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SeniorVoice

A publication of Older Persons
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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 49, Number 5 May 2023



**Q&A: Alaska
veterans benefits.**

- page 3

**Pickleball: Start
your own
community club.**

- page 11

**Travel: A food stop
at Kenai Peninsula
senior centers.**

- page 20

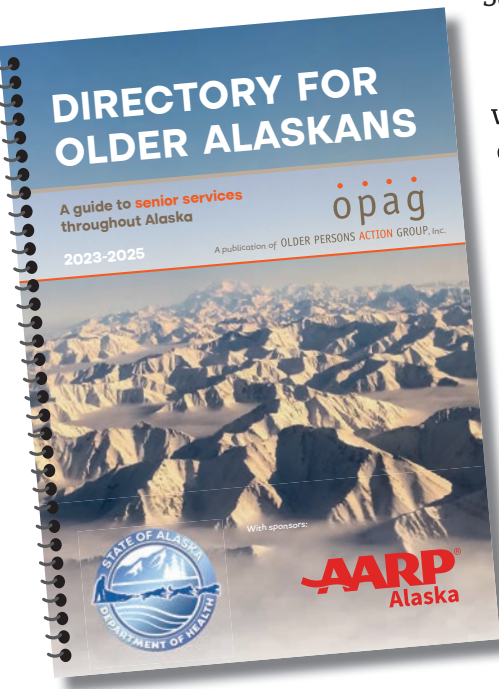
Students in Nordic folk apparel wind through the parade during last year's Little Norway Festival in Petersburg. The popular annual event celebrates Southeast Alaska's Scandinavian culture with food, music, dancing, races and contests, pageants, art shows and much more. This year's festival takes place May 14-21. See the full schedule at www.petersburg.org (Festivals and Events) or the Little Norway Festival Facebook page. For other activities around the state, see our calendar on page 15.

Photo courtesy Petersburg Chamber of Commerce

2022
**National Mature
Media Awards**
Winner



The new and improved Directory for Older Alaskans is here



Senior Voice Staff

Afterathree-year wait, a new version of the long-run-ningguide to senior services through-out Alaska is now available, with up-dated information in a familiar, us-er-friendly for-mat. Published by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., with spon-sorship from the State of Alaska Dept. of Health and AARP Alas-

ka, the 2023-2025 Direc-tory for Older Alaskans is a sturdy, spiral-bound handbook of businesses, agencies and other services for Alaska seniors and their families and caregivers. Listings are organized by region: Southcentral, Interior/Northern, South-east and Southwest, and then alphabetically by town. From Aleknagik to Yakutat, users can locate critical services from home health to food delivery to adaptive equipment and much more. New for this edition, listings in key cat-egories are identified with

icons for quick reference: Health and Personal Care; Housing/Food; Trans- portation/Accessibility; Financial & Legal. “OPAG has been pro- ducing this directory for almost 30 years, starting from a small pamphlet and evolving to its current format that is so popular for its user-friendliness,” OPAG Executive Director and Senior Voice Editor David Washburn said. “The 8.5x6 inch size is easy to hold and the spiral binding allows pages to lie open on their own so someone can refer to it while using their

phone or computer.” Copies of the directo- ry are being distributed through senior centers and other agencies, and are also available for individual or- ders. (See the form on the facing page.) Cost is \$5 for one copy and \$2 for each additional. The directory will also be available online as a PDF, with a search function and hotlinked listings. For more information, call 907-276-1059 Option 1 or toll-free statewide, 1-800-478-1059 Option 1. Or email admin@opagak.com.

Online shopping poses biggest risks to consumers *Here’s how you can protect yourself*

By ROSEANN FREITAS
Better Business Bureau

Online shopping has certainly made it easier to purchase products and services. But for many, that convenience has come with consequences. The most recent BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report revealed that, for a third consecutive year, online purchases were the risk-iest scam encountered by consumers. Nearly 75% of those who reported being targeted by an online scam ultimately lost money. Products most frequently used to deceive victims included pets/pet supplies, digital devices, and motor vehicles.

With online shopping here to stay, showing caution and performing research before you buy is increasingly important. Better Business Bureau recommends these tips for shopping smarter and safer online:

Confirm the business is legit

A professional-looking website isn’t an indication of a company’s legitimacy. Con artists often mimic real companies’ websites to fool consumers into making a payment or providing their personal information. Be-fore shopping, search for the company on BBB.org to verify licensing require-ments as well as to read

complaints and reviews left by previous custom-ers. Then confirm you are on the correct website by searching for the business via the web browser and double-checking the URL.

Think before you click

Clicking a link is easy but it might take you to a questionable website. Be cautious when an email or an online ad has a link to take advantage of the great deals. The link can direct you to an impersonated site and download malware directly onto your device. Both cons can lead to iden-tity theft.

Too good to be true

Offers of free items are

enticing. However, check for hidden costs or any monthly recurring fees. Also, when the supply of an item is low, the price is higher. Don’t get fooled by a great deal on a hard-to-find item.

Read the fine print

Read the fine print be-fore submitting your order, especially the return policy. Check if the company ac-cepts returns and if there is a restocking fee.

Shop with a credit card

Credit cards provide ad-ditional protection, and it is easier to dispute charges you didn’t approve or get your money back. Debit, prepaid or gift cards don’t

offer the same protections.

Keep your receipts

Save a copy of all corre-spondence with the com-pany until you receive and are satisfied with the product. According to the FTC, when shopping online, sellers are to ship your order within the time stated in their ads or within 30 days if no timeline is ex-pressed. If the item doesn’t arrive in the allotted time, then the seller must notify the consumer and then give them the option to cancel with a refund.

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

Send us your letters

Send letters to the editor to Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., #106, Anchorage AK 99503. Maximum length is 250 words. Senior Voice reserves the right to edit for content and length. Space may be made available for longer opinion piece essays up to 400 words. Contact the managing editor at editor@senior-voicealaska.com to discuss this. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

Mission statement:

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

Vision statement:

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



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Retiree benefits for Alaska veterans and their families

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

There is a vast array of benefits for retired veterans and their families, but “you don’t know what you don’t know.” Not to worry, we will point you in the right direction. I recently interviewed three Alaskan experts on the topic and here’s a sample of what they had to say.

First up, Verdie Bowen, Director of the Alaskan Office of Veterans Affairs: “I’m probably the only director in the nation that actually will take and file a claim. I’m Alaskan and I’m from the bush. When you go into a community, you’re the only expert there.

“We are here to serve you – veterans, dependents, survivors and those transitioning from military service. We offer assistance

in determining eligibility, connecting you with the services you need, filling out paperwork, and ensuring you receive every benefit you have earned.

“All across the state of Alaska, the number one reason veterans do not file benefits is because they believe they’re saving it for someone else, because they don’t need it. That’s not a good excuse. If they don’t receive the benefit which they have earned, then those funds and those benefits go somewhere else.

“The three top issues the veterans reach out to us for really depends on age, but mostly the number one is disability compensation. This is from injuries incurred in the military service. And the number two is health care... Number three

page 20 please

AARP focuses on legislative priorities

By **MARGE STONEKING**
AARP Alaska

On behalf of our more than 75,000 members, AARP Alaska is working to pass legislation in the current state legislative session that empowers all Alaskans to choose how they live as they age, and the vast majority of us want to age at home in our Alaskan communities. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the nation for the tenth year in a row. As the senior percentage of our population grows, more workers retire and the available workforce shrinks. We’ve seen this trend accelerated in the last few years, when many older Alaskans retired early to keep themselves safe from COVID.

We’ve focused our 2023 legislative priorities on workforce solutions to stabilize the flagging workforce in the healthcare field and public sector that is threatening older

Alaskans’ access to care and benefits. None of our priorities offer a silver bullet solution, but they can all help to diminish barriers to healthcare and state services that are impacting seniors. We are also partnering with other organizations to promote these workforce solutions, which amplifies the impact of our advocacy and increases the chance of successful passage.

The Nurse Licensure Compact

This year, we have collaborated with Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association, Mat-Su Health Foundation, U.S. Dept. of Defense, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Alaska Board of Nursing, UAA School of Nursing, and more than 70 other healthcare partners to advocate for Alaska to join the Nurse Licensure Compact (NLC). The NLC creates Registered

page 21 please

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Published by
Older Persons
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With sponsors:
Alaska Dept. of Health
and AARP Alaska

Your guide to senior services throughout Alaska.

Revised and improved, this booklet is packed with up-to-date information for people in need of senior-related services:

- Comprehensive listings of state agencies and programs, including contact telephone numbers.
- Local contact numbers for national programs like Medicare and Social Security.
- Regional listings, alphabetized by city of local organizations and services.
- New for this edition: icons to quickly locate most-needed services such as housing, transportation, health care.

Assisted-living	Volunteer organizations	Legal assistance
Health Care	Job programs	Housing
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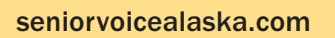
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Senior Voice, May 2023 | 3



AARP Alaska

Fixing the housing crisis will require policies that allow for a wider variety of housing options in all income levels and planning for future housing needs. Older Alaskans want to remain in their homes and neighborhoods but need more accessible and affordable housing. Nearly 70% of Alaska residents age 45 and older currently live in Alaska full-time. An AARP poll from 2020 showed 74% want to stay in their home and another 63% need affordable housing options. In 2021, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation surveyed seniors and found that 75% want a home under 2,000 square feet. ADUs could be one way to allow seniors to stay in Alaska, continuing to contribute to the community in disposable income, volunteer time and longtime Alaska knowledge.

907-338-8708





12 caregiver rights everyone should know

National Hispanic Council
on Aging Media

A caregiver is a person in charge of providing specific and often specialized care to older adults and people with chronic diseases. In other words, they are committed to accompanying and improving the quality of life of the person they care for. Caregivers fulfill the task of facilitating and providing care for the basic and instrumental activities of daily living that an older person cannot perform or in which they require some type of support, due to physical or mental disability.

Taking on the commitment of caring for a loved one brings many satisfactions and is fulfilling because of the affection one has for the cared-for person. However, being

a full-time caregiver has daily physical, mental, and organizational demands, and can conflict with the caregiver's own personal life.

The Red Cross has detailed 12 rights of caregivers on which it is important to reflect and which are valid for any person who provides care to a dependent family member or loved one.

Caregivers are entitled to:

- 1. To be recognized as valuable members of society.** The selfless contribution of these people has a social and economic value that is often invisible and unknown, measured by the hours of devotion or personal projects that have been postponed or abandoned. It is a commitment mostly made by women in the family context, who

take care or took care of their children and now also take care of their parents, their partner or another family member or friend.

- 2. To their own self-care.** It is very important that caregivers value and learn to take care of themselves, following the advice of experts. Their own wellbeing, as well as the wellbeing of the person they care for, will depend to a significant extent on self-care.
- 3. To educate and train themselves in caregiving.** When any disease develops in a family member, it opens a path of doubts and uncertainties about what to do or how to act. Receiving training and specific information about the disease and understanding how other people deal with similar situations is a very helpful resource.

- 4. To receive information from professionals about available resources.** Sometimes, caregivers are not able to benefit from resources because they are unaware of their existence or do not know how to access them.
- 5. To experience negative feelings about witnessing their ill loved one.** Sometimes, caregivers may perceive some of their thoughts as unacceptable or experience negative emotions toward a sick person. To avoid negative consequences for the caregiver's mental health, it is essential to understand that all feelings derived from such complex and disconcerting situations are valid and that it is essential to learn how to identify and manage them. This requires the support of the entire family and the

acknowledgment that the entire burden of caregiving does not fall on one person.

- 6. To set limits to excessive demands.** Feeling obligated to respond to all demands or assuming more responsibilities than one is capable of is often a precipitant of overload, or the so-called caregiver burnout.
- 7. To ask for help.** Often, caregivers are reluctant to ask for help, something that may result from a lack of assertiveness or not being considerate of their own needs. In other cases, caregivers do not know how to ask for help effectively, something that can be learned and will benefit their own well-being.
- 8. To dedicate time to themselves without feeling guilty.** Caring for

page 10 please

A health fair offers excellent self-care

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

By SHARON PHILLIPS
Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

May has arrived, and as we welcome the warmer weather and blooming flowers, let us also take a moment to recognize the importance of mental health. May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is dedicated to raising awareness for mental well-being.

Mental health is a crucial aspect of our overall well-being, as it encompasses our emotional, psychological and social wellness. Our mental health influences how we think, feel and act, and plays a significant role in our ability to cope with stress, relate to others and make

decisions. As we navigate through life, it is essential to prioritize our mental well-being, just as we would our physical health.

The Gratitude Exercise

One of the simplest yet most effective practices you can incorporate into your daily routine is a gratitude exercise. Practicing gratitude can have a profound impact on your mental health, helping to reduce stress, increase happiness and promote a more positive outlook on life.

This exercise can be done in a matter of minutes and can be easily incorporated into your morning routine, whether you're still in bed, enjoying your morning coffee or taking a

break at the office. Follow these steps to practice the gratitude exercise:

- 1. Find a comfortable position.** Sit or lie down in a relaxed posture, allowing your body to feel at ease.
- 2. Close your eyes.** Gently close your eyes and take a few deep breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.
- 3. Reflect on your blessings.** Bring to mind three things that you are grateful for in your life. These can be big or small, and can range from personal accomplishments to relationships, or even the beauty of nature.
- 4. Visualize your gratitude.** As you think of each blessing, visualize it in your mind's eye and feel the warmth of gratitude in your heart.

- 5. Express thanks.** Silently or out loud say "thank you" for each of these blessings, allowing the feeling of gratitude to fill your entire being.
- 6. Return to the present moment.** Take a few more deep breaths and gently open your eyes, bringing your awareness back to your surroundings.

By practicing this gratitude exercise daily, you can cultivate a more positive mindset and experience the many benefits of gratitude on your mental health.

By practicing gratitude, you can nurture your mental well-being and face life's challenges with greater resilience. Remember, taking care of your mental health is just as important as maintaining your physical health. So, embrace the month of

May and make your mental well-being a priority.

Visit a health fair for affordable blood tests

Pre-scheduling an appointment online is preferred at www.alaska-healthfair.org or by calling one of our offices. Walk-ins are accepted at spring events as space and time permits.

May 9, Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Fairbanks Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Fairbanks - Tuesday, 5/9/23, 8am-1pm - Fairbanks Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201

May 13, Anchorage - St. John Methodist Community Health Fair, 1801 O'Malley Rd., 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

page 10 please

Medicare and making the most of your doctor visits

By SEAN MCPHILAMY
Alaska Medicare
Information Office

Obtaining the best health care involves good communication between you and your doctor. Today I will help explain how you

can build an effective relationship with your doctor and make the most of your visits.

Communicate well with your health care provider

Communication is very

important when building relationships with your health care providers and getting the best possible care. To help you communicate with your providers, take the following steps:

Be prepared. Arrive at your doctor's office pre-

pared with your health insurance cards, a copy of your health history if you're a new patient, and a list of questions you want to ask your doctor. Bring something to take notes on what your doctor tells you. To assist, consider bring-

ing another person, like a family member, friend or caregiver.

Share information. Tell your doctor about symptoms you're having and any trouble you're having with

page 6 please



Buying over the counter hearing aids



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

Over the counter (OTC) hearing devices have a place but, they are not for everyone. Buyer beware.

1. Get tested. Getting your hearing test is important. You will find out if there is any blockage, such as wax, and it is helpful to know exactly what your hearing levels are. Getting your hearing test will tell us a lot, not just how well you hear. At Accurate Hearing, we give a free hearing test. Knowing your hearing results, you will be able to make a good decision on what product is best for you.

2. Know what you are buying. Make sure there is a good return policy. Check to see if it covers repairs, loss and damage, as well as whether you can get a loaner pair to use during repairs. Amplifiers are not FDA-regulated. Hearing aids are FDA-regulated.

3. Know the difference between OTC and prescription. OTC hearing aids will be an option to try for people that have difficulty hearing with normal to mild hearing loss, but for more severe hearing loss, prescription hearing aids are still the only option. People under the age of 18 will also need a prescription.

At Accurate Hearing, we offer free hearing tests. Call for an appointment, 907-644-6004.

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

activities of daily living. Share about other providers you've seen and any treatments they recommend.

Ask questions. If you don't understand something your doctor says, ask them to explain again in a different way.

Get it in writing. Ask your doctor to write down what you should do between now and your next visit, including instructions for how to take medicines, specialists you should see, or lifestyle modifications.

Follow up. If you experience any issues after your appointment, call your doctor's office to schedule a follow-up. Ask your doctor's office if they use email or an online portal to communicate with patients.

Advance Beneficiary Notice

If your provider believes that Medicare will not pay for a service, they may ask you to sign an Advance Beneficiary Notice (ABN) before you receive that service. The ABN allows you to decide whether to get the care — and pay out of pocket for it — if Medicare denies payment. The notice must list the specific reason why the provider believes Medicare may deny payment. Providers are not required to give you an ABN for services or items that are never covered by Medicare, such as hearing aids or dental care. Medicare requires providers to only use ABNs on a case-by-case basis. Providers cannot have a blanket ABN policy where they provide an ABN for all services.

Medicare covers second opinions if a doctor recommends that you have surgery or a major diagnostic or therapeutic procedure, such as something that would require general anesthetic. Medicare will cover a third opinion if the first and second opinions are different from each other.

Seek a second (or third) opinion if needed

A second opinion is when you ask a doctor other than your regular doctor for their view on your symptoms, injury or illness to better help you make an informed decision about treatment options. Medicare covers second opinions if a doctor recommends that you have surgery or a major diagnostic or therapeutic procedure, such as something that would require general anesthetic. Medicare will cover a third opinion if the first and second opinions are different from each other. The second and third opinions will be covered even if Medicare will not ultimately cover your procedure. Note that Medicare does not cover second and third opinions for excluded services, such as cosmetic surgery.

Billing errors sometimes happen

Doctors and their billing departments can make errors or honest mistakes when billing. You can spot these errors by reading your Medicare statements and comparing them to your own records. The Medicare Information Office offers "My Health Care Trackers" for this purpose. If something doesn't seem right, call your provider. For example, you may see that your provider billed

Medicare for an office visit on a day when you did not see them. Or, you may see that your provider billed you for a service that seems different than what you actually received. If they made a billing error, they should correct it. If your provider does not fix the error, or if you notice a pattern or errors, contact our office. One of our certified counselors can help you identify Medicare fraud, errors or abuse, and help resolve your concern.

Here to help

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



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:

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Treat Mom to something special for Mother’s Day

By **MAUREEN HAGGBLOM**
Anchorage ADRC

Wikipedia reveals that the modern Mother’s Day holiday was first celebrated in 1907. Anna Jarvis campaigned to make Mother’s Day a recognized holiday beginning in 1905, when her mother Ann Reeves Jarvis passed. Anna’s mother had been a peace activist and had cared for wounded soldiers on both sides of the American Civil War and had been urging for a “Mother’s Day for Peace”, asking that husbands and sons would no longer be killed in wars. Anna Jarvis had wanted to honor this and set aside a day to honor all mothers because she believed a mother is “the person who has done more for you than anyone in the world”. Although successful in founding the holiday, she became resentful of the commercialization of the holiday and eventually organized boycotts and

ADRC ANSWER OF THE MONTH

protests of Mother’s Day. How do you honor your mom on Mother’s Day? For those of us that have lost their mom, Mother’s Day can be painful. Honoring the other mother figures in your life can help – maybe phone them if you don’t live near each other. Telling grandchildren about the mothers that have passed, maybe telling a few funny stories, writing a tribute, doing something in memory of the person we lost are ways of honoring them. Remembering those handmade gifts we may have made for our moms when we were young offers inspiration for gifts of today. Here are a few ideas:

- ▶ A playlist of favorite tunes. Maybe a smart speaker, like Alexa, that can be programmed so all mom has to say is “play my music”.

- ▶ Host a family event to watch her favorite movie, show or musical. Mood setting candles, dim lights, and lots of popcorn! Or maybe a game or puzzle night.
- ▶ Enjoy a fancy meal at home, perhaps catered from a favorite restaurant, invite family and friends.
- ▶ Maybe share a hairstylist appointment or have a hairstylist come by your mom’s house.
- ▶ Pulling together a themed memory collage, a photo album of favorite photos or maybe framing a special photo in a fancy frame.
- ▶ Go to a social activity together, perhaps at the local senior center.
- ▶ Bake a favorite dessert together. The smell of a childhood favorite dessert may spark some happy memories and conversation.
- ▶ Help your mom fulfill a dream. Maybe a trip to a place she has always wanted

to visit or an activity she has always wanted to do. We wish everyone a meaningful and memorable Mother’s Day, and a happy spring.

Submitted by Maureen Haggbloom and the Anchorage Aging and Disability Resource Center Team.

Alaska’s Aging and Disability Resource centers connect seniors, people with disabilities, and caregivers with long-term services and supports. For assistance and answers, call your regional ADRC toll-free at 1-855-565-2017. Or visit the Alaska Div. of Senior and Disabilities Services ADRC website at <https://dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/pages/adrc>.

Anchorage symposium on Parkinson’s disease

Senior Voice Staff

Hope Conference Alaska, presented by the Northwest Parkinson’s Foundation, takes place May 6 at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The educational symposium will feature guest speakers Dr. Pinky Agarwal, with updates on Parkinson’s disease, and Dr. Karin Duncan, discussing gut health and Parkinson’s. Activities include a Qi Gong demonstration, Rock Steady Boxing, a resource fair and more for people with Parkinson’s, care partners, family, friends and interested health professionals. Boxed lunch provided by Sweet Caribou. Admission is free. To register, call Denny, 907-956-8009 or email denny@nwpf.org.



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Beneficial blueberries and smart e-bandages

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Powerful benefits from wild blueberries for older adults

New research published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition further supports daily consumption of wild blueberries for improving memory, brain function and blood pressure in older adults. A 12-week clinical trial called BluFlow, led by Dr. Ana Rodriguez-Mateos, an associate professor in Nutrition at the Department of Nutritional Sciences of King's College London, investigated the cognitive and vascular benefits of daily wild blueberry consumption in healthy older adults.

The BluFlow, double blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial focused on healthy older men and women between the ages 65 and 80. Participants were divided into two groups with one receiving a beverage made with 26 grams of freeze dried whole wild blueberry powder (equivalent to about 3/4 cup whole berries, or 178 grams of fresh blueberries), and the other group receiving a placebo. Both groups consumed their beverages daily at the same time over the course of 12 weeks.

Scientists found that



daily wild blueberry supplementation for 12 weeks led to improvements in cognitive and vascular function. Specifically, those who consumed the wild blueberry beverage daily exhibited improved memory, improved accuracy, quicker reaction time on various tasks, improved peripheral vascular function, and lower blood pressure.

"In terms of vascular function, our results reinforce what we've found before in younger populations, which is that consuming wild blueberries improves blood vessel function as well as lowers blood pressure," said Dr. Rodriguez-Mateos. "We think the effects are driven by the blue pigments in blueberries, the anthocyanins, and we found increases in their metabolites in the blood and urine of the volunteers consuming wild blueberry."

The study also documented increases in some

beneficial bacteria in the gut that seem to be driven by wild blueberry consumption, although larger studies are needed to confirm the role of the gut microbiota on the beneficial effects, according to the researchers.

Smart bandages improving care in new ways

Most of the time, when someone gets a cut, scrape, burn or other wound, the body takes care of itself and heals on its own. But this is not always the case. Diabetes can interfere with the healing process and create wounds that will not go away and that could become infected and fester.

These kinds of chronic wounds are not just debilitating for the people suffering from them. They are also a drain on healthcare systems, representing a \$25 billion financial burden in the U.S. alone each year. However, a new kind of smart bandage developed at Caltech may make treatment of these wounds easier, more effective and less expensive.

"There are many dif-

ferent types of chronic wounds, especially in diabetic ulcers and burns that last a long time and cause huge issues for the patient," said Wei Gao, an assistant professor of medical engineering at Caltech. "There is a demand for technology that can facilitate recovery."

Unlike a typical bandage, which might only consist of layers of absorbent material, the smart bandages are made from a flexible and stretchy polymer containing embedded electronics and medications. The electronics allow the sensor to monitor for molecules like uric acid or lactate and conditions involving pH levels or temperature in the wound that may be indicative of inflammation or bacterial infection.

The bandage can respond in several ways. It can transmit the gathered data from the wound wirelessly to a nearby computer, tablet or smartphone for review by the patient or a medical professional. Further, it can deliver an antibiotic or other medication stored within the bandage directly to the wound site

to treat the inflammation and infection. Amazingly, it can apply a low-level electrical field to the wound to stimulate tissue growth resulting in faster healing.

In animal models under laboratory conditions, the smart bandages showed the ability to provide real-time updates about wound conditions and the animals' metabolic states to researchers, as well as offer speed healing of chronically infected wounds.

"We have showed this proof of concept in small animal models, but down the road we would like to increase the stability of the device and also test it on larger chronic wounds because the wound parameters and microenvironment may vary from site to site," said Gao.

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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Grandparents raising their grandchildren

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**
For Senior Voice

Q: My daughter has recently gotten divorced and previous occasional visits with grandchildren has now turned into full-time care, due to an absent father and a daughter who cannot afford to care for them on her own. How do I handle the ambivalence towards this situation?

A: These days with circumstances of divorce, incarceration of a parent, death of the children’s parents, or when a family situation changes, it becomes a new beginning for older adults when they start caring for their grandkids.

Statistically, more grandparents are caregivers for their grandchildren than generations before them. Many, like you, are grappling with how to care for and discipline their grandchildren. The love you have for your grandkids is likely a positive one, but unexpected caregiving



when you have already raised children can bring on feelings of resentment, fear, anger or guilt. You may also find yourself grieving the retirement years you thought you were going to have, and what you had planned on doing during that time.

Acceptance and communication

First, acknowledge your feelings and accept them. Those emotions do not mean you love your grandchildren any less, just know that what you are experiencing is normal. And there are measures that take

Statistically, more grandparents are caregivers for their grandchildren than generations before them. Many, like you, are grappling with how to care for and discipline their grandchildren.

into account everyone’s well-being when building a new and different relationship with your grandkid(s).

Delicate communication that earns your grandchild’s trust is an initial step. An infant or young child may not always be able to express their emotions, therefore how you come across to them matters. Encourage your grandchild to communicate their feelings without passing judgment or ignoring what they have to say. Help your grandchild identify their emotions. You could ask, “You seem sad. Is something bothering you?” Young children may also express their emotions through play, so be observant to see if they are acting out, or seem angry.

Consider all forms of communication if your

grandchild doesn’t have frequent contact with one, both or either parent any longer. Is it possible to conduct a video chat, send a text, write an email or a letter? Encourage grandchildren to draw, paint, create music or write down their thoughts and feelings about the loss.

Be sensitive to your grandchild’s feelings, and their disappointment of lost contact. Be supportive and comforting by letting them know they are in a safe place. Establishing routines and setting age-appropriate guidelines, rules or boundaries can also help children adjust and adapt to new surroundings or schedules. Time with you may need some flexibility at first; your role has changed from

an occasional visitor to adopting a “kinship” role. You are now managing their appointments, homework, discipline, activities and meal prep.

Take care of yourself, too

Carve out time for yourself, even if only 5 or 10 minutes here and there, or an hour every other week. You need to be well-rested, sharp and focused when taking care of infants, toddlers, teens or young adults. Take an interest in their music, sports, art, theatre, hobbies, or other fascinations. Get to know the kids personally with “new found wonder”.

Legal assistance

Finally, know your rights, whether a temporary legal guardian, long-term custodian, or full-time caregiver. Find advocacy and support groups, or if circumstances warrant,

page 22 please



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Caregiver

continued from page 5

a family member often increases levels of stress and physical, mental and emotional strain. It is es-

sential that caregivers set aside time for themselves, allowing them to distract and relax.

9. To express their feelings. Caregivers may fear being judged by others if they express or show their feelings, or think that they

Volunteer hospice is a community resource

By SUMMER JOHNSON-THOMAS

Hospice of Anchorage

In February, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter decided to spend his remaining time at home with his family and receive hospice care. Despite his remarkable longevity and vitality until the end, President Carter still faced the inevitability of aging and the need for end-of-life care. After hearing this news, many people in the U.S. began wondering: what is hospice care? Hospice provides compassionate care to people nearing the end of their lives. It is a form of specialized healthcare that improves the quality of life of patients and their families during the final stages of a terminal illness.

There are two types of hospice care available: Medicare hospice and volunteer hospice. Medicare hospice is a government-funded program that provides palliative care to patients who have a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less to live. Volunteer hospices, on the other hand, are non-profit organizations that provide free or low-cost end-of-life care to patients who do not fit the qualifications of Medicare hospice. While both types of hospice care provide similar services, volunteer hospices often rely on the support of volunteers and donations to provide care. Hospice of Anchorage is a volunteer hospice.

Hospice of Anchorage services

In addition to end-of-life care for patients, Hospice of Anchorage also has a resource center open to anyone in Anchorage at no cost. Part of the resource center is a lending library with books on chronic illness, grief, end-of-life,

child loss, dementia, caregiving, and more. There is also a loan closet with a wide variety of durable medical equipment and supplies including walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs and incontinence supplies. These resources can be helpful for anyone, regardless of their current stage of life. Additionally, the resource center has free items for people experiencing dementia, like fidget blankets, robotic dogs and easy-to-use music players. These things can provide comfort and stimulation for people with dementia and improve their quality of life.

How can I help?

Volunteer hospices keep their doors open through volunteers, grants and donations. Hospice of Anchorage's loan closet is run on donations, and there is a high need in our community for these free resources. Currently, the loan closet is low on:

- transport and self-propelled wheelchairs
- 4-wheeled walkers
- bedside commodes
- shower chairs/benches
- unopened gloves
- unopened wipes
- size M incontinence briefs

If you, or an organization you belong to, is able to donate any of these items (or make a monetary donation in support of these items), please contact Hospice of Anchorage at 907-561-5322.

Volunteer hospices provide a vital service to the community. Through donations and volunteering, our Anchorage community can maintain this circle of help, hope, and comfort.

Summer Johnson-Thomas is a Hospice of Anchorage volunteer.

may be misunderstood. Having spaces to share feelings and emotions without being judged, such as those offered by various therapeutic groups, has proven to be of great help in the well-being of caregivers.

10. To make mistakes. Caring for a person involves a constant approach to complicated and changing situations that requires making an infinite number of decisions, making even the most self-assured person feel doubt. It is a continuous learning process that is nourished by experience and, therefore, by successes and mistakes.

11. To be treated with respect. The fact that one

person is assuming the responsibility of caring

for a family member should not lead others to make many assumptions or disregard the situation. Understanding and managing one's own emotional skills and being assertive are key tools for being respected.

12. To take care of their future. It is undeniable that caring for a loved one invades the agenda and future plans of the family, especially of the caregiver. However, it is important to think about one's own future, something that can be helpful in coping with grief when the family member is no longer around.

Although it is true that

the care of an older adult may be provided by a trusted family member and the family takes on this responsibility, it is not a family-only problem. Any relationship between a caregiver and a cared-for person is also a social, economic, political and sanitary problem. Acknowledging this problem today helps us defend the rights of caregivers and to embrace a commitment for improving the conditions of caregiving.

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

Health fairs

continued from page 5

May 13, Sitka Community Health Fair, Harrigan Hall 330 Harbor Dr., 8 a.m. to noon.

May 20, Central Central Community, Circle Historical Museum, Mile 128 Steese Hwy., 8 to 11 a.m.

May 20, Nikiski Community Health Fair at Nikiski Community Rec. Center, 50097 Kenai Spur

Hwy., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

May 23, Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Fairbanks Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Plan a health fair of your own

Don't miss the opportunity to bring affordable blood tests, free screenings and vital health education to your community or organization this fall. Partner with Alaska Health Fair, Inc. to encourage your constituents to prioritize their

well-being. To reserve your spot and schedule a community or worksite health fair, contact our team at 907-278-0234 for Anchorage and statewide inquiries, 907-374-6853 for Fairbanks, or 907-723-5100 for Juneau. Let's catch the wellness wave together and make a positive impact on the lives of Alaskans.

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



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Joining or starting a pickleball club

By JIM LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

There's something to be said for strength in numbers. Joining a club where you live, or where you go to vacation, even on short visits, gives you that advantage of numbers: New people to play with, and more options for venues.

When I plan travel, one of the first things I look for are clubs and venues in the area where I'm going. You can find options at this website, <https://www.places2play.org/>, or you can just Google "Pickleball" and the city or area you are traveling to.

Usually, clubs in larger cities will have a website with more detailed information on what the club offers, where there are playing venues, the cost to play, and any special programs they offer (like beginners' classes, levels of play times, social get togethers).

For example, on the home page of the Anchorage Pickleball Club (<https://www.anchoragepickleball-club.com/>), they feature their monthly schedule, which typically has up to six events throughout the month. These are special events like tournaments or recurring events like clinics. On their "Places to Play" page, they list outdoor and indoor places with the times and cost to play.



The Homer Pickleball Club website home page.

Jim Lavrakas/Far North Photo

Other web pages on their site offer resources and information on pickleball in general, local equipment dealers, and their membership sign-up.

Yearly dues are a very reasonable \$25 a year for adults, \$15 for 18 and under. For that you get:

- ▶ Opportunity to register before non-members for events
- ▶ Discount on all events (non-members pay \$15 more for all events)
- ▶ Access to "members only" section on website
- ▶ Company discounts, which are in the members only section
- ▶ Secondary insurance for all players

▶ Monthly news blast

This is what a club with nearly 600 members can offer for a very reasonable membership fee. Plus, those 600 members have a strong voice in advocating for their sport.

In Homer, where I live, I've been helping the local pickleball community start a club. A startup committee of four people, myself

included, has forged ahead and become an Alaska non-profit corporation with a recently granted Federal 501(c)(3) charitable status. This was done under the direction of a loose band of about a dozen people who are, in turn, a part of about 125 folks from a collected email list. That list is the product of signups at the two indoor facilities we use in Homer: the city run

HERC (Homer Education and Recreation Center) and the SPARC (South Peninsula Athletic and Recreation Center).

We sent out two surveys to the email list before we took the plunge and filled out the paperwork to the state and the Feds. The first survey, using the free Google Forms program, asked people general demographics questions -- where they lived, seasonal residents, how often they played, player level -- and then asked if they wanted to start a club, how much would be a reasonable membership fee to join. It also asked if they would be willing to volunteer in the club, and in what capacity.

This gave us a general idea of the interest in forming a club. Out of the 125 emails to which we sent this survey, we received 45 responses, a 36% response rate. It also gave us a good idea of what people thought was a reasonable membership fee. We knew we'd have to propose higher membership dues than Anchorage because of our

page 23 please

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Ketchikan.....	225-6420 or (877) 525-6420
Kotzebue.....	442-3500 or (800) 622-9797
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Anchorage Elder Mentor Leeta loves her service

By **RURAL CAP ELDER MENTOR TEAM**
For Senior Voice

My name is Leeta Topps, and I moved to Alaska from Chicago and have lived in Anchorage for a long time. I enjoy reading, walking and volunteering. I love my neighbors because we live in a beautiful community. I have a lot of fun playing games with my grandkids and the kids at school. I have been an Elder Mentor for about five years. I love my service in the community and have made great friendships and connections.

At Mountain View Elementary last year, I supported children with special needs, and they were so wonderful and sweet. Runny noses and eyes tired from crying, and still they just are loving on you.

Miss Ginger picked up my things from the school when the year was over, and I remember being so surprised with the gifts the students put together for me. I'm looking at it right now. They made me all kinds of cards and drew pictures, and it says "Thank you Miss T," with photos they took of me when I wasn't looking. And they all signed it, "we will miss you." How thoughtful! Another one of the classes I helped with was a Spanish language class. Even though I couldn't



Leeta Topps
Courtesy Rural CAP

understand what they were saying, we had the best time. Kindness rules. As an Elder Mentor, that love the kids put out just means everything to me.

Let me give you an example of how important it is to have an Elder Mentor in the classroom. Today there was a substitute teacher and the kids were a little all over place getting situated for the class lesson. Being an Elder Mentor, the students respect you in a special way. You are visiting the kids as a grandparent in the classroom. You're there to support them and be with them. You're not their teacher. You can say, "Alright, come on, let's sit down," and start to settle everyone for class. And the teacher doesn't have to get so stressed out. She looks to me to read to the kids, calm them down—plus, it's extra eyes, extra hands. Sometimes several of the

students might be upset and having a bad day. An Elder Mentor can approach them and say, "What's going on, how are you doing, what's your problem?" That kind of thing. Then the energy completely shifts in the classroom and we get back on track.

The Elder Mentor Program helps young people grow in wisdom and respect. Children learn how to love each other and how to show compassion. They see us coming and know we are nice. We are coming to help. I'm not coming to change any laws, or step on anyone's toes, I am here for support in the classroom and in the entire school. This is for our community. What we do reaches beyond just the school.

I hope you enjoy my family recipe for Gore Springs Mississippi Pound Cake, which is posted with this story at www.seniorvoicealaska.com. This recipe is over 100 years old and has been passed down from generation to generation. My daughter tried adding strawberries and I liked it the first time, but not the second time. This is the

only bundt cake recipe we use in our family.

Why volunteering matters to seniors

Studies show that people who volunteer regularly are also healthier overall. Joining the Elder Mentor Program revitalizes the spirit and brings youthful energy into your life. Finding purpose and having students' smiling faces to look forward to can make a world of difference. Children look up to you and rely on your support and guidance. You matter and have a place in the community.

As an Elder Mentor you meet new people and expand your social network. Elder Mentors get together regularly for additional training opportunities, and build deep friendships and connections. You are part of a team of passionate, humble and giving volunteers who are your peers. At our annual training, you have the opportunity to meet all the Elder Mentors who serve around the state. Get involved in fun opportunities like being featured in local news, or sharing a recipe in our Elder Men-

tor Cookbook. As a part of AmeriCorps Seniors, you are invited to AmeriCorps events happening in Alaska and around the nation.

Volunteers report being happier in their daily life because of their service. Volunteering as an Elder Mentor keeps both the body and mind engaged, and focused on joyful tasks, like reading to the students. Review your knowledge and refresh your mind through helping children with their times tables, puzzles, and learning how to spell. Give from the heart, and receive so much in return.

The Elder Mentor Program is currently accepting applications for the 2023-2024 school year. Benefits for qualifying seniors 55+ include PTO, a tax free stipend, paid holidays, free meals and travel assistance. Please call for more information and to apply, 907-865-7276, and check out the online application and learn more at eldermentor.org. Reach the team via e-mail at eldermentors@ruralcap.org.

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Remembering the ‘Nurse from New York’

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

“Here is something you might like to take a look at,” Dad commented back in spring 2005 as he brought me a worn manila colored bundle tied with string. Dad had been puttering around looking for something on the shelves where he kept important items, while I sat on the nearby couch at his home in Homer tying a quilt.

Before removing the quarter inch thick string, I read the address: “Miss Martine Burdick; Alaska Nurses Association; Seward San; Bartlett, Alaska,” and noted the February 1954

postmark. What treasure would these envelopes hold? I knew so little of this early history of my mother. Mom (Martine Burdick Clayton) was part of the last class to be eligible for the federal Cadet Nurse Corps



Martine Burdick (Maraley McMichael’s mother) in her Syracuse University nursing uniform and cap in January 1950.
Courtesy Maraley McMichael

program at Syracuse University, a World War II program. She entered the SU School of Nursing in 1945, completed the three-year program in September 1948 and then went on to receive her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in January 1950. After graduation, she was a staff nurse and an assistant instructor in nursing arts at the Wilson Memorial Hospital in Johnson City, New York.

Sponsored by the Board of Methodist Missions, Mom arrived in Seward, Alaska, in June 1951 to serve at the Seward Sanatorium, a facility created specifically for treatment of tuberculosis. The San, as she called it, had a 150-bed capacity in the converted Ft. Raymond army barracks. During its operation from July 1946 until July 1958, approximately 1,200 Alaskans were hospitalized and treated there. Most

page 14 please

Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center presents its **8th Annual Military Appreciation Gala** on Friday, May 19, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. All active duty military service members, veterans and surviving spouses will be honored. Ticket prices are \$40 per ticket, two for \$75, however sponsorships are requested to help cover the costs for the honorees by purchasing a table that seats eight for \$300. To purchase a ticket and/or make a sponsorship donation, call 907-688-2685 ... **“Miles for Meals,”** the **annual fundraiser** for the **Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI)** home delivered meals program, returns this year and the online auction takes place May 6-19. Look over items, ranging from gourmet dinners to tickets to the Alaska SeaLife Center and much more, at the WASI website, www.wasillaseniors.com. The Fun Run event is June 24, and the virtual fun run starts June 1. You can also make a donation through the website if you can’t participate in the action ... In **North Pole, Santa’s Senior Center’s book club** meets the fourth Tuesday of each month (May 23). May’s book for reading and discussion is **“Not For A Woman,”** by **Mary Carey**. Call for more information, 907-488-4663 ... **“Sittercize”** chair yoga classes at **Valdez Senior Center** will be offered two more times before instructor **Cammie Hsu** takes a summer break. The class will meet Tuesday and Thursday, May 2 and 4, at 10 a.m. Classes feature music and a pleasant group atmosphere. Wear comfortable clothes. Call for more details, 907-835-5032 ... Guided group **outdoor walks** return in May to **Seward**, with organized pole walks Wednesdays and Thursdays at 2 p.m. Meet on

page 14 please

Calling all brainiacs!

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From socializing to brain games, exercise, sleep, and healthy eating, maintaining brain health is an active pursuit. Join AARP Alaska for this six-part virtual event series with information and resources from the Global Council on Brain Health.



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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 13

the sidewalk at **Seward Senior Center** and walk the historical building route, the first lake to second lake trail, or Scheffler Creek to the Alaska SeaLife Center on the coastal trail. Walking poles provided free. For information, call 907-224-5604 ... Also in **Seward**, the **American Legion Post 5** sponsors a free **community breakfast** on Sunday, May 21, from 9 to 11 a.m. Call the senior center for details, 907-224-5604 ... And one more Seward item: the **foot care clinics** at **Seward Senior Center** have gone to an every-other-month schedule, with the next set for May 18. Call 907-224-5604 to make an appointment ... **Kodiak Senior Center** put out a call earlier this spring for members to bring in **high school photos** of themselves. The photos will be on display at the center throughout the month of May, in honor of **Older Americans Month**. Check it out and see if you recognize anyone. Details: 907-486-6181 ... Attention Anchorage-area service 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 May 10, hosted by **Anchorage ADRC**. 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. *Rambles is compiled from senior center newsletters, websites and reader tips from around the state. Email your Rambles items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.*

Nurse

continued from page 13

patients recovered and went on to lead active lives.

It was in 1998 at Mom's memorial service, that I first heard about the 1951 arrival to Alaska of "The Nurse from New York". Quoting the daughter of Dr. Frances Phillips, a Seward Sanatorium physician-surgeon, "Martine anticipated meeting the surgeon and Medical Director, whom she would assist, and was very concerned that she make a good first

impression. She dressed in her finest clothes and high heel shoes to disembark from the steamship 'Alaska'. As she walked down the board ramp off the ship, one of her heels got caught in between the boards and she literally tripped out of her shoe to meet the doctor and group of Methodist women waiting at the bottom of the ramp. Embarrassment didn't last long. It was time to roll up her sleeves, forget the high heel shoes, and get right to work at the hospital where she was so desperately needed. She became one of my father's

regarding appointment of Mom to the Board of Nursing for the Territory of Alaska.

Since I was too young to remember, Dad described her little "office" — a small porch at the front of the house where we lived in Spenard. Mom attended a national Board of Nursing convention somewhere back on the East Coast in the fall of 1960 when I was in kindergarten. Dad also told how he took care of us four kids in the little campground out on the Homer Spit when my brother was only a couple of months old in the sum-

mer of 1962, just so Mom could attend the state convention held that year in Homer. In 1963, when our family moved to Glennallen for Dad's new job with Copper Valley Electric, Mom turned her duties over to someone else.

Glennallen's small Faith Hospital was staffed with missionary nurses, so after a few years Mom attended classes at Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University)



Martine Burdick addressing members of the second annual Alaska Nurses' Association convention held in Juneau in May 1953.

Courtesy Maraley McMichael

most dependable nurses."

Sitting with Dad in 2005, the first envelope in the old bundle contained a black and white photo of Seward Memorial Hospital and several labeled small photos of various aspects of tuberculosis care. As Dad and I examined the contents of the other envelopes, we found copies of Board of Nursing correspondence for the territory of Alaska for the year 1954. Apparently, Mom was the secretary and on the nominating committee for officer positions. There was blank stationery and envelopes (all bearing the Alaska Board of Nursing letterhead), sheets of carbon paper, and a list of the nurses and their addresses.

Mom continued serving on the Alaska Board of Nursing in various positions, including Chairman, during the years that Alaska went through the changes and adjustments of transitioning from territory to state. I already had in my files a letter dated March 1958 from territorial governor Mike Stepovich,

to earn credits and receive a teaching certificate. That is the Mom I knew — a teacher — as did the folks in the Copper River Valley. Long after her passing, during my years living in Slana, if someone learned I was the daughter of Martine Clayton, I heard many good comments. I learned of specific examples of her unique teaching style and the positive effect she had on their children. These were people not just from Glennallen, but McCarthy and Slana as well. Mom very successfully changed careers in mid-life, a generation before that became more common.

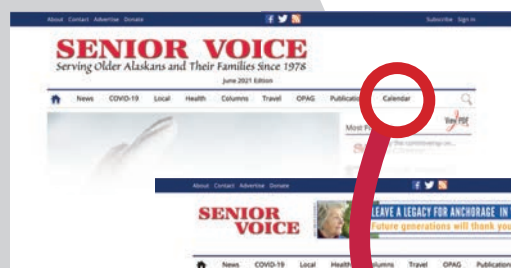
Old records, which long before could have been discarded, had turned into a history treasure for me, adding more to my knowledge about the "Nurse from New York". A lady I remember with love and honor this Mother's Day 2023.

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

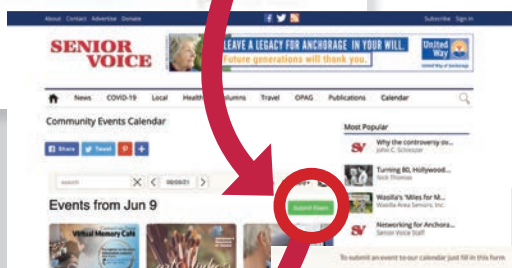
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Senior Voice

Senior Voice is published by Older Persons Action Group, Inc.



Ribbon cutting at Mid-Valley Adult Day Service in Houston

By **MELISSA SONNEK**
For Senior Voice

Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI) will hold a grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony, Friday, May 5 at 2 p.m., to celebrate the new WASI Mid-Valley Adult Day Services, located at 11975 W. Mid-Valley Way in Houston. All are welcome.

WASI's mission is to help seniors live as independently as possible for as long as possible. As the number of seniors continues to increase dramatically in the Mat-Su Valley, families, friends and professionals are seeking out more specialized care and support services for a vulnerable adult. The WASI Adult Day Services Program provides a variety of health, social and supportive services in a protective setting to adults who are physically frail or face the challenges of Alzheimer's, dementia, a developmental disability, or brain trauma. Healthy snacks are offered, and exercise programs are available. Participants can receive assistance with adult daily living activities, participate in arts and crafts projects, music, holiday parties, games, and other activities. Transportation

to and from the program is available. WASI Mid-Valley Adult Day Services currently accepts Medicaid Choice Waiver, Tri-West Healthcare Alliance for veterans and self-pay.

In addition, WASI provides daily services at the Mid Valley Senior Center, Houston location. Lunch is available to seniors age 60 and older from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for a suggested donation of \$6. Guests under age 60 are \$10. There are daily exercise classes like Bingosize, Strong Seniors, tai chi classes, Puzzle Club and trivia. The center has a library, notary public, Free WIFI and computer lab, low vision magnification equipment, and in the summertime there are garden planters available. The Mid-Valley Senior Center is open Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony or to inquire about the ADS program, call 907-416-5670, email wasiads@alaskaseniors.com, or check the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/midvalley-seniorcenter>

Melissa Sonnek is the WASI Mid-Valley ADS program manager.

Fairbanks library closure

Senior Voice Staff

Noel Wein Library in Fairbanks will close for renovations starting May 1, according to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Libraries website. The renovation work is expected to last about 10 months. During that time, library services will continue at other locations in town, including North Pole, and a new location will open temporarily on June 1 at Joy Community Center, 24 Margaret Ave.

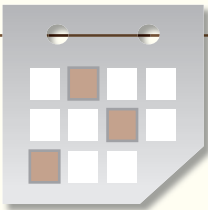
The book mobile will continue service at its regularly scheduled times and locations. Books on hold will continue to be picked up at the Noel Wein location weekdays and Saturdays, and interlibrary loan books will continue to be available.

For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3AnSTJk> and select from the discussion tabs or call 907-459-1020 for Noel Wein Library staff or, for North Pole branch, 907-488-6101.

Calendar of Events

- May 3 Anchorage** Older Americans Month Kickoff event at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Speakers, performances, presentation of Ron Hammett Award. Seating limited. Will be streamed online via ZOOM. For information or to RSVP to 907-770-2000 or 907-770-2006
- May 6 Anchorage** “Amblin’ for Alzheimer’s,” Anchorage Golf Course, 9 a.m. to noon. Annual fundraiser for Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska, a noncompetitive walk, participants can work in teams or as individuals. For more information and online registration, <https://bit.ly/41AYOXq>
- May 11 Fairbanks** Senior Recognition Day at the Carlson Center, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Presentations, food, and awards ceremony for outstanding achievement recipients. 907-459-1136 for information
- May 5 Palmer** Pioneers of Alaska Women’s Igloo #11 Style Show and Spring Luncheon, Palmer Moose Lodge, 113 South Cobb Street, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Fashions from the Beaded Moose and Mat-Su Senior Services. Door prizes. Wear big hats! Tickets, \$15. Call Norma, 907-745-3387 or Fran, 907-376-3865
- May 13 Talkeetna** “Clean Air Challenge” bike ride fundraiser for the American Lung Association. Meet at Talkeetna Alaska Lodge and choose a route, from family-friendly 10-mile to challenging 100-mile. There’s also a “Cycle Your Own Way” option, with no set route or date. Visit the website for more information, including registration and costs. www.cleanairchallengeak.org
- May 14 Nationwide** Mother’s Day
- May 17 Juneau** State legislative session ends
- May 18 Homer** Homer Senior Citizens, Inc. annual membership meeting at Homer Senior Center, 1:30 p.m. Attend in person, online or call-in to vote. For more information or to register, call 907-235-4555 or email bonny@homerseniors.com
- May 23 Anchorage** Senior Poetry Workshop at Mt. View Library, 120 Bragaw St., 2 to 3 p.m. Join local poet and facilitator Brian Hutton for a poetry workshop, including exercises and discussions on creativity and mental well being. Info, 907-343-2830
- May 26-27 Haines** Great Alaska Craft Beer and Home Brew Festival at Southeast Alaska Fairgrounds. Showcasing best beers from Alaska and Yukon breweries, home brew contest, gourmet dinner with pairings, more. <https://seakfair.org/beerfest/>

May 29 Nationwide Memorial Day



Send us your calendar items
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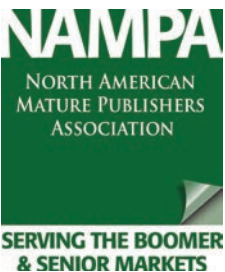
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Senior Voice

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WWII Japanese ousted from Aleutians, May 1943

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

This coming Memorial Day, it seems fitting to honor the sacrifice that America’s brave military made in the Aleutians 80 years ago this month.

Under the mistaken belief the Doolittle Raiders had taken off from an air base in the Aleutian chain to bomb Tokyo during spring 1942, Japanese forces bombed Dutch Harbor two months later. They then proceeded to occupy the islands of Kiska and Attu, although most Americans had no idea the enemy was entrenched on our soil – no enemy had occupied American soil since the War of 1812.

That battle for the Aleutians became – in proportion to the number of opposing troops – the second most costly war in the Pacific, second only to Iwo Jima. It later was described as the most difficult and dangerous in all modern warfare.

Our U.S. infantry made the first amphibious island landing in its history with about 15,000 troops arriving at Attu the beginning of May. Regiments hit three locations on the 40-mile island: Red Beach, Holtz Bay and Massacre Bay.

Massacre Bay got its name when Russians killed 15 Aleuts there around 200 years before. American boys soon had their own variations on that theme, such as “Assassination Alley” and “Carnage Corner” as the battle raged on.

The island’s terrain was almost as hard to conquer as the enemy. The fog and mist and continuous raw chill took their toll as well as the enemy bullets. A campaign that was expected to last a few days, stretched into weeks, and it wasn’t until May 29 that American pincers finally closed.

On the night of May 30, a banzai charge of wildly yelling Japanese made a final effort. When their attack failed, 500 men committed mass suicide by pulling the pins of their grenades and holding them against their chests.

The campaign ended with 549 American and 2,351 Japanese dead.

When 32,000 U.S. and Canadian forces arrived at Kiska in August, they found no Japanese troops left on the island. Under cover of fog, the Japanese fleet had secretly removed its 5,000 soldiers from Kiska by submarines.

Allied casualties during the invasion still numbered close to 200, however, as the enemy had set booby traps prior to leaving Kiska – and a mine in the harbor sunk a destroyer. Trench foot infected about 130 men.

Hundreds of American servicemen would have their feet am-

putated because of frostbite and trench foot, an infection of the feet caused by cold, wet and unsanitary conditions during the campaign.

The original Fort Richardson became home to a mass grave for 235 Japanese, brought to the fort in 1953. Its headstone read: “Here Lies Unidentified Japanese Soldiers.” And a few feet away from the Japanese dead were the graves of Russians and Canadians, most of whom had lost their lives ferrying warplanes to our World War II allies. Across the road, a separate plot held our American dead.

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.



In May 1943, American and Canadian troops landed on Attu in the Aleutians and began to take back the island from Japanese invaders.
Courtesy University of Alaska Fairbanks

You Don't Say

Across

- 1 Farm young
- 5 ___ Achray, Scotland
- 9 Finish a drive?
- 13 Abbey area
- 14 Wall hanging
- 16 Dwarf buffalo
- 17 Mackerel shark
- 18 What 007 and a martini will do at a pub?
- 20 Santa’s little helper
- 21 Mousse
- 22 Made sure it worked
- 23 Texas oil city
- 26 Artful
- 27 In alignment
- 28 Second in a series
- 30 Item in a bucket
- 33 Chemistry Nobelist Otto
- 34 Himalayan kingdom
- 36 Hubbub
- 37 Playwright Burrows
- 38 Arafat’s grp.
- 39 Verb with thou
- 40 Young fox
- 41 Chat room chuckle
- 42 Merles
- 44 Son of Rhea and Cronus
- 45 Coxcomb
- 46 For fear that
- 47 Skyscraper support
- 48 Playing marble
- 49 Canyon sounds
- 52 Sweet wattle
- 55 Propel a boat
- 56 Black-backed gull
- 59 Antique stair part?

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- 61 Literally, “I forbid”
 - 62 Shade giver
 - 63 Mild oaths
 - 64 “The Dukes of Hazzard” spinoff
 - 65 Uses a Singer
 - 66 Barrie buccaneer
 - 67 Some souvenirs
- 9 Hardly ruddy
 - 10 Part of A.M.
 - 11 Cancel
 - 12 Place for a plug
 - 15 Be the astronomer?
 - 19 Not on the level
 - 21 Force unit
 - 24 Horse color
 - 25 “Aladdin” monkey
 - 27 Verboten
 - 29 Bibliog. space saver
 - 30 Be the director?
 - 31 Intense hatred
 - 32 Flower holders
 - 33 Fair share, maybe
 - 34 Melancholy mudhen?
 - 35 “Bonanza” brother
- 38 Insurance contract
 - 43 High season, on the Riviera
 - 44 Tappan ___ Bridge
 - 47 Fiddle stick
 - 48 Gents
 - 50 Heraklion’s home
 - 51 Gymnastics apparatus
 - 52 Bern’s river
 - 53 Kind of cut
 - 54 Haughtiness
 - 57 Part of the Winnebago nation
 - 58 Big cheese
 - 59 French connections
 - 60 “Gunsmoke” bartender
 - 61 Spot checker?

Crossword answers on page 22



Fans are still dreaming of Jeannie

By **NICK THOMAS**

Tinseltown Talks

No doubt many a teenage lad, and even a few adults, developed a major crush on Barbara Eden during her five-season run in the 1960s sitcom “I Dream of Jeannie.” Now 91, fans are delighted to see the actress looking so youthful and healthy.

“I have exercised all my life and now do a mild spin (stationary) bicycle and walking,” Eden said from her home in Los Angeles. “I’ve always been careful about what I eat but I’m not fanatic about it – I’m a carnivore! I try to stay away from sugar, but unfortunately I like it too much.”

As for her skincare, she does adhere to a ritual. “I use sunscreen every day and Estee Lauder line repair that I put underneath the sunscreen and underneath moisturizer before I go to bed.”

But Eden and her husband of over 30 years, Jon Eichholtz, did experience a health scare after contracting COVID.

“We caught it early and Jon was very ill,” she recalled. “Our doctor had us infused with the antibodies right away and luckily I wasn’t sick. We did catch the variant later, but it was just like a cold.”

Growing up in San Francisco, young Barbara dreamt of becoming a singer, spending two years at the local Conservatory of Music and taking singing engagements with bands around the Bay Area. But after moving to LA in the early 1950s, her stunning beauty, charm and talent inevitably led to Hollywood.

Best known for her role as the magical genie in the popular NBC series, Eden has delighted fans for decades with appearances at TV conventions and Hollywood autograph shows. She continues to travel, speaking to audiences and showing clips of her film and TV career, and taking questions. This year, she’s already visited Georgia, Florida and North Carolina (see www.barbaraeden.com).

And while some actors who became closely associated with one standout role

may distance themselves from that character, Eden never resented her connection to “Jeannie.”

“Why would I want to step away from it?” she asked. “I’m lucky to have very polite fans and have loved meeting them over the years in so many cities.”

Beyond her “Jeannie” role, Eden’s entertainment career has been extensive with over 25 film roles, appearances in numerous TV movies and series, and a vast stage career that includes touring major U.S. cities in the beloved play, “Love Letters,” first performing it with “Jeannie” co-star Larry Hagman.

Hagman dealt with alcohol problems while working on “Jeannie” and could be difficult on the set.

“Larry was his own worst enemy but was always wonderful to me,” she said. “He acted out with the crew and would be difficult with male guest stars who came on the show. But we had a good rapport and



Two years ago, Barbara authored and published her first children’s book, “Barbara and the Djinn.”

MJ Cheshire photo

worked together very well. I toured with him in ‘Love Letters’ and he was just wonderful.”

Eden is also an author, releasing her best-selling autobiography, “Jeannie out of the Bottle” in 2012. Two years ago, she also published her first children’s book, “Barbara and the Djinn,” which perhaps not surprisingly features a young girl named Barbara and yes, a genie.

“The little girl magically travels to different places and meets different people learning what is most important in life which is kindness and understanding,” she explained. “I’ve loved to read ever since I was three or four when my mother and aunt would read to me. I thought how

sad that children today just look at their phones and computers, so I wanted to give them a book to hold that can take them on an adventure using their imagination. It’s a great book to give to the grandchildren.”

While she has no plans for more books, Eden may appear on stage again for those still dreaming of seeing “Jeannie” in person.

“I don’t have any dates, but I’d love to do ‘Love Letters’ again,” she says. “It’s gratifying that people still want to see me perform and hear me talk about my



Barbara Eden as “Jeannie” in the popular 1960s series and more recently, age 91..

Courtesy Harry Langdon, Jr.



NBC photo

career.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery in Alabama and has

written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnickt.org.

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Family members who kill, in Hollywood and real life

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice

One of my guilty pleasures is watching the latest celebrity “trial of the month” on Court TV, and I definitely tracked the recent Alex Murdaugh murder trial.

If you haven’t been following it, Alex Murdaugh was a powerful lawyer in South Carolina, who is accused of murdering his wife and his 22-year-old son. He claimed he was elsewhere at the time of the murder, but police found a cell phone on one of the victims, with video taken just before the murders, and you can hear Alex’s voice in the background. He was convicted and will spend the rest of his life in prison.

But being an estate planning attorney, my mind could not help but wonder about the inheritance implications of the case. I know nothing about South Carolina’s inheritance laws, but I do know what would happen in Alaska.

Alaska has a statute, AS 13.12.803, which is designed to prevent anyone from inheriting from someone they kill. If there was a “felonious killing,” the killer is not allowed to inherit from the victim in anyway, including through probate, a living trust, beneficiary designations or just about any other method. The legislature spent two and a half pages of text trying to cover every possible way someone could conceivably inherit, and making sure they couldn’t if there was a felonious killing.

What is a felonious killing? Anything that falls within certain criminal statutes, including not only murder and manslaughter, but also criminally negligent homicide. If there is a criminal conviction, that resolves the issue of whether it was a felonious killing. If there was no criminal conviction, there is a procedure in the statute for an aggrieved party to



ask the courts to determine that there was a felonious killing, even if the authorities never brought criminal charges.

So what happens, under the Alaska statute, if you feloniously kill someone and there is an inheritance you otherwise would have received from them? The inheritance passes as if you had died before the decedent. If you murder your rich uncle, who left you \$1 million in his will, that money goes to whoever would have received that money, under the terms of the will, if you had died before your uncle. If the will said “I leave \$1 million to my beloved nephew Buford if he survives me, but if he doesn’t survive me to his then-surviving issue”, then the money would go to your children instead.

But Mr. Murdaugh, who had money, murdered his son, who didn’t have money. But while his son didn’t have much money in life, his son’s estate will have money. That’s because his son’s estate will have a claim against Mr. Murdaugh for wrongful death. Apparently his son left no wife or children behind, so whoever the next living kin of the Murdaugh clan might be could open a probate estate and sue Alex for pretty much everything he is worth. Although they might have to get in line; Alex Murdaugh was facing indictment for embezzling millions of dollars from clients of his law firm, and those people will also have causes of action.

Looking at the statute makes me think of another case, albeit a fictional one. There is a movie called “ Fargo,” which is set in Minnesota. Yes, I know

page 22 please



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Artificial intelligence and ChatGPT, in its own words

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**
Bob's Tech Talk

This month's Tech Talk is a little different. Nearly all of it was written by a computer. This technology has been under development for decades. It has been a staple of science fiction movies since I was a kid.

Recently, one of the most advanced chat robots ever constructed was made public. ChatGPT has washed across tech like a tsunami. The only thing anyone seems to agree on is that the world has changed forever — whether for better or worse remains to be seen.

What follows is the transcript of an interview I did with ChatGPT. I did not change a single word.

Q. What is ChatGPT?

A. I am ChatGPT, a large language model created by OpenAI, based on the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) architecture. I have been trained on a massive amount of text data using unsupervised learning techniques, allowing me to generate human-like responses to a wide range of prompts and questions. I can understand and generate text in multiple languages, and I can perform tasks such as language translation, summarization, and sentiment analysis. My primary goal is to assist users in generating high-quality text and providing relevant information.

I rely on algorithms and statistical models to generate responses based on patterns and correlations found in the vast amounts of data that I was trained on. However, my responses

are not perfect, and there are several factors that can contribute to errors or inaccuracies in my answers.

One major limitation of my training data is that it reflects the biases and limitations of the sources from which it was derived. If the training data is incomplete or biased in some way, it can lead to errors in my responses or cause me to generate inappropriate or misleading answers.

Q. Could you answer the same question again, this time so that a young child may be able to understand it?

A. Hi there! I'm ChatGPT, and I'm kind of like a really smart robot who can talk to you and answer your questions.

You know how you learn new words and how to put them together to make sentences? Well, I did something kind of like that, but with lots and lots of words and sentences that I read on the internet. I learned how to put words and sentences together to make responses that sound like something a person might say.

My job is to help people with different things like answering questions, translating languages, and giving information. People can talk to me and I'll do my best to help them out.

I try to answer your questions as best as I can. However, sometimes I might make mistakes or not understand things perfectly. This can happen because the information I learned might be incomplete or not perfect, or because the way humans talk can be tricky to understand. It's a bit like when you learn something new in school —

sometimes you might get it wrong at first, but you keep trying and learning until you get it right.

Q. Are you dangerous?

A. As an artificial intelligence language model, I am not inherently dangerous. I do not have physical capabilities, and I do not have the ability to cause harm or make decisions on my own. My responses are generated based on the input I receive, and my behavior is determined by the programming and algorithms that were used to create me.

However, it's important to note that any technology, including AI [artificial intelligence], can be misused or manipulated by individuals with malicious intent. For example, if someone were to use me to spread misinformation or to manipulate others, that could be harmful. It's important for users to be critical of the information they receive, and to use technology responsibly and ethically.

In general, my purpose is to assist and provide

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

ChatGPT

There is a free version of ChatGPT version 3 available. Signups are free, but unfortunately it requires a valid email address and mobile telephone number.

www.openai.com/blog/chatgpt

About ChatGPT and other LLMs

This article is an overview of the major ChatGPT-like programs currently underway and background information that describes how they work from a technical perspective.

www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Large_language_model

How High Is High?

Explore the skies above in this entertaining interactive illustration of the relative distances from the earth to outer space.

www.neal.fun/space-elevator/

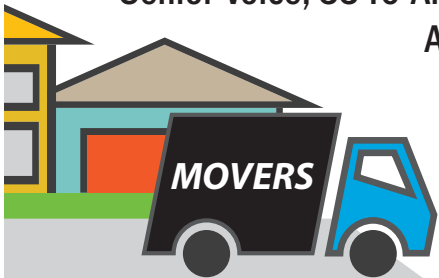
information, and I am designed to be safe and reliable. If you ever have any concerns or questions about my behavior, you can always contact my creators at OpenAI, who are com-

mitted to ensuring that I am used in a responsible and beneficial way.

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

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Kenai Peninsula senior centers welcome travelers

Post-pandemic travel rises in state's most popular destination

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

Gone are so many of the historic Alaska roadhouses that provided travelers with a meal and sometimes lodging, but senior centers across the Kenai have stepped in.

The Seward Highway to Kenai's communities is lined with breathtaking scenery from bore tides, mountains and a side trip to Portage and its glaciers. (A word about Turnagain: Do not get out of your car and try to walk on the sucking mud or you will become the center of a rescue situation.)

And once on the Kenai you have dining options.

The Kenai opens its arms

"We're open to anyone, and they can bring guests, like people visiting from out of town," said Kenai Senior Center Administrative Assistant Red Piersee.

Lunch is at noon and costs \$7. People are not required to be members.

The address is 361 Senior Court, Kenai. Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 907-283-4156.

At the Ninilchik Senior Center, Administrative Assistant Tandy Wallace said the hot lunch is at noon.

"We absolutely welcome anyone in the public, as well as guests," she said.

The suggested donation is \$8 for anyone of any age.

Address is 66265 Aspen Avenue, Ninilchik. Open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to



Kenai Senior Center's dining room, shown here during a special event in early April, is spacious and the center welcomes visiting seniors for meals.

Courtesy Kenai Senior Center

4 p.m. Call 907-567-3988

At the Soldotna Senior Center, they serve lunch at noon and for visitors 55 and older, cost is \$12, and for members, \$7. (Membership cost is \$20.)

The address is 197 West Park, Soldotna. Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 907-262-2322

In Anchor Point, the senior center welcomes everyone regardless of age or membership to a full service breakfast. For the menu go to their Facebook page or call 907-235-7786. Thursday night dinners, 5 to 6:30 p.m., are \$14 for dine in or take out for visitors, but call ahead to make

a reservation, 907-235-7786. Address: 72750 Milo Fritz, Anchor Point. Center hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Fridays, 9 a.m. to noon.

The Homer Senior Center offers lunches from noon to 1:30 p.m. in its Silver Lining Café that include salad, soup, an entrée, dessert and beverages for a suggested donation of for \$7 for those over 60, \$15 for ages 12-59, and \$5 for under 12.

"If they want to donate more than that it would be wonderful," said Bonnie McDermott, who oversees membership and meal reservations. "All they have to



A group from Nikiski enjoy a meal in the Homer Senior Center Silver Lining Café. Some days, diners are treated to live music.



Courtesy Homer Senior Center

do is fill out a short form so we can get them into our database."

Reservations are highly encouraged, she said, for the kitchen to get an idea

of how many to prepare for.

"We won't turn anyone away," she said. The address is 3935 Svedlund Street, Homer. Hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 907-234-7655.

Surging senior population and expense curtail meals

Executive Director Dana Paperman said the Seward Senior Center could no longer provide meals to those other than local seniors, because of escalating food costs and the increasing number of seniors. It is now focused on providing meals to those who live in Seward and Moose Pass.

"For years, we served more and more Alaskans than ever before," Paperman said.



Anchor Point Senior Center welcomes everyone regardless of age or membership to a full service breakfast.

Courtesy Anchor Point Senior Center



Military

continued from page 3

is education. Many times people will need to brush up on their education, and they try and find ways to utilize either their GI Bill or veterans readiness and employment. And I have a fourth one: Over the last couple of years, we have seen more dependent indemnity compensation claims than we have seen over any other period of time that I've been in the office. If the veteran passes away from a VA disability, then that spouse is eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments from the VA."

For more information, call 907-334-0874 or 1-888-248-3682. Website: <https://veterans.alaska.gov/home/>. Email: alaska.veterans@alaska.gov

'It's all about helping'

Next up, Darryl Morgan, Retirement Services Officer, Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson (JBER) Alaska:

"It's all about helping retirees. I'm a retiree myself so I have a certain debt that I feel that I owe them. I understand where they're at and where they're coming from. It's much easier for me to relate. I publish the changes to this newsletter [JBER Retired Soldier Newsletter] that gets out there, and I also meet them one-on-one individually to assist them with any questions they may have concerning the retirement benefits for the military."

JBER Annual Retiree Appreciation Day is Saturday, May 13, from 1000 hour to 1600, at the Arctic Warrior Events Center. Speakers, vendors, a health clinic and more will be there. Darryl really encourages you to attend:

"This is a tremendous

opportunity to reach out to the Alaska Military Retiree Council and to me, and also the retirees. For example, a retiree officer like me, Retirement Services Officer, they're going to come from the Air Force and be there too – Army Retirement Services, Air Force officers and Air Force Retirement Services will be out there as well. A lot of times people don't know about the benefits that exist. And this is a tremendous opportunity to communicate with the retiree community to learn about all the benefits that are authorized for them."

For more information, call 907-384-3500. Website: <https://www.jber.jb.mil/Services-Resources/Alaska-Retiree-Services/>. Email: Darryl.w.morgan.civ@army.mil

Support from the Military Retiree Council

And finally, a few words

from Roland Cabiad (Maj.), Chairperson of the Alaska Military Retiree Council:

"The Retiree Council is for all the military retirees who still wish to support members of the active and retiree communities in and around JBER Alaska.

"Even though you're retired, your service to your community is worthwhile. The time that you're contributing to society will keep you young. Sitting in front of a TV is not keeping you young – it will just make you mad.

"We are kind of like a liaison agency because we're a volunteer agency with the military, but it is stated in the army regulations that we will have a council as a conduit to bring up information that is needed to help support the retirees. Also, it says we will be mentoring active-duty military service members about the military way of life. So, if you have a mil-

itary service member, like say, a family member that needs some help, then we may be able to help them out. For example, we help out with JBER Fisher House – we go and volunteer for that. We also helped out during Christmas with a single-soldiers Christmas party for active-duty military."

For more information, call 907-384-3500, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Alaska.Military.Retiree.Council>. Email: eaglemedic86@gmail.com

Explore these resources so that you and your family receive all the retiree benefits to which you are entitled. Finally, note that quotes throughout this article have been edited for length and clarity.

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.

AARP

continued from page 3

Nurse (RN) license reciprocity with the majority of other states, allowing Alaska to put nurses to work faster in hospitals, nursing homes and clinics statewide.

Alaska's local nursing program has capacity for just 324 graduates each year – a far cry from filling the 1,500 nurse openings annually. This demand is expected to grow to more than 5,000 by 2030 as our population and healthcare workforce ages. Maintaining a qualified and robust workforce is the single biggest healthcare challenge in Alaska, with nursing topping the list, and already we have seen closures and restrictions on patient care due to workforce crisis. Alaska nurses overwhelmingly support the NLC with 92% of the responding nurses stating they are in favor of joining the NLC, including 87% of nurses who are members of a labor union.

Home- and community-based services and participant-directed care

More than 80 percent of adults express a desire to remain in their homes

and communities as they age and prefer a home setting over a nursing home or other institutional setting. Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) includes a wide range of services and supports provided at home, but that system is threatened by workforce crisis. Much of the work of HCBS is performed by direct care workers, including personal care aides, home health aides and direct support professionals. Alaska is experiencing a severe workforce shortage in these areas, impacting the ability for people with disabilities and the elderly to receive home services and avoid costly institutional care.

Our state needs more home- and community-based direct care staff. AARP is partnering with the Statewide Independent Living Centers, SEIU caregivers union, Peer Power, and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education to advocate for a Participant (or Self) Directed Care program option, modeled after the VA's successful Veteran Directed Care Program in Alaska.

Participant-Directed Care is a HCBS option in which the individual who receives services decides how, when and from whom their services will be de-

livered. Self-direction is a flexible alternative to "traditional" HCBS, in which a person receives services from a worker employed by a home care agency and the person generally has less control over how his or her services are delivered.

Participants in self-directed programs often choose to hire family, close friends, or neighbors as paid caregivers. Paid family caregiving through participant-direction addresses multiple needs: the person who needs care can age in place among friends and family; the family caregiver can earn modest income for the difficult work he or she performs, which lessens the impact of the lost job hours for the caregiver and the larger economy; the homecare workforce is expanded; it prolongs the use of lower-cost HCBS while delaying or avoiding costly institutionalization.

Defined benefits for public employees

The State of Alaska has an average 17% vacancy rate across departments, with the Dept. of Health topping the list at over 20% vacancy. Public workers earn up to 14% less than private-sector workers. Providing a defined benefit pension would help to bridge that wage gap in the long-term and would make the

state more attractive and competitive in employee recruitment and retention. Without such a program, state services are suffering and public access to benefits and services is threatened by short staffing.

In Alaska, where public employees do not participate in Social Security, the average pension benefit is between \$2,133 and \$3,176 per month, providing a retirement income floor to public retirees. As public employee retirement benefits have declined, Alaska

is consistently short of the qualified workforce needed to create strong state services and public education systems. AARP is part of the State Pension Coalition organized by AFL-CIO to reinstate a pension option for all public employees.

To add your voice to our advocacy priorities and stay informed, visit <https://action.aarp.org/secure/aarp-2023-priorities-older-alaskans>.

Marge Stoneking is the AARP Alaska Associate State Director for Advocacy.

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Legal

continued from page 18

Fargo isn't in Minnesota, I haven't figured that one out either. Also I don't recommend watching the movie if you are sensitive to violence or profanity, as it has plenty of both. But it also has an interesting plot.

Jerry Lundegaard is a sleazy automobile dealer who has gotten himself into financial trouble. His father-in-law is wealthy, but will not give any money to Jerry. So Jerry concocts a scheme in which he pays a couple of thugs to kidnap his own wife, hold her for ransom, and insist that Jerry himself must bring the ransom money. Jerry intends to get the money from his father-in-law, who would do anything for his only daughter. His plan is to pay a little bit of that ransom money to the thugs, and then keep most of it for himself. Things go wrong as the father-in-law insists on taking the ransom himself, ends up getting shot to death by one of the thugs, and then ultimately the thugs kill Jerry's wife. A local police chief puts things together, and Jerry ends up going to prison.

One assumes that Jerry would not have a whole lot of money, since it is clear that his business was not doing well and he was in financial trouble. But his father-in-law had money, and only one child, Jerry's

wife, who had only one child herself, a teenage son. This surviving teenager would presumably have the right to all of his grandfather's assets. And if his parents did have any assets, this teenager would have a claim against them, because he could sue his father for having caused the death of his mother. Although I note that several other people got killed in the course of this movie, and most of those murders could be traced to Jerry's kidnapping scheme, so again I expect this young man will have to split any of his parents' money several ways.

But he would not have to share his grandfather's money. That was, presumably, going to Jerry's wife, but since she had already died it would pass through to the grandson. Claimants against Jerry's estate wouldn't have any right to that, since the grandfather was an innocent party.

So do you think maybe I should just try to enjoy the next movie, instead of thinking through the inheritance implications?

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. And if you're thinking of murdering someone for the inheritance, maybe a different kind of professional, like a psychologist. Or a pastor, maybe. Oh heck, just don't do it, okay?

Grandparents

continued from page 9

seek advice of legal counsel. Do not be afraid to ask professionals for help. Especially if there has been a divorce (or an estrangement, death of parents, or suspected neglect or abuse of grandchildren), clarify your legal rights and ensure access to your grandchildren. Most importantly, however, avoid putting the

grandkids in the middle of any heated discussions or legal battles.

Wishing you the best in this new chapter. Realize everyone will have mixed emotions during the time of transition. Take it slow, create an environment of stability, ask for advice when you need it, and take care of your own health.

Resources

► VOA Alaska Kinship Care Services, <https://voaak.org/services/family/kinship/>

► Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, University of Wisconsin-Extension: <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/grandparenting/>

► National legal resource in support of grandfamilies within and outside the child welfare system: www.grandfamilies.org.

Karen Casanovas, PCC, CPCC, CLIPP is a health, wellness and simplified living coach practicing in Anchorage. If you have questions write to her at info@karen-casanovas.com.

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A membership to the Anchorage Senior Activity Center helps support programs and services like:

- ✓ Art & Craft Classes
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- ✓ Social Events & Discussion Groups
- ✓ Technology Center

 907-770-2000  AnchorageSeniorCenter.org



Senior Voice Alaska.com

Crossword answers from page 16

F	O	A	L		L	O	C	H		P	A	V	E	
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IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS:

Anchorage Senior Activity Center
1300 E. 19th Avenue, Anchorage
May 18, June 21, July 11 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Wasilla Senior Center
1301 South Century Circle, Wasilla
May 22, June 12, July 24 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Palmer Senior Center
1132 S Chugach St., Palmer
May 15 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.

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22 | Senior Voice, May 2023



Pickleball

continued from page 11

smaller player numbers in the area.

Our second email was a one-question survey that asked which type of membership the person would potentially sign up for:

- Single player, \$35
- Family (two or more in same household), \$55
- Half-year Single player, \$30
- Half-year Family (two or more), \$50

Again, we received 44 responses to our email blast, and from the collected responses we determined that membership fees would generate about \$2,000 the first year. We may have put the cart before the horse, in that the cost of filing for corporation and charitable status, plus liability insurance and other financial necessities (like a website) would leave us very little cash on hand to do the things we had intended to do, like purchase equipment and sponsor tournaments. But, in for a penny, in for a pound!

We mirrored the Anchorage club’s benefits to some extent, but we had to back off the promise of new equipment, at least in the first year. We began to see the biggest advantage of forming a club was the status a formalized organization would give us for advocacy and future fundraising.

Here is the process I used

to create our non-profit club. Necessary disclaimer: I’m not a lawyer, your process may be different:

1. Obtain an Alaska business license (\$50 a year);
2. Create your bylaws that include the following specifics. These should also go in your state Articles of Incorporation. You should research the specific language:
 - a. limit the purpose to tax exempt purposes,
 - b. net earnings not benefiting anyone,
 - c. what happens to assets upon dissolution
3. File for your State of Alaska Articles of Incorporation (\$50);
4. File an Initial Report with the Dept. of Corporations;
5. Obtain an Employee Identification Number (EIN) from the IRS (free);
6. File your IRS form 1023, the Federal 501(c) (3) tax exempt application (\$275);
7. After you receive your approval letter from the IRS, register as an Alaska Charitable organization (\$40) with the Alaska Dept. of Law.

That’s a bit of work, and it helps to have someone who has gone through the process shepherd you through the paperwork and online filing. Reach out to an established sports non-profit in your area to see if they can help.

This Chamber of Commerce website has a pretty good primer for creating a non-profit in Alaska.

<https://www.chamberof-commerce.org/nonprofit/alaska>.

Homer is in the midst of planning a community recreation center, and we want to work with other non-profit sports groups to see this happen. As a

club, now we can advocate with a single and loud voice the specific needs of our pickleball community to our city government. Is that worth \$35 to \$55 a year? We’ll know a few years down the road. Stay tuned.

Next column: Focusing

on high-percentage shots.

Jim Lavrakas has lived in Alaska for almost a half century. The self-proclaimed “squirrel man” has found a lively outlet in the pursuit of pickleball. You can reach him at <http://www.FarNorth-Press.com>.

Video assistance with Social Security questions

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration partners with locations throughout Alaska to offer a secure video service option. Video service is a convenient and no-cost way for people to talk directly to a Social Security employee through a secure computer link that includes two-way video and sound.

The video service locations are available at:

- In Nome, Norton Sound Health Corporation, located at 1000 Greg Kruschek Ave. Video service is available for walk-ins on

a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

- Kenai Senior Center, 361 Senior Court. Video service is available for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the first and third Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

- Kodiak Job Center, 211 Mission Road, Suite 103. Video service is available here for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

The agency strongly encourages people, who can,

to use its online services at www.socialsecurity.gov, call on the phone, or use the video service option when possible. These service options can save people a long trip to a busy office.

Most Social Security services are available to the public online and with a my Social Security account, or by telephone. And most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create their my Social Security account, a personalized online service, at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

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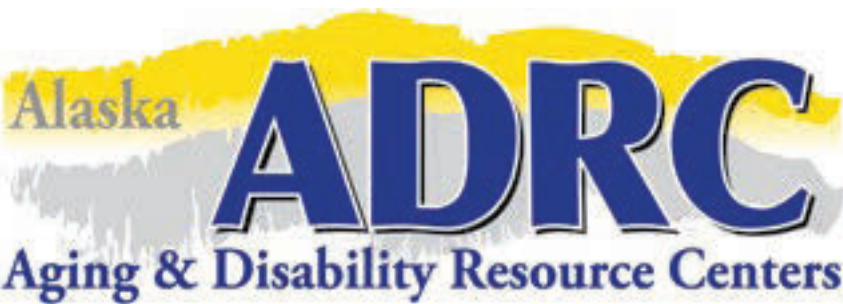
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Independent Living Center
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907-262-6333 / 1-800-770-7911 www.peninsulailc.org

Southeast Alaska

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

Mat-Su Borough

LINKS Aging & Disability Resource Center
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907-373-3632 / 1-855-355-3632 www.linksprc.org

Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

Bristol Bay Native Association

Aging & Disability Resource Center
1500 Kanankanak Rd., Dillingham, AK 99576
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The State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, administers the ADRC grant in partnership with the 6 regional sites. For more on the ADRC grant program, contact an ADRC Program Manager at 907-465-4798 or 1-800-478-9996.