Enjoy your Retirement!

Chester Park is a safe, secure 55+ Adult Community. Our Member-Owners enjoy all the benefits of home ownership with none of the hassles. **DON'T WAIT! UNITS SELL QUICKLY!**

Safe, Secure Senior Living
For more information or a tour please call:
907-333-8844
www.chesterparkcoop.com

---

Proposed tax exemption for senior home modifications.
- page 2

Anchorage’s standout but not-so-different quilter.
- page 15

Travel:
Luxurious European train sleepers and an update on Alaska’s ferries.
- page 24

Happy passenger and senior center housing resident Alice Landers rides with Combat Vets Motorcycle Association member J.D. Weeks during the club’s annual visit to Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center on Aug. 19. This was the seventh year the club has visited the center, and 43 bikes were involved.

Michael Dinneen Photography/Senior Voice
Passport delays, what's the deal?

By LOGAN HICKLE
Better Business Bureau

Airlines are seeing international travel peak this summer with families feeling comfortable traveling internationally with the COVID pandemic slowing down. Many countries have reopened in 2023, including the tourist hot spot of Japan. With these compounding factors, the $20,000 to the property tax exemption at no cost to the State of Alaska.

The home modifications incentive is a way to motivate older Alaskans to think about adding grab bars, raised toilets or roll-in showers with hand-held showerheads. Often homeowners put off adopting their homes until a crisis occurs. Suddenly they need ramps, stair handrails, night-lights or other modifications just to enter and get around inside their own home. Coping with a family healthcare crisis while working on adapting the home is often difficult. This incentive provides a way to keep elders living in a home adapted for aging-in-place while gradually recovering some of their home modifications costs.

Home modifications are very specific and should not be confused with home maintenance, repairs, remodeling or renovation. For purposes of this property tax incentive, home modifications are defined as adaptations to a home that help prevent falls and make the home more accessible, safer and simplify Activities of Daily Living for individuals and/or their caregivers and service providers. Activities of Daily Living are defined as bathing, dressing, eating, mobility, toileting and transferring. Examples of home modifications include accessible bathrooms, doors, grab bars, hand-held shower heads, handrails, lighting improvements, raised toilet seats, ramps, roll-in showers, single-lever faucets, stair/step safety improvements and wider doors.

How it will work

According the proposed legislation, homeowners would provide local assessors offices with paid receipts for their materials and/or labor expenses each year when they file for their existing exemption(s). The total home modifications amount cannot exceed $20,000 for as long as the qualified homeowner lives in the same home.

To receive the home modifications property tax exemption, a homeowner would complete the “Senior Citizen/Disabled Veteran Tax Exemption Application” provided by their local assessor or clerk’s office. To file for the additional home modifications exemption they would also complete a form documenting the modifications completed during the past tax year and provide proof of payment for materials and labor.

Calculating the financial impact of the Incentive involves many factors. Mill rates range from 0 to 20 mills around Alaska and the base Senior Citizen/Disabled Veteran Real Property Tax Exemption varies from $150,000 to $300,000. The number of homeowners who will use the exemption is unknown. See the box for a formula to figure out what the Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive would mean for you. This incentive is a wise investment for older Alaskan homeowners and their communities. The following are some costs and benefits.

---

Home modification proposal will benefit everyone

By KARLA ZERVO
For Senior Voice

A proposal to help Alaskans fix their homes so they can live at home longer is on its way to the legislature. Current state statutes provide a minimum $150,000 property tax exemption for Senior Citizens/Disabled Veterans. If approved by legislators, modifying a home would add an additional $20,000 to the property tax exemption at no cost to the State of Alaska.

The home modifications incentive is a way to motivate older Alaskans to think about adding grab bars, raised toilets or roll-in showers with hand-held showerheads. Often homeowners put off adopting their homes until a crisis occurs. Suddenly they need ramps, stair handrails, night-lights or other modifications just to enter and get around inside their own home. Coping with a family healthcare crisis while working on adapting the home is often difficult. This incentive provides a way to keep elders living in a home adapted for aging-in-place while gradually recovering some of their home modifications costs.

Home modifications are very specific and should not be confused with home maintenance, repairs, remodeling or renovation. For purposes of this property tax incentive, home modifications are defined as adaptations to a home that help prevent falls and make the home more accessible, safer and simplify Activities of Daily Living for individuals and/or their caregivers and service providers. Activities of Daily Living are defined as bathing, dressing, eating, mobility, toileting and transferring. Examples of home modifications include accessible bathrooms, doors, grab bars, hand-held shower heads, handrails, lighting improvements, raised toilet seats, ramps, roll-in showers, single-lever faucets, stair/step safety improvements and wider doors.

Try this formula to figure out what the Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive would mean for you.

A) Current year’s documented annual home modifications expenses ____________ B) Mill rate for your home’s property tax ____________ C) Mill rate multiplier = .001 per $1,000 assessed value = _______001__ D) Annual property tax exemption (Multiply lines A x B x C) $__________ E) Number of years you plan to live in your current home _________ Total Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive $__________ (Multiply lines D x E)

---

Home modification proposal will benefit everyone

By KARLA ZERVO
For Senior Voice

A proposal to help Alaskans fix their homes so they can live at home longer is on its way to the legislature. Current state statutes provide a minimum $150,000 property tax exemption for Senior Citizens/Disabled Veterans. If approved by legislators, modifying a home would add an additional $20,000 to the property tax exemption at no cost to the State of Alaska.

The home modifications incentive is a way to motivate older Alaskans to think about adding grab bars, raised toilets or roll-in showers with hand-held showerheads. Often homeowners put off adopting their homes until a crisis occurs. Suddenly they need ramps, stair handrails, night-lights or other modifications just to enter and get around inside their own home. Coping with a family healthcare crisis while working on adapting the home is often difficult. This incentive provides a way to keep elders living in a home adapted for aging-in-place while gradually recovering some of their home modifications costs.

Home modifications are very specific and should not be confused with home maintenance, repairs, remodeling or renovation. For purposes of this property tax incentive, home modifications are defined as adaptations to a home that help prevent falls and make the home more accessible, safer and simplify Activities of Daily Living for individuals and/or their caregivers and service providers. Activities of Daily Living are defined as bathing, dressing, eating, mobility, toileting and transferring. Examples of home modifications include accessible bathrooms, doors, grab bars, hand-held shower heads, handrails, lighting improvements, raised toilet seats, ramps, roll-in showers, single-lever faucets, stair/step safety improvements and wider doors.

Try this formula to figure out what the Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive would mean for you.

A) Current year’s documented annual home modifications expenses ____________ B) Mill rate for your home’s property tax ____________ C) Mill rate multiplier = .001 per $1,000 assessed value = _______001__ D) Annual property tax exemption (Multiply lines A x B x C) $__________ E) Number of years you plan to live in your current home _________ Total Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive $__________ (Multiply lines D x E)
Age-Friendly team talks community livability at block party

AARP Alaska

The AARP Alaska Anchorage Age-Friendly team hosted a booth at the 2023 Annual Fairview Block Party July 22 and enjoyed the opportunity to collect feedback about making Anchorage and Fairview more Age-Friendly. The event was lively, fun-filled and featured live music, good summer weather along with several other community service organizations, AARP partners and many engaging community members.

The AARP booth centered around what it means to be an Age-Friendly community, shown by the “8 Domains of Livability”. The Domains are Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Work and Civic Engagement, Communication and Information, and Community and Health Services. The quality and availability of these features is what makes a community a good place to live for seniors and all residents. Our booth featured graphic posters explaining each of the domains and flyers with more detailed explanations.

The Anchorage Age-Friendly team is currently gathering input from community members by asking the question, “What can be done to improve these elements in our community?” During the block party, we talked to about 100 adults and children who stopped at our booth. With a little conversation, we were happy to find people had a lot to share.

One way we collected feedback was by asking people to write or draw their thoughts on cutouts representing each of the 8 Domains of Livability. Once we explained the concept, there was a clear winner for children 12 and under. Their favorite domain was Outdoor Spaces and Buildings and the major change they want to see is to have “more trash pick-up-uppers.” The idea was probably driven in part by the number of block party organizer/volunteers who were walking around picking up trash throughout the event, but what is important is that kids noticed how this simple action can make a difference in their neighborhood.

It is more difficult to determine one clear favorite from the adult suggestions for improvement, but several people talked about the need for more affordable housing and others were passionate about the need for more public transportation options within the Fairview neighborhood. Overall, the block party was incredibly fun and a terrific opportunity to engage with many different people and share ideas about improvements that can make Anchorage more Age-Friendly.

If you are interested in joining the effort to make Anchorage more age-friendly, please contact Patrick Curtis at pcurtis@aarp.org.

Jeanne Ashcraft

Jeanne Ashcraft started out as a school librarian, but for the last 10 years she has been operating Ashcraft Historical Transcription in Anchorage. She’s 80 years of age now, and periodically thinks about stepping back from the work, but hasn’t yet. She seems to be having too much fun.

When and why did you come to Alaska?

Oh, my. I came in 1998, about 25 years ago. My daughter and I drove up.

I had three sons up here and a new grandchild, so I came up temporarily to see the grandchild, but then all of a sudden I had another grandchild and then I got a job. I’m a school librarian and they needed school librarians, so I got a job in Kennedy Elementary out on Fort Rich. Then my daughter met someone and got married and had a grandchild, and I just fit. I never left.

How do you describe your business, Ashcraft Historical Transcription?

In general, I just say I transcribe historical documents. And if they look confused, I’ll say, “Old letters, deeds, journals, marriage licenses, news, all kinds of stuff, whatever people want typed up in digital form so they can print it out.” I have to be really good at reading handwriting.

I’m here [in my home office] in my pajamas at two in the morning, or whatever I feel like, and it’s fun. It’s not a job that I could have for my permanent income. It’s second. But I make enough to pay [her canine companion’s] vet bills and take a vacation—things like that. Plus, it’s just fun. And the best part about it, honestly, is that it’s so satisfying to be doing something useful.

I think that when you retire, you’ve worked or, even if you haven’t had a job outside the home, when you reach a certain age you think, “Okay, now I’m kind of retired.” I felt this, and sometimes people feel kind of like useless all of a sudden.
I’m divorcing at age 77. What can I do?

By KAREN CASANOVAS
For Senior Voice

Q: My wife recently moved out, and I am unsure how to begin life over at age 77. She wants a divorce and I cannot imagine my life without her.

A: While not knowing the details of your situation, I acknowledge your predicament. Life transitions pose difficulties for many reasons. First, the emotional havoc of that news is tough to digest. It creates pain, anxiety or possibly guilt, then drains a person’s vitality. And people often see change as a problem rather than an opportunity. Further, it will not be just one alteration in your life as you know it, but many variables co-occurring.

What gets us through challenging events is our mindset toward those circumstances and whether or not the internal roadblocks to overcoming them will outweigh the external barriers.

What gets us through challenging events is our mindset toward those circumstances and whether or not the internal roadblocks to overcoming them will outweigh the external barriers.

Home
continued from page 2

Homeowner costs
» Taking money, time and energy to complete or supervise home modifications
» Spending a maximum of $20,000 while you live in the same home
» Documenting and verifying materials and labor expenses

Homeowner benefits
» Living longer in your own home
» Easing tasks for family and paid caregivers
» Lowering the cost of your care after hospitalization
» Increasing home safety and reducing life-changing falls
» Preparing your home for yourself and future generations
» Welcoming family, friends and neighbors regardless of their age or abilities

Community costs
» No cost to the State of Alaska
» Losing some local property tax revenue
» Administering the exemption by local Assessors Offices

Community benefits
» Reducing EMT calls, emergency room visits, hospitalizations and intensive care costs that average $80,000 for each Alaska senior who falls
» Providing more efficient, cost-effective community-based transportation, home-delivered meals, respite and chore services for elders
» Decreasing hospital and healthcare costs by $30,000 per patient for every $3,000 spent on home modifications, as Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing reports
» Lowering the number of work-related injuries to caregivers, home health-care workers and senior service providers
» Keeping older residents in familiar communities with homes modified for independent or assisted living and long-term care, especially where no Pioneer Home exists
» Increasing the number of homes in a community that are prepared for current and future local residents to age in place

Fixin’ to stay
You can support the Senior Home Modifications Property Tax Exemption Incentive by letting your local legislative delegation know that you think keeping seniors in their own homes is a good idea for seniors and for the communities where they live. You can spread the word to your family, friends, neighbors, churches, community groups and senior service providers. This property tax incentive is a sure way to help older Alaskans who are “Fixin’ to stay.”

Karla Zervos is a Fairbanks Senior Center Helping Hands Home Modification Program Volunteer Founder.

Where You Are Cared for Like Family.

Services Provided
» Skilled Nursing Services
» Certified Nursing Assistance
» Physical Therapy
» Occupational Therapy
» Personal Care Services
» Meal Preparation
» Bathing/Grooming
» Housekeeping

Servicing Mat-Su, Eagle River and Anchorage areas.

Contact us for a free consultation (907) 357-3655 • wellspringhomehealth.com

NATIONALLY ACCREDITED, ALASKA OWNED & OPERATED

Now Hiring for RNs, PCAs/CNAs, Physical and Occupational Therapists! Applications available on our website.

Gift of Growing

There is no better gift than giving our children tools to help secure their future.

We sell hydroponics systems to grow food 365 days a year
Hydroponics farming uses less water, less land, and no pesticides
We grow farmers for food independence

Contact us to learn how to leave your legacy through the purchase of a Sunny Pro XL

(907) 782-4420
sales@vhhydroponics.com
vhhydroponics.com
Robotic glove custom made for stroke survivors

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER
For Senior Voice

A first-of-its-kind robotic glove currently is lending a hand and providing hope to piano players who have suffered a disabling stroke. After suffering a stroke, everyday tasks can be extremely challenging due to decreased coordination and strength in one or both upper arms. These problems have spurred the development of robotic devices and now Florida investigators have come up with a new robotic hand that uses artificial intelligence (AI) to improve hand dexterity.

The developers claim this robotic glove is the first to “feel” the difference between correct and incorrect versions of the same song and to combine these features into a single hand exoskeleton. “Playing the piano requires complex and highly skilled movements, and re-learning tasks involves the restoration and retraining of specific movements or skills,” said Erik Engeberg, who is a professor at Florida Atlantic University College of Engineering and Computer Science. “Our robotic glove is composed of soft, flexible materials and sensors that provide gentle support and assistance to individuals to relearn and regain their motor abilities.”

Researchers integrated special sensor arrays into each fingertip of the robotic glove. This new technology provides precise force and guidance in recovering the fine finger movements required for piano playing. By monitoring and responding to users’ movements, the robotic glove offers real-time feedback and adjustments, making it easier for them to grasp the correct movement techniques. “In my opinion, we are indeed in a new era when it comes to helping people after a stroke. Advances in technology, such as the robotic glove, have opened new possibilities for rehabilitation and recovery,” said Engeberg.

Music and strokes
Stroke is the most important cause of disability for adults age 50 and older. After a stroke, patients commonly need rehabilitation to relearn to walk, talk or perform daily tasks. Research has shown that besides physical and occupational therapy, music therapy can help stroke patients to recover language and motor function. But for adults trained in music and who suffered a stroke, playing music may itself be a skill that needs to be relearned.

In a study published in the journal Frontiers in Robotics and AI, the Florida researchers have shown how novel soft robotics can help recovering patients relearn playing music and other skills that require

New coordinator at Alaska Center for the Blind

Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired

My name is Pete McCall and I’m excited to introduce myself as the new Older Blind Coordinator at the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired. I was born and raised in southwest Louisiana and worked over 20 years as an administrator and teacher in the New Orleans Catholic school system. Six years ago, I came to Alaska to teach in one of Alaska’s villages, Kotlik. I met my wife in Anchorage and have been in Alaska ever since and now call it my home.

It is my goal to help build a close-knit, vibrant community at the center, 3903 Taft Drive. During these meetings, we will have a guest speaker and share tips on dealing with low vision and blindness. We will also share information about assistive technologies and devices to make independent living easier and more enjoyable.

Medigap policies help cover out-of-pocket costs

By SEAN MCPHILAMY
Alaska Medicare Information Office

As you may know, Original Medicare (Parts A and B) covers approximately 80 percent of the cost of most services. But what about the remaining 20 percent, or even the other out-of-pocket costs like deductibles or copayments? You may want to obtain a Medicare Supplement Insurance (also known as Medigap) policy as a companion to your Medicare coverage. But how to know which one? My first recommendation is to obtain a copy of the Consumer Guide to Medicare. We would be happy to provide a printed or electronic copy.

Medigap coverage
Out of pocket costs of health insurance for individuals enrolled into Medicare may be paid by policies that offer standardized benefits to work with Original Medicare. This is known as Medigap coverage, which is plans sold by private insurance companies. If you have a Medigap, then this plan will pay part or all of certain remaining costs after Original Medicare pays first. Medigaps are designed to cover outstanding deductibles, coinsurance and copayments. If you have a Medigap, you will generally not have any out-of-pocket costs for an inpatient hospital stay or outpatient doctors’ visits if your providers accept Medicare assignment.

An individual may choose any one of up to ten different Medigap policies (or plans) named alphabetically: A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, M and N. Two of these plans (C and F) are only available if the individual first enrolled into Medicare before 2020. Other letters (such as E, H, I or J) represent plans which are no longer able to be newly issued to Medicare enrollees. Each policy offers a different set of standardized benefits, meaning that policies with the same letter offer the same benefits. However, premiums vary from company to company.

Protected Enrollment Periods
Here in Alaska, there are two different specified times when someone has guaranteed issue rights, which means that you have the right to buy a plan without being denied coverage or charged higher premiums due to your health status. The first period starts when you are age 65 (or older) and enroll in Medicare Part A and B for the first time, it ends six months later. If you apply for a policy after this period, your policy will not cover any pre-existing conditions.

It’s an honor to serve you and I hope you can make it to our support group sessions. If you have ideas of how we can better support you, please let us know.

Contact me by email at pmccall@alaskabvi.org or call 907-771-4306.

medicareonlinealaska.com

Cover page please
Medigap continued form page 5

period ends, companies may refuse to provide you coverage because of health reasons. If you are under 65 and have Medicare Part A and B coverage because of disability (per the Social Security Administration) or end-stage renal disease, you will not be eligible for this period until you become 65 years old.

The second period begins when you lose or end certain kinds of health coverage; however, there are only 63 days under which you may exercise this guaranteed issue right and apply for a Medigap policy to supplement your Medicare coverage. The Consumer Guide mentioned previously details many of these examples in Appendix A. The variations and details are too numerous to list fully in this article. If you have questions, please contact our office to discuss with any of our certified Medicare counselors.

Purchasing a Medigap policy

Fifteen different insurance companies offer Medigap policies to supplement your Medicare. In addition, the Alaska Comprehensive Health Insurance Association (ACHIA) exists to offer coverage to Alaskans who otherwise are unable to qualify for a policy.

When picking the plan that may be right for you, assess your health care needs now and in the future. Compare premiums both for your current age and for someone 10 to 15 years older to look at changes over time. The State of Alaska-published Consumer Guide to Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) is a fantastic resource with an overview, comparisons between the different plans, contact information for each of the insurance issuers, and monthly premium estimates.

None of us have a crystal ball nor a time machine; we know that you want to make the best decision you can, so give our office a call to help.

For any Medicare related questions, contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program. If you are part of an agency or organization that assists seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

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

Medicare counseling by phone

By LEE CORAY-LUDDEN
For Senior Voice

Hi, my name is, Lee Coray-Ludden, I am a Certified Medicare Counselor serving Southeast Alaska and the rest of the state as needed through referrals by SHIP (State Health Insurance Program). I am available Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. My office is in the Soldotna Senior Center. You can contact me directly by calling 907-262-2322. The phone will be answered ‘Soldotna Senior Center’—it’s a small staff, just ask for Lee or ‘the Medicare person’. Thanks and have a good day.

Oct. 15-Dec. 7 is the time to sign up for Medicare prescription drug plans.

Plans change, so compare each year for the best value.

If you have other prescription insurance, you may not need Medicare Part D.

Check with your plan! Questions?

Visit www.medicare.alaska.gov
Fall health fairs return around the state

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

September is a bustling month for Alaska Health Fair, with numerous opportunities to participate in health education and affordable blood and health screenings. We invite you to join us at these events across various communities, whether you attend to receive services, volunteer to help serve the public or share a mission by exhibiting.

Southcentral
Sept. 9 Valdez Valdez Civic Center, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sept. 9 Anchorage St. John Methodist Church, 1801 O’Malley Road, 8 a.m. to noon.
Sept. 15-16 Palmer Palmer Depot, 610 S. Valley Way, 2 to 6 p.m. on Sept. 15, and 8 a.m. to noon on Sept. 16.
Sept. 15-16 Soldotna Peninsula Center Mall, 44322 Sterling Hwy., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sept. 23 Seward Community Health Center, 477 First Ave. 8 a.m. to noon.
Sept. 23 Chugiak Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center, 22424 N. Birchwood Loop, 8 a.m. to noon.
Sept. 27 Palmer Mat-Su College, 8295 E College Drive, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sept. 30 Anchorage Egan Civic and Convention Center, 555 W. 5th Ave., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Southeast
Sept. 30 Skagway Skagway Rec. Center, 455 13th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tanana Valley and northern regions
Sept. 12 Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Office, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sept. 26 Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Office, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Sept. 30 Delta Junction Delta Junction Elementary School, 2659 Nistler Rd., 8 a.m. to noon.

Prostate cancer and the Alaska Men’s Run

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month and Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is dedicated to educating our community and supporting early detection and intervention. Here’s what you need to know.

Understanding prostate cancer
Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men in the United States. The cause is not entirely understood, but risk factors may include age, family history, and race. Early symptoms may include difficulty in urination, blood in the urine or semen, and pelvic discomfort.

Early detection of prostate cancer greatly increases the chance of successful treatment. Currently, metastatic prostate cancer is incurable, making early detection and intervention critical.

Partnership with Alaska Men’s Run
Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is proud of our long-standing partnership with the Alaska Men’s Run, an organization impacting men’s health in our community for over 30 years. This collaboration has enabled us to provide free PSA (Prostate Specific Antigen) tests at all of our health fairs, while supplies last.

Alaska Men’s Run is an annual event held in Anchorage, aiming to raise awareness and funds for prostate and testicular cancer. This year’s run is on Saturday, Sept. 16. Learn more at https://alaskamensrun.com.
New guidelines for latest Alzheimer's medications

Also: Olive oil may help protect from dementia

By JOHN SCHIESZER
For Senior Voice

Olive oil packs powerful punch against dementia

Switching your cooking oils to olive oil may have important hidden brain benefits. A new study is suggesting that incorporating olive oil into your diet may help reduce the risk of dying from dementia. As many countries face rising rates of Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia, the study offers hope that healthy lifestyle factors such as diet can help to prevent or slow the progression of brain deterioration.

“Our study reinforces dietary guidelines recommending vegetable oils such as olive oil and suggests that these recommendations not only support heart health, but potentially brain health,” said Anne-Julie Tessier, a postdoctoral fellow at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, Mass. “Opting for olive oil, a natural product, instead of fats such as margarine and commercial mayonnaise is a safe choice and may reduce the risk of fatal dementia.”

Dementia includes a range of conditions in which abnormalities in thinking or memory affect a person’s daily activities. Alzheimer’s disease, a progressive and fatal disease affecting an estimated 5.7 million Americans, is the most common form of dementia. This new study is the first to investigate the relationship between diet factors and dementia-related death. Scientists analyzed dietary questionnaires and death records collected from more than 90,000 Americans over three decades. During the study period, 4,749 participants died from dementia.

The study showed that people who consumed more than half a tablespoon of olive oil per day had a 28% lower risk of dying from dementia compared with those who never or rarely consumed olive oil. Research suggests that people who regularly use olive oil instead of processed or animal fats tend to have healthier diets overall. However, Tessier noted that the relationship between olive oil and dementia mortality risk in this study was independent of overall diet quality, suggesting that olive oil has properties that are uniquely beneficial for brain health.

“Some antioxidant compounds in olive oil can cross the blood-brain barrier, potentially having a direct effect on the brain,” said Tessier. “It is also possible that olive oil has an indirect effect on brain health by benefitting cardiovascular health.”

Previous studies have linked higher olive oil intake with a lower risk of heart disease. Incorporating olive oil as part of a Mediterranean dietary pattern has also been shown to help protect against cognitive decline. Tessier cautioned that the research is observational and does not prove that olive oil is the cause of the reduced risk of fatal dementia.

Additional studies such as randomized controlled trials will be needed to confirm the effects and determine the optimal quantity of olive oil to consume in order to reap these benefits. Overall, however, the study aligns with dietary recommendations and bolsters the evidence for using olive oil in place of other oils.

New guidance on latest treatments for early Alzheimer’s disease

New therapies for early Alzheimer’s disease are changing how patients are being managed. Monoclonal antibodies that remove amyloid plaques in the brain are bringing new hope to people whose lives have been affected by Alzheimer’s disease. Now, the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) has developed new guidelines for patients. The guidelines are derived from expert consensus about new and emerging therapies.

“Neurologists care for millions of people with Alzheimer’s disease and many people with early forms of dementia are eager to learn if these new therapies could help them,” said AAN president Dr. Carlyne E. Jackson. “To help neurologists provide the highest quality care, experts with the American Academy of Neurology have summarized the available evidence on anti-amyloid monoclonal antibodies so that neurologists, patients and their caregivers can make informed decisions together about possible treatment with these therapies.”

The guidelines provide the latest available information on lecanemab, aducanumab and donanemab.

“Recent data on lecanemab and other monoclonal antibody infusions targeting amyloid-β protein make clear that new agents are highly likely to be part of the toolkit for neurologists caring for people with Alzheimer’s disease,” said Dr. Vijay K. Ramanan with the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Lecanemab received traditional FDA approval on July 6, 2023. Aducanumab received accelerated approval from the FDA in June 2021, but has not yet received traditional approval. Donanemab is available only to individuals participating in a clinical trial. Donanemab is not yet approved, but a decision on traditional FDA approval is expected within the next four months. All of these agents are administered through regular infusions and monitoring with multiple brain scans.

Currently, only individuals with early symptomatic forms of the disease, mild cognitive impairment or mild dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease, may qualify to receive lecanemab. There is a concern that some patients may take these drugs inappropriately out of desperation. Neurologists says all older adults should be counseled about certain genetic risk factors and must not have a history of strokes.

If a person is taking certain anticoagulant medications that are commonly prescribed to older adults, they may not be eligible. The goal of using these therapies is to remove amyloid-β plaques and slow cognitive decline. These new therapies are not a cure for the disease. There is reason for optimism as there are dozens of very promising new agents in the development stage.

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.
YOU’RE INVITED

#1 Most Modifiable Risk Factor for Preventing Dementia

The Early Treatment of Hearing Loss and Tinnitus with Modern Treatment Plans

September 26th
Doors open at 10:00am

Aloft Hotel • 310 West 36th Avenue and C Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Reserve Your Seat at: audassociatesliveevents.com or Call (907) 312-2578

Who This Event Is For:
1. If you have experienced Tinnitus, or ringing/buzzing/chirping in the ears
2. If your doctor has ever told you that you were diabetic
3. If you have high blood pressure
4. If you sometimes have difficulty hearing
5. If you are retired without a driving purpose
6. If you forget more than you used to, or are having more memory lapse
7. If any of the above apply to you, a loved one, or neighbor we look forward to seeing you and them at this Dementia Education Event

Learn From Guest Lecturer
Harvard Medical & M.I.T. Trained Neuroscientist and Certified Dementia Practitioner

Dr. Keith Darrow, PhD, CCC-A
M.I.T. and Harvard Medical Trained Neuroscientist and Clinical Audiologist
Amazon #1 New Release & Best-Selling Author
Spokesman, Excellence In Audiology
Expert in Speech and Hearing Bioscience and Technology
Professor at Worcester State University
Nationally Recognized Speaker, Trainer, and Researcher
Research Associate at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

His publications and research cited over 1000 times

FREE GIFT FOR ALL ATTENDEES
FREE Copy of Dr. McCarty’s Best Selling Book, ‘Isolation The Last Frontier’

LIMITED SEATING • RSVP REQUIRED
Robotic
continued from page 5

dexterity and coordination. While wearing the glove, humans can use it to gain control over the movement of each finger to a significant extent. Engeberg said the glove is designed to assist and enhance natural hand movements, allowing a stroke survivor to control the flexion and extension of their fingers.

Improved dexterity
The glove supplies hand guidance, providing support and amplifying dexterity. Each fingertip contains an array of 16 flexible sensors or ‘taxels,’ which give tactile sensations to the wearer’s hand upon interaction with objects or surfaces.

“For example, the robotic glove is certainly an important advance in stroke rehabilitation. Not only can the glove be used by stroke victims, but it could be used broadly by people with spinal cord injuries, brachial plexus injuries, basically anyone who has impaired motor control or sensation of the hand. Furthermore, this kind of glove could even be used as a tool to prevent certain kinds of injuries caused by repetitive movements,” said Engeberg.

However, he cautioned that this technology is still in early stages. Currently, the robotic glove is a significant development but there are also other interesting technologies on the horizon that could further transform stroke rehab.

For instance, virtual reality-based therapies are gaining attention and have shown promise in providing immersive and engaging rehabilitation experiences. Additionally, brain-computer interface technologies hold potential for enabling direct communication between the brain and external devices, opening up new avenues for rehabilitation,” said Engeberg.

How can I get this glove?
As for availability, the timeline for the robotic glove’s widespread use could vary. While the technology is progressing rapidly, it may still take some time before it becomes readily accessible to the general public.

“However, there might be ongoing clinical trials that individuals can participate in to gain access to the technology and contribute to its further development. Consulting with health care professionals or research institutions specializing in stroke rehabilitation would provide more specific information about the current status and availability of such trials,” said Engeberg.

The researchers used machine learning to successfully teach the glove to ‘feel’ the difference between playing a correct versus incorrect version of a beginner’s song on the piano. The glove operated autonomously without human input, with pre-programmed movements. The song was “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” which requires four fingers to play.

“We found that the glove can learn to distinguish between correct and incorrect piano play. This means it could be a valuable tool for personalized rehabilitation of people who wish to re-learn to play music,” said Engeberg.

The authors foresee that patients might ultimately wear a pair of these gloves to help both hands independently regain dexterity, motor skills and a sense of coordination.

The technology developed by professor Engeberg and the research team is truly a game-changer for individuals with neuromuscular disorders and reduced limb functionality,” said Stella Batalama, who is the dean of the FAU College of Engineering and Computer Science. “Although other soft robotic actuators have been used to play the piano, our robotic glove is the only one that has demonstrated the capability to ‘feel’ the difference between correct and incorrect versions of the same song.”

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.

A whole new way to get healthy

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

Omada® surrounds participants with the tools and support they need to lose weight and reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

• Personalized program
• Weekly online lessons
• Professional health coach
• Small online peer group
• Wireless smart scale

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

Learn more:

omadahealth.com/alaska

For more information, email diabetes@alaska.gov
Make a difference in seniors’ lives
Become a Long Term Care Ombudsman volunteer

Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman

Do you care deeply about improving seniors’ quality of life? Join us in speaking up for Alaska seniors living in long term care facilities. As a Long Term Care Ombudsman volunteer, you’ll advocate for residents of assisted living homes and skilled nursing facilities across Alaska.

We need compassionate volunteers statewide who want to defend seniors’ rights and dignity. Free training is provided, and you’ll be supported every step of the way. No previous experience required – just bring your empathy, patience, and drive to help vulnerable older adults.

Volunteer opportunities are available in Anchorage, Bethel, Eagle River, Fairbanks and many more communities. Uplift someone’s golden years. Contact Alvin Ancheta at 907-334-4480 or 1-800-730-6393 to learn more about this rewarding volunteer role. Make a difference today! Our next volunteer orientation and training dates are Saturday, Oct. 28 and Saturday Nov. 4.

Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

Family Caregiver Support Programs offer free support meetings to allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend.

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

ARA also hosts a statewide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Sept. 14 and 28), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Caregiver Support Group meets every Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. The group is available to all caregivers in the region. For more information and a Zoom invitation, call Denny Darby at 907-463-6181 or email Denny.Darby@ccs-juneau.org.

Virtual assistive technology expo

Senior Voice Staff

Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) will host its second annual virtual expo Sept. 12 and 14, with speakers and presentations on topics related to accessibility such as increasing home safety; Microsoft Office accessibility features; reminders and other memory aid tools and technologies; low-tech technologies and tools for low vision; even a session on assistive technologies for agricultural work.

Sessions are conducted online, from 9 a.m. to noon each day, and free for everyone. For schedule information and registration, visit https://bit.ly/44yKlMp. Call ATLA at 907-563-2599.

Farmer’s Market checks for fresh produce

Senior Voice Staff

Still haven’t used or picked up your Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program checks, worth $35 toward fresh produce? The booklets are available at local senior centers and other agencies and may be used through Oct. 31.

Links to program information and a downloadable application are at https://bit.ly/3BFv1LX. Or call your local senior center or meal program for details. There’s also a proxy application form that allows someone to apply on behalf of someone else.

Celebrating 20 years of Assisted Living!

PROVIDING YOUR LOVED ONE WITH PRIVACY, DIGNITY, AND INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

48 apartment community w/ private, fully accessible bathrooms
14 apartments on a secured floor dedicated to Memory Care and Special Needs
RN’s on staff during business hours and on-call 24/7 to triage resident/staff concerns
New state of the art call system w/ customizable features
Activities Coordinator w/ on and off-site recreational opportunities
Restaurant-style dining room professionally ran by NANA
Wi-Fi in common area, Basic Cable, and all Utilities Included
Person-centered care-planning provided by Administrator/RN with 20 years at the community

Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

Family Caregiver Support Programs offer free support meetings to allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend.

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

ARA also hosts a statewide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Sept. 14 and 28), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Caregiver Support Group meets every Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. The group is available to all caregivers in the region. For more information and a Zoom invitation, call Denny Darby at 907-463-6181 or email Denny.Darby@ccs-juneau.org.

Virtual assistive technology expo

Senior Voice Staff

Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) will host its second annual virtual expo Sept. 12 and 14, with speakers and presentations on topics related to accessibility such as increasing home safety; Microsoft Office accessibility features; reminders and other memory aid tools and technologies; low-tech technologies and tools for low vision; even a session on assistive technologies for agricultural work.

Sessions are conducted online, from 9 a.m. to noon each day, and free for everyone. For schedule information and registration, visit https://bit.ly/44yKlMp. Call ATLA at 907-563-2599.

Farmer’s Market checks for fresh produce

Senior Voice Staff

Still haven’t used or picked up your Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program checks, worth $35 toward fresh produce? The booklets are available at local senior centers and other agencies and may be used through Oct. 31.

Links to program information and a downloadable application are at https://bit.ly/3BFv1LX. Or call your local senior center or meal program for details. There’s also a proxy application form that allows someone to apply on behalf of someone else.

Celebrating 20 years of Assisted Living!

PROVIDING YOUR LOVED ONE WITH PRIVACY, DIGNITY, AND INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

48 apartment community w/ private, fully accessible bathrooms
14 apartments on a secured floor dedicated to Memory Care and Special Needs
RN’s on staff during business hours and on-call 24/7 to triage resident/staff concerns
New state of the art call system w/ customizable features
Activities Coordinator w/ on and off-site recreational opportunities
Restaurant-style dining room professionally ran by NANA
Wi-Fi in common area, Basic Cable, and all Utilities Included
Person-centered care-planning provided by Administrator/RN with 20 years at the community

Virtual assistive technology expo

Senior Voice Staff

Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) will host its second annual virtual expo Sept. 12 and 14, with speakers and presentations on topics related to accessibility such as increasing home safety; Microsoft Office accessibility features; reminders and other memory aid tools and technologies; low-tech technologies and tools for low vision; even a session on assistive technologies for agricultural work.

Sessions are conducted online, from 9 a.m. to noon each day, and free for everyone. For schedule information and registration, visit https://bit.ly/44yKlMp. Call ATLA at 907-563-2599.

Farmer’s Market checks for fresh produce

Senior Voice Staff

Still haven’t used or picked up your Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program checks, worth $35 toward fresh produce? The booklets are available at local senior centers and other agencies and may be used through Oct. 31.

Links to program information and a downloadable application are at https://bit.ly/3BFv1LX. Or call your local senior center or meal program for details. There’s also a proxy application form that allows someone to apply on behalf of someone else.

Celebrating 20 years of Assisted Living!

PROVIDING YOUR LOVED ONE WITH PRIVACY, DIGNITY, AND INDIVIDUALIZED CARE

48 apartment community w/ private, fully accessible bathrooms
14 apartments on a secured floor dedicated to Memory Care and Special Needs
RN’s on staff during business hours and on-call 24/7 to triage resident/staff concerns
New state of the art call system w/ customizable features
Activities Coordinator w/ on and off-site recreational opportunities
Restaurant-style dining room professionally ran by NANA
Wi-Fi in common area, Basic Cable, and all Utilities Included
Person-centered care-planning provided by Administrator/RN with 20 years at the community

Virtual assistive technology expo

Senior Voice Staff

Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) will host its second annual virtual expo Sept. 12 and 14, with speakers and presentations on topics related to accessibility such as increasing home safety; Microsoft Office accessibility features; reminders and other memory aid tools and technologies; low-tech technologies and tools for low vision; even a session on assistive technologies for agricultural work.

Sessions are conducted online, from 9 a.m. to noon each day, and free for everyone. For schedule information and registration, visit https://bit.ly/44yKlMp. Call ATLA at 907-563-2599.
Stay on the road with better driving skills

By CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY
For Senior Voice

As people age, it becomes more important for them to match their driving habits to their abilities. Safe driving habits ensure everyone’s well-being on the road, not just the driver. While aging does not necessarily mean a decline in driving abilities, certain changes in vision, reaction time and strength may require adjustments. By adopting specific habits, the more experienced drivers can enhance their driving skills and reduce the risk of accidents.

Start with maintenance
Schedule regular health check-ups to monitor your physical and cognitive abilities, as these can directly impact driving performance. Eye examinations and hearing tests can help identify potential issues early and allow for appropriate interventions or adjustments. You might need glasses or hearing aids, sunlight-reactive lenses for your eyeglasses, or maybe even yellow-tinted sunglasses, and not even have noticed it yet.

With proper maintenance, drivers can enhance their driving skills. Talk to a physical therapist or your primary caregiver about exercises that can help. Developing those hand-eye skills makes it easier to react to unexpected situations on the road.

Keep up with traffic laws
Traffic rules change frequently. Over time, traffic laws and regulations change so it is extremely important for all drivers to stay informed about current laws. Did the state make it illegal to occupy the left lane except when passing yet? What about when you are driving slower than the speed limit because of weather? When should you pull over and let traffic pass you? Taking a driving refresher course or participating in driver’s education programs specifically designed for older adults can provide updated information and reinforce safe driving practices. Perhaps providing a record that you took the classes to your insurance company will lower your insurance costs.

Your attention is required
Becoming distracted can worsen a driver’s focus and reaction time, and the distraction can lead to disorientation about where you are. Drivers should minimize distractions by focusing on the road. Avoid using mobile phones and do not eat or groom yourself while behind the wheel. Adjust your music and GPS systems before driving.

Maintain a safe following distance, and remember that changes. Every driver should maintain a safe following distance, allowing plenty of time to react to sudden stops or changes in traffic. As we age, our time to react to something increases so you might need to increase your following distance to compensate. You should never be closer than three seconds behind the car in front of you, but as you notice your reactions taking longer you need to increase that to four or five seconds or whatever you need to be safe.

Learn to use the bells and whistles
Modern vehicles come equipped with safety features designed to enhance safety. Drivers should familiarize themselves with these features such as anti-lock brakes, blind-spot detection, and lane departure warning systems. Some of the fanciest cars even have a self-driving mode that can help a driver stay in their lane. You can also have your car connect to your cell phone and it can dial 9-1-1 immediately for you if you are involved in an accident.

Weather updates
Take weather conditions into account in your driving decision and driving actions. Rain, wind, snow, ice, and unmaintained roads can significantly impact road safety. Adjust your driving habits according to weather conditions such as slowing down and increasing your following distances during poor conditions. If you notice someone tailgating you and making you feel uncomfortable, maybe give some extra grace to them and pull over so that they can pass and not continue to crowd you into driving unsafely.

Mindset matters
Accept limitations. None of us want to admit that we are slower than we used to be, but we are. None of us want others to know that sometimes things are blurrier at night than they used to be, but they are. If certain things make driving dangerous, change your habits to stay safe. It is your safety on the road and the safety of the people around you.

Remember that you need to adjust your driving to your current abilities and the road and weather conditions. Drive safe, drive defensively, and arrive alive.
Back to school with Grandma Rosemary

RurAL CAP Elder Mentor Program

Hello there! My name is Rosemary Havens and I am a longtime Elder Mentor volunteer in Anchorage. I am 91 years old, and I was born in New York City. I love music, all kinds of music. When I was 14, I worked in the movie theater sorting the candy for sale then moved to cashier. I heard the music and I was so drawn to it. That’s where I saw my first opera on film. Beacon Theatre in New York. It’s still there. I came to work early one day just so I could watch the opera. It was “La Traviata.” Magical! I’ve lived in Anchorage since 2004. Now there are four generations in the family. I used to go bald eagle watching every summer in Eagle River visiting family and then I moved up to be closer. I lived in Puerto Rico for over 30 years. My home was right across the street from the ocean. I love the climate on the island. Some of my family still lives there.

And here, there is so much wildlife outside my window. Recently there’s been this rooster wandering around. I also see moose, bear, magpies, robins, you name it. I love getting up in the morning. I get up at seven o’clock. I get dressed, dressed like I’m going out. And if you don’t do that, you’ll get into a rut. I come here to sit here, watch the news, and have breakfast. I’m ready for the day. That’s one reason I love the Elder Mentor Program. It gets me out there meeting people and being part of the community.

Kids like me! Everyone calls me Grandma. What else could they ever call me? I love doing puzzles with the kids because they learn so quickly. Isn’t it wonderful to help children? To mentor children? I enjoyed last summer so much because I was volunteering in the summer school program at Wonder Park. That was the first time I’ve ever taken my scooter out because I didn’t know how much I had to walk. And the kids and I had so much fun together.

I spent five years volunteering with Elisabeth at Muldoon Elementary, and now we’ve been friends for about 11 years. I love her husband’s soup. We did so many great projects with the students. Then I volunteered with the little kids in Muldoon for three years up until the pandemic. I volunteered with pre-kindergarten, first grade and fourth grade. Our fourth grade students made hand-made drums. I still have my beautiful drum made by our classroom teacher. The whole school went to the gymnasium every morning and pledged allegiance to the flag in both Yupik and English. Everyone knew each other so well. All the students and staff would go berry picking together, too. It was so wonderful. I am still so close with the teachers and staff from there. We made beautiful bonds.

Retired teacher shares her praise

Elisabeth A. Kachline, “grateful retired classroom teacher,” shares these compliments about Grandma Rosemary:

“Don’t remember the specific date the Vice Principal and Grandma Rosemary walked into my room while the students were at lunch and recess, but the moment wonderfully rests in my memory. Rosemary was to spend a little time in my room and then go to the other kindergarten classrooms. We clicked. She stayed with me that day and for the next five years. Grandma Rosemary has an extraordinary personality. She is always positive. She connects with students, especially those with Spanish as a first language. The kindergarten teachers would often get together at lunch to share classroom happenings. Grandma would often bring foods to share along with her knowledge, humor and wisdom.

Today, five years after retirement, we are friends and as sisters from a different mother. We get together quite often. She arranges haircut days for Muldoon Manor and me; and we share a love of many things, including 49th State Brewing Root Beer.

The Elder Mentor Program is a marvelous resource for classroom teachers. I will be forever grateful to these wonderful ladies who encouraged students and me with their presence and life wisdom.”

Join the Elder Mentor program in your community

The Elder Mentor Program is currently accepting applications for the school year. Benefits for qualifying seniors age 55+ include paid time off, a tax-free stipend, paid holidays, free meals and travel assistance. Please call for more information and to apply, 907-865-7276. Check out the online interest form and learn more at https://eldermotor.org. If you are a school interested in having Elder Mentors volunteer in your classrooms, please contact us. You can also reach the team via e-mail at eldermentors@ruralcap.org or by searching “Elder Mentor” on Facebook to find us there.

Make sure you visit this same article on the Senior Voice website for Grandma Rosemary’s Pasta Salad recipe.

By LISA PAJOT For Senior Voice

As we near the end of summer, many of us are planning for the winter months ahead: hunting, picking berries, canning vegetables, and freezing summer’s food bounty. And the birds who will spend the winter with us are doing the same.

Many birds that live in Alaska year-round have clever strategies for ensuring they have enough food to get them through our long, cold winters. If you watch closely, you can see them gathering and caching food at this time of year. Some are scatter hoarders, hiding their foods in various places around the environment, and some cache food nearby.

Red-breasted nuthatchers, the small songbirds who you see going up and down tree trunks seemingly upside down, stuff beetles and seeds under the bark of birch and spruce and often cover the cache with moss, lichen or even small rocks. Black-capped chickadees are also busy this time of year, hiding seeds and insects behind tree bark, under dead leaves, between spruce needles or under moss.

The Canada jay also caches foods in multiple places in their territory, coating their finds with sticky saliva that helps to preserve the food for the long winter. These three birds have learned that the antimicrobial properties in spruce resin help preserve their caches of insects and seeds.

Rosemary Havens has volunteered in several Anchorage schools as an Elder Mentor. Courtesy RurAL CAP

Small birds, big preparations for winter

Black-capped chickadees are among Alaska’s birds that hide and preserve their food to get through the winter. Photo courtesy Bird TLC staff

By LISA PAJOT For Senior Voice

As we near the end of summer, many of us are planning for the winter months ahead: hunting, picking berries, canning vegetables, and freezing summer’s food bounty. And the birds who will spend the winter with us are doing the same.

Many birds that live in Alaska year-round have clever strategies for ensuring they have enough food to get them through our long, cold winters. If you watch closely, you can see them gathering and caching food at this time of year. Some are scatter hoarders, hiding their foods in various places around the environment, and some cache food nearby.

Red-breasted nuthatchers, the small songbirds who you see going up and down tree trunks seemingly upside down, stuff beetles and seeds under the bark of birch and spruce and often cover the cache with moss, lichen or even small rocks. Black-capped chickadees are also busy this time of year, hiding seeds and insects behind tree bark, under dead leaves, between spruce needles or under moss.

The Canada jay also caches foods in multiple places in their territory, coating their finds with sticky saliva that helps to preserve the food for the long winter. These three birds have learned that the antimicrobial properties in spruce resin help preserve their caches of insects and seeds.

The Boreal owl, a small owl primarily active at night, caches food too. Their strategy is to cache voles or shrews just before and after snowfall. They do not store their food long-term, like the chickadee, nuthatch or jay, but instead have a quick meal on hand after thawing their frozen prey using the heat from their freshly cached feet.

How do the birds that scatter their food around the environment remember where they hid everything, you might wonder? Studies have found that chickadees in Alaska have larger hippocampus volumes with more neurons than their relatives in more southern latitudes. This gives them increased spatial memory to recall where they put that spider back in September.

Many studies of corvids (the family that includes ravens, jays, crows, and magpies) have found that these birds also have hippocampus enlargements that aid in spatial memory. Birds who store their food must be aware of which individual birds are nearby when they are page 20 please
Class reunion is a town reunion in Glennallen

By MARALEY McMICHAEL
Senior Voice Correspondent

After making the 140-mile drive from Palmer to Glennallen, I parked my car, gathered the coleslaw I’d made from cabbage from my garden, and I walked with anticipation to the picnic area of the Pinneo Ballpark. Fifty years ago in May, 22 other classmates and I had graduated from Glennallen High School, and I was curious as to who I might find to visit with at this class reunion.

There had been no communication between me and any of my classmates about marking this milestone year, so I could only hope that some would show up. The night before, I dug out our yearbook and the four prior years and looked at all the photos and names of the seniors, hoping that would help jog my memory. I had no doubt I would recognize my classmates (even with grey hair), but I wasn’t as sure about the others who might attend. In 1993, I helped organize our 20th reunion and it was a big deal. Eight of us gathered for dinner at Tolsona Lake Lodge and then again for lunch the next day at the Caribou Café in Glennallen. We only invited the 23 members of our graduating class. I lived in Palmer at the time. Then 10 years later when I lived in Slana, I helped one of our classmates (who lives in the area) organize a picnic at the Pinneo Ballpark for our 30th. That time we decided to open it up to the classes before and after us, as well as teachers. I think we used 1980 as the cut-off year, but it wasn’t set in stone. There hadn’t been much of a reunion of any kind in several years and we had a great turnout.

So much so, that a local girl (class of 1978) decided to keep it going these 20 years since. It always takes place the last Saturday of July at the ballpark. Hamburgers, hotdogs and drinks are provided and alumni are asked to bring a potluck side dish. The 1978 graduate stores all the reunion supplies and makes sure it happens each summer.

Back in 1973, I married Gary a week after graduating and we immediately moved to Anchorage for his construction job. Since we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary this past May, I was very aware that it was also 50 years since my graduation. Since that, too, seemed like such a milestone, I decided I wanted to take the time and make the effort to attend the annual reunion in Glennallen, a town I called home beginning in 1963.

On the drive to Glennallen the morning of July 29, I’d had plenty of time to think and consider my expectations. I do correspond with three of my classmates regularly, but only once a year at Christmas, and one of those lives out-of-state. I knew she would not attend. Another of our classmates married a guy from Tonga not long after our graduation and has lived all of her married life in his home country. Others live in Maine, Florida, Texas and California, scattered with the winds. Four are local and many live in other Alaskan towns. Four of our classmates have died. I hoped at least five of us would show up to celebrate this 50th.

Arriving at the cooking area first, I immediately recognized a guy from the class of 1971 grilling hamburgers. We greeted each other and his wife and I chatted for a few moments, before she offered to take page 26 please
Anchorage's not-so-different quilter

By SHEILA TOOMEY
For Senior Voice

There was something different about one of the quilters at the monthly Guild meeting. There among all the women oohing and aahing at a "show and tell" presentation. It was pretty obvious. It was a guy.

The Anchorage Log Cabin Quilters Guild has about 150 female members— and George Taylor, who seems puzzled when you ask him why he wants to hang out with a room full of women. Well, OK. That’s probably a stupid question.

George, now in his 70s, just smiles.

In the public imagination, “quilters” are old ladies gathered around a huge quilt frame—usually pictured outdoors—stitching earnestly to finish the latest bed cover. All very vintage, very 19th century.

But today, in the 21st century, quilters range from casual piecers of fabric scraps to international artists producing improvisational museum quality work. And men are among the best-known artists in the field—men like Kaffe Fassett, possibly the most recognizable fabric designer working today. Or Ricky Tims, who brought his workshop to Alaska a couple years ago and wins international awards for his amazing quilts.

George Taylor in his studio with a design board. Stan Jones photo

You earned your Social Security.

Learn how to maximize it.

You work hard and pay into Social Security for your future. So it’s only fair for you to get the money you’ve earned. But Social Security is facing a funding shortfall that must be addressed so we can protect it for you.

If politicians don’t take action in the next 10 years to save Social Security, your Social Security could be cut by 20%, an average of $4,000 a year.

To learn more, visit our booth at the Alaska Federation of Natives conference from October 19 to 21. Find information and resources on Social Security at aarp.org/socialsecurity.

facebook.com/AARPAlaska | @AARPAK | aarp.org/ak
Rambles
News from the Grapevine
continued from page 15

Nome Swimming Pool has been closed for two months but reopens in September. It will offer a swim session for seniors, 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays, Sept. 6 and Sept. 13. Call for more information, 907-443-5717. Another seasonal favorite returns in September, indoor walking in Fairbanks at the Big Dipper. Beginning Sept. 5, join in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. Call Marya to register, 907-459-1136. Also in Fairbanks, the Parks and Rec program is hosting a community prom on Friday, Sept. 15 at the Joy Community Center, 5 to 7 p.m. This is an all ages dance event. Call for more information, 907-459-1070. The Alzheimer’s Association will host its “Walk to End Alzheimer’s” fundraiser in two locations in September: Soldotna on Sept. 16 and Anchorage, Sept. 23. The event raises funds for Alzheimer’s Association research and advocacy. No fee is required to participate, however registration is required and donations encouraged. The Soldotna walk takes place Saturday, Sept. 16 at the Soldotna Regional Sports Complex. Registration begins at 10 a.m., opening ceremony at 10:30 a.m. and walking begins at 10:50. There are short and longer walking routes to choose from. The Anchorage walk Sept. 23 takes place at the Alaska Zoo, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pick up Promise Garden flowers at the entrance, explore the zoo and head to the lawn at 11 a.m. for Promise Garden and Closing Celebration. There will be multiple walking routes of different lengths. Registration online at www.alz.org (click “Event” tab at top and search for Alaska). More information: Cyrese Gorrin, 907-215-6711 or cygorr@alz.org. Rambles is compiled from senior center newsletters, websites and reader tips from around the state. Email your Rambles items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.

Quilter
continued from page 15

Lucky for all of us, an infinite variety of local creativity will be on exhibit in Anchorage, for free, at the Great Alaska Quilt Show, Sept. 9 and 10, at the First United Methodist Church on W. 9th Avenue at G Street, right on the Park Strip. Every quilter has a story about how they first decided it was a good idea to spend hours, days, even years sewing tiny pieces of fabric together, often after first cutting the same fabric into the tiny pieces. But George’s story is even more legendary than the ladies around the quilt frame: He made his first quilt from flour sacks.

No, he wasn’t living in some 1900s backwater, too poor to afford store-bought cotton. It was the 1960s. He was living in Anchorage, working for the in-house bakery at a local supermarket, watching them dump flour out of cotton sacks. All that cotton, in danger of going to waste. It stirred the urge that cannot be denied. He salvaged the sacks and made a quilt.

When he began to get serious about quilting, he asked a friend who had been piecing for a while if she had any spare scraps he could use. (Quilters: you can laugh here.) She filled his car trunk with bags of them. “I made three go0” by 108” quilts,” he recalled. Then gave them away.

For artists like George, quilting is more than a hobby. It’s what he does with his life. Why was he attracted to it? “I have no idea,” he says.

But it’s fun to speculate: Perhaps he inherited a yen to piece things together from his father, a journeyman carpenter. Perhaps the fact that, after working a dozen different jobs as a youth—waiter, grocery store clerk, truck driver, tug boat crew, bus boy at The Whale’s Tale, a printer for five years, a Chinese restaurant—after all that, he went back to school and became a draftsman for the Alaska Dept. of Transportation for 27 years.

And what does a draftsman do? “Generate designs and drawings,” “calculate dimensions,” “create layouts,” “design, make the ‘scale’ right. Sounds familiar to anyone with a sewing machine and a rotary cutter.”

Over the years, George’s quilts have been featured in more than a dozen books, many by celebrated artists—Mary Mashuta, Judy Hopkins and Roberta Horst, to name a few.

Personalize Your Home Care with HomeWell™ of Anchorage

Home care is never a one-size-fits-all solution. Our holistic approach to home care provides a personalized experience based on individual needs—ensuring a better quality of life. Get the professional assistance you need and the peace of mind your family deserves, no matter where you call home.

Call HomeWell of Anchorage today at 907-868-3100

Around the State

Great Alaska Quilt Show
Sept. 9-10

First United Methodist Church
W. 9th Avenue at G Street

Hundreds of local quilters, including George Taylor, have shared their art in the 33-year history of the Great Alaska Quilt Show. And a whole lot of them will be doing so again on Sept. 9 and 10.

As usual, the show will feature the entire range of quilts, from beginners sewing squares into classic patterns to artists with skill and imagination that amazes. It’s not a sale, it’s a show. For visitors who just have to buy something, one quilt will be raffled off and there will be a small-quotient silent auction.

Did we mention admission and parking are free?
**Commission on Aging to meet Sept. 19**

**Senior Voice Staff**

The Alaska Commission on Aging will conduct their quarterly meeting Sept. 19, in-person in Seward and online via Zoom. Held at Seward Senior Center, the meeting is open to the public and will start at 9 a.m. and end at 4:30 p.m.

The commission includes a roster of advocates from around the state with the mission to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education and interagency cooperation.

The meeting will be open for public comment at 1:15 p.m. Public comment will be limited to three minutes for personal and five minutes for organizations. Organizations may be represented by not more than three speakers whose combined comments may not exceed 10 minutes.

Those wishing to call in via telephone can dial 253-235-8782 and follow the prompts. The meeting ID is 865 8072 6904.

To attend in person, the address is 336 Third Ave. in Seward.

The link to participate online via Zoom is https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86580726904.

For more information, call 907-465-3250.

More information on the meeting will be posted Sept. 1 to the ACoA website at https://health.alaska.gov/acoa/.

**Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers**

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the event begins at 9 a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast is provided. The next date is Sept. 13, hosted by the Palliative Care Alaska Network.

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

---

**Calendar of Events**

**Sept. 10** Nationwide National Grandparents Day

**Sept. 11** Nationwide Patriot Day

**Sept. 12-14** Nome Tribal Justice Summit, hosted by Kawerak, Inc., at Nome Mini Convention Center. Regional Alaskan tribes are invited to learn and discuss how to strengthen tribal courts and traditional law. Open to public, registration required. www.kawerak.org or call 907-443-4325.

**Sept. 13-15** Kodiak “Dementia Collaborative,” three-day series presented by Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc., Hospice and Palliative Care of Kodiak, Alzheimers Resource of Alaska, KANA Elder Services. Memory screenings (call to schedule); film showing, “Alive Inside,” at the public library; Dementia Caregiver Support Group meet and greet, community talk, more. For times and info, call the senior center, 907-486-6181.

**Sept. 15-17** Worldwide Rosh Hashanah

**Sept. 16** Soldotna Chili Cookoff at Soldotna Senior Center, 2 p.m. Admission ($10) buys you a slice of cornbread and bowl of chili from the center’s kitchen as well sample cups from contestants and voting privileges. Also, a live auction, games, live music, and a captivating car show from the Kaknu Kruzers. 907-202-2322.

**Sept. 16** Kenai “Dancing in the Streets” at Nenana Civic Center, 5 to 10 p.m. Celebrate recovery with friends, dancing, DJ and glow sticks. Dinner and desserts provided. All are welcome. Presented by Railbelt Mental Health and Addiction, and the Nenana Student Living Center. Call Bethany Jones, 907-378-1443.

**Sept. 20-23** Seward Pioneers of Alaska Annual Grand Igloo Convention. www.pioneersofalaska.org

**Sept. 23** Soldotna Harvest Moon Local Food Festival at Soldotna Creek Park. Kenai Peninsula’s biggest one-day farmers market and local food celebration, spotlighting Alaskans who grow, harvest and produce food and wellness products. Vendors, live music, kids’ activities, cooking demonstrations, educational presentations, wild edibles walks, Permentation Station, more. Free. goes on all day. www.Kenailocalfood.org.

**Sept. 23** Anchorage 27th Annual Sons of Norway Nordic Market, Viking Hall, 8141 Briarwood St., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bazaar of Scandinavian gifts returns with woodworking and Norwegian knitting demonstrations, Scandinavian music, traditional food favorites like Polse (reindeer dog wrapped in lefse), traditional soups, waffles, krumkake, Danish puff pastry, Risengrot, meatballs on a stick served with fresh Alaskan lingon berries, and more. 907-349-1613. www.sofnalaska.com

**Sept. 28** Seward Senior Center 45th Anniversary Party, disco dance party at Gateway Hotel, 6 to 8 p.m. Music, food, games, prizes, quilt raffle, photo booth. 907-224-5604

---

**In-person and Zoom classes for curious learners age 50+**

**Opportunities for Lifelong Education**

Register Now for Fall Term! Registration Begins Sept 5 Courses Posted Now on Website

www.OleAnchorage.org or (907) 231-0095

**Deadline for October edition is September 15.**
From bankruptcy to Skagway elite

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

Harriet Smith Pullen left her children with friends in Seattle, and a bankrupt farm in Cape Flattery, and arrived broke in Skagway on Sept. 8, 1897. Although husband Daniel came with her, their marriage ended after he continued on to the Klondike and later died in Seattle in 1910.

Earning $3 a day (about $108 in 2023 dollars) as a cook for Capt. William Moore, one of Skagway’s founders, the enterprising 37-year-old soon opened a tent restaurant to feed Skagway’s hungry stumpters. She also began baking pies in pie tins made from discarded cans.

It didn’t take long for Pullen to gain a reputation as a pie baker by using the tons of dried apples included in every stumpter’s outfit to create her pastries. She eventually made enough money to send for her three sons to help with the business, which she’d moved into a log building.

An experienced horsewoman, Pullen also saw an opportunity to provide the stumpters with transportation as well as food. She sent for her seven horses, and when they arrived in Skagway, she jumped into a rowboat and guided them to shore because no one else would bring them in.

With grit and courage, along with her care and knowledge of horses, she hired out to pack prospectors and their supplies over the White Pass ‘Trail. Pullen became one of the few women packers on the trail, surviving the rough conditions and the corruption imposed by Soapy Smith and his band of thieves.

Her business was so successful that she netted a grubstake that would bring them in.

An experienced horsewoman, Pullen also saw an opportunity to provide the stumpters with transportation as well as food. She sent for her seven horses, and when they arrived in Skagway, she jumped into a rowboat and guided them to shore because no one else would bring them in.

With grit and courage, along with her care and knowledge of horses, she hired out to pack prospectors and their supplies over the White Pass ‘Trail. Pullen became one of the few women packers on the trail, surviving the rough conditions and the corruption imposed by Soapy Smith and his band of thieves.

Her business was so successful that she netted a grubstake that would bring them in.

An experienced horsewoman, Pullen also saw an opportunity to provide the stumpters with transportation as well as food. She sent for her seven horses, and when they arrived in Skagway, she jumped into a rowboat and guided them to shore because no one else would bring them in.

With grit and courage, along with her care and knowledge of horses, she hired out to pack prospectors and their supplies over the White Pass ‘Trail. Pullen became one of the few women packers on the trail, surviving the rough conditions and the corruption imposed by Soapy Smith and his band of thieves.

Her business was so successful that she netted a grubstake that would bring them in.
When and how to ‘reset’ play in pickleball

By JIM LAVRAKAS
For Senior Voice

So, you’re out there banging away at your opponents and they’re banging it right back at you. Something’s got to give as the speed of the ball and the pace of the return continues to climb. You see that your returns to your opponents also continue to rise in the air and you know that it’s only a matter of seconds before they are able to hit down on the ball and win the point.

What can you do as the frenetic energy builds,
sudden. I think we have a need to be relevant and to be contributing in some way, whether it’s volunteering, whether it’s just going to church and having breakfast with people, or we’re making a beautiful garden in your neighborhood—whatever.

We want to be relevant. And this honestly gives me a huge amount of satisfaction that way, because I’m helping preserve really important stuff to families and to companies and to businesses. For example, Corpus Christi, Texas. I transcribed all of their city council meeting minutes from the time they started in 1848 until about 1904, when they got their first typewriter.

I only transcribe from written to written. I don’t do auditory. Almost everything is sent to me as a scan, emailed as a scan, or a JPEG, or something. Every once in a while—in fact, any day—I’m going to receive in the mail an actual journal, a great grandmother’s travel journal, from this client who wants this done. Because the binding is fragile, he doesn’t want to have to crack it open to scan the pages, so he’s sending me the journal. I’ll just work from that. I do that three, four times a year. Once in a while I get a whole box of war letters. It’s just too much for the client to take each one out of the envelope and unfold them and scan them. I’ve never had trouble receiving anything, protecting anything—everything gets back to the owner.

When did you start doing this?

I started in 2013. I had knee replacement surgery and I was sitting in a chair all day, and I got bored. I had an old journal of a great uncle who walked from Hamburg, Germany to Switzerland just before World War One broke out. He kept an incredible journal, so I typed up his journal, which I inherited, just for the fun of it. I had my mom’s letters from college. She only went one year, but they were really fun to read. She was 18 or 19. Then I finished that. I thought, “God, there must be other people who have stuff like this sitting around their homes.” And I had so much fun doing it. I just had this need festering in me to be doing something other than knitting and gardening and going out to dinner with friends.

Any final words for our readers?

I guess in a more philosophical sense, as you get older you think more about the value of your time. If you’re doing something that’s become a drudge or not fulfilling, or if you love what you’re doing and you feel fulfilled and you’re okay with it—I don’t know why you would stop unless there’s something to fill its place. I guess one other thing I’d say—we’re never too old. As long as we have our health, we’re never too old to try anything.

This interview has 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.
Age 70 or older and not yet receiving benefits?

Social Security Administration

Retirement is not one-size-fits-all. It can mean different things to different people. Perhaps you have not applied for Social Security retirement benefits because you’re still working or are delaying applying so you can get the higher benefit. If you’re age 70 or older, you should apply now for the benefits you’re owed. Your benefits will not increase if you continue to delay applying for them because you are 70 or older.

Did you know that you can receive benefits even if you still work? Your earnings can increase your monthly benefit amount—even after you start receiving benefits. Each year that you work, we check your earnings record. It’s possible your latest year of earnings is one of your highest 35 years. If so, we will automatically recalculate your benefit amount and pay you any increase due.

You can claim your retirement benefits now. The best and easiest way to apply is with a personal online account at my Social Security. You can create your free account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Once you create your account, you can get an estimate of how much you might receive each month based on when you want to start receiving benefits and then apply.

In your account, you can also:
- Access our publications—like the fact sheet for workers ages 70 and up.
- Find your Full Retirement Age.
- Learn about benefits for your spouse and family members.
- Apply for benefits.
- Manage your benefits once you start receiving them.
- Learn more about applying for retirement benefits at www.ssa.gov/applyingonourwebsite. Please share this information with those who need it.

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 Kruschem 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 you 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 your 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. If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, request a replacement SSA-1099, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account. People who are delaying applying for retirement benefits can use their online account to get a personalized Social Security Statement, which provides their earnings information as well as estimates of their future benefits. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services.

Opus Memoria
Compassionate Care for Those with Dementia

Daily activities are in place to keep the residents safe, active and living out their memories through all senses. Caregivers are on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

- Private rooms
- Fenced one acre property
- One caregiver for every three residents
- Specialized training on caring for seniors with dementia
- Staff is required to complete continued education for Dementia and Alzheimer’s.
- ADA compliant

Call For Your Free In-Home Assessment

Lynetta Hagel-Grant, Owner
907.868.1919

Suzanne Hickel, Owner
907.677.1919
The deer in the headlights moment

By KENNETH KIRK
For Senior Voice

When people come to see me for the first time, they are usually emotionally prepared to deal with the unpleasant question of what happens to their stuff when they die. I mean, really, nobody schedules an appointment with an estate planner to have a will or trust done, and is shocked to be asked that question. That’s why you’re there, right?

What they are not always prepared for is a follow-up question: What happens if any of your children has died before you? Some people are ready for that one, but others get that shocked, deer–in–the–headlights look. Nobody wants to think about one of their children dying before them. It is a horrible thing, and most people, if they have ever thought about it, promptly go to their remaining children.

But in order to do estate planning, you have to answer that question. There is no way to write up a will, or a trust, without making that decision. And train for ill and trouble’s sure I’d face it as a wise man would. For that matter, I have been assuming throughout that you want the estate to go to your children. Maybe it’s not your children, it’s your nephews and nieces, or your best friend. Different wording, but the same question. You still have to say what happens if they don’t survive you.

There are a lot of perfectly good answers to this question. There are also a few answers that don’t work. Sometimes people say, “Can’t that just be decided later?” As I said, there is no way not to answer that question. One way or the other, the words you put into that testamentary document are going to have an impact and it goes to their children. That is never happened.

But let us say that, instead, I write it as “I leave my estate to my issue, in equal shares”. Your issue means your descendants. Now, regardless of what kind of document this is, if one of your children dies, it goes to their children.

For that matter, I have been assuming throughout that you want the estate to go to your children. Maybe it’s not your children, it’s your nephews and nieces, or your best friend. Differ -ent wording, but the same question. You still have to say what happens if they don’t survive you.

Nobody wants to think about one of their children dying before them. It is a horrible thing, and most people, if they have ever thought about it, promptly pushed it to the back of their mind and decided that such a thing would never happen.
Scrapbooks, flight trackers and travel chargers

By BOB DELAURENTIS
Bob’s Tech Talk

Q. Is there a computer-friendly way to organize the notes I take when planning a trip?
A. There are apps designed to collect separate bits of information from different sources and organize them into meaningful groups. Chances are pretty good you already use at least one. A word processor like Google Docs can be a decent notebook. Websites like Pinterest (www.pinterest.com) can be used effectively to organize disparate ideas if they are on Pinterest already.

But these tools have limitations. They are good for collecting bits of information, less good at organizing the information you have collected.

This is where tools like Notion (www.notion.so) can be useful. Notion is a suite of apps and services that has tools for both note taking and organizing. Notion is available on most devices, and it has a generous free tier that might be all you ever need.

There is an entire subculture on YouTube for explaining how to use Notion. The good news is that you do not have to embrace every feature to make Notion useful. Notion is worth a look if you choose, flight tracking software has become an established leader in the flight tracking space, and it is also available on iPhone.

Flighty app seems to change every few years. In 2023, the top pick for iPhone, iPad and Mac is Flighty (www.flightyapp.com). Flighty excels at presenting the most important information you need while traveling in a clean, well-designed handheld interface.

For Android, the best option is FlightAware Flight Tracker (www.flightaware.com) on the Google Play store. FlightAware is an established leader in the flight tracking space, and it is also available on iPhone.

No matter which option you choose, flight tracking software has become an essential travel companion.

Q. What is the best way to keep my iPhone charged when traveling?
A. There are a wide variety of products that fit on a bedside table and travel well. These products fit into one of two categories: stands and chargers. Stands tend to be less expensive, and usually require additional components such as cables and power adapters. Stands can be a good option if you already have extra cables or adapters available. However, stands can be cumbersome to pack. It is easy to leave home with an incomplete set of components.

Wireless bedside chargers are a convenient upgrade for both travel and everyday use. They provide everything in a single package.

By far my favorite is the Anker 3-in-1 Cube with MagSafe. The small size (when folded) makes it easy to pack. The 3-in-1 Cube is a complete set of chargers in a single device, with magnetic docks for an iPhone, an Apple Watch, and an AirPods case.

Google’s flight tracking works best when you are actively seeking answers for a specific flight. What it cannot do is notify you when something has changed.

Driving

continued from page 12

unsafe, it may be necessary to explore alternative transportation options such as buses, cabs, ride-sharing services or carpooling.

Managing stress while driving is crucial for maintaining focus and making smart decisions on the road. When you are stressed, it is easier to be distracted or angered. Deep breathing exercises, listening to relaxing music, or taking breaks during long drives can help you stay calm and in control.

Remember that you need to adjust your driving to your current abilities and the road and weather conditions. Drive safe, drive defensively, and arrive alive.

Christian M. Hartley is a 40-year Alaskan resident with over 25 years of public safety and public service experience. He is the City of Houston Fire Chief and also serves on many local and state workgroups, boards and commissions related to safety. He lives in Big Lake with his wife of 19 years and their three teenage sons.

Free Estate Planning Workshops

Law Office of Constance A. Aschenbrenner, LLC
P.O. Box 140842
Anchorage, Alaska 99514
Phone: (907) 334-9200
www.akwilltrusts.com

Discover “The 7 Threats to Your Estate Plan”
It’s all about family!
Have you protected them?

If Crisis Strikes, You Risk:
• Losing control
• Additional stress on your family
• Loss of what you spent a lifetime building

Proper Planning Ensures You:
• Maintain control of assets for the sake of the family
• Give control to those you trust when you’re not able
• Remain home without stress on the family, should the need for long term care arise
• Keep family business private

IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS:

Anchorage Senior Activity Center
1300 E. 19th Avenue, Anchorage
Sept 7, Oct 10, Nov 9 | 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Wasilla Senior Center
1301 South Century Circle, Wasilla
Sept 11, Oct 2, Nov 13 | 9:30–11:30 a.m.

Free initial consultation for those who attend the workshop. Book now to protect your loved ones.

To reserve your space call (907) 334-9200 or go to www.akwilltrusts.com

Wander the Web
Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

Travel Advice
Chances are you have seen this site in search results. I have mentioned it before, but its continued usefulness makes it worth another visit.
www.tripadvisor.com

The Ultimate Travel App
The Tripsy app is a powerful tool for travel planning. Use it to track flights, create sightseeing activities, or simply dream about your next vacation. Unfortunately, it is for iPhone only.
https://tripsy.app

Travel Article Collection
www.smithsonianmag.com/travel

There are other multi-device chargers available, but none of them are as small and yet powerful enough to fast charge three devices at the same time. Later this month, iOS 17 will add a nightstand mode to some iPhone models, making the cube an even better travel companion.

My advice, if you have an iPhone, get one of these chargers. If you want to get a head start on holiday shopping, watch for sales on the 3-in-1 Cube for that special person on your gift list.

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

Senior Voice, September 2023 | 23
Europe sleeper trains travel far and wide
From Brussels to Prague, Paris and beyond

BY DIMITRA LAVRAKAS
Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

Why do I write so many columns about trains? Because I’m old, you’re old and we can’t walk that far anymore.

Taking a train means you see more of a country and its cities, towns and villages, and in style and comfort.

Comfort means a lot at our age.

Czech railway company RegioJet picks up speed

If you’re traveling by train between major cities in the Czech Republic or Vienna, RegioJet offers economy class, first class, business class, and four-bed cabins, which are like bunk beds and perfect if you’re traveling with your extended families on the trip.

The bright yellow trains hum through mountains and valleys like a bumblebee, traveling up to 124 mph. From Brussels to Prague it’s just 15 hours. Routes include Brussels to Prague by way of Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Hanover, Berlin and Dresden. Plans are to add a route from Amsterdam to the south of France, which should prove very popular.

The most affordable class is standard, with prices starting at $206 a night, and includes reclining seats with headrests, complimentary Wi-Fi, and a selection of drinks (mint tea, coffee, apple juice). After boarding, guests in the Business Class have the option of enjoying orange juice or Bohemia Sekt Brut, including a quiet compartment for four people with electric sockets.

Remember you’ll need a European plug adapter to use with your wall charger so that you can plug it into a wall outlet in Europe, except in the UK.

America uses type-A/B plugs, while most European countries use Type-C plugs. American appliances run on 110 volts, while European appliances run on 220–240 volts.

There are all kinds of world plug adapters, ranging from basic ones that are simple but would do the job, to sophisticated but pricier next page please

Alaska’s winter ferry schedule announced
AMHS sails ahead with funding on deck

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS
Senior Voice Travel Correspondent

It didn’t take long for new Alaska Marine Highway Director Craig Torga to make waves. Since his appointment in March this year, he’s been busy turning the ferry service around.

The winter schedule is now out and he’s heeded the concerns of remote ports. For example, Kake, Angoon and Tenakee Springs will have two stops a week Wednesday and Saturday, every month this winter — a far cry from last year’s dead zone in January and February. And Gustavus will also get two visits a week. Unfortunately, this year Pelican is the only community without regularly scheduled ferry service during the winter period.

The Kennicott ferry will be coming online in mid-December when Columbia goes in for its annual overhaul, but not before a nearly two-week blackout in service between Bellingham and major Alaska ports.

“There will be a service gap for Southeast for just under two weeks between Dec. 2 and 14,” said Sam Dapcevich, spokesperson for the Alaska Dept. of Transportation and Public Facilities. Columbia is scheduled to resume work starting March 15. The Alaska Marine Highway System will not be taking reservations for next page please

A luxurious ride on the new Orient Express La Dolce Vita brings you back in time.

Photo courtesy Orient Express La Dolce Vita/Rendering by DimoreStudio

An Alaska Marine Highway ferry makes its way through Tongass Narrows.

Dimitra Lavrakas photo

next page please
Train
from page 24
ones. Easiest place to get
one may be off of Amazon.

Travel on a legend
Many of us have read
the book, or seen the movie
“Murder on the Orient Ex-
press,” and now you can
board it.

Six new trains of the
2023 premier of the Ori-
ent Express La Dolce Vita
offers six routes traveling
through 14 regions. And
three international itiner-
aries are offered through
eight countries, linking
Rome to Paris, Istanbul and
Split, Croatia.

Plus, opening in 2024,
there is a first-ever Ori-
ent Express Hotel, Accor’s
Grand Hotel de la Minerva.
Not for the faint of heart.

Ferry
from page 24
Kennicott after the end of
February until it becomes
clear whether there will be
enough crew to run both
mainliners.

This winter, ferries Le-
Conte and Hubbard will
share service through the
Lynn Canal, meaning either
one ship will run or the
other. That accommodates
the scheduled overhaul of
LeConte, which begins at
the end of November, and
the Hubbard, which goes
offline in mid-March.

Pelican, which relies on
a ramp, will lose regular
ferry service when the
LeConte goes offline. Its
dock can’t accommodate
the Hubbard. However,
supplemental contract
providers will fill in the gap
in service, Dapcevich said.

Go to https://dot.alaska.
gov/amhs/schedules.shtml.

Federal funds will bol-
ster ferries and
infrastructure
With five of its nine ships
over 45 years old, there are
plans for three new vessels.
The first, replacing the be-
loved Tustumena and bol-
stered by more than $286
million in federal money
for new ferries and termi-
nals from the Infrastruc-
ture Investments and Jobs
Act, will be diesel-electric;
the second, diesel-powered
hybrid; and, the third, a
low-emissions ferry,
which uses an alternative
fuel such as methanol,
natural gas, propane, hy-
drogen or electricity.

In mid-August, U.S.
Transportation Secretary
Pete Buttigieg took the
M/V Hubbard from Ju-
neau to Haines with Sen.
Lisa Murkowski after his
flight was canceled due to
stress and discomfort. The
flight was deemed un-
safe.

The founders Adrien
Aumont and Romain Payet
say, “The experience of
flying around Europe is
an illusion, and a one-hour
flight is actually a grueling
four-hour trip from door
to door.

“Finally, and most im-
portantly, air travel pro-
duces high carbon emis-
sions. Midnight Trains was
born of these observations.
It’s time to choose a more
comfortable, efficient, and
sustainable alternative.”

In June, France passed
a bill to ban short-haul
flights through parliament
where a train alternative
of 2.5 hours or less exists
Voila!

The M/V Malaspina docks in Skagway.

The M/V Malaspina docks in Skagway.

A sleeper train on the fast-running RegioJet train has both bunks and couch.

Photo courtesy RegioJet

SeniorVoice SUBSCRIPTION
Just pick up the phone and call 276-1059 or toll free, 1-800-478-1059 to start your Senior Voice subscription today or subscribe at www.seniorvoicealaska.com. The QR code below will take you to the subscription page.

Or complete and mail this form to:
Older Persons Action Group, Inc.
Publisher of the Senior Voice
3340 Arctic Blvd., #106
Anchorage AK 99503

Senior Voice, September 2023 | 25

Your subscription includes your OPAG membership.

SUBSCRIPTIONS
☐ New: One year - $30
☐ Gift subscription: One year - $30
☐ Renewal: One year - $30
☐ Gift subscription: Out of State - $35
☐ Out of State: One year - $35
☐ Other
☐ Address change
☐ Low income
☐ My donation (donations help fund the Older Persons Action Group’s programs and services, including the publication and distribution of Senior Voice to low-income seniors.)

Name__________________________________________
Address _________________________________________
City __________________ State _______ Zip __________
Email ___________________________________________
Phone ___________________________________________

PAYMENTS
☐ Credit Card ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ other_________
☐ Name on card ___________________________________
☐ Card# __________________________________________
☐ Exp _______ Sec code ___________
☐ Check # _________________________________________
☐ Amount $ __________________

Make Check Payable to Senior Voice

Out of State: One year - $30

Low income

Other

Address change

Gift subscription: One year - $30

My donation

Gift subscription: Out of State - $35

Renewal: One year - $30

New: One year - $30

Address

Amount $ __________________

Check # _________________________________________

PO BOX 276, KENAI, AK 99611
Phone 907-276-1059
Emailseniorvoicealaska.com

Make Check Payable to Senior Voice

Out of State: One year - $30

Low income

Other

Address change

Gift subscription: One year - $30

Gift subscription: Out of State - $35

Renewal: One year - $30

New: One year - $30

My donation

My donation (donations help fund the Older Persons Action Group’s programs and services, including the publication and distribution of Senior Voice to low-income seniors.)

Address

Payment

Out of State: One year - $30

Low income

Other

Address change

Gift subscription: One year - $30

Gift subscription: Out of State - $35

Renewal: One year - $30

New: One year - $30

My donation

My donation (donations help fund the Older Persons Action Group’s programs and services, including the publication and distribution of Senior Voice to low-income seniors.)

Address

Payment

Out of State: One year - $30

Low income

Other

Address change

Gift subscription: One year - $30

Gift subscription: Out of State - $35

Renewal: One year - $30

New: One year - $30

My donation

My donation (donations help fund the Older Persons Action Group’s programs and services, including the publication and distribution of Senior Voice to low-income seniors.)

Address

Payment
Reunion
continued from page 14
my salad to the food table. Just then another lady (I didn’t recognize) caught my eye and we began to talk. It turned out she is the wife of one of my brother’s good friends. (My brother graduated in 1980.) And so it went. I just kept speaking to first one person and then another, introducing myself and asking who others were, engaging in so much conversation it was hard to stop long enough to get a plate of food, which I took to a picnic table in the shade.

I enjoyed talking to the mother of the lady who makes sure the yearly reunion happens – a dear lady from my mother’s generation. I also enjoyed exchanging memories with a friend of Gary’s, who knew him even before we married. I don’t know what year he graduated, but did learn he is now 79. Then I had a great conversation with a 1971 graduate, whose son I knew from my years working at the Slana School where he did his first year of teaching in 2002. I laughed with a lady whose son I knew from the future and wonder purposefully change my childhood memories.

Later that night, I made a list of everyone I could think of that attended and came up with 32. And yes, several were from out-of-state. There were only two people I absolutely did not recognize and had to ask their names, but they were quite a bit older than me, graduating before I became a freshman.

I was among the last to leave, staying until almost all the food had been cleared away and the supplies had been packed up in the boxes for another year, wanting to soak up enough nostalgia to last a long time. Then I took a leisurely drive around town, taking photos and reliving childhood memories.

I marveled at how quickly 50 years passed. Then I purposefully change my mindset and look toward the future and wonder about those years, too, as I continue on this journey of life.

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

Passport
continued from page 2
Scam Tracker that mentions the word “passport.” What’s happening here is bad actors are setting up official-looking websites to sell passports that simply don’t exist, and they aren’t authorized or even capable of making these documents.

Individuals have reported to BBB that they lost money using websites they found through an online search or on social media. They filled out a form and paid a processing fee. They thought they were on a government website because it looked official. But it wasn’t. And to make matters worse, these fake websites often collected applicants’ Social Security Numbers and other personal information. Giving up that personal information is worse than losing a few hundred dollars in a one-time transaction.

What can you do?
Consider submitting for a passport now whether you need it or not, just in case travel comes up. Even if you don’t have any plans to travel internationally, it’s best that you play the waiting game now while you don’t need a passport, instead of a month out from a trip.

As with any government document, only use official government websites to gather information on passports and submit documents. Ensure you are visiting websites ending in “.gov” like https://travel.state.gov. You can visit travel.state.gov to find up-to-date information on processing times and to learn how to submit for your passport. You can also head over to www.BBB.org/travel to stay on top of all the latest information and helpful tips for your upcoming vacation.

Logan Hickle is a PR and communications manager at BBB Great West and Pacific.
of the reset says it simply: “A reset is nothing more than a third shot drop performed at a time when you find yourself not in control of the point.” A third shot drop is a return that drops softly in the kitchen where your opponent is challenged to slow their own game down. “Kitchen” is the nickname for the “no-volley zone”.

There’s two major ways to reset. If you’re on the run you simply want to get your paddle out in front of you the best you can and connect with the ball as low as you can so that its return has a higher arc, while still aiming to drop in the kitchen. This helps make the shot unattackable and gives you time to recover.

You’re trying to slow the game down, so hitting back hard is unproductive. And you will most likely dump the ball in the net. “Just get it over” softly into the kitchen and you will have achieved the slowdown you’re looking for.

You may have to retreat to do this. And in pickleball we want to strive to move forward to the net, yes? But there are times when retreating is the best and only way to recover from an attack and you need to take the ball off the bounce, and not volley the return (a volley is a shot taken out of the air.).

The other way to reset is to block your opponent’s shot. This usually comes into play when you are at the net and your opponent volleys the ball hard at you. A block involves turning your paddle sideways and literally blocking the shot with a soft paddle hold. Using a light hold allows you to soften your return so that it just falls over the net. Again, you achieve best results attempting the block by having your paddle in front of you, in the paddle ready position. I’ve talked about this before, the “ready position”. This is the one thing I see players fail to do that can improve their game immediately. Get, and keep, your paddle in the ready position. That means, get your paddle out in front of you with your non-paddle hand resting near your paddle hand wrist (see photo). To get into the habit of doing this when I first started playing, I repeated to myself “paddle ready, paddle ready” after every shot, and that prompted me to bring my paddle back up after a shot.

There are some very good videos of resetting on the Web. PrimeTime Pickleball has a good one at https://bit.ly/4sflIA4, with player/instructor Daniel Moore. And on the same website you can see how to block a shot at https://bit.ly/3rQJkxK. These are skills that you develop over time. I think they are some of the hardest skills to master because you’re trying to change the pace of the game. Developing skills, it is said, takes repeating them (correctly) 10,000 times. So, you better get started.

This self-directed testing and learning tool comes complete with short lessons and practice exercises to improve skills on a number of common computer topics.

Courses Include:
- Basic Computer Skills
- Internet Basics
- Using Email
- Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint
- Career Search Skills
- Social Media and Your Digital Footprint

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services CAGML-247051-OMLS-21.