 1 p.m. during the quarterly meeting, providing an opportunity for community members to share their thoughts and concerns directly with the commission.

Prior to the meeting, the commission will host an Elder Listening Session on Sept. 10 at 2 p.m. at the local long-term care facility. This session provides an opportunity for Kotzebue's senior community to voice their concerns and share their experiences directly with the commission.

The quarterly meeting will focus on addressing the needs and challenges faced by Alaska's senior population, with a special emphasis on the unique circumstances in Kotzebue and the surrounding region. The commission will review the insights gathered from the Elder Listening Session and discuss potential solutions and initiatives to improve the quality of life for seniors in the area.

In addition to these

events, the ACoA will also be attending the Kenai State Peninsula Fair from Aug. 9-11 in Ninilchik, engaging with the local community and raising awareness about the commission's work.

The feedback and ideas gathered during these events will help guide future initiatives for the Alaska Commission on Aging. We encourage public participation to ensure that these solutions are comprehensive and beneficial for all.

For more details or to get involved, please contact Jon Haghayeghi, Executive Director of the Alaska Commission on Aging, at 907-465-4793. We value your input and look forward to your participation in making Alaska a better place for our senior community.

Are predatory text messages now just part of life?

By DAVID WASHBURN

Senior Voice

Like many households, mine does a lot of shopping via mail. So when a text message from the postal service appeared on my smartphone, alerting me that a package was being held due to "incomplete address information" and would be returned if I didn't act within 12 hours, I promptly poised my finger to click on the link.

But then I stopped. Since when does the USPS send me text messages? And I've read that spam text messages are so potent now that simply clicking a link can open your device's door to theft.

Suspicious but curious, I visited the nearby post office and showed the clerk the message. He didn't have to lean in to read it, replying immediately, "that's fake". He's gotten

the messages on his own phone, he said.

Within the next day, my wife got a similar fake call to action text message, hers purportedly from our credit union. A recent charge for \$503.80 was attempted against our account and she needed to click the link to verify approval, it said.

Instead, she called the credit union, which confirmed the message was a hoax.

These phone message scams are increasing in quantity and also in quality—they can be very convincing. And bank scams are at the top of list, says Michelle Tabler, a fraud expert who works with AARP Alaska.

"According to the Federal Trade Commission, the most common text message scam reported in 2022 was bank fraud warnings. Most commonly, you would receive a text purportedly

from your bank alerting you to a transaction and asking if you approved it. Just by replying, the scammer knows they have found an active phone number," Tabler says. "The scammer may then call you with a spoofed caller ID that often mimics that of your actual bank. To stop the 'fraudulent' charge, they will instruct you to send money to yourself through a digital wallet app (e.g. Zelle). They will also tell you to give them the verification code the bank sends you. Don't do it."

The postal clerk I spoke with said that had I replied to the fake postal service text message, I would have been instructed to enter my credit card or other payment information to pay a small fee of around a dollar to cover the address correction transaction. Once the scammers have the payment info, they're

off and running.

It is just one of the many variations bombarding us.

"Scammers have found that people read nearly all their texts whereas they may not answer calls from unknown numbers or respond to emails," Tabler says. "The goal is the same, though: They want you to supply them with your personal information so they can gain access to your accounts."

So what do we do?

"Never click on any links from an unexpected text

message," Tabler says. "Even if you are expecting a package. Go directly to the shipper's site and check on the status of your package."

She added that, as a rule, don't trust Caller ID. And "your bank will never ask you to send money to yourself. Never share one-time passcodes with anyone."

Shame that our own devices, which can offer so much in enriching our lives, are being used against us.

David Washburn is the editor for Senior Voice.

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"Promote choice and well being for seniors through legacy and leadership."



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Page design Rachel Gebauer, Gebauer Design



Anchorage church to offer tiny homes to unhoused seniors

By **BETTY HERTZ**
For *Senior Voice*

NIMBY, Not in My Backyard. These angry words have created barriers for those needing help finding safe housing and obtaining other basic needs. Central Lutheran Church

in Anchorage reframed NIMBY and created a non-profit organization, In Our Backyard (IOB). The mission is to provide safe, interim homes and connections to support services for our unhoused senior neighbors as they work to obtain permanent homes. In Our Backyard Board

Chair Julie Green-Graham shared, "Each time the Sullivan Arena closed, members of Central Lutheran Church asked, how we can help? Being proactive by having discussions with Fairview neighbors and other groups and by research, the idea of small transitional homes on

Central Lutheran property grew into In Our Backyard." Central Lutheran's midtown location and proximity to public transit, medical offices, the Anchorage Senior Center, and other social services make it the ideal location for a transitional housing facility for our unhoused seniors.

Why seniors? According to May statistics from the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, 314 people met our occupant age criteria of 50 or older. The occupants must be willing to work with a case manager and able to live

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Financial planning: The secret weapon every family caregiver needs

By **TERESA HOLT**
AARP Alaska

It's essential for everyone aged 18 and above to have a will, an advanced health care directive, and a durable power of attorney in place. However, many people haven't done this yet. The reason could be our natural discomfort when it comes to discussing topics like death or the potential loss of our ability to sign legal documents. As we grow older, these conversations become increasingly important. If you're assisting a friend or family member, it's crucial to ensure that they have all the necessary paperwork completed. Remember, these documents need to be in place while the person still has the ability to express their wishes and make informed decisions.

Make it clear with a will

While it's not mandatory for everyone to have a will, this document can greatly simplify matters after your passing. A will clearly outlines how you'd like your property and assets to be distributed, which can help avoid potential conflicts among your loved ones. You have several options for creating a will - you can write one by hand, fill out a notarized or witnessed form, or hire an attorney

for professional assistance. If you own property or assets worth more than \$50,000, have a complex family situation, or possess Native allotment or restricted land, having a professional help you create a will becomes even more crucial. It's also important to appoint a trusted individual as your executor who will work with the court system to make sure your wishes are followed. Alaska Legal Services has a will form and information on how to complete it on their website.

Advance directives

Everyone should consider completing two types of advance directives: a durable power of attorney and an advance healthcare directive. A durable power of attorney is a document where you appoint a trusted person to manage your financial and personal matters if you're unable to do so. However, this doesn't include medical decisions. That's where an advance healthcare directive comes in. This document allows you to name a decision-maker and describes your preferences about life-prolonging measures if you're unable to communicate your wishes. Both of these documents need to be either notarized or signed by two witnesses.

Alaska Legal Services provides forms and explanatory videos for these documents. It's important to note that a Do Not Resuscitate Order (DNR) is a separate document that you can complete with your doctor.

Transfers and trusts

If you own a house or piece of property, you might want to consider completing a "Transfer on Death Deed" that allows you to transfer this property without a will or going through probate. However,

you cannot use this for a Native allotment or for property owned by several people. You can find a form to do this on the Alaska Court website.

There are many kinds of trusts, which are created to help people solve specific issues to manage personal income, property or assets, such as helping someone become eligible for Medicaid, protect assets, reduce tax liabilities, etc. For example, a Miller's trust is set up to help someone who is just over the income limit become eligible for

Medicaid. Trusts tend to be complicated and require an attorney to set up.

If you would like more information on this topic, come to AARP Alaska's Financial Fitness fair on Sept. 7 at the Loussac Library in Anchorage to hear directly from the experts. Go to www.aarp.org/ak for more information about this upcoming event.

This article is intended to be a general summary and does not constitute legal advice.

Teresa Holt is the AARP Alaska State Director.

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Two old guys in a parking lot: A true story

By **LAWRENCE D. WEISS**
For *Senior Voice*

Sure, it's just an ordinary asphalt parking lot, but it's the one by the gas station at the Girdwood turnoff. People in the Lower 48 loot their retirement security to make a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage to Alaska to see the view along there—the Turnagain Arm surrounded by towering snowy mountains. I didn't notice any of it.

I was focused on using the bathroom. But first I had to get there. Step one was getting out of the car. And to do that I had to bend my knee. The pain was excruciating. Finally, I was able to stand in the parking lot. Then I was ready to hobble ever so slowly across the lot to the minimart and travelers' relief.

That's when I noticed him. An old guy like me, but he was straight out of Geezer Central Casting. His round face was covered with a scruffy gray beard, topped by the off-white floppy hat mature men prefer. He wore a cream-colored jacket, rust-colored cargo pants which hung loosely over his stocky frame, and tan colored chukkas. I felt like he was a friend I just hadn't met yet.

He stared at me as he shuffled along the sidewalk by the store, heading to the parking lot. His expression seemed to say, "This guy

looks familiar but I don't know who he is." He came to the curb, stopped, broke the gaze to stare down, and contemplated stepping off the 5 inch curb onto the parking lot. He positioned his feet just so, then gingerly stepped down.

Now we were both in the parking lot heading directly toward each other. I was limping, dragging my unbending left leg. He was slowly and deliberately shuffling. When we were just a few feet apart he stopped, fixed me with his stare and said, "Growing old's a bitch, ain't it?"

I said, "You got that right. I was on vacation in Homer for a week. We were supposed to come home to Anchorage yesterday, but I spent the day in the emergency room with a knee that suddenly swelled, hurt like hell, and wouldn't bend. They told me I have gout in the knee. Could take two or three weeks to get better."

"I hear you," he said. "I get dizzy spells all the time." We looked at each other for a few seconds. We understood. "Hey, I gotta get going," I said. "Well, you take care," he said. And we passed in the parking lot.

I limped into the store, passing slowly through the gauntlet of shelves



L. Weiss image, utilizing Microsoft Designer

crammed with gaudy packages of snack food all yelling "Buy me! Buy me!" But I was on a mission—the men's room.

Mission accomplished. Problem was I had to pass back through the "Buy me!" cacophony. Usually I am strong and breeze past all that stuff. But this time I was limping slowly and had lots of time to gawk at the vast array of salty, fatty, sweet snacks. Then I saw it.

Cracker Jacks. A bag of Cracker Jacks. Ok, so they weren't in the tall skinny box I remembered as

a kid, but still, I could taste them. The salty peanuts stuck in little clusters to the sweet caramel corn. The prize—maybe a green plastic ring fitted with a compass. I had to buy the Cracker Jacks.

By the time I limped down the sidewalk by the store to the parking lot I had already gobbled down half the caramel corn and found the "prize," a small square of cardboard with a puzzle printed on it. And one peanut. I was a little sad.

I looked up to continue my hobbling across the parking lot, and there he was. The same old guy shuffling back across the parking lot headed toward the store. Maybe he had to pee again. I don't know. Anyway, just as we were about to pass, I held out my bag of Cracker Jacks and said, "I haven't had Cracker Jacks in years and years. I saw these and had to buy them. Want some?"

He looked at the offering

for a moment, didn't take any but said, "You know, any more they have crappy prizes." I said, "Yeah, I just found that out. And not only that, I'm halfway through and I found only one peanut!" We smiled and nodded our goodbyes, a little richer in shared disappointment.

When I got to the car my wife was patiently sitting in the driver's seat waiting for her grunting and cursing husband to fold himself in. There wasn't much left, but I offered her the rest of the bag. I complained about the prize and the miserable solitary peanut. As I was whining, she poured the contents of the bag into her cupped hand—a few pieces of caramel corn and about 15 peanuts. I'll be darned.

I looked around for my new friend but didn't see him in the parking lot. I wanted to tell him that there was a handful of peanuts in the bottom of the bag. It made me feel a bit better and I thought he would too.

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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Strategies to bolster your immune system

By **DR. EMILY KANE**

For Senior Voice

It's almost back-to-school time and those runny nosed kids are going to be bringing bad bugs home. Here are four tips for keeping your immune system strong.

To bolster your immune system, start with the basics, as always: Stay well-hydrated, keep a regular schedule that allows for eight hours of



sleep each night, and eat a healthy diet. If you want to
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Alaska Health Fair's fall schedule now available

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

The much-anticipated Alaska Health Fair fall 2024 schedule is being released in the first week of August. As your trusted partner in health and wellness since 1980, we're gearing up for another season of empowering Alaskans with vital health education and affordable blood screenings. Our fall lineup promises a range of events across the state, bringing health resources directly to your community.

Key points:

- ▶ Schedule release date: First week of August 2024
- ▶ Events will span various locations across Alaska
- ▶ Featuring our signature

affordable blood tests and free health education. View the full list on our website.

▶ Opportunities for attendees, volunteers, and exhibitors

We encourage you to visit our website at www.alaskahealthfair.org to view the complete schedule and plan your visit. Remember, you can make appointments online or simply walk in to any of our events.

Calling all health advocates

We're inviting local medical professionals, nonprofits, businesses and government agencies to participate in our health fairs as health educators. This is your chance to promote

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The Ruby XL 5" is a digital magnifier that allows users to magnify materials up to 14 times—books, photographs, newspapers, medications, labels and more. Users can choose to fold out the handle for a balanced grip or use it as a reading stand that holds the screen at a comfortable angle. With options to adjust magnification, change contrast or color coding, or add a reading line, there are many ways users can customize the display to meet their needs.

Digital magnifiers are

manufactured with many different variations—screen size, battery life, handle variety, number of contrast or color modes, amount of magnification

available, the ability to connect with an external display and more are considerations when identifying the right fit for an individual. There is no “one-size-fits-all” digital magnifier or tool for vision loss. The Ruby XL 5" is just one example of a digital magnifier that could benefit an individual with vision loss.



Photo courtesy ATLA

This column is brought to you by ATLA (Assistive Technology of Alaska), a nonprofit, statewide resource. ATLA does not endorse this product but shares information on the types of assistive technology that may benefit Alaskans. For more information or to arrange a free demonstration, visit www.atlaak.org or call 907-563-2599.

your mission, grow your practice, bring valuable health and safety resources to attendees, and connect with your local community. Exhibitor space is always free at our health fairs.

Volunteer opportunities

Both medical and non-medical volunteer positions are available at our fairs and in our office. Time volunteered for Alaska Health Fair qualifies for professional license renewal, making this a great opportunity for healthcare professionals.

Exhibitor and volunteer applications are available on our website.

Stay informed

Sign up for our mailing list to be notified of the schedule release, free blood testing initiatives, and other important health and safety information. Don't miss out on these valuable updates. Visit our website, click on “subscribe to newsletter.” Follow us on Facebook for the latest updates and health tips.

For any questions, please contact us at in Anchorage or statewide at 907-278-0234; in Fairbanks, 907-374-6853; and in Juneau, 907-723-5100.

About Alaska Health Fair

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

is a nonprofit serving Alaskans since 1980. We are committed to providing communities with affordable blood screenings and valuable health education. Our mission is to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. With just four employees and hundreds of dedicated volunteers, Alaska Health Fair delivers around 100 health fairs throughout Alaska each year, offering free health education and low-cost blood tests. Join us at one of our upcoming health fairs and take a step towards a healthier you. See www.alaskahealthfair.org.

Medicare programs that can save you money

By **SEAN MCPHILAMY**

Alaska Medicare Information Office

As Americans and as Alaskans, we share in the health care program costs of our Medicare, both through our federal income taxes and through the cost sharing paid by individuals enrolled into Medicare. But for some Alaskans with low income and low assets, these costs can be a significant part of the monthly budget—there are programs which can help save you money.

In this month's article, I will introduce the Medicare



Savings Program (MSP), which can help with the bills for Original Medicare (as Parts A & B) along with describing the Extra Help program, which does the same for your Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

(PDP, under Part D).

Medicare Savings Program

For Alaskans with low income and low assets who have enrolled into Medicare, the Medicare Savings Program (MSP) can significantly help manage your costs. The State of Alaska's Division of Public Assistance manages the MSP; Alaskans request enrollment into the MSP by submitting the Application for Services (form GEN-50C). This year, the income limit is \$2,137 per month (single) or \$2,894 (couple), while the asset limit is

\$9,430 (single) or \$14,130 (couple); assets do include your savings, checking and invested accounts, but do not count the value of your home or your car. Covered costs normally include the premium for your Part B outpatient services. This can save you \$174.70 each month.

If your income and assets values are even lower, then your reduced expenses will also include Medicare cost sharing (co-pays, co-insurance) along with your deductible and the premium for Part A inpatient services (for those who may be ineligible for

premium-free Part A, such as if your work history is less than a combined ten years). The category of this MSP is known as a Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB). To qualify, your monthly income limit is \$1,588 (single) or \$2,149 (couple) and your asset limit of \$9,430 (single) or \$14,130 (couple). Once eligible for Medicare, and if your countable assets are no more than \$2,000 then you will likely qualify to simultaneously be enrolled into Medicaid for Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) individuals.

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Foods and vitamins that boost hearing health



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

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps improve circulation. The inner ear depends on good circulation to stay in good health. Vitamin C is an antioxidant believed to help keep your immune system strong to help fight off infections in the middle ear. Vitamin D is good for your three middle ear bones. Studies are being done with vitamins A, C, E and magnesium to see if having normal levels in your bloodstream might help prevent hearing loss. Deficiencies of vitamin B12 might be responsible for age related hearing loss, according to The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Keeping your diet bal-

anced gives your body the nutrients it needs without having to take supplements and is much healthier for you. Foods that are high in vitamin E are almonds, hazelnuts, spinach, turnip greens, kale and plant oils such as sunflower and grape-seed oils. Vitamin C foods are kale, broccoli, berries, citrus fruits, tomatoes, peas, papayas and oranges. Sunlight is a great vitamin D source. Living in Alaska we can't rely on the sun for our vitamins. Good food for vitamin D is fish, egg yolks and cheese. Vitamin B12 can be found in red meat, milk, yogurt and swiss cheese.

Always consult your doctor before adding vitamins to your diet.

We ensure every patient gets the right hearing aids to best meet their hearing loss, lifestyle and budget needs. Request an appointment by calling 907-644-6004.

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



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

Medicare

continued from page 5

Extra Help for your Prescription Drug Plan (PDP)

Once you have enrolled into a Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), then you may be eligible to save on your out-of-pocket costs through a federal program called Extra Help. This program is managed by the Social Security Administration. You may be automatically enrolled in certain circumstances, or you may qualify if your income limit is \$2,371 (single) or \$3,212 (couple), and your asset limit is \$17,220 (single) or \$34,360 (couple). As with the MSP, assets do include your savings, checking, and invested accounts, but do not count the value of your home or your car.

Extra Help is not a re-

placement for your Part D PDP; rather this program is a low-income subsidy which offers specific benefits to help lower your costs.

Under Medicare's Part D, your PDP is offered by an insurance company, which has contracted with both drug manufacturers (pharmaceutical companies) and drug distributors (pharmacy networks). When choosing the best PDP, your goal is to meet your specific medical needs and to also offer the lowest overall costs, as a combination of your annual deductible, monthly premiums, and the co-pays when you pick up your prescriptions from an in-network pharmacy during the calendar year. Extra Help helps by lowering the costs of your prescription drugs, reducing the cost of premiums (for specific plans), eliminating a previously incurred late enrollment penalty, and offering special enrollment

periods (once per quarter, during the first nine months of the calendar year).

To discuss these cost saving programs, 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 new 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, but I serve the state via phone. If you are local, I can help you as a walk-in.

I am here Mondays

through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon.

Call with your Medicare questions, 907-262-2322.

The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman is looking for you!

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Turning your years from a negative to a positive

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice



Q: As I reflect on the discussions surrounding "old age" that have been circulating lately, I find myself contemplating the challenges that come with aging. While I may not process information as quickly or move with the same agility as a younger person, I wonder: How can these issues be turned into positive experiences?

A: The fourth century, BC Phoenician merchant Zeno once said after his ship hit a rock and lost all his cargo, "I made a prosperous voyage when I suffered shipwreck."

This ancient wisdom may resonate with you. When we are faced with difficult challenges and struggles, it can be easy to feel like giving up or succumbing to despair. Life is undeniably full of adversity that often leaves us feeling defeated and overwhelmed.

Aging, a natural process often perceived negatively in society, offers many overlooked benefits. The wisdom and experience that come with age, accumulated through life's trials and tribulations, can guide us to make better decisions and navigate future obstacles more effectively. This wealth of knowledge can also be shared with younger generations, contributing to a

more informed and cohesive society.

It is crucial to remember that overcoming these obstacles can help us build resilience and strength. Each challenge conquered helps us develop coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills that can be applied to future hurdles, fostering a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy. Facing problems and struggles can also provide opportunities for personal growth and self-discovery. Confronting fears and limitations allows us to learn more about ourselves and our true capabilities, leading to increased emotional flexibility and a deeper sense of purpose in life.

To create a happier life amidst challenges and struggles, seeking support and guidance is essential. Professional therapy or counseling can help people process emotions and develop coping strategies. Self-help books like "The Resilience Factor" by Kar-

en Reivich and Andrew Shatte; or podcasts like "The Happiness Lab" by Dr. Laurie Santos; and Arthur Brooks' YouTube series "Be Happier" offer valuable insights and practical tips for building resilience and finding happiness.

Here are some steps for building strength and resiliency:

1. Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
2. Stay active and engaged in activities that bring joy.
3. Keep company with good people.
4. Seek out professional support as needed.

5. Focus on the positive aspects of aging relishing the wisdom and experience that comes with it.

While navigating life's challenges and aging struggles may be daunting, they also present opportunities for personal growth and better mental health. By facing these roadblocks head-on, developing coping strategies, and seeking support when necessary, we can emerge stronger and more resilient. Embracing the intricacies of aging can lead to a happier and more fulfilling life.

Additional resources

- "The Art of Growing Older: Writers on Living and Aging" edited by Wayne C. Booth.

- "Aging Well: Surprising Guideposts to a Happier Life from the Landmark Harvard Study of Adult Development" by George E. Vaillant.

- "The Gifts of Aging: And Other Secrets for Living a Beautiful Life" by Anne Scott.

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, CLIPP is a health and wellness professional coach practicing in Anchorage. If you have questions write to her at info@karencasanovas.com.



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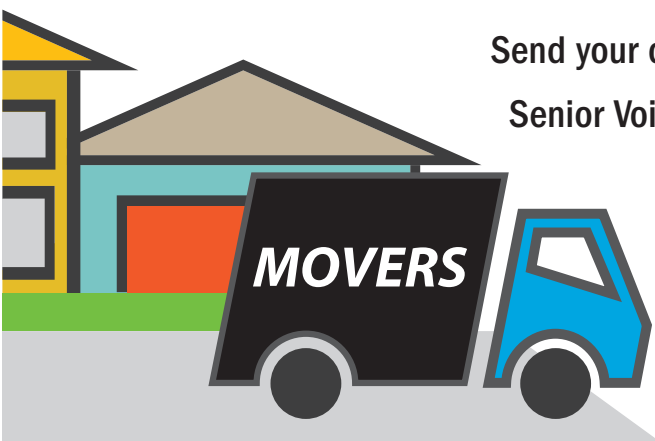
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Awareness and avoidance of germs on airplanes

Also: Prostate med may help with dementia; using bees to diagnose cancer

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Staying healthy at 35,000 feet

If you are planning on flying and debating whether to wear a mask, it is best to know the facts. Infectious disease expert Dr. Clark Abraham, who is with the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine, said some people may be surprised about the risk of germ spread on most airplanes.



The real hotspot might be the airplane lavatory. Here, transmission can occur either by coming into contact with surfaces contaminated by bacteria or by inhaling air contaminated with certain viruses, such as influenza or COVID, after being used by a contagious passenger. Transmission of norovirus, the common cause of diarrheal outbreaks on cruise ships, has also been reported.

“In general, the surfaces of public restrooms are frequently contaminated with fecal flora, bacteria found in stool. Airplane restrooms that are shared between passengers are no exception,” said Dr. Abraham. “Although airlines clean the lavatory between flights, their use during the flight results in contamination of the toilet, sink handles, door handles—inside and outside, and especially the floors. Bacteria from the bathroom can also track into the cabin on the bottom of our shoes.”

To avoid coming into contact with these germs, he advises passengers to open and close lavatory door handles with a sanitizing wipe, use toilet seat covers, and close the lid before flushing.

Hidden health benefits with prostate medicines

Certain drugs used to

next page please



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Medical

from page 8

treat urinary symptoms due to an enlarged prostate may be associated with a reduced risk of dementia with Lewy bodies, according to a new study. Dementia with Lewy bodies is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder that can cause memory and thinking issues, movement problems, and issues such as hallucinations.

The study does not prove that these drugs reduce the risk of dementia with Lewy bodies. However, it shows an association.

“These results are exciting because right now there are no drugs to prevent or treat dementia with Lewy bodies, which is the second most common neurodegenerative type of dementia after Alzheimer’s disease,” said study author Jacob E. Simmering with the University of Iowa in Iowa City. “If we can determine that an existing drug can offer protection against this debilitating disease,

that has the potential to greatly reduce its effects.”

The study looked at men taking different types of drugs to treat urinary problems caused by an enlarged prostate, a common problem for older men. The drugs terazosin, doxazosin and alfuzosin appear to block brain cell death by activating an enzyme important for energy production in brain cells. Previous studies have shown a similar association between these drugs and Parkinson’s disease, which is similar to dementia with Lewy bodies.

Once researchers matched the groups by age and other factors, they found that men taking terazosin, doxazosin or alfuzosin were 40% less likely to develop dementia with Lewy bodies than men taking tamsulosin.

“More research is needed to follow people over time and determine whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship here, but it is promising to think that these drugs could have a protective effect on this disease that will likely

affect a larger number of people as the population ages,” said Simmering.

Honeybees help diagnose lung cancers

Michigan State University (MSU) researchers are reporting that honeybees can detect biomarkers or chemical concentrations associated with lung cancer in human breath. The researchers have shown that honeybees can distinguish between different lung cancer cell types using only the ‘smell’ of the cell cultures. These findings could be used as a model for developing new tests to diagnose lung cancer early.

“Insects have an amazing sense of smell, the same way dogs do,” said study investigator Debajit Saha, an assistant professor at MSU. The researchers wanted to see if honeybees could distinguish between the chemicals in human breath from someone who was healthy compared to someone with lung cancer. Study investigator Elyssa Cox and her team developed a “recipe” for a synthetic breath mixture using dif-

ferent levels of six compounds. “It took a steady hand to create the recipe,” said Cox. “We tested the synthetic lung cancer versus healthy human breath mixtures on approximately 20 bees.”

Cox helped design a custom 3D-printed harness to hold a live honeybee while she attached a tiny electrode to its brain to measure any changes in the bee’s brain signals. “We pass those odors on to the antenna of the honeybees and recorded the neural signals from their brain,” said Saha. “We see a change in the honeybee’s neural firing response.”

The researchers also wanted to measure how much of the cancer-indicating compounds needed to be present in someone’s breath for the honeybee to detect cancer.

“The honeybees detected very small concentrations. It was a very strong result,” said Saha. “Bees can differentiate between minute changes in the chemical concentrations of the breath mixture, which is in the parts per 1 billion range.”

Saha hopes this work will open the door for more biological and smell-based disease detection technologies. In the future, Saha’s team plans to develop a test based on honeybee brains that would analyze the breath and wirelessly report back in real-time if cancer chemicals are present.

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

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Don't be intimidated: Strength training is for everyone

By BARBARA DUBOIS

For Senior Voice

Of the three components of physical fitness— aerobic, flexibility and strength—the latter is least likely to be addressed and the least palatable among the senior crowd. Why? The mere thought of it conjures up arduous workouts that are extraordinarily difficult. Images of grunting and groaning weight lifters, their anguished faces dripping with sweat, makes the whole thing seem so unappealing and ridiculously hard.

This is an imagery that we need to dispel. Strength training for the elderly crowd is essential and it is not a grueling process that will make us miserable or be impossible. It is not only highly doable, but even pleasurable. Like anything, developing a routine is the key.

Muscle mass is vital for health

Why is strength training so critical? What can we do to prevent muscle mass loss and maintain bone density? Muscle mass



© Ljupco | Dreamstime.com

Muscle mass is critical for preventing falls and also is important for maintaining bone density and strength, thus preventing osteoporosis.

starts to decline in our 40s and reduces by as much as 3% to 5% per subsequent decade. By the time we reach our 60s, 70s and 80s, that can be quite a substantial loss. You do the math: at 30 years past the 40 year threshold, that's a 15% muscle mass loss.

Muscle mass is critical for preventing falls and also is important for maintaining bone density and

strength, thus preventing osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is also serious as the fragility of the bones means breaks happen more frequently due to the depleting skeletal system struggling to sustain the weight of a person. Weight bearing exercises also fortify the bones and jar them into either retaining or increasing their density. Breaks then are less likely

to occur.

Another very important feature of building muscle mass is that falls can be prevented by strength training as fortified muscles give one a steadier balance and a greater sense of surefootedness.

Different approaches

What exactly is the process of strength training and how should a person approach this? The last thing we want to do is foster this idea that all of us need to be high powered body builders. Au contraire. What is really needed are frequent repetitions of light weights three to four times a week as opposed to this idea of the body builder hoisting massive weights thrust quickly into the air. We are talking initially of mild resistance training with light hand weights.

Over time this cultivated habit can make all the difference in the world in improving balance, reducing falls and preventing bone density loss with a gradual strengthening of the muscles. Classes can be taken in groups to not only teach one the various pos-

sible methods but also the sense of doing something positive in a group setting is a great fortifier. Music and the gentle guidance of a course instructor keeps the momentum going. Building the habit of strength training has its own special rewards when done as a group. Anything that cultivates not only better health and habits but also establishes relationships is highly desirable.

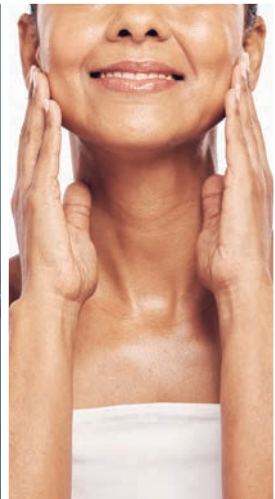
Longevity and independence

The most important aspect of strength training beyond the ones mentioned is it improves our mood and prolongs our independence. We need to not only stay as mobile as possible as long as possible, not only as strong as possible as long as possible, but also happily independent. We want to be able to take care of ourselves and each other. After all, isn't that what we are all about?

Barbara DuBois has an MA in Health Education and International Journalism and teaches and writes about fitness for The Alaska Club.

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Discovering and treating tuberculosis

By DR. BRUCE CHANDLER

Alaska Dept. of Health

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the oldest diseases in the world. It has been around for thousands of years. In the 200 years since TB was introduced to Alaska, it has ravaged much of the state, and continues to do so, even 60 years after the discovery of effective drugs to treat and cure the disease. TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease, and Alaska continues to have the highest rate of TB in the United States. Most of Alaska's cases are in the Southwestern and Northern regions of the state. In 2022, 95 Alaskans, ranging in age from 3 months to 93 years were diagnosed and treated for TB.

TB is an airborne disease that is spread by very small droplets in the air containing TB bacteria. These droplets can be spread by an infected person coughing or breathing. The infected droplets can remain in the air for hours, and if someone inhales a droplet, they can become infected. People with weak immune systems, or those who are very young or old are more likely to catch TB.

Latent TB is most common

Most people who become infected with TB are not sick. They have no symptoms. They have

TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease, and Alaska continues to have the highest rate of TB in the United States.

what is called "latent" or "inactive" TB infection. This means their immune systems can keep the TB bacteria walled off and in a resting state. While people with latent TB are not infectious and do not have symptoms, at any point their latent TB can become active TB. The only way to know if you have latent TB is to get a skin or blood test. If diagnosed with latent TB, you can take antibiotics to be cured.

Active TB symptoms and risks

Active TB is when someone is sick and has symptoms, which can include: Persistent cough (may or may not be bloody); chest pain; fever; night sweats; chills; tiredness; loss of appetite; weight loss

When someone has active TB, they can infect others around them. If you or someone you know has any of these symptoms, you should see your medical provider or your local public health nurse to be evaluated. The sooner you are evaluated, the sooner you can be treated. Remember, if you think you might have TB, get a TB test, and if you test positive for active TB, get treated!

Treating TB

Treating active TB is a long process, but you are not alone in this process. A team of public health nurses, community health aides, and other trained healthcare workers will ensure that you have the support you need to complete the treatment.

They will monitor you, your symptoms, and your medications to ensure that everything is working, and you are on your way to becoming healthy again. Although the treatment requires taking multiple drugs for six months or longer, it will cure your disease and restore your health.

Although TB continues to be a major problem in Alaska, the Alaska Dept. of Health is proud of the work that our public health

nurses, microbiologists, pharmacists and others are doing, day in and day out, as well as the work of our many healthcare partners. Without their work, TB would be much more widespread than it is today. Together we can work to cure and prevent TB in all our communities.

If you have questions or would like to learn more about TB in Alaska, you can contact the Alaska TB Program at 907-269-8000 or go to tb.alaska.gov.

How to hire a caregiver for in-home help

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: I need to hire a good in-home caregiver to help my elderly father who lives alone. What's the best way to do this? —*Searching Sarah*

Dear Sarah: Finding a good in-home caregiver for an elderly parent is not always easy. How can you find one that's reliable and trustworthy, as well as someone your parent likes and is comfortable with? Here are some tips that can help.

Know his needs

Before you start the task of looking for an in-home caregiver, your first step is to determine the level of care your dad needs.

For example, if he only needs help with daily living tasks like shopping, cooking, doing laundry, bathing or dressing, a "homemaker" or "personal care aide" will do. But if he needs health care services, there are "home health aides" that may do all the things a homemaker does, plus they also have training in administering medications,

changing wound dressings and other medically related duties. Home health aides often work under a nurse's supervision.

Once you settle on a level of care, you then need to decide how many hours of assistance he'll need. For example, does your dad need someone to come in just a few mornings a week to cook, clean, run errands or perhaps help him with a bath? Or does he need more continuous care that requires daily visits?

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Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program will hold the following caregiver support group meetings in August. Meeting format is open discussion unless otherwise noted.

Aug. 1 Tyotkas Elder Center, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Aug. 2 Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

Aug. 7 Kenai Senior Center, joining with the “Stronger Together” group, 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Aug. 15 Sterling Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.

Aug. 29 Nikiski Senior Center, featuring a show-

ing of “Alive Inside,” about music and dementia, 1 to 2 p.m.

Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. For the August meetings schedule or other information, or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Keschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654 or email kpfensp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org.

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

Kodiak Senior Center hosts the caregiver support group on the third Thursday of each month (Aug. 15) at 1 p.m. Call for information, 907-486-6181.

Around the state

Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska (ARA) organizes caregiver support meetings around the state, including Anchorage, Ea-

gle River, Fairbanks, Homer, Juneau/Southeast, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, Seward, Sitka, Soldotna, Talkeetna, Willow. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details.

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

In **Southeast Alaska**, the Southeast Senior Services Senior and Caregiver Resource Center is available. Call Jennifer Garrison at 866-746-6177.

The national Alzheimer’s

Association operates a 24-hour help line for caregivers, staffed by specialists and Masters-level clinicians, at 800-272-3900.

Online caregiver support for Alaska veterans

The Alaska VA Caregiver Wellness Cafe is held monthly on the first Thursday (Aug. 1) from 1 to 2 p.m. via the Teams software and is an informal virtual place to engage with other caregivers while learning about topics beneficial to your role as a caregiver. Enrollment in Alaska VA Caregiver Support Program (CSP) is not required to participate in the call. For information, call 907-375-2606.

Further discussion about redirection strategy

By **DANI KEBSCHULL**

Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program

Redirection is a technique that shifts the focus of the loved one away from a situation that causes them fear, anger, anxiety, or from engaging in dangerous and unsafe behavior, toward a situation that’s more calm and pleasant. Last month we looked at the benefits, when caregiving for someone, of redirecting their attention and behavior toward the positive. Now let’s look at the unsuccessful outcomes of negative verbal redirection in a case where someone

can’t find their purse and is convinced someone has stolen it.

▶ “Your purse hasn’t been stolen. You must have misplaced it.” Dismissing their reality of the missing purse shows that you are invalidating their feelings, negatively impacting their trust in you and possibly upsetting them further. It also fails to resolve their concern, as they still believe their purse to have been stolen.

▶ “You don’t need your purse right now anyway.” This is negating their need to know where their purse is. Most people always need to know where their

purses or wallets are, as they contain identification, money, credit cards, and other important items. What matters is that their purse is important to them right now, and if we create doubt in its value to the person, we risk upsetting and frustrating them.

▶ “Don’t worry about your purse right now. Come have

some lunch and I’ll look for it later.” This approach ignores their immediate need and communicates that their concern is of little importance to us. However, in their reality, the purse is still missing, and they will likely continue to look for it.

The common thread through these scenarios

is that it doesn’t matter if the purse is missing or not. What matters is that the person believes it to be missing – this is their reality. That’s why we use the redirection technique to de-escalate the situation and return the person to a much better state with positive, enjoyable activities that bring them happiness.

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Managing environmental allergies year-round

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice

Cottonwood trees are spoiling the air with their seeds and causing a huge increase in seasonal allergies, so this is as good a time as any to explore how to handle allergies and discuss protecting ourselves at home from allergies. We will also talk about other allergies, as well.

Let's talk about what you can do in your home to reduce allergens. Your heating and cooling systems can be great allies in the fight against allergies. During allergy season, running your air conditioning can help. It doesn't just cool your home, it also filters the air, removing many allergens. Make sure to change your AC filters regularly—about every three months is a good rule of thumb.

When running our heaters in the winter, the dry air can irritate our nasal passages. Consider using a humidifier to add some moisture to the air. But be careful not to make it too humid, as that can encourage dust mites and mold growth. Aim for a humidity level between 30% and 50%.

If it's summer and you don't need the heat but don't have an air conditioner, many heaters allow you to turn off the heating



element but keep it pushing air through the venting systems. Just moving the air through the filters that the blowers have can help remove allergens.

Vacuuming and dusting are crucial for reducing allergens in your home. Try to vacuum at least twice a week, using a vacuum with a HEPA filter if possible. For dusting, use a damp cloth instead of a feather duster, which can just spread dust around. Try to dust at least once a week, focusing on areas where dust collects like bookshelves, windowsills and the tops of picture frames.

Another daily habit that can help is leaving your shoes at the door. This prevents you from tracking in pollen and other outdoor allergens and depositing them into the carpet fibers to be kicked up later by people walking.

Food allergies can affect us no matter where we live. In Alaska, we enjoy lots of fresh seafood, but some folks might be allergic to

If it's summer and you don't need the heat but don't have an air conditioner, many heaters allow you to turn off the heating element but keep it pushing air through the venting systems. Just moving the air through the filters that the blowers have can help remove allergens.

fish or shellfish. If you've eaten these foods all your life without problems but suddenly feel sick after eating them, talk to your doctor. It could be a new allergy—those can happen at any time of your life.

Our long, dark winters bring their own challenges. We spend more time indoors, which can increase our exposure to indoor allergens like dust mites and mold. To help, use a dehumidifier in your home, especially in damp areas like basements. This can reduce mold growth. Also, when the weather allows, open your windows to let fresh air circulate.

Seasonal allergies in Alaska can be tricky. On days when pollen counts are high, try to stay indoors. But we know how precious our outdoor time is, especially during our short summers. If you do

go out, wear a hat and sunglasses to keep pollen out of your eyes and hair. You may want to change your clothes when you come in and consider taking a quick shower to rinse off any pollen.

For those with pet allergies, it's important to note that many Alaskans have dogs, often large breeds that spend time both indoors and outdoors. If you're visiting friends with pets, take your allergy medicine before you go. If you have pets yourself, try to keep them out of your bedroom to reduce your exposure to pet dander.

If you have an allergic reaction, over-the-counter antihistamines can help with mild symptoms. If you have severe symptoms like trouble breathing, or feeling like your tongue or throat is swelling, call 911 right away.

It's a good idea to see your doctor for less severe but persistent symptoms. They might refer you to an allergy specialist. While there aren't many specialists in Alaska, telemedicine options are becoming more common, giving you access to expert care.

Remember, in Alaska, we're used to preparing for extreme conditions. Think of managing your allergies the same way – with the right preparation and knowledge, you can handle whatever comes your way. By taking these steps in your home and daily life, you can significantly reduce your exposure to allergens and breathe easier.

Stay safe, stay warm, and enjoy all that our beautiful Alaska has to offer.

Christian M. Hartley is a 40-year Alaska resident with over 25 years of public safety and public service experience. He is the City of Houston Fire Chief and serves on many local and state workgroups, boards and commissions related to safety. He lives in Big Lake with his wife of 20 years and their three teenage sons.



The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program at APIA has partnered with several non-profits to meet community needs by encouraging and supporting volunteerism for people ages 55 years and older in the Anchorage and Mat-Su region. We are currently looking for elders to volunteer at the following sites (but not limited to): Alaska Regional Hospital, Alaska Veterans and Pioneer Home, Alaska Veterans Museum, Anchorage Loussac Library, Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Catholic Social Services, Downtown Hope Center, Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, Prestige Care and Rehabilitation Center, Primrose Retirement Communities, Wasilla Area Seniors Inc.

If you are interested please contact:

Brianne Hunt
RSVP Coordinator
(907) 276-2700 ext. 276
Or directly (907) 222-4276
brianneh@apiai.org
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Agnes Sweetsir and Galena's assisted living journey

Story and photos by YASMIN RADBOD

For Senior Voice

In 2009, Agnes Sweetsir noticed that the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility (YKEALF) in Galena was empty. "It just sat and sat," she recalls. "I lived right down the street and was embarrassed. It was just a monster of a building."

Agnes prayed on it. "I figured I could help get it up and running for a few months, but I didn't realize we needed an administrator." She took on the role. "I worked 60 to 80 hours a week for \$25,000 a year. Charlie Green was our maintenance manager—same pay. We never would've made it if they had tried paying us a half-decent salary."

Fifteen years later, Agnes is retiring and reflects on her journey.

"I knew about Elders, but not the industry. It was hard to find information on regulations because people haven't been doing assisted living here. Things like average water usage, no one knew. Then there's the design. We had to take off all the glass doors. In the winter, we put Styrofoam on the windows to insulate. It's not pretty, but we need to do it."

Agnes spent countless hours researching and



Agnes Sweetsir stands outside the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility in Galena, where she has dedicated 15 years ensuring its success.

networking. Her family's support was invaluable, she says.

"This is a business. In any business, you need to create a product or service that people will be willing to invest in and purchase. I knew a little about accounting, supervision, and HR. And I am very resourceful. One of the first things I did was meet with our board and go through the process of crafting their mission statement and values. We're a private nonprofit licensed by the state, and a 501c3. Foundations and agencies are out there to help but you need to be either or both a 501c3 and a private nonprofit."

Community effort

A crucial aspect of the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility's success is its community involvement. The facility sources about 80% of its protein locally. Folks provide fresh moose, fish, baked goods, and berries.

"If we're short-staffed, people volunteer to help cook and clean. Having traditional Native food makes a big difference," Agnes says. "One resident calls it their 'spiritual food.' Young Elders from the community provide emotional support for both residents and staff, especially during end-of-life care. Before our facility existed, families would struggle. People had to move their loved ones out

of town. If I had stayed my parents' caregiver, I would've been dead before them. Both my parents spent their final days at YKEALF. It was beautiful."

The 2013 flood posed a significant challenge, causing housing shortages and increased maintenance costs, Agnes says. "We would've sunk if we didn't have property insurance. This is a high-risk industry and insurance is absolutely necessary."

Trainings and resources

Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility also owns a four-apartment housing complex for staff. Some workers are related to the residents, Agnes says.

"Our facility is one of the few in the country that is truly culturally relevant. Staff work long hours and deal with a lot. We teach them in orientation to not take things personally.



One of the first things Agnes did in her position was help the board design their values, philosophy and mission.

People suffering from dementia would never normally act like that, it's the disease."

The facility originally developed a dementia-friendly community with help from Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Agnes says.

"Our staff was trained, and we also offered trainings at the community hall for health clinic staff, churches, and families to learn about dementia. Even our store clerk was familiar with ADRD (Alzheimer's disease and related dementia). It was very progressive because the public was not afraid. They learned to recognize the signs and knew what to do."

The "Five Wishes" living will to help residents communicate their end-of-life care preferences has been critical, Agnes says. "More and more, we take our residents through that process. Those kinds of activities bring people peace. I think they live longer because of that—they're not worried about what will happen in the future."

Agnes remains available as a resource for those interested in starting ALFs in their communities. She recommends Teepa Snow and Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska's "Savvy Caregivers" training.

Chassidy and Ginger, who have been with Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility and are committed to its mission, will take over as co-administrators as Agnes retires. They plan to expand to 20 beds, the original intended size of the facility. Agnes is confident in their ability to continue the work, noting their dedication and love for the Elders.

"It's the littlest amount of money I've ever made in my life, but it's the most rewarding job I've ever had," she says. "I go to bed at night knowing that I have made a positive difference in someone's life. It really mattered what I did, and they can't pay you enough for that."

Agnes Sweetsir can be reached at 907-656-7449 and asweetsir.ykealf@gmail.com.

Contact Riki Chapman for UAA's three-part Dementia Skills Training for Assisted Living Homes (based on Teepa Snow's method of Positive Approach to Care®) at racook@alaska.edu or 907-264-6257.

See the online version of this article at seniorvoicelaska.com for recipes from YKEALF's cookbook.

Yasmin Radbod is the Alaska Commission on Aging Rural Outreach Coordinator.



Margie Attla, a revered Elder in the Athabascan community and resident at the Yukon Koyukuk Elder Assisted Living Facility, hosts a weekly Athabascan radio show on Fridays, 1 p.m. on K1YU 88.1 Galena Community Radio. She has hosted her program since the 1970s. Tune in to learn Athabascan words, listen to great fiddle music, and more. The station is streamed online at <https://kiyu.com/>.



Agnes, third from right, with staff and residents enjoying a summer day with a beautiful view of the river.



Prospector's Society still mining—for adventure



Alaskan Prospector's Society members gather for a photo at the El Cap Cave hike trailhead on Prince of Wales Island in May, 2022.

Photo courtesy Alaskan Prospector's Society

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

The dictionary defines a prospector as one who searches or explores. Members of the Alaskan Prospector's Society (APS) are continually prospecting for fun and knowledge about the great state of Alaska. The celebrates its 80th birthday this August.

According to the organization's website, APS organized in June of 1944 at Elmendorf Air Force Base, now Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. APS was a spinoff from a popular course titled "Short Course in Mining," at the University of Alaska's extension service. With so much interest in the course, APS was formed to capitalize on what was learned, with its first objective searching for minerals.

As the social aspect expanded, parties, picnics, hikes and other outings were included in the schedule.

New members and new interests changed the APS's purpose and resulted in the motto, "To See and Know Alaska." The organization's Constitution was changed in 1961 to reflect the greater interest in social gatherings, travel type programs and trips designed to give meaning to the APS motto.

Alaskan Prospector's Society meetings are at 7 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at the First United Methodist Church, 725 W. 9th Avenue in Anchorage. Come early from 6:30 to 7 p.m.

for snacks and socializing. Guests are always welcome. Programs are presented at each meeting.

"After the interest in mining petered out, it became a group of over-50-year-olds who are like sponges soaking up new information," said Rosie Stauffer, APS program director.

"They're so intelligent and ask great questions at the end of the presentations."

The membership requirement is unusual in that one need only attend three meetings and sign the attendance roster—need not be consecutive meetings—or present a program.

Stauffer's goal is to invite presenters who "think out of the box," like the upcoming lecture by Mr. Whitekeys in September on "The Voyage of the Alaska Union," that he describes as the telling of an untold gold rush story.

"He will be a great draw," Stauffer said.

There are no dues and once a member, always a member, resulting in over 8,000 present or past members scattered all over the United States.

In the past, some trips went by charter planes to remote villages with arrangements made to sleep in sleeping bags on floors of armories, school, community centers and churches, with those going taking their own food.

Last summer, the group traveled to Port Allsworth in Lake Clark National Park, spent a weekend in

Skagway, took the train to Seward on the Fourth of July for the Mount Marathon race, spent five days exploring Nome and the surrounding area, rode the Whistle Stop train to Hurricane Gulch and back, and held the Goodbye to Summer picnic and the annual Christmas Party.

Upcoming programs

- Aug. 6, "Last Frontier

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

This year's **Stand Down** event for veterans in Fairbanks takes place Aug. 17 at the Pioneer Park Civic Center, during which VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing and health screenings to homeless and at-risk veterans. Veterans also receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services. For more information, call 907-456-4238 ... Homer Senior Center invites everyone to play games and cards in its dining room on Mondays (cards), noon to 4 p.m., and the first and third Thursdays (games), also from noon to 4 p.m. It's free, no membership required. Call for information, 907-235-7655 ... Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center will host a **Wildlife Awareness Safety presentation** by the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game on Aug. 8. The presentation is titled "We Share The Same Home," and starts at 2:30 p.m. in the dining room. Call for details, 907-688-2677 ... Kenai Senior Center hosts "It's OK That You're Not OK," a **support group for widows and widowers** on Monday, Aug. 12 at 1 p.m. Share your thoughts and feelings with others who understand what you're going through. Call the center for information and to sign-up, or just show up. 907-283-4156 ... The **Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) Elder storytime** takes place the first Friday of every month at the **Kodiak Library** at 10:30 a.m. This is a chance for Elders to read a story to young families. For more information, or if you are interested in being a reader, call Cassie Keplinger, KANA Elder Services Director, at 907-486-1368 ... The **Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program check booklets** are available at local senior centers and other agencies for use through Oct. 31, 2024. Each booklet includes \$40 worth of checks for

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

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buying fresh Alaska-grown fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs and honey at participating farmers' markets, authorized farms, and roadside stands within Alaska. Applicants must be at least 60 years old and meet low-income eligibility guidelines. Links to program information, booklet distribution locations and a downloadable application are at <https://bit.ly/3BfGvLV>. Or call your local senior center or meal program for details. There's also a proxy application form that allows someone to apply on behalf of someone else ... The Mat-Su area is hosting two **electronics recycling events** in August, where folks can bring in **unwanted small appliances and electronics items** like microwaves, toasters, laptop/desktop computers, tablets, TVs, DVD players, printers, copiers, cables and wires, fluorescent lights bulbs, for free disposal. Do not bring large appliances, smoke alarms, batteries and ballasts, medical equipment or anything containing liquids. Dates and locations are **Mid-Valley Recycling** at the **Big Lake Transfer Site**, Aug. 3 and 4, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and **Sutton Recycling** at the **Sutton Transfer Site**, Aug. 11-12 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call **Valley Recycling**, 907-745-5544 ... The **Alaska Medicare Information Office** hosts the "**Medicare Minute**" at noon on the second Monday of each month. The free online event offers a brief presentation focusing on a particular Medicare topic, followed by an opportunity for attendees to ask questions. The next session is Aug. 12. Register at <https://bit.ly/3SkyLba>. The office will also offer a **free webinar**, "**Medicare 101**," on Aug. 28, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Medicare experts will go over the basics of Medicare A, B, C, D, Medigap (Medicare Supplements), and how to protect yourself from Medicare fraud and abuse. The presentation is one hour followed by 30 minutes to answer questions. Register at <https://bit.ly/4dfiteY>. Have questions about either of these online events? Contact the Medicare Information Office at 907-269-3680 or email hss.medicare@alaska.gov.

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

Traditions come alive at Scottish Highland Games

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**

Senior Voice Correspondent

After an extra stressful week, I so looked forward to spending a whole day at the 43rd annual Scottish Highland Games on June 29. It had been on my calendar for over a month, but I hadn't been sure I'd be able to attend.

This was not my first experience at the Games. That was back in the 1980s when our children were young and it was held on the grounds of the Eagle River Lions Club. My husband, Gary, had just learned that he came from a Scottish background, rather than Irish. That day in Eagle River, we enjoyed our introduction to all things Scottish, especially the sabbler toss. Thirty years later, Gary and I attended again. By this time, the Games had been relocated to the Palmer fairgrounds. But, Gary had limited mobility by then and was not able to wander around and take in the various activities as much as I would have liked.

So now in 2024, I studied the detailed program of events at home, strategizing how to make efficient use of my day. The Alaskan Scottish Salmon Toss sounded intriguing and I was excited to learn the highlight was to be the Women's World Championship, featuring 10 women athletes from the USA, Canada and Australia.

I'd heard it might rain, so packed my raincoat, but the sky looked so clear and the temperature so warm, I decided to wear my straw hat to prevent sunburn. Wallet, camera, paper, pen, water, and I



Author Maraley McMichael with two members of the Palmer Police at the Scottish Highland Games.

Maraley McMichael photo(s)

was off—in the mood for fun and adventure. And I got a full day's worth! I bought a ticket for one day and hurried to the Borealis Theatre (renamed Ceilidh Theatre for the weekend) just in time for the opening ceremonies at 10 a.m.

After that, I took a quick walkabout among the 150 merchants and food trucks lining the walkways. The atmosphere was just like being at the Alaska State Fair (including the food aromas), only no rain. The groomed flowerbeds already sported lovely blossoms. I hurried back to the Borealis Theatre for "Ally the Piper"—an excellent one-girl performance of bagpipes and penny whistle. She became famous on social media during the pandemic, playing bagpipe music to a rock background. Her music was so loud that I had to move back to the grassy area, and was glad to have my raincoat to sit on.

From there I went to where the men athletes had just finished the "heavy events" and listened to one competitor from San Diego answer questions from spectators. He recently completed his 19th year of Scottish Highland Games competitions (with Alaska being his 46th state), participating in 13 to 15 a year.

Then it was on to the women's competition where I watched the rock throw until I realized it was time to return to the Borealis Theatre for the next concert, the Harp Twins.

The Harp Twins from Illinois are young twin blond girls (Norwegian background) with a wonderful sense of humor who play unconventional harp music. They compose their own music as well as performing covers. I have never cared for rock music like AC/DC and Aerosmith, but done by the Harp Twins, it was fabulous. When they introduced the Wolfgang Twins from Pennsylvania (Viking background), the music ramped up a notch. The twin brothers, whose attire looked the part, beat drums decorated with deer hides and antlers, sometimes with all their might, with never a smile until the very end of the show. I recommend an internet search for these two sets of twins to get a feel for their



Scottish dancers performing on the Celtic stage at the 2024 Scottish Highland Games.

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Prospector's

continued from page 15

Flight Mission” with APS Board President Karla Shaw. The intent of the mission is to celebrate Alaska’s Veterans with a trip to Washington D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honoring their services and sacrifices. The trip is currently available to those who served during the period from WWII through Vietnam, including the Alaskan Territorial Guard. These trips are without cost to the Veteran and are funded entirely by individuals and corporate sponsors.

► Aug. 20, world traveler of 99 countries Tam Agosti-Gisler presents “Giving Your Time, Talent and Treasure as You Travel.” Tam has been in Alaska since 1959. Retired from her career as an educator, educational non-profit director and school board member, service remains her passion along with travel. She tries to combine the two by doing service

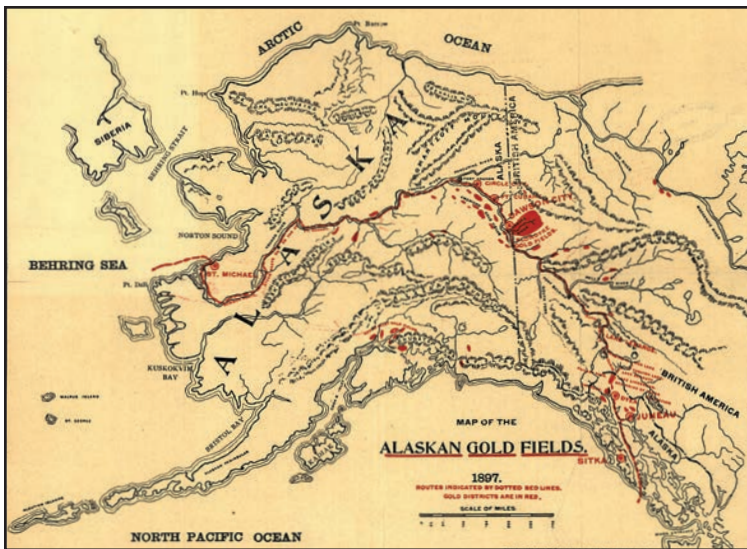
projects in other countries and will offer some tips on how you can do the same. Her most recent trip brought her country count to 99 and she's currently contemplating what country will be her 100th. She will talk about the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka.

► Aug. 27, the 80th birthday celebration of the founding of APS. This will take place at Coast Inn on Lake Hood. Happy hour begins at 5 p.m. with a dinner at 6 p.m. and entertainment to follow. Tickets are on sale until Aug. 20—none will be sold at the door. Price is \$40 each with \$10 refunded to those attending.

► Sept. 17, “The Voyage of the Alaska Union.” Renowned Mr. Whitekeys of the “Whale Fat Follies” and “Christmas in Spenard,” will be telling this untold gold rush story.

For more information go to <https://alaskan-prospectorsociety.org> or email alaskan.prospectors.society@gmail.com.

Or call Rosie Stauffer, 907-301-7029.



In 1897, gold seekers from the Lower 48 stampeded to British Columbia, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska in search of wealth in gold.

Map image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the event begins at 8

a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast provided. The next date is Aug. 14, hosted by attorney Constance Aschenbrenner.

Call Older Persons Action Group, Inc. at 907-276-1059 for location information and to RSVP for this event, or for more information on future events and to be added to our e-mail reminder list.

Calendar of Events

Aug. 3 Kodiak Bingo on Sundays at Kodiak Senior Center, hosted by VFW Post 7056 Auxiliary. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., split the pot game at 6:15 and regular bingo at 6:30. Must be 21. 907-486-6181

Aug. 9-11 Ninilchik Kenai Peninsula Fair at the fairgrounds. Fair food, rides, pig races, rodeo, live music, “stilt circus”, petting zoo, exhibits, more. Kenaipeninsulafair.com

Aug. 16 Fairbanks Seniors potluck social at Mary Siah Recreation Center, 2 to 4 p.m. Bring a dish to share. 907-459-1136

Aug. 16-Sept. 2 Palmer Alaska State Fair at the fairgrounds in Palmer. Rides, giant cabbages, live performers, concert headliners, famous fair food, animals, exhibits, much more. Closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Daily admission, \$11 for seniors 65 and older with ID. :30Telling Contest at 4 p.m. (sign up at 3:30) at the SBS Woodlot. Sept. 1 is Military Appreciation Day, with \$5 admission at the gate for all active duty and retired. Bring ID, as discount extends to three dependents too. www.alaskastatefair.org

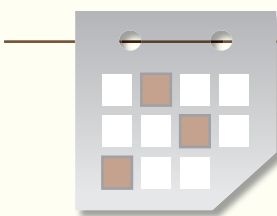
Aug. 16-17 Kenny Lake Kenny Lake Fair at 7 Mile Edgerton Hwy. This year’s theme is “Celebrating the 60s”. Featuring exhibits, petting zoo, live music, artists, sack races, various awards contests such as flower arrangement, open mic 60s song cover, men’s chili making, best decorated booth, much more. Doors open at 9 a.m. Tickets \$5 adult, \$3 kids 12 and younger. Vietnam veterans free. For information, call Kenny Lake Alaska Community League, 907-831-6043.

Aug. 20 North Pole Santa’s Senior Center Primary Election Day Bake Sale. Polling takes place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and the bake sale will be underway throughout that time. 907-488-4663

Aug. 23 Kenai Kenai Areawide Old Timers Luncheon at Kenai Senior Center. Doors open at 10:30 a.m., lunch with turkey and gravy and fixins starts at noon. There will be a special recognition of local centenarians. The event is popular so arrive early. Suggest donation of \$8 for ages 60 and older, and \$16 for those younger. 907-283-4156

Aug. 23 Ninilchik Ninilchik Senior Center Annual Fundraiser Dinner and Auction. Doors open at 4 p.m. for wine and cheese tasting, prime rib dinner starts at 5 p.m., followed by desserts and auction. Dress theme is “Olympics flair.” Tickets, \$35, must be purchased prior to event night. 907-567-3988

Aug. 31-Sept. 1 Girdwood Girdwood Fungus Fair, in the Community Room, 250 Egloff Dr. Presented by the Turnagain Arm Mycological Society. Presentations, exhibits, guided forays, more. www.fungusfair.com



Send us your calendar items

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Deadline for September edition is August 15.

101 Mobility

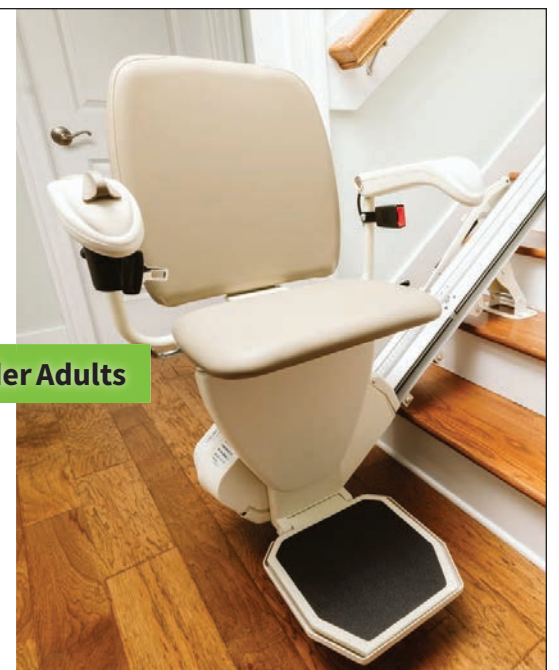
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Flying Baritone from Fairbanks pens iconic song

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

Gold miners in 1906 Fairbanks passed a fur cap for contributions to give the 7-year-old warbler. His only number was “In The Good Old Summer Time,” but it pleased the whiskered sourdoughs in the frontier town.

That was the beginning of a career that took the little singer far. Robert MacArthur Crawford grew up to become a professor of music, conductor of the Newark Symphony Orchestra and guest soloist for the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, D.C. But his most enduring claim to fame came in the late 1930s when he composed the words and music for the U.S. Army Air Corps song, “Off We Go Into The Wild Blue Yonder.”

Born in Dawson, Yukon Territory, during 1899, he and his family moved to the new gold camp of Fairbanks where Bob’s musical talents blossomed with the opening of miners’ pokes. He decided early on that he wanted to be a musician—a violinist, at first. Bob ordered an instrument from a mail order house, but under the teaching of Fairbanks’ musician Vic Durand, he turned his attention to the piano and composing. His musical composition ability soon became evident when he wrote the words and music for a song titled “My Northland.”

An energetic youngster, Bob sold newspapers to earn money during the early 1900s as he knew he wanted to continue his education Outside. A construction job on the Alaska Railroad, and another job at a service station, earned him enough for one year at Princeton University. While studying at Princeton, he also took part in many extra-curricular activities and started the Princeton University Orchestra. For seven years, he directed and orchestrated the music of the annual Triangle Show and demand for his baritone voice grew.

The young musician developed another passion during this time—aviation. He piloted his bride around Alaska on their honeymoon, and then flew back to Fairbanks in 1936, bringing light opera soprano Ruby Mercer with him. They presented a concert in the old Empress Theatre, with Don Adler as piano accompanist.

Crawford’s love for flying and the wild, blue yonder prompted him to enter a contest to find a song for the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1937.

More than 750 compositions flooded the volunteer committee. But committee members found no songs that satisfied them.

So Asst. Chief of the Air Corps Brig. Gen. Hap Arnold, who took over command of the Air Corps in 1938, solicited direct inquiries from contestants—including Irving Berlin. But no new creations proved worthy, either.

Then, just before the July 1939 deadline, Crawford entered his song. It fit the bill and the committee unanimously voted it as the winner.

Crawford, known by now as the “Flying Baritone,” was handed the \$1,000 first-place prize at the 1939 National Air races in Cleveland, Ohio. He then stepped to the microphone and sang the song for the first time in public.

Hundreds of top military and civilian celebrities attending the Aviation Banquet stood and applauded the song that epitomized the cocky determination and enthusiasm of the men who became World War II fliers—including



Fairbanks’ own Robert MacArthur Crawford won the 1939 contest for a U.S. Army Air Corps theme song. Courtesy U.S. Air Force

Crawford, who joined the Air Corps at the outbreak of the war and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

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 are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com.

Breakfast Menu

Across

- 1 Argus-eyed
- 6 Frigid
- 11 With 19 Across, a Cantonese dish in a basket
- 14 Jiltee of myth
- 15 Kind of football
- 16 Suffix with labyrinth
- 17 Breakfast dish
- 19 See 11 Across
- 20 Charged particles
- 21 Professional suffix
- 22 “The Prague Cemetery” author
- 23 Morning eyeopener
- 26 They go with 17 Across at breakfast
- 28 Land unit
- 29 It might be sticky
- 30 On vacation
- 31 Map abbr.
- 32 Stretched tight
- 34 Rein in
- 36 Breakfast treats, maybe
- 38 Accompaniment to 17 Across
- 41 Mrs. Dithers in “Blondie”
- 42 Moon Mullens’s kid brother
- 43 Tom Clancy subj.
- 44 Cries at a circus
- 45 NYC attraction, with “the”
- 46 Puts on
- 47 Morning alternative to 23 Across
- 50 Breakfast juice type
- 52 Nigerian language
- 53 Tiny bit
- 54 Jerahmeel’s first born
- 55 Chicken ___ king

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Crossword answers on page 26



Her Hollywood memories go back to childhood

By **NICK THOMAS**

Tinseltown Talks

Her film and television career only lasted a decade, but Evelyn Rudie's memories from the 1950s and 60s as a child actor remain vivid, beginning with a small role in the Fred Astaire and Leslie Caron 1955 musical, "Daddy Long Legs." After meeting director Henry Koster through a family connection when she was just three years old, young Evelyn was offered an audition at Twentieth Century Fox.

"They thought I looked exactly like Leslie Caron would have looked like as a child," recalled Rudie, who ended up playing one of the orphan children in a scene with the French actress.

Throughout the 50s she appeared in several movies

but received special acclaim for roles in live television plays on shows such as "Playhouse 90" and "General Electric Theater." For her performance as Eloise in the 1956 CBS "Playhouse 90" episode of the same name, Rudie became the first child nominated for an Emmy.

The TV play was based on the Eloise children's book series from the 50s written by actress Kay Thompson and illustrated by Hilary Knight. The books portray the fictitious antics of young Eloise who lives in the New York City Plaza Hotel. With plenty of dialogue, Rudie's character was central to the story and her performance on live TV was flawless (the 90-minute show can be seen on YouTube), but the original plan was for Thompson to

overdub Rudie's voice.

"They wanted to know if I could say my lines if I was coached all day before the broadcast," explained Rudie. "Well, I'd heard those lines every day for three weeks during rehearsals, so it really wasn't any big deal for me."

Rudie's role in the 1959 "General Electric Theater" episode "Nobody's Child" was also memorable, mainly due to her co-star.

"I worked with Ronald Reagan, who was one of the nicest people I've ever met," she said. "He had a way of looking at you that made you feel like you were the most important person in his life. He did that with the director, the gaffer, the lady in the commissary – everyone. Whether or not it was genuine, who knows, but it probably served him well when he went into politics."

And speaking of presidents, when bantering with Groucho Marx in 1959 on "You Bet Your Life," she informed the comedian if she didn't remain in acting, she wanted to become president of the United States stating, "a woman has just as much right to be president as a man does." Not surprisingly for the time, the line drew only modest applause from the audience mixed with a sprinkling of what sounded like disapproving 'oohs' as well.

"At school, in first grade,



Evelyn Rudie and husband Chris DeCarlo, artistic directors at the Santa Monica Playhouse.

Provided by Evelyn Rudie

we talked about career choices, so I only wanted to be president if my acting career didn't work out. Fortunately, it did," she said.

Rudie's true acting passion turned out to be theater where she still works today. Along with husband Chris DeCarlo, the couple have been artistic directors since 1973 at the Santa Monica Playhouse where they also act in productions (see www.santamonicaplayhouse.com). This coming fall, the Playhouse will be premiering "My Father's Trunk," the story of her father's years as an underground anti-Nazi cabaret creator. After he died in 1996, Rudie discovered an old trunk in the basement containing costumes, set

designs, show programs, and most of the songs and sketches he wrote for the Secret Cabaret at the Tuschinski Theatre in Amsterdam.

"I've been translating the songs ever since and finally we're ready to start putting the show together," she says. "In a way, I'm grateful I didn't do more films or a TV series because a lot of kids who did became messed up. I got to be a normal kid and enjoy an acting career at the same time."

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



Actress and author Kay Thompson, who appeared in the Playhouse 90 TV episode "Eloise," with young Evelyn Rudie as Eloise. For her performance, Rudie became the first child nominated for an Emmy.

CBS publicity photo

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Hire

continued from page 11

After you determine his needs, there are two ways in which you can go about hiring someone. Either through an agency, or you can hire someone directly on your own.

Hiring through an agency

Alaska's home health care expenses are high, with the average starting price \$18 per hour, according to care.com. A Place For Mom says the median hourly private pay home care rate in Alaska is \$40,

the second-highest in the nation.

Hiring a personal care or home health aide through an agency is the safest and easiest option, but it's more expensive, with costs depending on where you live and the qualification of the aide.

How it works is you pay the agency, and they handle everything including an assessment of your dad's needs, assigning appropriately trained and pre-screened staff to care for him, and finding a fill-in on days his aide cannot come.

Some of the drawbacks, however, are that you may not have much input into the selection of the caregiv-

er, and the caregivers may change or alternate, which can cause a disruption.

To find a home care agency in your dad's area use search engines like Google or Bing and type in "home health care" or "non-medical home care" followed by the city and state your dad lives in. You can also use Medicare's search tool at Medicare.gov/care-compare—click on "home health services." Most home health agencies offer some form of non-medical home care services too.

You also need to know that original Medicare does not cover in-home caregiving services unless your dad

is receiving doctor ordered skilled nursing or therapy services at home too. But, if your dad is low-income and qualifies for Medicaid, he may be eligible for some coverage.

Hiring directly

Hiring an independent caregiver on your own is the other option, and it's less expensive. Hiring directly also gives you more control over who you hire so you can choose someone who you feel is right for your dad.

But be aware that if you do hire someone on your own, you become the employer so there's no agency support to fall back on if a problem occurs or if

the aide doesn't show up. You're also responsible for paying payroll taxes and any worker-related injuries that may happen. If you choose this option, make sure you check the aide's references thoroughly and do a criminal background check at companies like eNannySource.com.

To find someone use an elder care matching service like Care.com or CareLinx.com, which both provide basic background checks.

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

Social Security on-site visits to three locations

The Social Security Administration will be providing in-person services to three local Alaskan communities, Dillingham, Nome and Sitka, the first week of August.

These services will allow local Alaskans to perform a variety of essential tasks, including replacing Social Security cards, updating addresses, reporting changes, and asking questions about their benefits. This will be especially beneficial for those living in areas where access to an SSA office is

limited, noted a Social Security Administration press statement. Bringing a form of identification is recommended.

The on-site services schedule is:

Aug. 5, Dillingham Senior Center, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Aug. 6, XYZ Senior Center in Nome, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Aug. 9, SAIL office in Sitka, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For further assistance or to learn more about the services offered, visit www.SSA.gov or contact the local host organization directly.

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Immune

continued from page 5

occasionally have a treat, that's fine. Just don't make a regular habit of sugary, fried or processed foods. Then try the following detox program to flush out your system and jump-start your defenses.

1) Just eat two meals daily. If you're a breakfast person, your two meals of the day should be soon after arising, and then an early supper that's wrapped up by 5 p.m. If you're not ravenous in the morning, your scheme would be a brunch around 11 a.m., and then a light dinner around 6 p.m. This way, you can give your digestive system a rest for at least 14 hours daily. Try it for 10 days in a row. If this schedule works for you, you can adopt the two-meals-daily plan as a permanent immunity booster.

2) Cold water walking. This is one of my favorite immunity hacks. First, begin your day with a full 12-oz. glass of water. Then in the bathroom, as you are brushing your entire naked body

with a long-handled dry skin brush (always brushing toward the heart from all directions), fill the tub ankle-deep with cold water. If you don't have a tub, use a large plastic container that you can easily stand in. Walk in place for 60 seconds in the cold water. This is wonderfully invigorating! Who needs coffee after morning cold-water walking?

I like to brush my face with a softer, smaller skin brush while enjoying my cold-water tonic. Once you get used to the cold water, you can sit down in the water and splash up under your armpits or any achy joints for a few seconds before getting out.

3) Plan a "fasting mimicking" diet plan for five to 10 days. Since 80 percent of your health is determined by the food you choose to eat, choosing food wisely makes for a fundamental immunity building lifestyle. I recommend designing at least five days of 500 calorie per day, mostly veggie, choices to start your cleanse, while allowing for some adjustments, if needed, for the second half of the program.

The second five days could include healthy fatty fish, for example, or eggs.

The first meal of your day should ideally be the main meal, focusing on vegetables, clean protein, and some good fats. If you're an appropriate weight or underweight, add some healthy complex carbs such as steel-cut oats, quinoa, brown rice, or a baked sweet potato. If you wouldn't mind losing a few pounds, ditch the carbs.

Keep a glass container of chopped veggies to add to an omelet, or if you're vegetarian, organic tofu for the first meal scramble. Lightly oil a pan with olive oil, coconut oil, or ghee, and sauté the chopped onions, scallions, garlic, ginger and spices. Next add the mix of chopped veggies: celery, red pepper, leeks, sliced mushrooms, and grated beets. Avoid nightshades (tomato, potato, eggplant). Whip up 1-4 eggs, depending on your appetite, with 1-2 Tbs. nut milk, yogurt, or water. I love a dash of nutmeg with eggs. Pour the eggs over the cooked veggies, and add a handful of spinach. After 3-4 minutes

on a medium-low flame, flip the whole thing over so the spinach wilts. Serve right away, and add toppings as desired: B-vitamin rich nutritional yeast, toasted flax, sunflower or pumpkin seeds; pulverized kelp powder; a dash of turmeric; and maybe some sprouts. Yum.

Your second meal should be lighter. In the summer, there's nothing like a big fresh salad. Start with local greens, if possible. Add sprouts, chopped veggies (like the morning batch but add kimchee or other pickled produce). Slice an avocado. Add cucumbers. Consider topping with a can of small fish. The SMASH fish are the healthiest—salmon, mackerel, anchovies, sardine and herring. These are small enough to have not bioaccumulated heavy metals, which is unfortunately a concern with larger fish all over our small planet.

4) Get 45 minutes of exercise per day. No list of immunity hacks would be complete without exercise. And you don't have to go crazy with it. Walking is terrific, especially up hills or stairs. If you feel uninspired

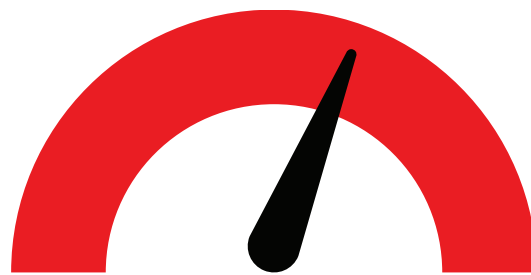
about movement choices, try something new. Flow yoga, PureBarre, stand-up paddle, spinning, folk dancing, water aerobics, a different trail to hike—there are hundreds of options out there. Explore! The key is to do something every day. And drink most of your water during exercise, not with meals.

To keep your immune system in top shape, you need to eat right, drink plenty of water, and get enough sleep. It's also very helpful to poop every day. Don't hesitate to use a light, non-habit-forming laxative at the end of the day if you didn't have a complete bowel movement. I recommend magnesium (start with 250 mg, but you may need more, especially women who lose a lot of magnesium in menstrual blood), Senna, or Swiss Kriss. Rehydrated prunes and apricots are very effective for some people. Try eating two to four at bedtime before tooth brushing, as dessert after dinner.

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



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Finalize your decisions in writing, before it's too late

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice



Years ago, when my daughters were much younger than they are now, they came to me one evening with silly grins on their faces.

"Dad," they said, "We have a new advertising slogan for you." I waited. "Sign and date, before it's too late!" And then they laughed their little preteen heads off.

I scratched my chin a moment and said, "You know, that's not bad. I think I'll use that."

They drew back in horror. "No, dad! Don't use that! It was a joke! That would be a terrible slogan!"

And, because sometimes young people have a better idea of what will offend people than we oldsters do, and because after all it was their idea in the first place, I didn't use it. But I have thought about that slogan many times over the years.

For instance, I thought about it when a woman called to tell me her relative had died unexpectedly, and she thought he might be one of my clients. I looked at my client records and did not see the name, so I asked her what made her think he was one of my clients. She told me that he had left a folder on his dining room table, with my name and contact information on it.

It certainly sounded like one of my folders, so I asked her to tell me what was in it. She started reading off the headings of the papers inside, and I recognized it as a packet that I gave out when I did public seminars about estate planning. So he had been to one of my

seminars, but never followed up.

And as that realization was dawning on me, she mentioned one more item that made my jaw drop. There was an article in the packet, which I had not been including in my seminars for at least eight years. So apparently for a long time, he had been keeping my seminar packet, and had taken it out before he died. But it did him no good.

I again thought about that advertising slogan when I got a call from a former probate client. I had helped her resolve her father's estate, and in the process she mentioned several times that she needed to get her own estate planning done, but said she would get to it "once all of this other stuff was taken care of". I didn't hear from her again until long afterward, when she called from the hospital to say she had had a medical crisis, and although she was recovering, she needed to make an appointment for a telephone consultation to get something in place.

When the day came for the consultation I called her, but the phone rang unanswered. A few days later I learned that she had a sudden downturn and died.

I thought about "sign and date, before it's too late" again recently, when I had a consultation with an older gentleman. He wanted to think more about some of the decisions, so he scheduled a follow-up appointment. Later he told his friend, to whom he wanted to leave his assets, that he had "taken care of everything with the attorney". But he hadn't. Telling your attorney what you want to do has no legal impact whatsoever. He took his own life a few days before our next appointment, with nothing in place.

And sometimes it's not

that the person died. There was a fellow I had known outside of the office, whose daughter called to make an appointment for him. When she brought him in, I realized almost immediately I would not be able to do anything for him. His dementia had progressed to the point at which, even though the legal standard for signing a will is relatively low, he would not have been able to meet it. It was already too late for him, even though he was still alive.

So: If you know you need to do this, don't put it off, get it done. Going to some

seminar doesn't accomplish anything if you don't follow up. Neither does talking to the attorney, without anything more. You have to actually make these decisions and finalize them in writing.

And then sign and date, before it's too late.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. If you're wondering, none of his daughters went into marketing. But they should have.



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Photo Books, Venmo fraud, fax alternatives

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Bob's Tech Talk

Q. Some years ago I had a photo book printed, but I no longer see that option in my photos app. Where did it go?

A. There are photo printing services online that print photo books. If you were using a Mac, you might be referring to its legacy photo service, which was discontinued years ago.

Today, no matter what device you use, consider Photobooks Pro (see the link in the box). They are a high-quality photo printing service that offers dozens of book designs.

And if my guess is correct that you were talking about Mac legacy software, Photobooks Pro has support for reprinting Apple legacy books. Search their help section for details.

Printing a gallery of photos creates a priceless gift, and I encourage you to explore the possibilities before gift season.

Q. Someone I do not know sent me money on Venmo. Because I had no idea who sent it, I did not accept the transaction. How can I find out if this is a scam? What should I do?

A. It is safe to assume it is likely a scam. You did exactly the right thing by refusing to accept the payment. If you had accepted it, your only option would be to ignore that money until the legal owner comes looking for it.

One of the classic Venmo scams is to send someone money, then message the recipient to ask for the money back, claiming it was a mistake. If you assume the sender is honest, the chances are near certain that you will pay twice.

First, the payment you

I had to send a fax for the first time in years, and it cost over \$40. Talk about sticker shock! Why are faxes so expensive, and are there alternatives?

“returned” to the sender, and second, later, when Venmo deducts the money from your account. That happens because the original sender used a stolen credit card. It takes time to investigate fraud, and by the time the party who was defrauded seeks a resolution, the original fraudster has moved on to another victim. That leaves you holding the bag.

It is a good idea to report any suspicious activity to Venmo support to create a record, although in practice that money may remain in your account for some time.

The best thing to do is remember that Venmo is a simple money transfer service intended for people who are in contact with one another and mutually agree to the transaction before it happens.

Q. I had to send a fax for the first time in years, and it cost over \$40. Talk about sticker shock! Why are faxes so expensive, and are there alternatives?

A. Those of us who remember the days before email existed surely remember fax machines. Those things were everywhere, and the idea of sending a fax was as routine as paying a dime a page to use a copy machine. What started as an expensive technology for fast-track communication ended up virtually free.

Back when laptops had built-in modems, those modems could reach out and send a fax to any fax machine for the price of a phone call. Then fax ma-

chines became obsolete.

Unfortunately, computer fax modems have mostly disappeared, replaced by a combination of broadband internet and by online fax services.

That leaves us today in a situation where it is generally more expensive to send a fax than ever. Not because of technology costs, but basic supply and demand.

If someone asks you for a fax, ask them if email is an option. Generally, email has replaced fax machines, except in rare cases. That leaves consumers with very little choice for sending urgent documents that cannot be sent either as email or via the postal service.

Free, low use fax services can be found online, although they usually require a subscription. Afterward you have to remember to cancel it before it renews.

All this assumes the document is on your computer to begin with. In circum-

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

Photo Book Printing

Three services that supply printed photo books from your device's photos.

Costco/Shutterfly: costco.com/photo.html,

Photobooks Pro: photobooks.pro,
and Presto Photo: prestophoto.com

Old School Fax Modem Hardware

USB 2.0 Fax Modem, 56K External Hardware Dial Up V.92 Modem. Check the usual online retailers for discount pricing.

startech.com/en-us/networking-io/usb56kcmh2

Virtual Sandbox

Miss the beach this summer? Play with digital sand inside your Web browser.

thisissand.com

stances where signatures are required, the most difficult part of the process may be scanning the pages into a computer.

Unless your local copy shop charges an outlandish fee, the easiest way is to overpay and consider it a “convenience” fee.

You can also subscribe to an online fax service or buy

an inexpensive fax modem for your computer, but that tradeoff has diminishing returns for the occasional fax.

So there are alternatives, but the right answer depends on each person's specific circumstances.

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

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A cozy cabin for exploring the Amazon rainforest

Alaska couple's South American journey

By **LAUREL DOWNING BILL**

For Senior Voice

Part four in a four-part series.

After exploring Peru and Quito to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary, my husband and I flew to Coca. Known as the gateway to Ecuador's Amazon rainforest, the town sits at the confluence of the Napo and Coca rivers. That's where we climbed into a motorized canoe and spent two hours speeding down the Napo to our ship, Anaconda.

From the moment we stepped aboard the 148-foot, 20-cabin ship, we were excited to see what Smithsonian Journeys and Audley Travel had arranged for us. The vessel, though compact, exuded an air of elegance and comfort. Since Don, 80, and I, 72, are seniors, comfort is key. We were pleased to find the accommodations surpassed our expectations. Our cozy cabin, with floor to ceiling windows overlooking scenery along the river, provided a tranquil sanctuary amidst the lush, wild wilderness outside.

There were few passengers on this sailing. The 2020 Covid pandemic and 2022 local political trouble had decimated tourism, and it was just beginning to recover. We had nine

crew members, including a naturalist who was born in the Amazon, attending six passengers.

Following a gourmet feast of shrimp soup, prawns, and flan, we sat at the bow with our shipmates to enjoy the raw beauty that surrounded us as we slowly made our way down the river. We then climbed into a canoe and spent an hour sightseeing close to the bank. With binoculars pressed to eyes, we spied a Greater Ani, white-winged swallows, and a couple hoatzin—which locals call stinking turkey for its foul odor.

The next morning we rode the canoe to Roca Fuerte, the last Ecuadorian settlement before entering Peru's waters. We then continued to a creek where we entered the Yasuni National Park, a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Within minutes, we had pink river dolphins popping up and disappearing all around us. They were too fast for us to get photos.

We continued to a large grassy area where crew members climbed on the canoe's bow to look for reptiles. Soon one lookout shouted and pointed into the reeds. The rudder man gently urged the canoe about three feet in. And there we saw an enormous green anaconda curled up



While many tourists to the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest stay in lodges that dot the Napo River, Anakonda, seen here with its motorized canoe tied aft, is the only luxury ship cruising its waters. The ship's captain found a sturdy tree to tie up to each evening, which surprised and delighted us.

Photos courtesy Laurel Bill

and asleep—thank goodness. The crew estimated the huge snake was at least 15 feet long.

The crew motored our canoe back the way we'd come, then tied it to a mangrove tree. The chef, who accompanied us on this trip, handed us homemade roast beef sandwiches and other goodies to eat while some of the guests tried their luck at fishing for

piranha. No fish bit the shrimp bait, however, as dolphins were too close.

After lunch, we returned to Ecuadorian waters and stopped at a primitive thatched-roof settlement of eight families. The second chief met us and explained they live the way of their ancestors and shied away from civilization. Children only go to school through the sixth grade

and then help sustain the village by hunting, fishing and other traditional methods.

We were struck by the warmth and hospitality of the villagers. Despite our differences in language and culture, there was an undeniable sense of kinship that transcended our individual backgrounds. We bought

next page please



Emotions ran rampant when the canoe pulled into the grass reeds and stopped short of this 15-foot green anaconda in the Yasuni National Park. Fear diminished when we realized it was asleep. It is a non-venomous boa and is the largest, heaviest, and one of the longest snakes in the world. These snakes can reach more than 21 feet long.



We stopped at a small settlement of eight families along the banks of the Napo River. They live in primitive huts with thatched roofs, as seen in this photograph. There were 67 people in this village, most of them children, who all lived as their ancestors have for generations. When the children reach adulthood, they travel to other villages to find mates.



Rainforest

from page 24

nut and fiber bracelets the children had made to help them purchase items the villagers needed, such as flour and salt.

The next morning we canoed to a local farm owned and operated by Cecilia, a 71-year-old matriarch of a Quechua family. It was fun listening to our naturalist speaking her language. The crew of Anaconda regularly purchased locally grown fruits and

vegetables from her, and part of this arrangement included guests harvesting what the chef needed to prepare his meals.

Don and I were put in charge of cutting down a yucca plant and then pulling up the roots where tubers were attached. Don turned out to be a master with a machete. We harvested seven big tubers. Two Canadian sisters chopped down a bunch of plantains and the other couple from the East Coast downed a palm tree and found its heart.

A tiny black Tabor mon-

key watched as we hauled our harvest down to our canoe along a path lined with cocoa plants, edible ferns, and herbs. On the trip back to Anaconda, we passed a woman hand-washing clothes in the muddy, sand-filled river.

When we returned to the ship, the chef held a cooking class and taught us how to make shrimp and heart of palm ceviches. And that night we enjoyed yucca bread and fried plantains made from our day's harvest.

A highlight of our adventure came the following day when we canoed to the Kichwa Anangu clay lick where scarlet macaws often frequented. After pulling the canoe up on a beach, we climbed steep steps to reach a leaf-strewn dirt trail. We then hiked about a mile, including crossing logs laid across a stream, to reach a bird blind that faced the lick.

We sat quietly for about 10 minutes. Suddenly one scarlet macaw flew in, then another, and another. We lost count at 20. The beautiful red, yellow and blue birds were mesmerizing as they ingested clay from a pond near a foliage-filled rock wall. Soon orange-cheeked parrots



After a mile-long hike into the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle, we were rewarded with the sight of dozens of scarlet macaws flying in to feed at a clay lick. The birds are about 32 inches long, with about half that length in the tail. We heard them before we saw them, as they make loud squawks, squeaks and screams that can carry two miles.

Photos courtesy Laurel Bill



The crew of Anaconda stop regularly at a local woman's farm to pick up fresh produce that the ship's chef uses to create gourmet meals. Don and I oversaw harvesting a yucca plant, and thankfully, my husband was handy with a machete. We pulled several tubers from the roots.

and cobalt-winged parakeets began showing up. It was an unbelievable sight.

That evening, the crew held a barbeque to bid us farewell. We feasted on sushi, ribs, roasted potatoes and more while listening to the night sounds in the middle of the Amazon jungle. In a world that often feels increasingly interconnected yet distant, the Amazon reminded us of the importance of slowing down and enjoying the

wonders of the natural world.

Our once-in-a-lifetime trip was amazing, and we want to advise our fellow seniors who might be yearning for an adventure of their own to not let age be a barrier to exploration. Whether it's savoring all that South America has to offer or embarking on a journey closer to home, there's a world of discovery waiting to be uncovered at any age.

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Traditions

continued from page 16

music. If the background of some of the music videos looks familiar, it's because they were filmed in Alaska.

There isn't room to describe in detail all the rest of the events I enjoyed. But, they included watching several teams compete in tug of war, men demonstrating the sheaf toss (throwing the sheaf high in the air over a horizontal bar using a pitch fork), the men's "weight over a bar" event, the saber toss, and the Haggis eating competition.

Numerous men wore kilts, both competitors and fairgoers. I've never seen so many large bellied kilt wearers, including the athletes.

The only not fun activity of my day was standing in the hot sun for 45 minutes ordering and then waiting for a delicious pastrami hamburger, which I enjoyed while watching the tug of wars. Even then, while standing in the food truck line, I could hear the music of many dance groups performing and competing on a nearby stage.

At one point in the afternoon when I was physically dragging, I had to make the decision whether to leave and go home for my daily nap, or find somewhere to "rest" on the grounds.

Deciding to stay, I sought out one of the wooden pavilions, which would at least provide shade, if it wasn't jam packed full. I was in luck and found an empty third of a picnic table bench near the back



A man throws a stone at the stone throwing event at the Scottish Highland Games.



The Wolfgang and Harp Twins playing a concert at the Scottish Highland Games.

Maraley McMichael photos

of the pavilion. Gathering my belongings into my lap, I leaned over and rested my head on my arms. To my surprise, about five minutes later, the air was filled with enjoyable music. With a quick peek at my brochure, I learned it was the Rogues and Wenches playing a set in the Highland Pub. There was only a plastic web fence between the back of the pavilion and the back of the pub band stage.

I didn't plan to nap, but drifted off. Awaking with a start, I looked at my watch and realized I'd have to hurry to catch the second performance of the Harp and Wolfgang twins. In the earlier concert, they said their second show would feature different songs. I didn't want to miss the Salmon Toss at 5 p.m., but I didn't tear myself away from the twins in time for that, but did accidentally catch the end of the Haggis eating contest.

I had missed the first performance of SYR (heavy metal Celtic band) earlier

in the day, but heard their music blasting out of the Borealis Theatre while walking the fair grounds. Although I was unfamiliar with this band, I'd overheard lots of "buzz" during the day, that SYR was the concert to attend. I didn't think it was my kind of music, but decided I was not ready to call it a day yet and went to hear them at 5:45 p.m.

The heat of the direct sun was unbearable, so I joined several others in the shade of the back wall of the grassy area of the Borealis Theatre, again using my raincoat to sit on. One family of three, with

a girl of about four years, all dressed in Scottish garb, danced with abandon during several songs, but crowd attendance was not even half that of the Harp and Wolfgang Twins. It wasn't until the third song, that I recognized a Celtic flavor to the music, but I did stay for the whole hour before calling it a day and reluctantly walking to the parking lot.

On July 4, while at the Palmer Pioneer Home with Gary, I briefly saw the administrator, who was there with his family on his day off, visiting the two summer resident goats. Since he sometimes plays his

bagpipes for Pioneer Home activities, I asked if he had participated in any way at the Scottish Highland Games. He said he was a judge for the "piping" and that the second day of Games (Sunday) was not as nice because of rain.

The Alaskan Scottish Club, good timing, and good weather all worked together and provided one of the best days of my summer.

Note: The Scottish Highland Games always take place the last weekend in June.

Maraley McMichael is a life-long Alaska currently residing in Palmer. Email her at maraleymcmichael@gmail.com.

Crossword answers from page 18

A	L	E	R	T		P	O	L	A	R		S	U	M
M	E	D	E	A		A	R	E	N	A		I	N	E
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The Center for Safe

Alaskans offers CarFit appointments. "Simple adjustments can make a significant difference in driving safety," says John Ruyak, a Senior Program Manager with the Center for Safe Alaskans. "We are honored to support our senior community members in feeling safe and secure while driving."

The next CarFit event takes place Aug. 14 at the Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center, 22402 Birchwood Loop Road, 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

To RSVP for a CarFit appointment, or for more information, call the Center for Safe Alaskans at 907-929-3939.

CarFit is a national program developed by AAA (American Automobile Association), AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association.

The Center for Safe Alaskans, a nonprofit, seeks to prevent injuries, promote wellbeing and improve safety in Alaska and beyond. To learn more, visit: <https://safealaskans.org/>



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Unhoused

continued from page 3

independently. They may be singles or couples. We have been told that we could be at capacity within an hour of starting the selection process.

IOB will build a secure community of six interim homes on Central Lutheran Church's property at 15th and Cordova. The sizes of the homes will be four 8' x 8' and two 8' x 12'. In addition, a four-season bathroom/shower trailer will be on site. Security will be provided.

Julie said, "Although this project is small, it is like dropping a pebble in water. We are hopeful the ripple effect will inspire others to replicate it in Anchorage and throughout the state."

Faith-based organizations, community groups, businesses and individuals

are supporting us. Funding is coming from grassroots efforts, foundations, and grants. The architect, electrical engineer, structural engineer, and project manager are donating their time to guide us.

As the homes are occupied, we will focus on helping our new neighbors feel welcomed and valued. Volunteers will provide a community support network and interact in various ways to help the occupants settle in. Along with creating a sense of community, we will help by providing daily hot meals, arranging transportation, making laundry services accessible, and assisting with other needs. One of the occupants will serve on the IOB board.

Want to learn more or want to help? Visit our website: <https://inour-backyard-ak.org>.

Betty Hertz is an In Our Backyard board member.

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