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Senior Voice

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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 47, Number 1 January 2024

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Tech: When buying a used iPhone may be the better choice.
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Geri DeBoer, 79, enjoys water aerobics at the Lake Otis YMCA in December. The class meets three times weekly, promoting exercise and socializing. Read about the benefits of swimming, from improved sleep and brain function to better energy and mood, and our annual list of pools around the state on page 5.
Michael Dinneen photo for Senior Voice





Access Alaska seeks peer mentors for new program

Access Alaska

My name is Desiree Rodriguez, and I am the peer mentor advocate at Access Alaska. I happen to be in a wheelchair because of a spinal cord injury from cancer when I was age three. Although I grew up disabled, I have been fight-

ing for my independence since I was 12. Today, I work full-time and live independently. My goal is to help people feel like they are part of a community and reach their goals. Access Alaska provides independent living services to seniors and people with disabilities. We are

well known for our lending closet, where people can borrow wheelchairs, walkers and other items and equipment. Recently we started our peer mentorship program in which people with any disability can sign up and be a mentor or a mentee and help other people with disabilities achieve their goals. This program is free, like the rest of our services. Mentors will undergo an interview, background check, peer mentorship training and will be paired with someone with the same disability (if available), interest and personality. Being a mentor is a volunteer position but can be used to boost your resume and practice networking, advocacy,

communication and avoid isolation. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide transportation, but we encourage our mentors and mentees to meet in our office or in public for safety and ethical reasons. Your mentor or mentee will be a “professional friend” or an “advocate”. Our new program covers Anchorage, Eagle River and Mat-Su. If the program is successful, it will go statewide. If you have some free time and need help navigating life with a disability any disability, including age related issues, mental illness, substance abuse, etc. or you have mastered life with a disability and know many community resources, this might be the perfect program for

you to network and help the disability community. Mentees don’t need a background check or training. Applicants must have lived experience with a disability and are maintaining their own personal wellness and able to support others. Applicants must be 19 years of age or older and have a desire to learn and practice skills of communication, support and group facilitation. Access Alaska will provide training and ongoing feedback and support in a team environment. Please help us spread the word. Contact Access Alaska and ask about our peer mentorship program at 907-248-4777 or email info@accesslaska.org. Questions are welcome.

Social Security and scam awareness

Social Security Administration

Social Security impostor scams continue to be widespread across the United States. Scammers use targeted, sophisticated tactics to deceive you into providing sensitive information or money. If you receive a suspicious letter, text, email, or call, do not respond. We want you to know how to identify a scammer and avoid becoming a victim. We will never:

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- As part of our enhanced security when accessing your personal my Social Security account.

If you owe money to us, we will mail you a letter with payment options and appeal rights. We encourage you to report suspected Social Security impostor scams—and other Social Security

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Senior Voice

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The nurse who fell in love with Copper River Basin

Series: Working past retirement in Alaska

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

Gay Wellman, how did you end up living in the Copper River Basin?

I came up with my second husband to Alaska in '78. I just fell in love with the whole area. I was happy to live out here with my second husband. But you know, that didn't work



out. I ended up marrying a man who had property

Gay Wellman, 82, lives in Kenny Lake with her husband and says she has no intention to retire.

Photo courtesy Gay Wellman

out here and had been living out here for a long time. We ended up back in the Wasilla area before we could move out here after we got married. I finally

got here in 1996 and it's been my home ever since. I live in Kenny Lake. It's a little community that's in the Copper Basin.

And you're a nurse, is that correct?

Yeah, I'm a nurse. I gave up my license this year. It just felt like I wasn't really needing it. I got certified in psychiatric nursing. I became a nurse in the Substance Abuse Unit, the first one in Alaska that was inpatient. That would have

been in the early '80s, Alaska Hospital. I worked there for quite a few years. Then I moved over to mental health with South Central Counseling Center, which is now Anchorage Community Mental Health. I worked there for several years, working with the chronically mentally ill and dual diagnosis. Then a short stint at the VA, and then I finally got out here

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Age-Friendly Anchorage: Moving forward in 2024

Anchorage Age-Friendly Leadership Team

Since Anchorage became a member of AARP's Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities in June 2021, AARP volunteers have been collecting feedback from Anchorage residents regarding what can be done to make Anchorage a more age-friendly place to live. Here is a reminder of what it means to be an Age-Friendly community: An Age-Friendly community should provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents to participate in community life. Well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.

The phase for collecting community feedback has just wrapped up. Thanks to all of you and the many others who have provided feedback. The Age-Friendly team now knows what residents want and need to thrive as they age. The collection of feedback included intergenerational voices, the interfaith

community, cultural institutions, professional organizations, voices from the municipality and others who share an interest in making Anchorage the best place to live for all people.

Currently, the team is completing an assessment, which includes a description of community assets, demographic information, and the results of listening sessions and completed questionnaires. The results will be used to determine the specific actions needed to make Anchorage more age-friendly.

Of the approximately 300 comments and suggestions reviewed to date, the following observations and trends rose to the top. Thirty percent of the feedback received referenced Outdoor Spaces and Buildings. More specifically, many responses praised the options available in Anchorage. However, a need was expressed for increased accessibility in winter and additional outdoor opportunities that would appeal to people of all ages. Housing, Communication and Information, Community and Health Services and Transportation each received 12% of feedback.

The remaining areas of Social Participation, Work and Civic Engagement, Respect and Social Inclusion received less than 8% of feedback.

Based on interpretation of the community data outlined above, an action plan will be created. Implementation of the goals outlined in the action plan, such as increased access to transportation or recreational opportunities,

will require collaboration with community partners, the municipality and residents. Overall community involvement increases the likelihood that elements of the plan create key initiatives, such as housing strategies, transportation and transit master plans, urban guidelines, and street designs.

AARP Alaska will be

looking for continued support and input as work continues in developing the Age-Friendly Anchorage Action Plan. If you are interested in working to make Anchorage a better place for all, please consider getting involved with the Age-Friendly Anchorage team. For more information, contact Patrick Curtis at 907-268-7919 or pcurtis@aarp.org.

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Memorable vacations when faced with health issues

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

Q: My son has asked me to accompany his family on a vacation. They've requested I choose a destination suitable for my chronic illness. This seems like an unsettling task.

A: Living with a chronic condition can make a vacation seem daunting, but with proper planning and preparation, it is possible to have an enjoyable trip.

After consulting with your healthcare professional, take time to plan your itinerary carefully, considering accessibility, availability of medical facilities, and climate of destination. Choose activ-



ities and attractions that are suitable for your health condition. Other factors to determine are the duration of the journey, level of comfort and support required.

Modes of transport. Airlines are equipped to handle passengers with disabilities and most

Everyone's experience with an injury or disability is unique, so tailor this list of tips to your specific needs. Prioritize your health and well-being to ensure a smooth and comfortable vacation.

medical conditions. Many train services offer accessible seating, ramps and disability assistance, making it a comfortable choice. Bus transit may be suitable for shorter distances and have accessible vehicles with ramps or lifts for passengers with mobility challenges. Another option is to rent or drive your own car, which allows easy access to medical supplies, and for breaks if you have back or mobility issues. Cruises are an op-

tion providing a range of amenities and services for your specific needs. Additionally, research available specialized vehicles to ensure safe transportation if you have a severe medical condition or disability.

Weather conditions. Extreme temperatures impact your health. If you experience heat intolerance or cold sensitivity, plan travel during seasons with milder temperatures.

Be aware of the humidity and high altitude levels at

your destination. High altitude can cause symptoms such as shortness of breath, dizziness and fatigue, especially for those with respiratory or cardiovascular conditions.

Since different regions have different allergens, research the common allergens at your destination and carry allergy medication or avoid known triggers if you have respiratory conditions.

Rain, inclement weather or long-distance hikes are challenging if you have mobility issues or are recovering from an injury. Be prepared with appropriate rain gear, waterproof

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Working

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and I got a wonderful job with the Copper River Native Association working with a family services kind of person—helping families that were losing their children or in danger of losing their children because of behaviors or whatever.

Then this job opened up [with Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska] and I was able to step into that, which is sort of a culmination of everything I was doing. It feels like my life has been leading me to this job. I've gained personal experience as well as my own personal hurts—and learning how to heal from those. The more we can heal from those old hurts, the clearer our mind will be. It's less cluttered. It's less stuck. I think all of that leads to us having a fuller life, if we can heal from those old hurts.

That's basically what we're trying to do for folks. Whether it's substance abuse or whether it's a burden being born with brain changes, but how to help people fulfill their life as full as they can.

And this job now with dementia is all about helping families learn how to deal with the challenges and learning how to find the joy in the challenges and find the rewards in the challenges.

You have worked way past the usual age of retirement. Why did you decide to do that? Now that you are 82, are you thinking more about retirement?

No, no, no, I don't think I'm going to retire. Not right now. I'm part time. I have done that, but I don't anticipate stopping as long as I've got this wonderful job. I get to work from home, for Pete's sakes. I get to do whatever I want. Essentially, I found purpose. That's what we need when we're older—purpose that is service—for me, anyway. I love what I'm doing.

I enjoy meeting new people. I have discovered that Zoom is wonderful. You meet people in these little boxes and they become close friends or close people you really, really care about, right? Oh, who would want to stop doing that? Meeting all these incredible people that are dealing with—oh my goodness, what they're dealing with is so difficult and challenging. And yet, we can find joy in it. We do a lot of laughing in the classes, in the support groups.

Do you have any advice for older people nearing the age of retirement in terms of whether they should retire, or should they keep on working?

If they're in a job that is draining, it's not feeding their soul—and I'm not speaking in the sense of religious soul, but who we really are. To me, spiri-

tuality is connection and relationship, not only with other humans, but with our world. And if we're in a job where we feel like we're not contributing to making it a better place, then yes, you should retire.

I wish I had time to dance, the ability to dance because right now my body's telling me, "Nah, you're not gonna be danc-

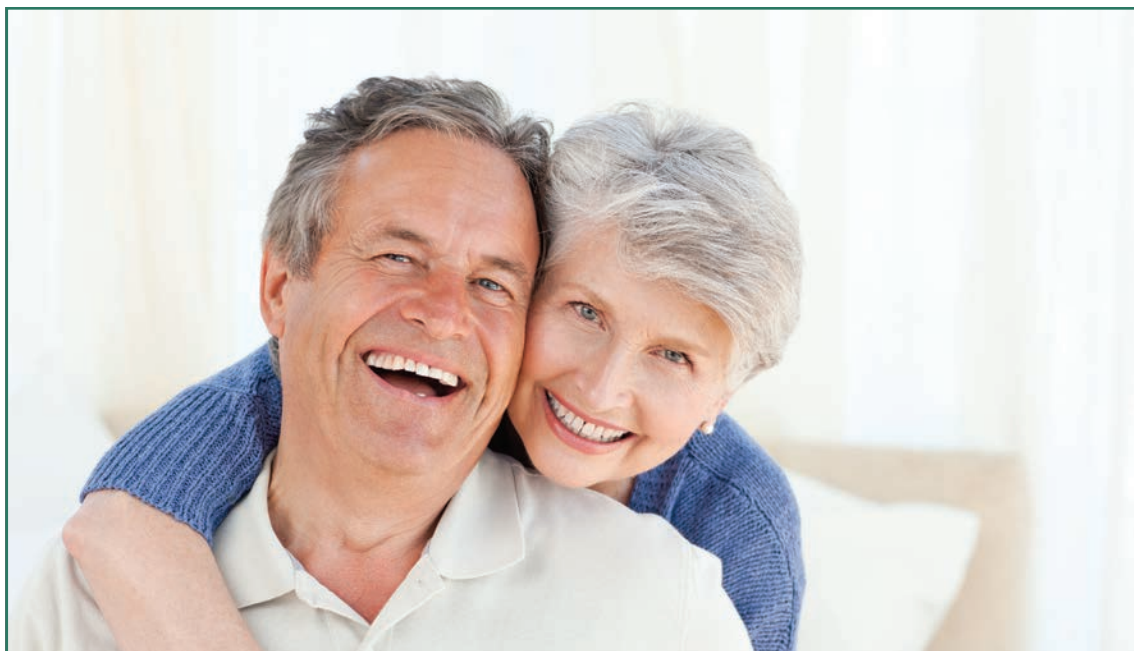
ing anymore." But in my heart, I would love to be able to dance. I'd love to be able to sing in a choir. And I've been able to do a few of those things.

At some point I want to travel, and we're doing that. My husband and I got a little motorhome. Our bodies are telling us we should be slowing down. We joke about it. We wanted to do

all this traveling before we got too decrepit. We missed that window, but we're gonna do it anyway.

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.



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Mindful grieving and recovery through yoga

By **ERIN KIRKLAND**
For Senior Voice

Perhaps the most consistent element of the loss and grief process is its absolute in-consistency. Anyone who has lost a loved one to death, divorce, illness or separation knows firsthand the ebb and flow of feelings, made more complicated by physical and emotional reminders of their absence.

It can be hard to know how to help ourselves when every aspect of our human form is affected by a loss, ranging from tearfulness to muscle aches and sleep disorders. And while therapy and group support can be



Instructor Sandy Walters, right, leads a chair yoga class last fall at Hospice of Anchorage.

Photo courtesy Hospice of Anchorage

practical ways to ease into a “new normal,” many people forget that our physical and emotional needs require bolstering, too.

Enter the ancient practice of yoga, a combination of mental mindfulness and physical poses that benefit the entire mental,

physical, emotional and spiritual self, especially during times of extreme stress. As we move through the various stages of life, working, raising children, and engaging with spouses and peers, every day is full of a wide range of feelings and emotions that require management. How, when, and where we choose to manage those emotions are key, says yoga therapist and Licensed Professional Counselor Margi Clifford, founder of Yoga For Mental Health in Anchorage.

“An emotionally healthy person is someone who experiences a full range of emotions,” she says. “Mental health is char-

acterized by an ability to tolerate that range in life experiences. Yoga is the ‘intention to pay attention’ to these emotions.”

Yoga’s roots have been traced to the famous Bhagavad Gita, a 700-verse Hindu scripture, in which “skillful action” is quoted as a framework for a fulfilled life in the form of physical exercises combined with a decisive mindset that, according to Clifford, makes all the difference.

Yoga instructor and Hospice of Anchorage volunteer Sandy Walters says yoga benefits the body

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Keep your Alaska winter going swimmingly

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

In the dark winter months, swimming can be enjoyable and an outstanding full-body workout. Further, it can be an effective way of building and maintaining muscle strength. The water provides a natural resistance that makes your muscles work harder. The resistance offered by the water may even be up to 44 times greater than that of air, suggesting that swimming may be a more challenging workout than other forms of exercise.

Grant Fairbanks, who is 74 and lives in Bethel, attributes a general overall improvement in health from doing water aerobics

twice a week. He said he feels 10 years younger than his chronological age.

“When I go to Homer and swim with older people, it seems like the best possible exercise. When I don’t get to do water aerobics, I have more aches and pains.”

Fairbanks said many more opportunities are now available for swimming in 2024 in Alaska because the threat from COVID-19 has dissipated.

He regularly visits his children in Homer where he especially likes water aerobics classes at the Bay Club.

“They have really good aerobic classes and there are different levels. Being in the pool is nice and it is not weight bearing, but

it really gets the muscles moving. You can strengthen up a lot of muscles with the right instructor,” Fairbanks said.

Michele Cateson, who lives and works on the land of the Dena’ina and is the Assistant Director of Recreational Programs at Alaska Pacific University, said older adults in Anchorage are feeling more comfortable being back in the water.

“In the last year, we have seen more and more older adults coming back to the pool. Whether it is for aqua aerobics, lap swimming, or private swim lessons. It seems the older adults of Anchorage are feeling more comfortable being back into a routine,” Cateson said.

Previous studies have demonstrated that regular swimming can help lower blood pressure, reduce the risk of heart disease and improve cholesterol levels. Additionally, studies suggest that swimming may significantly reduce the risk of death from heart disease. Particularly advantageous for seniors who suffer from arthritis or other joint issues, swimming can help reduce stiffness in the joints.

Staying active is key to health

Older adults who participate weekly in many different types of leisure time activity, such as walking for exercise, jogging, swimming laps, or playing tennis, may have a lower

risk of death from any cause, as well as death from cardiovascular disease and cancer, according to a study led by researchers at the National Cancer Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health.

The findings suggest it’s important for older adults to engage in leisure time activities that they enjoy and can sustain, because many types of these activities may lower the risk of death, the authors wrote. The findings, which were published in JAMA, used data from 272,550 adults between ages 59 and 82 who had completed questionnaires about their leisure time activities. The researchers looked at

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Denied Medicare Part D coverage? You can appeal

By **SEAN MCPHILAMY**
Alaska Medicare Information Office



While I am writing this month’s article, we are in the last few days of the annual Open Enrollment Period, when you may sign up to change your enrollment in a Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan. This period occurs annually from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7; changing your plan at other times of the year may require you to be eligible

for a Special Enrollment Period. But what if you don’t meet this requirement, and your prescrip-

tion drug cost share (the amount you pay when you pick up the prescription from the pharmacy) costs too much or worse, what if your plan does not cover your prescription? You have the right to appeal any decision.

Understand your right to appeal

If your Part D plan denies coverage of your medication, you may appeal the decision. A Part D appeal is a formal request for review

of a coverage decision made by your Part D plan. There is more than one level of appeal, and you have the right to continue appealing if you aren’t successful at the first level. Be aware that at each level of appeal, there’s a separate timeframe for when you must file the appeal and when you will receive a decision.

Pay close attention to the paperwork you receive, and feel free to call the State of Alaska’s Medicare Information Office for help in

understanding your appeal process.

File an exception request

If your pharmacist tells you that your plan will not pay for your prescription drug, the pharmacist should give you a notice titled “Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage and Your Rights.” First, call your plan to find out the reason it isn’t covering your drug. There

page 6 please



Talking to a loved one about hearing loss



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

Hearing loss doesn't just affect the person who has it. It also affects spouses, family members and friends.

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

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

screen for hearing loss during physicals.

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

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

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

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



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Medicare

continued from page 5

are various reasons why a plan might do this, and knowing the reason is very important to your appeal. Here are a few examples of reasons why a Part D plan may deny coverage:

- ▶ The drug is not on your plan's list of covered drugs (the formulary).
- ▶ You may need to request approval from the plan before it will cover your prescription. This is known as prior authorization.
- ▶ Your plan requires that you try a different, usually less expensive drug first. This is known as step therapy.
- ▶ Your drug has been prescribed for off-label use. This means that your doctor has prescribed the drug for a reason other than the uses approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Once you know why your drug wasn't covered at the pharmacy, speak to your prescribing provider about your options. For example, you may be able to try a comparable drug that your plan does cover.

If switching to another drug isn't an option, you'll need to file an exception request with your plan. This is a formal request for your plan to cover your drug. Contact your plan to learn how to file one. Ask your doctor to provide a letter of support that directly addresses the denial reason. If your request is approved, your drug will be covered. If it's denied, your plan will send you a Notice of Denial of Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage. This is your formal denial notice from the plan, and now you can

There is more than one level of appeal, and you have the right to continue appealing if you aren't successful at the first level.

begin a formal appeal.

How to appeal the decision

You have 60 days from the date listed on this notice to file an appeal. Directions on how to appeal are on your denial notice. Your provider may appeal on your behalf or help you with the appeal process, but they aren't required to do so. If a doctor is not appealing on your behalf, you should ask them to write a letter of support addressing the plan's reasons for not covering your drug.

If your plan approves your appeal, your drug will be covered. If your appeal is denied, you can choose to move to the next level of appeal. There are four levels of appeal after this first step. At each level, if you are denied, follow the instructions on the denial notice to submit your next appeal. Follow all deadlines carefully. If your appeal is approved at any point, your Part D plan should cover your drug until the end of

the calendar year.

Be sure to ask your plan if they will continue to cover the drug after the year ends. If they will not, you can appeal again next year, or consider switching Part D plans during Medicare's Open Enrollment Period to a plan that does cover your drug.

None of us has a crystal ball, nor a time machine, so we make the best decisions we can at the time we make them. If you find yourself overwhelmed by any Medicare issue, please feel free to contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program.

If you are part of an agency or organization that assists seniors with medical resources, consider networking with the Medicare Information Office. Call us to inquire about our new Ambassador program.

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

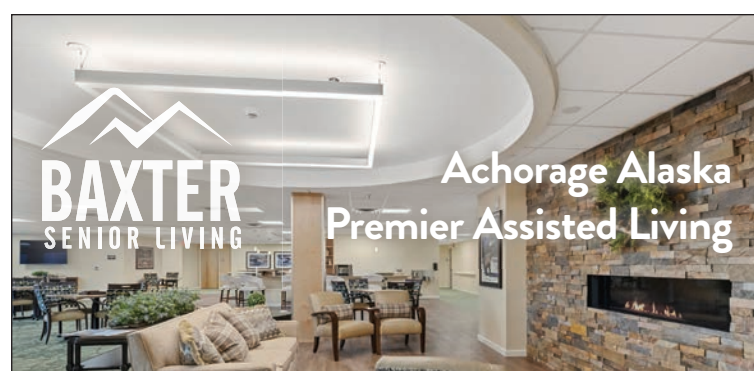
Medicare counseling by phone

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.



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Simple self-care ideas for your mental health

Also: Health fairs in January

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Let’s take a moment to shed some light on this often misunderstood and overlooked aspect of our wellbeing. Mental health isn’t just about whether you’re feeling happy or sad at any given moment – it’s a complex tapestry that weaves itself through every facet of our lives, from our relationships and careers to our physical health and overall sense of purpose. It is a concept that encompasses an individual’s emotional, psychological and social well-being. It refers to our ability to think, feel and behave in ways that enable us to navigate through life’s

challenges, form meaningful relationships, and contribute to our communities. If you find yourself struggling with your thoughts, emotions or behaviors on a regular basis, it may be a sign that you’re experiencing a mental health issue. These issues can manifest in various ways, such as feelings of persistent sadness, anxiety or anger; difficulty concentrating or making decisions; changes in appetite or sleep patterns; social withdrawal; and even physical symptoms like headaches or fatigue. If these symptoms are interfering with your daily life and relationships, it’s important to seek help from a

mental health professional. Taking care of your mental health is just as crucial as taking care of your physical health. By acknowledging and addressing these issues, you can pave the way for a happier, healthier and more fulfilling life.

Here are some simple ways to maintain good mental health in 2024:

Physical activity. Ready to dance like nobody’s watching? Or maybe you prefer the feeling of a sweaty workout in the gym. Either way, moving your body releases those happy hormones and keeps stress at bay. So why not put on your favorite tunes and shake it up?

Social contact. Got a bestie who always knows how to cheer you up? Make sure to keep in touch. Regular social interactions can make us feel connected and supported. Invite your friends over for a movie night or plan a fun outdoor adventure—the possibilities are endless.

Meditation. Ever tried closing your eyes and just breathing? It might sound simple, but meditation can work wonders for our

mental health. It helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings, allowing us to let go of negative emotions. So take a deep breath, and let’s give it a try.

You-time. Need some quiet time to recharge? Whether it’s a bubble bath, a cozy book, or a DIY project, spending time on activities that make you happy is crucial for maintaining good mental health. So go ahead, treat yourself to some me-time.

Hobbies. Have a passion for pottery or a flair for fashion design? Pursuing hobbies that you love can provide a creative outlet and a sense of accomplishment. So why not pick up a new skill or dive deeper into an old one? The journey to mastery is not only fulfilling but also great for our mental wellbeing.

Taking care of your mental health is a lifelong journey, and it’s never too late to start prioritizing your wellbeing.

Alaska Health Fair offers useful and affordable blood tests, but your healthcare provider is needed for a comprehensive health

evaluation. Getting a thyroid screen (\$35), vitamin D screen (D2, D3) (\$50), vitamin B12 screen (\$35), and ferritin (\$35) tests can detect potential deficiencies linked to mental health issues, neurological symptoms and fatigue. Consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice.

Health fairs return

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is just starting to rock and roll with our busy spring 2024 health fair season. Our first Fairbanks event is an office draw on Tuesday, Jan. 23, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The first Anchorage event is being held on Saturday, Feb. 3 at First Christian Church in Rogers Park from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Whether you’re looking to volunteer, exhibit or take advantage of the affordable blood tests, there are numerous opportunities to get involved. Visit www.alaskahealthfair.org for pricing, event schedule, volunteer opportunities and more. Or call one of our offices: Anchorage, 907-278-0234; Fairbanks, 907-374-6853; Juneau, 907-723-5100.

Free radon test kits available

Senior Voice Staff

The Alaska Radon Program will give out free radon tests for National Radon Action Month in January.

Radon is a colorless, odorless cancer-causing gas that is commonly found in Alaska. With homes closed up during the winter, January is a good time to

test for the gas.

Alaska residents may request a test kit at <https://bit.ly/3v9Qh2p>.

For more information, contact Jennifer Athey, Alaska Div. of Geological and Geophysical Surveys, at 907-451-5028 or email jennifer.athey@alaska.gov.

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Drone AED deliveries and digestible sleep sensors

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Drones equipped with defibrillators may help save lives

Researchers have evaluated the possibility of alerting drones equipped with automated external defibrillators (AED) to patients with suspected cardiac arrest. In more than half of the cases, the drones were ahead of the ambulance by an average of three minutes. In cases where the patient was in cardiac arrest, the drone-delivered defibrillator was used in a majority of cases.

Swedish researchers at Karolinska Institutet evaluated the use of drones equipped with AEDs to get to the scene faster than an ambulance and found some impressive results. The investigators have been published in the journal The Lancet Digital Health.

“The use of an AED is the single most important factor in saving lives,” said principal study investigator Andreas Claesson, who is an Associate Professor at the Center for Cardiac Arrest Research at the Department of Clinical Research and Education, Södersjukhuset, Karolinska Institutet. “We have been deploying drones equipped with AED since the summer of 2020 and show in this follow-up study that drones can arrive



at the scene before an ambulance by several minutes. This lead time has meant that the AED could be used by people at the scene in several cases.”

Although an early shock with an AED can dramatically increase the chance of survival and there are tens of thousands of AEDs in many cities, they are not available in people’s homes where most cardiac arrests occur. The current project covered an area of approximately 200,000 people in western Sweden. An initial study conducted in the summer of 2020 in Gothenburg and Kungälv showed that the idea was feasible and safe.

“This more comprehensive and follow-up study now shows in a larger material that the methodology works throughout the year, summer and winter, in daylight and darkness. Drones can be alerted, arrive, deliver AED, and people on-site have time to use the AED before the ambulance arrives,” said first

Swedish researchers evaluated the use of drones equipped with AEDs to get to the scene faster than an ambulance and found some impressive results.

author Sofia Schierbeck, who is with the Karolinska Institutet.

In the study, drones delivered an AED in 55 cases of suspected cardiac arrest. In 37 of these cases (67%), the delivery took place before an ambulance, with a median lead of 3 minutes and 14 seconds. In the 18 cases of actual cardiac arrest, the caller managed to use the AED in six cases (33%). A shock was recommended by the device in two cases and in one case the patient survived.

“Our study now shows once and for all that it is possible to deliver AED with drones and that this can be done several minutes before the arrival of the ambulance in connection with acute cardiac arrest,” said Claesson. “This time saving meant that the healthcare emergency center could instruct the person who called the ambulance to retrieve and use the AED

in several cases before the ambulance arrived.”

New ingestible electronic device may help detect breathing issues

Diagnosing sleep disorders such as sleep apnea usually requires a patient to spend the night in a sleep lab, hooked up to a variety of sensors and monitors. Researchers from MIT, Celero Systems, and West Virginia University now hope to make that process less intrusive, using an ingestible capsule they developed that can monitor vital signs from within the patient’s GI tract.

The capsule, which is about the size of a multivitamin, uses an accelerometer to measure the patient’s breathing rate and heart rate. In addition to diagnosing sleep apnea, the device could also be useful for detecting opioid overdoses in individuals at

high risk.

“It’s an exciting intervention to help people be diagnosed and then receive the appropriate treatment if they suffer from obstructive sleep apnea,” said Giovanni Traverso, an Associate Professor of mechanical engineering at MIT and a gastroenterologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, Mass. “The device also has the potential for early detection of changes in respiratory status, whether it’s a result of opiates or other conditions that could be monitored, like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).”

In a study with 10 volunteers, the researchers showed that the capsule can be used to monitor vital signs and to detect sleep apnea episodes, which occur when the patient repeatedly stops and starts breathing during sleep. The patients did not show any adverse effects from the capsule, which passed harmlessly through the digestive tract.

Over the past decade, the

next page please

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Device

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research team has developed a range of ingestible sensors that could be used to monitor vital signs and diagnose disorders of the GI tract, such as gastrointestinal slowdown and inflammatory bowel diseases. This new study focused on

measuring vital signs, using a capsule that included an accelerometer. It detects slight movements generated by the beating of the heart and the expansion of the lungs. The capsule also contains two small batteries and a wireless antenna that transmit data to an external device such as a laptop. “What we were able to show is that using the capsule, we could capture

data that matched what the traditional transdermal sensors would capture,” Traverso says. “We also observed that the capsule could detect apnea, and that was confirmed with standard monitoring systems that are available in the sleep lab.” None of the patients reported any discomfort or harm from the capsule. Radiographic imaging per-

formed 14 days after the capsules were ingested revealed that all of them had passed through the patients’ bodies. The research team’s previous work has shown that objects of similar size usually move through the digestive tract in a little more than a day. The researchers envision that this kind of sensor could be used to diagnose sleep apnea in a less in-

trusive way than the skin-based sensors that are now used. It could also be used to monitor patients when they begin treatment for apnea to make sure that the treatments are effective. 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.

Are you in danger of developing glaucoma?

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: What can you tell me about the eye disease glaucoma? My older brother was recently diagnosed with it and lost some of his vision, but never had a clue anything was wrong. Could I be at risk too? –Stressed Sibling

Dear Stressed: Yes. Having an immediate family member with glaucoma significantly increases your risks of developing it, but there are other risk factors you need to be aware of too.

Having an immediate family member with glaucoma significantly increases your risks of developing it, but there are other risk factors you need to be aware of too.

Here’s what you should know.

What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that can damage the optic nerve and cause vision loss and blindness if it’s not treated. This typically happens because the fluids in the eye don’t drain properly,

causing increased pressure in the eyeball.

But the scary thing about glaucoma is that with no early warning signs or pain, most people that have it don’t realize it until their vision begins to deteriorate.

While there are two main types of glaucoma, the most common form

that typically affects older adults is called open-angle glaucoma. This disease develops very slowly when the eye’s drainage canals become clogged over time, leading to blind spots in the peripheral or side vision. By the time you notice it, the permanent damage is already done.

Are you at risk?

It’s estimated that more than 3 million Americans have glaucoma today, but that number is expected to surge to more than 6.3 million by 2050. If you

answer “yes” to any of the following questions, you’re at increased risk of developing it.

- Are you African American, Hispanic/Latino American or Asian American?
- Are you over age 60?
- Do you have an immediate family member with glaucoma?
- Do you have diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, migraines or have extreme nearsightedness or farsightedness?

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The State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, administers the ADRC grant in partnership with the 6 regional sites. For more on the ADRC grant program, contact an ADRC Program Manager at 907-465-4798 or 1-800-478-9996.

Anchorage Area

Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Health Department
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Kenai Peninsula/Kodiak Island/Valdez/Cordova

Independent Living Center
47255 Princeton Ave., Ste 8, Soldotna, AK 99669
907-262-6333 / 1-800-770-7911 www.peninsulailc.org

Southeast Alaska

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

Mat-Su Borough

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777 N. Crusey St., A101, Wasilla, AK 99654
907-373-3632 / 1-855-355-3632 www.linksprc.org

Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

Bristol Bay Native Association

Aging & Disability Resource Center
1500 Kanakanak Rd., Dillingham, AK 99576
907-842-4139 / 1-844-842-1902



Yoga

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through improved mobility, circulation, and respiration, facilitating healing after injury or illness.

“For a human body grieving, usually there is tightness in the chest, hollow-like feeling in the gut and other discomfort,” Walters said. “Yogic breathing techniques along with heart opening postures can alleviate that discomfort in the body. Yoga philosophy offers words of wisdom, stability, and grounding. Mantras where you repeat a word or phrase such as ‘Peace’ or ‘I am healing’ can be so comforting. Guided meditation can help a person to stay focused in the present moment and let the healing process begin.”

Margi Clifford also reiterates the benefits for the musculoskeletal system, with regular yoga practitioners reporting increased strength and better balance. For Alaskans of any age, she says, this can especially help during those winter months when ice and snow make outdoor walking potentially treacherous. Then, too, are the release of oxytocin, that amazing mood-boosting hormone that initiates our pleasure senses when we’re engaging with other humans in positive ways.

Strength in numbers

When moving through the murky waters of loss, the overwhelming sense of grief can feel particularly individual, as if no one else could possibly fathom what we’re experiencing. But having a cadre of peers and a common thread of practicing yoga is a social support for the entire person, Clifford said.

“We know loneliness is one of the biggest challenges to mental health, and community is the solution. Yoga is a sacred practice. It provides not only a place to acknowledge the immensity of our experience, but also to see it from another

perspective. The ‘paying attention’ that we do in yoga helps to guide attention through the entirety of our experience. Sometimes that is past, present and future; sometimes that is mind, body and spirit; sometimes, especially in more challenging postures, it is breath, hips and feet. In this way we get to practice, within the confines of a safe, intentional and loving container, acknowledging, honoring, and continuing to be, embodied as we are, while we are.”

But how often does one need to join a yoga session to receive these benefits? Turns out, it’s less about quantity than quality, Clifford reflected. Using the mantra intention, she says, the foundation of yoga, that skillful action, can be practiced any time at all.

“From the way you purposefully move from sitting to standing, or getting dressed in the morning, it all helps,” she said, “The more often, the better.”

But for those looking to begin a sustained, regular program, she says, find a partner for accountability, then start small. Start with one pose in one class, and let the social community and movement be enjoyed.

“There is no end goal here,” she said. “The process is the practice.”

Exploration at your own pace

Volunteer teacher Sandy Walters also reminds new yoga students that taking a gentle or restorative yoga class at first will be most helpful.

“Try out other different styles of movement and breathwork to find the one that resonates for you. Grief can bring a different need each day. What’s important is building a consistent practice with the support of the yoga instructor/therapist who can assist a person in healing.”

The more our bodies become accustomed to the poses and actions, the easier it will be and the better we will feel. A structured class of 10 minutes, either online or in person, is a

great place to start. Aren’t sure about where to go? Ask your healthcare provider, friends, or therapist for recommendations. Key to this, Clifford also cautions,

is to find a yoga teacher who makes you feel secure and confident about practicing in your current physical and mental condition. Yoga For Mental Health

is starting a new schedule of activities in January. For information, call 907-277-9642 or visit www.yogaformentalhealth.com.

Hospice of Anchorage

Stefanie LeBarre, Clinical Program Manager for the Hospice of Anchorage leads the organization toward utilizing volunteers and a clinical team to facilitate grief events for community members in the Anchorage municipality, like yoga.

Hospice of Anchorage’s bereavement groups and events are often led by volunteers with expertise in many different realms, including yoga, crochet, painting, and mindful meditation.

“Grief is a natural part of life,” says

LeBarre, but some people may find the traditional support group setting intimidating.

“Grief groups incorporating activities like yoga can reduce stress and intimidation for the attendees in a low-pressure environment. Hospice of Anchorage focuses on the biopsychosocial spiritual aspects of grief. By taking this holistic approach, we can support each person’s unique needs.”

Hospice of Anchorage is at 2612 E Northern Lights Blvd. Contact: 907-561-5322 or hospiceofanchorage.org.

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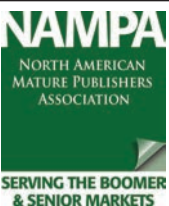
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Free support, resources for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program will hold the following support group meetings in January:
Jan. 2, Tyotkas Elder Center (in Kenai), 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Jan. 5, Soldotna Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.
Jan. 16, Kenai Senior Center, 1 to 2 p.m.
Jan. 18, Sterling Senior Center, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Jan. 26, Nikiski Senior Center, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. For more information or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Kebschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654.
The **Homer** caregiver

support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Jan. 11 and 25), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.
Around the state
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, Talkeetna, Willow. Call 1-800-478-1080 for details.
ARA also hosts a statewide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 1 to 2 p.m. For information, call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.
In **Southeast Alaska**, the Southeast Senior Services 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.
The national Alzheimer’s Association operates a 24-hour help line for caregivers, staffed by specialists and Masters-level clinicians, at 800-272-3900.
Family caregiver tip of the month
New Year resolutions for caregivers can be opportunities for growth but can sometimes feel like punishments. One of the things I hate about New Year resolutions is they seem to be about taking away something rather than giving yourself something. But when our brains think of resolutions as punishment rather than pleasure, it’s hard to maintain them.
Here are some ideas to get you started:
Accept help. Those

called to caregiving know in ways others don’t that giving care too often means putting yourself last. But let’s face it, you can’t do everything. Quite simply, you deserve a break. While you’re at it, don’t just experience the beauty of your own respite. Witness the enjoyment your loved one may get from interacting with others who might step in to provide care while you are gone. Lean on friends and let them help ... they want to, you know!
Laugh, exercise and relax. Not necessarily in that order. But understand the importance of letting go. Laughter has long been touted as an antidote for what ails you, and exercise tones our bodies as well as our minds. It helps to relax muscles, relieves pain and boosts the immune system. Laughter and exercise together are a formidable formula for relaxation. Why not rent a funny movie? Read a captivating book? Tell a joke? You can do it.

After all, life can be a grin.
Maintain “me” time. No matter your obligations, continue with hobbies and personal routines. Read a good book, dig in the dirt, create a scrapbook or even cook. Take a warm bubble bath. Light some candles. Treat yourself to a manicure or a pedicure. Or maybe even schedule a massage. Keep up with friends and social activities. After all, time away can be a quality investment since you will return refreshed and ready to tackle new challenges.
Stay positive. Your outlook is contagious and by turning the corners of your mouth up, you just might help your loved one do the same. Keeping a journal can provide an outlet for your emotions and can double as a barometer of your moods and attitudes.
Take care of yourself. As a caregiver, it’s easy to neglect your own needs and focus solely on the needs

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Pickleball mobility: Your best moves happen before your game

By JANET WARNER

For Senior Voice

Pickleball, a funny name for the fastest growing sport for several years now.

My office at The Alaska Club East is near the area where we have our pick-up pickleball games. The sounds are iconic – the paddle hitting the ball, the ball bouncing on the floor, the shoes squeaking. However, it's always more than these mechanical sounds. There are oohs, ahhs, "I got it", high fives and laughter, so much laughter.

Players are in love with the game of pickleball. It addresses so many needs – activity, easy to get started, ability to progress and get better, pure enjoyment of the experience, and social time, all play a role in the love of the game. When we combine movement with quality people connections, our sense of wellbeing and happiness skyrocket.

Unfortunately, that happiness can be negatively impacted when we incur an injury. The most common injuries in pickleball involve the ankles, knees, shoulders, back, elbows



The Alaska Club fitness trainer Ty Tinker demonstrates a balance exercise to improve mobility.

The Alaska Club photo

and wrists. That's pretty much the overall body, huh? The shoulders, elbows and wrist issues are usually on the paddle side, which makes sense as that's the arm that's reaching for the ball and swinging. It also means that unless we play equally with right and left, we are using one side of our body much more than the

other. However, we can make these areas strong and ready with mobility exercises. Of course, the lower body issues are often related to quickly moving after having been still for a moment, lunging after a ball or making a quick shift in direction. These too can be reinforced with mobility movements.

Mobility is a buzz word and it's buzzing because it's so valuable to so many people. Mobility training includes movements designed to increase your range of motion and strengthen the muscles around each joint within that range of motion. When the muscles supporting these key joints are strong, the likelihood of injury decreases significantly.

I know, you just want to play pickleball. Like anything of value, taking time for maintenance or in this case, mobility, is so worth the time and effort. Mobility exercises make for a great warm up activity. Plan 15 to 20 minutes prior to play time. Make it social and get your fellow

pickleballers to join you.

Mobility exercises can also be done at other times in your day. Maybe while you're watching a football game or your new favorite TV show. Here are some mobility exercises you can easily incorporate into your warmup or other times throughout the week:

Wrists. Slowly roll your wrists (right and left at the same time) rotating inward. After a few repetitions, roll outward the same number of repetitions. Move slowly and with control.

Ankles. Balance on one leg or hold onto the wall, slowly rotate your ankle making circles in one direction and repeat in the other direction. Change your stance on the other leg and repeat on your opposite ankle.

Hips. Balance on one leg (or hold on to the wall), with your knee bent at 90 degrees, circle your hip backward 3-5 times and then forward the same number of times. Slow and controlled.

Shoulders. Place your fingertips on the top of your shoulders (same hand

on same shoulder). Circle backward 5 times slowly and then forward 5 times slowly. One arm at a time, circle the arm up, back, and around with just a small bend at the elbow 5 times. Repeat with a backward moving circle then repeat on the other arm.

If you want to learn more about mobility and how it will not only improve your pickleball skills but also your overall feeling of being strong and pain-free, please join us at The Alaska Club's Studio location at Jewel Lake in Anchorage for Hot Mobility, Wednesdays at 7 am. Visit www.wellnessliving.com/schedule/studiohotyoga.

You can take up to three classes with us at no cost. You can also find a video with warmup exercises on YouTube at <https://bit.ly/3TqqLzU>.

Let's keep those ohs, ahhs, and laughs coming. You don't want to miss out on a minute of the fun so be sure to invest a few minutes in your mobility.

Janet Warner is The Alaska Club Executive Director of Fitness Services and a proud grandmother of three.

AARP and United Way launch 211 program for Alaska caregivers

AARP Alaska

AARP Alaska has partnered with United Way to provide a new resource for Alaska's 94,000 family caregivers. AARP Alaska and United Way Worldwide

are using the 211 helpline to connect residents with trained, compassionate navigators and available local resources. Through 211, a free health and human

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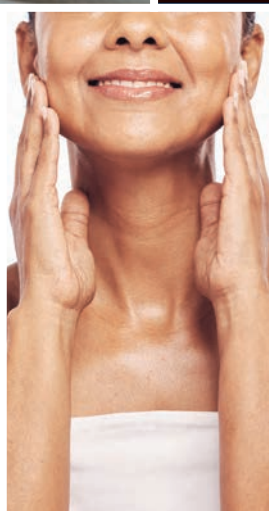
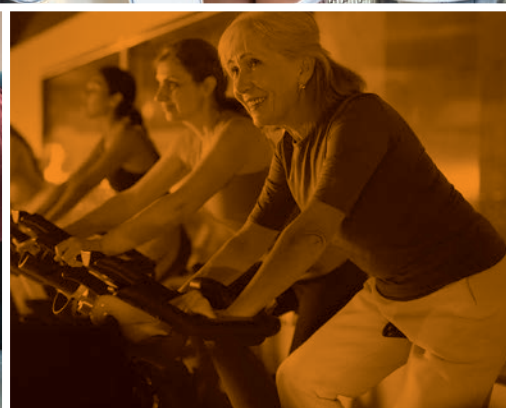
Support

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of the person you care for. However, self-care is crucial for maintaining your well-being, and making time for yourself is essential. Some self-care resolutions that you can consider include setting aside time for yourself each day; pursuing hobbies or interests; taking a break when you need it; accepting help when it's offered.

So there you have it. Five resolutions you should be sure to keep this year. At a time of life when the daunting responsibility of caring for a loved one will no doubt be added to an already-heavy load, it's important to remember your own best health is a necessary prerequisite to good care. Know you are investing in your own best future by taking care of the business of love.

- Dani Kebschull, Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program



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A checklist for preventing winter falls

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice

The ice, snow and cold of wintertime are hazards, but with caution and preparation, people can stay safe and enjoy the winter season with a decreased risk of falls and injuries. This is vitally important for people with poor balance, but applies to everybody.

Keep clear pathways and remove tripping dangers. Keep walkways and hallways clear of clutter and debris and make sure there are no tangled extension cords or other hazards. Improving lighting, placing handrails on both sides of stairs, and using non-slip mats in hazardous areas are good preventative measures. Take time after snowstorms to shovel, salt paths, and sprinkle cat litter to melt ice.

Wear proper footwear that fits you. Indoor and outdoor shoes should have thin, non-slip soles with a bit of traction. Put away the flip-flops and sandals and move to closed-toed shoes for the winter. Focus on a snug yet comfortable fit that provides adequate ankle support. If pain or foot issues make shoe shopping difficult, talk to a podiatrist or orthotist who can recommend custom or-



thotics and medical-grade footwear.

Mobility aids improve safety. Canes and walkers need proper rubber tips at the bottom to prevent slipping. Replace tips that are worn out regularly, at least twice per year. Four-point canes and cleated crutch tips offer even better traction control. When using a walker outside, lift rather than pushing or dragging across icy or uneven surfaces to avoid loss of control. Losing your balance is a very difficult mistake to overcome in slippery conditions.

Balance and strength exercises help a lot. Core, hip, leg and ankle exercises improve stability, reaction times, and confidence. Try standing on one leg while brushing teeth, leaning side to side, marching in place, and using resistance bands. Tai chi is another

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A heated pad can reduce icy buildup outside an entrance. Just be sure the cord is out of the way.

David Washburn/Senior Voice

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Senior Voice, January 2024 | 13



Kwethluk's Grandma Luula brings wisdom, joy to the classroom

RurAL CAP Elder Mentor Team

My name is Lola Evan. I am from Hooper Bay, and I was born in 1947. As I was growing up there weren't many houses, only a few. It was a real beautiful small village with smiling friendly people. Always happy. I never did attend school, but the Elders talked to me about when we grow up to respect our parents and Elders. I used to stay with Elders most of the time, and we mostly stayed in tents by the Point.

When men came from seal hunts we would line up. Our parents would teach us how to cut up the seal. On Saturday everybody would leave the tents, and we would have church on Sunday. The Elders played volleyball and us kids would play handball and lap games. They let us go to qasgiq and before they talked, they opened and said, "those who don't want to listen—those are the girls that won't learn anything and will be disrespectful." I love Elders. I love them because they have the wisdom and they are smart. Elders have strong and loving hearts.

I love being an Elder Mentor. I returned from work and volunteer with

children at Head Start here in Kwethluk. It's my favorite place to be. Children are so lovable; they are like little angels growing up. I learned from Elders when I was a child, and now I share my wisdom and knowledge with the next generation, too.

Become an Elder Mentor in your community

Tatiana Sergie, Kwethluk Head Start On-Site Coordinator, praised Lola for her Elder Mentor work with the children. "Lola Evan, well known as 'Luula' by the children, has been volunteering with the children for fifteen years," Sergie said. "She is always willing to help staff getting activities ready, or setting up activities on her own for children to do during the day. It's always a joy when we get to hear her tell stories of what she can remember when she was little. The children and staff get to hear how different her lifestyle was compared to theirs. Lola isn't afraid to join in on extracurricular activities. She will ride a trike, or get a ride from one of the children, she will shoot balls into the hoop, and dance with a hula hoop. The children and staff really do love and appreciate the



Lola shares a laugh at the annual Elder Mentor gathering last summer in Anchorage. She has been volunteering with children for 15 years.

Photo courtesy RurAL CAP



Lola Evan, known as Grandma Luula, and student Emmelia enjoy a little ride.

Photo courtesy of Tatiana Sergie

time Lola gives to our site."

The Elder Mentor Program is currently accepting applications for the new year. Benefits for qualifying seniors age 55 and older 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. Fill out the online Interest Form and learn more at eldermentor.org.

If you are a school interested in having Elder Mentors volunteer in your classrooms, please contact us, or fill out the Site Interest Form also on our website. You can reach the team via e-mail at eldermentors@ruralcap.org.

Search "Elder Mentor" on Facebook to find us there.

Grandma Luula's homemade bread

Inherited from her mother

My mom never did measure, she just did what she knows. I learned how to cook from watching her all the time.

1. Put warm water into a bowl.
2. Add 1 small cup sugar, 1 small tsp. salt, mix, then add 1 yeast packet and oil (as much oil as you like).
3. Add small bag of flour, start to mix, and keep adding flour until it doesn't stick.
4. Now pour the dough into a pan.
5. Cover the pan until the dough rises.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
7. Bake your bread.

The history of the Klondike Gold Rush never gets old

Ancestor's story becomes a trilogy

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

For Senior Voice

Somewhere in the wilds of Homer is Brian George Smith, a self-proclaimed "male action figure of the opposite of a crazy cat lady."

He has 13 older, special needs cats who keep him company while he writes.

With a video, screenplay and film background, this man who hasn't watched TV in 20 years turned to writing books after his business died during the pandemic.

"The books aren't making much money, and they pay you squat," he says of the self-publishing approach, "but I'm happy as a clam selling a few."

While there are old-timey clichés to jibe with the time that transports you into that era, before you jump to the conclusion that his books contain worn phrases, I'd like to point out the way with words he has on the page.

For instance, "He blinked, the tumblers in his lizard brain slowly turning over."

What a picture.

Family history tugs at him

His first book, "Ida Mae Joy: Gold Dust Dreams," tells of his great grandmother's marriage and her move to Skagway from Upper New York state to set up a grocery with her husband William Henry

Joy. The trilogy continues in 2022 with "Pearl: In Search of Ida Mae Joy," and in 2024, it will be complete with "MacGregor's Gold."

The move itself, her faith in her husband and her

mettle is a real indication of her character. Smith's own trials with alcohol adds reality to Will's battle and defeat because of it.

So many, an estimated 100,000, followed their

dreams north during the 1890s when the country was in the throes of financial depressions and bank failures. The gold standard at

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Sharing a love of sewing across generations

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

My daughter Erin called from her home in Colorado and left a voice message, “Call me when convenient. I want to talk about quilt batting.”

Erin had recently resumed work on the corduroy quilt she started over 20 years ago. The top was finished and she wanted to put the layers together, bind it and tie it. This was the same daughter who greatly disliked sewing in seventh grade Home-Ec class at Colony Middle School. It was too structured. She was more of the “creative” type. I’m glad she eventually grew to share my love of sewing.

One day as a young girl, my mother suggested my sister and I cut out material to make a Dresden plate quilt like her Aunt Carrie had made. Although Mom didn’t sew much, she produced a box of vintage fabric remnants and showed us how to create a template, which my sister and I used to cut out 18 pieces of various fabrics. Something came up, our lesson ended with the plan that we would work on that project later, and I was tasked to keep track of the box. Later never came. I still have that little black box containing the seeds and dreams of a beautiful quilt.

Another project was my idea: Clothes for my Barbie doll. I don’t know where the pattern came from, but I cut out material and sewed several items by hand. They weren’t as fancy or as professional as store bought, but I enjoyed the process of making them.

When 4-H started in Glennallen, in the mid



Maraley McMichael modeling an outfit she made, May 1972 Mother-Daughter Tea in the Glennallen School gym.

Photos courtesy Maraley McMichael

1960s, I signed up for sewing, cooking, woodworking and electricity. Sewing was my favorite. I made a clothespin storage holder, and a pincushion, and was so happy when they won ribbons in the 4-H division of the Alaska State Fair in Palmer. Soon mom purchased a sewing machine through the mail for family use. By the time I took Home-Ec in high school, I was sewing a lot of my own clothes.

I remember one project in particular. Another girl and I showed up to class with the exact same materials for a dress/vest set. Unknowingly, we had both ordered our material out of the Montgomery Ward catalog. The local store had some yardage, but not to our liking and driving to Anchorage only for fabric was unthinkable. She made the blue print dress with solid blue vest. I made the green. And we each looked best in the colors we chose.

At least that was a comment I heard when we modeled our dresses at the Mother/Daughter Tea.

I kept that sewing machine humming while I attended high school: Pants, skirts, shirts, dresses, a

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

The State of Alaska Dept. of Health is sponsoring a two-day workshop in February to train students to teach **Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention**. Students will receive a textbook and DVD, learn in person from Master Trainer Sarah Meitl, and upon completion of the course be certified instructors. The session takes place Feb. 3-4 at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Cost of the workshop is \$100. Scholarships are available to pay for travel and two to three nights hotel stay for those living at least 50 miles away from the workshop and willing to commit to teaching at a local senior center for six months. Application deadline is Jan. 26. Registration and scholarship forms are available by calling 907-224-5604 or emailing ssc@seward.net ... A reminder that many **senior centers’ membership enrollment** is based on the calendar year, meaning it’s likely time to **renew** your membership. Thank you for the continued support of your local facilities, programs, services and people ... Kudos to **Santa’s Senior Center in North Pole**, whose members teamed up with the 17 Mile Homemakers group and the Fort Wainwright USO to put together Christmas cards and cookies for military members. The center’s December newsletter notes that these goodies were provided to 1,500 single soldiers in the community. That’s some serious tidings of comfort and joy ... Also in North Pole, Santa’s Senior Center welcomes in its **new board of directors: Joe Gelinas** (president), **Lamie Ellsworth** (vice president), **Sharon Corbett** (Secretary), **Rochelle Renner** (treasurer), **Candy Clarke**, **Judi Hasting**, **Cora Williams** (Parliamentarian). And a thank you to the outgoing board members for their years of service ... **Mat-Su** area business **Revel Treks and Tours** offers walks,

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Contents of the black box containing the seeds and dreams for a beautiful quilt from Maraley’s youth.



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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

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classes and other small group activities that are senior-friendly for a small membership fee. Coming up: **Community Winter Walk on Moose Range Trail** for people age 50ish and older, Tuesday, Jan. 16 from 1 to 3 p.m. Meet at the trailhead on Wendt Rd. for a leisurely walk in the winter outdoors. Free for first-timers, or \$12 one-time fee for non-members. To register and for more information on the event, other activities and membership, visit www.reveltreksandtours.com ... Anchorage Museum's monthly **Vital + Creative workshops** allow creatives age 55 and older to explore new skills by making art with others. The Jan. 11 class, "Mail Art," dives into the 2 and 3-dimensional world of paper art. After visiting the storytelling exhibition "Lines of Sight," participants will learn techniques to making envelopes, pop up cards and constructed mail that will delight both artist and recipient. The workshop takes place 2:30-4:30 p.m. and is free, with materials provided. Registration is required and space limited. Visit anchagemuseum.org for more details, or call 907-929-9200 ... The "Planning for Life's Changes" educational series continues at **Kodiak College**, with part 2 focusing on organizing personal documents, led by **Deb Houlden-Engvall**. Discuss what documents should be organized and how to do it, whether you use old school methods of pen and paper or are completely digital. The class is at the Kodiak College Benny Benson Bldg., Room 128, on Tuesday, Jan. 16, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. For more information, call the **Kodiak Senior Center**, 907-486-6181.

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

Sewing

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tie for Dad, a shirt for my boyfriend. By the time of my wedding, I felt confident enough to make my dress and help my sisters with their bridesmaid and maid-of-honor dresses. My husband bought a sewing machine for me as a wedding gift.

After we married, the tradition continued with curtains, bedspreads, bathrobes, and even a swimsuit. Even when we lived without electricity, I still managed to sew. One winter I used a treadle machine to make a blue jean quilt. Another time, I babysat and was paid with use of electricity in order to use my sewing machine.

When my children were little, I enjoyed sewing for them, including making Halloween costumes. One year I looked high and low for camouflage material to make my son some pants like his Papa's. My timing was just a little off because the next year camouflage pants for boys were all the rage. Sears began selling them and all of a sudden in the fabric stores, several patterns of camouflage



Maralee sews the first rectangles of 15 quilts made from her mother's clothes for her grandchildren, November 1999.

Photos courtesy Maralee McMichael

The completed 15 quilts. It took her 10 years to finish the project.



material could be found. When Erin was six, I made the dress she wore as flower girl in my brother's wedding. The blue ribbon it was awarded at the Alaska State Fair that fall is still treasured.

My sewing machine didn't see much use for several years when life got so busy with working part time and chauffeuring the kids to their sports activities. But during the summer Erin was 13, my desire to sew something was so strong I told her I'd like to make some clothes for her. She picked out two patterns and the materials. I sewed hard for two weeks and completed a dress and another three-piece outfit. She only wore these items once or twice before her tastes drastically changed. She preferred a new style, which could only be found in thrift stores.

My son surprised me during his first year in college with a special request for a polar fleece jacket, which was a new and different challenge. A few years later, I added a pair of polar fleece pants for use with all his downhill skiing. My husband asked for custom made driving light covers for his truck.

Even with my teacher aide job at Slana School, my love for sewing came in handy. One year for the Christmas play, I made costumes for a shepherd, Joseph, Mary and an angel. Another year for a 1950s theme play, with a little help, I made eight poodle skirts of various colors and sizes. Some of the girls continued to wear their skirts after the play ended.



Maralee McMichael sews binding seam on a burgundy quilt while snowbirding in a travel trailer during winter 2006-2007.

The biggest challenge of all came with making 15 quilts out of the clothes my mother wore during her teaching career—a quilt for each of her grandchildren. Even though they were made with a simple rectangle pattern, twin size, and tied rather than quilted, that project took me 10 years on and off from start to finish. All the time and effort was worth it, though, when I gave the first one away to a niece living in Fairbanks. Her daughter watched as she looked at her quilt with a big smile on her face, pointing to certain pieces of material saying, "I remember Grandma wearing that and that..."

As I thought about our upcoming conversation about quilt batting and all the sewing I've enjoyed through the years, I find it even more special knowing my daughter shares that same love.

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



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History

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Brian George Smith lives in Homer, where he writes and also operates a rescue for older cats.

Photograph courtesy of Brian George Smith

that time was tied to paper money, and gold shortages at the end of the 19th century meant that gold dollars were rapidly increasing in value ahead of paper currency — worldwide. This contributed to the Panic of 1893 and Panic of 1896, causing unemployment and financial uncertainty. In response, men and women dropped everything and headed north to make their fortunes, filing through Seattle then on to Skagway and up and over the Chilkoot Trail to the Klondike area of the Yukon Territory of Canada. Like Ida Mae Joy, many did not make a killing but

had the adventure of their lives. Their stories have been written many times over the last 125 years. “I have thought about ghost writing, writing is sort of like acting, everyone says they can do it,” Smith says. And in a way he is ghost writing his great grandmother’s story, inhabiting her body and mind, as she wrestles with the failures of her husband and the attention of Skagway outlaw Soapy Smith. Eventually both men betray her, and Smith does portray her emotions with a feminist flourish. Friends have given feedback like “a real page turner” and “she has depth and range.” Love, illness, loss, work, blizzards, death, and lessons learned fill the pages. Eventually he will return to Skagway and do more research into her life, Smith said. “I’ll delve into what her real story is,” he said. “There isn’t much information and she fell off the map in 1898.” To order his books and also make donations to his Roundhouse Cat Sanctuary for rescued senior cats, email him at soujourn53@gmail.com. The books are also available at local bookstores.

Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the event begins at 8 a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast provided. The next date is Jan. 10, hosted by Emerald View Adult Day Services. 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.

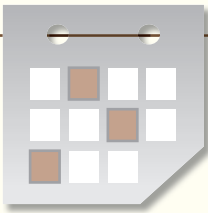
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Search for “Senior Voice Alaska” then click on over!



Calendar of Events

- Jan. 1 Statewide** Application period opens, Jan. 1 through March 31, for Permanent Fund Dividend. Information and online application at <https://pfd.alaska.gov>.
- Jan. 7 Worldwide** Orthodox Christmas
- Jan. 9 Chugiak** Free legal assistance at Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center. Attorney Eva Khadjinova from Alaska Legal Services will offer consultation by appointment at the center, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. by appointment only. Call to schedule, 907-688-2674.
- Jan. 9 Soldotna** “Armchair Travel” at Soldotna Public Library, 1 p.m. This month’s subject is Brazil. Jo Nutter, born and raised in northeast Brazil, will share pictures, videos and snacks. Register online at www.soldotna.org/departments/library. Call 907-262-4227.
- Jan. 11 Talkeetna/Willow** Paws on the Move Mobile Veterinary Clinic visits Upper Susitna Community and Senior Center, 16463 E Helena Drive, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bring pets for a variety of exams and services. Call 907-841-7297
- Jan. 11 Anchorage** 9th Annual Diversity Community Health Fair, Loussac Library, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Free community event with informational booths, activities and health screenings and other services. Presented by the Polynesian Assoc. of Alaska. Contact: Lucy Hansen, 907-250-4142 or paoaalaska@gmail.com, or Nyabony Gat, 907-743-0213 or ngat@alaskaliteracyprogram.org.
- Jan. 15 Nationwide** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Jan. 16 Juneau** Legislative session begins. Information at the Alaska State Legislature website, <https://akleg.gov>.
- Jan. 19-20 Anchorage** International Guitar Night, Discovery Theatre at the Alaska Center for Performing Arts. Presented by Anchorage Concert Assoc., the 24th edition of International Guitar Night brings together a stellar ensemble of globally renowned guitarists, from classical guitar to modern fingerstyle, Brazilian guitar and blues, for a mind bending, instrumental guitar extravaganza. Information and ticket details, www.internationalguitarnight.com. Performances will also take place in Talkeetna (Jan. 18), Fairbanks (Jan. 21) and Valdez (Jan. 23).
- Jan. 23 Anchorage** Health and Wellness Fair, Anchorage Senior and Activity Center, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sponsored by ASAC and the Anchorage Health Dept. Exhibits, health tests and information, resource assistance, more.
- Jan 27 Fairbanks** Family Day at University of Alaska Museum of the North. This month’s theme: Rodents! Meet mammalogists, see and touch museum specimens, investigate the importance of rodents to arctic ecosystems, try an I Spy hunt in the galleries, create art, and more. Noon to 4 p.m. Admission free for kids age 17 and younger. For more information, go to bit.ly/uamnfamilydays
- Jan. 27-Feb. 3 Cordova** 2024 Cordova Ice Worm Festival. Annual arts and crafts show, food fair, fireworks extravaganza, variety show, paper airplane contest, Iceworm Parade, Tail Hunt and more. www.icewormfestival.com for events schedule and information.



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Woody Island’s lucrative Alaska export: Ice

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL
Senior Voice Correspondent

A little “two-by-four” island, a couple of miles off the city of Kodiak, has several Alaska firsts. The first horses in Alaska were brought here, the first road constructed, the Territory’s first iron rails put in, and the first field of oats was sown: all to support a sawmill. The sawmill established on Woody Island was perhaps unique in commercial enterprises because its main product was sawdust. And the sawmill, the iron rails, Alaska’s first road, and first horses were the result of what many call “Alaska’s Wackiest Industry”—ice. It was something Alaska had plenty of and California wanted.

In 1851, Californians were enjoying a gold boom and could afford such luxuries as ice to chill their drinks and keep their food from spoiling. But ice sent from Boston via Cape Horn was very expensive and not enough could be supplied to meet the demand. Alaska was closer. The first shipment of ice was sent from Sitka in February 1852, and it sold for about \$75 a ton in San Francisco (more than \$2,700 in 2023 dollars).

Some authorities contend that the secret and principal object of the American Russian Commercial Company, or the “Ice Company” as it was generally called, was not to deal in ice. They say it was to supply Alaska with provisions during the Crimean War when it was feared Alaska might fall into British hands. But it’s beside the point whether the “ice business” was just a blind. It proved profitable, after an uncertain start, and provided work and profits for many years.

Little Woody Island profited, too, for ice from Sitka proved unpredictable due to that city’s mild climate. Once – in the winter of 1853–54 – a California ice ship had to chip ice from Baird Glacier because Sitka had no ice that winter.

The first mention of the ice establishment on Woody Island comes in 1855 in a letter from Lt. Doroshin to Gen. Helmerson, according to “Seal and Salmon Fisheries and General Resources of Alaska IV.”

“On Wood Island, Kodiak Harbor, during a number of years past, horses have been kept to perform certain labor in connection with a mysterious ice company and for the use of these horses a field of 12 acres of oats is regularly sown.”

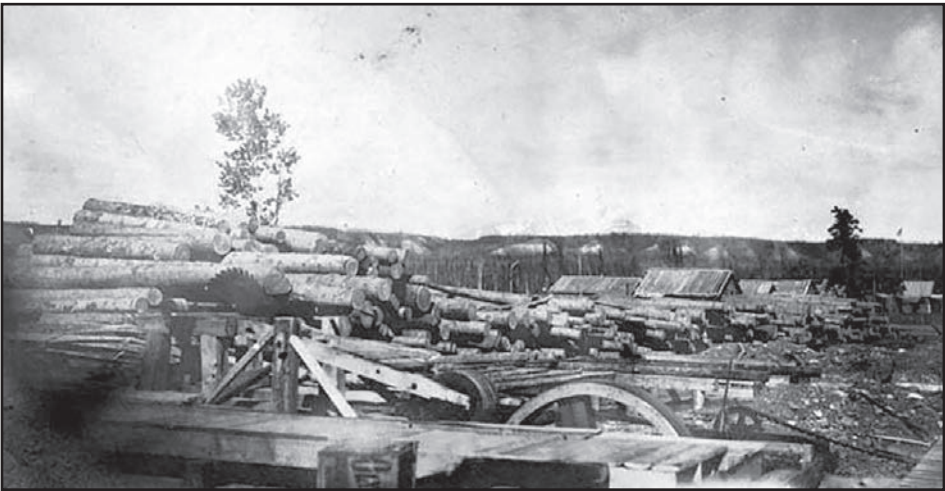
The Russians built two large ice-houses on Woody during 1852–53, when it was discovered that 40-acre Lake Tanignak could supply better ice than Sitka. To keep the ice from melting, a water-pow-

ered mill was erected to produce sawdust in which to pack the ice until it was shipped.

Between 1852 and 1859, more than 7,000 tons of ice was shipped as far south as Mexico and Central and South America.

A farce almost unequalled in history occurred during this time, as well, according to Yule Chaffin, author of “From Koniag to King Crab.” An artificial ice machine was invented in the early 1850s, but the machines were expensive, and few people could afford them.

To stifle competition, the ice machine manufacturer offered to pay a set sum every year to the Alaska ice company not to ship the ice it chipped. The contract between them was renewed for several years, and to make sure the ice machine manufacturers wouldn’t back out of the agreement, Woody Islanders continued to put up new ice each year, letting



Woody Island residents built a sawmill, similar to this one in Copper Center, to make sawdust to insulate ice before they sent it via steamship to rich Californians after the Gold Rush of 1848.

Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, General Photograph File, AMRC-b77-107-25

the old ice melt.

Construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad put an end to Woody Island’s ice business, as it became more feasible to ship ice from the Sierras into San Francisco.

This column features tidbits found

in Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com.

The Neighs Have It

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- 74 Roundup need
- 75 Imbroglio
- 76 Bowler, for one

Down

- 1 Damp and chilly
- 2 Oklahoma county seat
- 3 Hee-haws, maybe
- 4 John Wayne played one in a 1959 civil war flick
- 5 Declare with confidence
- 6 Bring to bear
- 7 ___ Cruces, N.M.
- 8 Headquarters
- 9 Appearance
- 10 Loser’s place?
- 11 Shamus

- 12 Opposite of WSW
- 14 1967 Monkees song
- 18 Que. neighbor
- 21 Appaloosas, e.g.
- 22 Remote abbr.
- 23 Land in l’océan
- 25 Unit of energy
- 26 Volvo rival
- 28 Hot stuff
- 29 Suffix with grape
- 30 Towel holder
- 32 Aardvark’s morsel
- 36 Trash bag accessory
- 38 Symbol of worthlessness
- 41 Bring home the bacon
- 43 Numerical prefix
- 44 Kind of blanket
- 45 High card

- 47 Soccer standout Hamm
- 49 Actress Novak
- 50 Venom carrier
- 52 Playful river creatures
- 54 Camping must-haves
- 58 Riddle-me-___
- 61 A chorus line
- 63 “I have an idea!”
- 64 ___ de tête (French headache)
- 65 Some ducts carry them
- 66 ___ gestae
- 67 Stage hog
- 68 Flamenco cheer
- 69 Narc’s org.
- 70 Fast no more

Crossword answers on page 26



Joyce Bulifant's ups and downs of marriage and career

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

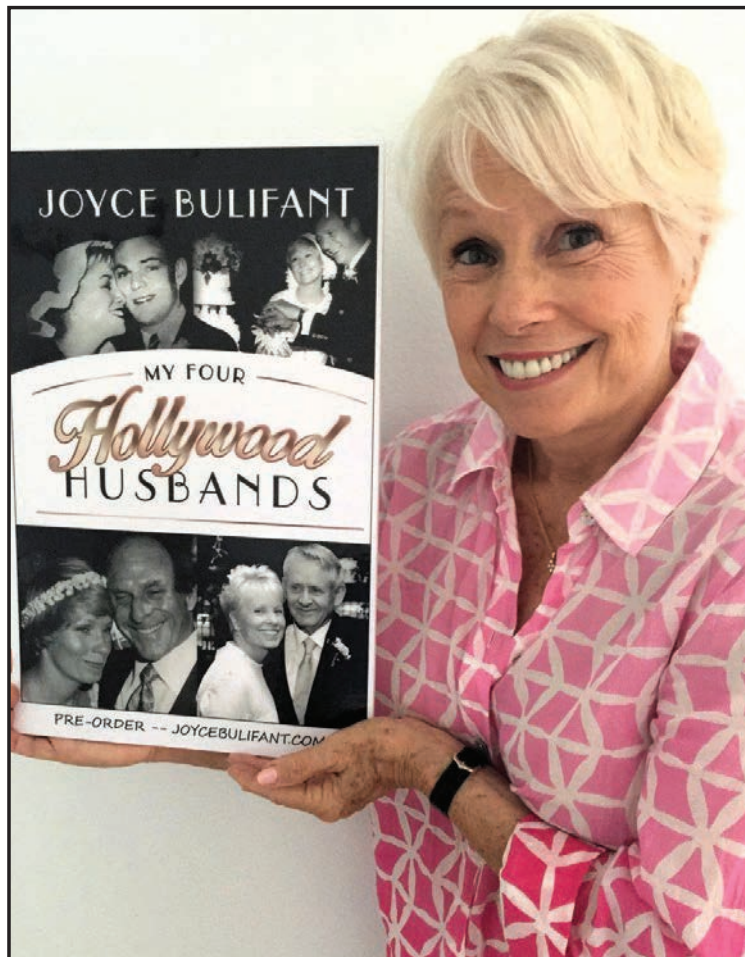
For those who keep track of Hollywood nuptials, the title of Joyce Bulifant's 2017 autobiography may not represent a marital world record, but it's certainly an attention grabber. The actress, who co-starred in TV series such as "Flo" and "Mary Tyler Moore," recounted her life and career in "My Four Hollywood Husbands."

Bulifant describes how alcohol influenced her four hubbies: "Hawaii Five-O" star James ("Danno") MacArthur; TV/film producer, director and screenwriter William Asher; "Days of Our Lives" actor Edward Mallory; and her last husband, actor Roger Perry who died in 2018.

"It was never my intention to marry famous Hollywood men, it just happened that way," said Bulifant from Los Angeles. "I was 14 when I first met Jimmy (MacArthur) while we were at boarding school together and we started dating a couple of years later."

She remembers her spouses as unhappy men, especially MacArthur in their decade-long marriage.

"When he wasn't working, he would drink more and it became a terrible situation," she said. "I



Joyce Bulifant displays the cover of her book, "My Four Hollywood Husbands".

Provided by publicist

thought if I just loved them enough they wouldn't need to drink and would become happy, but it just didn't work that way."

She remained happily married to her last husband Roger Perry although he too experienced some early rough patches.

"He wanted to get better, so that's why this marriage worked," she said.

Career-wise, Bulifant has been successful on stage as well as in film and television, and was a

dadgum movie, I thought it was so silly," she recalled. "I was married to William Asher at the time and he told me 'You're an actress—you act!' Now it's been called one of the 100 funniest movies ever made."

But one major TV role did slip past.

"I was all signed, sealed, and delivered to play Mrs. Brady on 'The Brady Bunch,'" she recalled. "One Friday, I was showing the director and producer (and writer, Sherwood Schwartz) my wardrobe but they were acting very strange. When I asked what was wrong they sat me down and said the executives at ABC in New York wanted Florence Henderson for the role."

Schwartz called that evening confirming the bad news. "That's the way it goes in this business," said Bulifant. "Florence was a wonderful actress and a lovely lady."

Concentrating on TV work, Bulifant only appeared in about a dozen films. Her first main feature role was in the 1967 Disney musical "The Happiest Millionaire," memorable

for her "Bye-Yum Pum Pum" song with Lesley Ann Warren. It would be the last live-action feature produced by Disney, who died a year before the film's release.

Bulifant's radiant cheerful on-screen personality and distinctive youthful voice made her a favorite comedic actress with audiences. Despite some missed career opportunities and the marital challenges, she has always remained optimistic.

"When you're in the entertainment business, you have to deal with disappointment and rejection so if you don't feel strong and confident about yourself it can be very disheartening," she says. "That's true for anyone with self-doubt, which is why my book resonates with people from all walks of life. So I'm very pleased when I hear from people it has helped."

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



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Swim

continued from page 5

whether participating in equivalent amounts of seven different exercise and recreational activities, including running, cycling, swimming, other aerobic exercise, racquet sports, golf, and walking for exercise, was associated with lowered risk of death.

They found that achieving the recommended amount of physical activity per week through any combination of these activities was associated with a 13% lower risk of death from any cause compared with no participation. Currently, it is recommended that all older adults engage in 2.5 to 5 hours of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity, or 1.25 to 2.5 hours of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week.

Grab your suit and change your outlook

Scores of studies have demonstrated that there are significant mental health benefits from swimming. The weightlessness of the water can relax the body and provide a calming effect on the mind. One study conducted by a swim club in England demonstrated that swimming may significantly reduce anxiety and depression in adults. Swimming promotes the release of endorphins, which can help improve mood. A study was conducted in India with 50 older

adults who regularly swim and 50 non-swimmers. The researchers found that the swimmers had better mental speed and attention compared to non-swimmers.

Another significant benefit for older adults is that swimming can improve overall brain function and may help improve sleep quality, which is essential for maintaining optimal brain function. Studies suggest that moderate to vigorous swimming increases energy levels and alertness during the day and improves sleep quality by reducing the time it takes to fall asleep.

"Swimming is crucial to many older adults' lives, it provides a gentle exercise that not only conditions their cardiovascular system, but it helps them strengthen their stability muscles. Swimming helps a person become stronger from the inside out, by improving stability and balance. This is exceptionally important when walking on snowy and icy covered walkways and parking lots," said Cateson.

Swimming is an effective way to burn calories, making it an excellent option for older adults trying to maintain a healthy weight. The number of calories burned during a swim session will depend on factors such as your weight, the intensity of your workout and the type of stroke you're performing. The calorie-burning potential can be increased by performing different

strokes and intensities in a swim routine.

"Most of our aquatic programs provide a tight-knit community aspect," said Cateson. "Several of the adults get together for brunches or dinners. Some even stay after their program and talk in our lobbies. Several 60+ year old U.S. Masters swimmers call themselves, 'The Slow Lane Supper Club.' They meet weekly at an agreed upon restaurant to gain a sense of community and belonging."

Getting started and finding the right fit

It is recommended that all older adults consult their physician before beginning a new exercise routine. This can help provide guidance on the appropriate level of activity based on an individual's pre-existing health conditions.

With swimming, picking out the right swimwear and gear makes a big difference. Swimsuits that work best are made of high-quality chlorine-resistant materials with adequate support

and coverage. Experts recommend starting with gentle water exercises and then gradually progressing to swimming laps. Private swimming lessons are available at most swimming pools. It is recommended that you establish a regular swim schedule and set achievable goals.

The key to success often can be found in having a buddy who shares similar goals. Joining a swim group is easy and can be a lot of fun.

Swimming pools in Alaska

You may want to consider checking aquatic facilities near you for their activities such as lap swim, open swim, swim lessons, water aerobics and more. Offerings and schedules can change due to several factors, including staffing and other issues

Anchorage

Southside YMCA at Dimond Center Mall, 344-7788.

Anchorage Community YMCA, 5353 Lake Otis Pkwy., 563-3211.

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

H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark, 1520 O'Malley Rd., 522-4420.

Moseley Sports Center at Alaska Pacific University, 4400 University Dr., 564-8314.

Alaska Club East (membership required), 5201 E. Tudor, 337-9550.

Alaska Club South (membership required), 10931 O'Malley Centre, 344-6567.

Buckner Physical Fitness Center Bldg., 690 D St., Fort Richardson, 384-1308.

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

Fairbanks

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

Mary Siah Recreation Center, 805 14th Ave., 459-1081.

Hamme Swimming Pool, 931 Airport Way, 459-1086.

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

Juneau

Augustus Brown Pool, 1619 Glacier Ave., 586-5325.

Dimond Park Aqua Center, 3045 Dimond Park Loop, 586-2782.

Around the state

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

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

Eagle River Alaska Club Eagle River (membership required), 12001 Business

Blvd., 694-6677.

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

Craig Craig Aquatic Center, 1400 Wattertower Rd., 826-2794.

Haines Haines Pool, 274 Haines Hwy., 766-2666.

Homer Kate Kuhns Aquatic Center, Homer High School, 600 E. Fairview Ave., 235-4600.

The Bay Club (membership required), 2395 Kachemak Drive, 235-2582

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

Ketchikan Gateway Aquatic Center, 601 Schoenbar Rd., 288-6650.

Kodiak Kodiak Community Pool, 800 Upper Mill Bay Rd., 481-2519.

Naknek Kvimarvik Pool, School Road, 246-7665.

Nikiski Nikiski Pool, 55525 Poolside Ave., 776-8800.

Ninilchik Ninilchik School Pool, 15735 Sterling Hwy., 714-0351.

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

North Pole Wescott Pool, 300 E. 8th Ave., 488-9402.

Palmer Palmer Pool, 1170 W. Bogard, 861-7676.

Petersburg Community Center, 500 N. 3rd St., 722-3392.

Sand Point Sand Point School, 269 Red Cove Rd. 383-2696.

Seward Seward Jr./Sr. High School Pool, 2100 Swetmann Ave., 224-3900.

Sitka Blatchley Pool, 601 Halibut Point, 747-5677.

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

Unalaska Unalaska Aquatics Center, 55 E. Broadway, 581-1649.

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

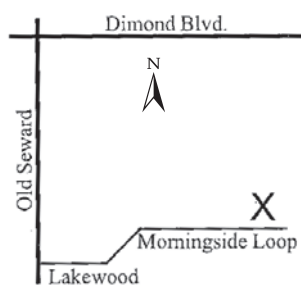
Wasilla Wasilla Pool, 701 E. Bogard Rd., 861-7680.

Wrangell Wrangell Pool, 321 Church St., 874-2444.

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Video assistance with Social Security questions

Social Security Administration

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

The video service locations are available at:

► In Nome, Norton Sound

Health Corporation, located at 1000 Greg Kruschek Ave. Video service is available for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

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

► **Kodiak Job Center**, 211 Mission Road, Suite

103. Video service is available here for walk-ins on a first come, first served basis, on the second and fourth Tuesdays, 9 a.m. to noon.

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

Most Social Security services are available to

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

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 not yet receiving 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.

Scam

continued from page 2

fraud—to the Office of the Inspector General's website at oig.ssa.gov/report. You can find more

information about scams at www.ssa.gov/scams. Please share this information with your friends, family, and colleagues to help spread awareness about Social Security impostor scams.

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Free legal assistance for landlords, tenants

Senior Voice Staff

Alaska Legal Services will operate a free landlord/tenant helpline in January, Monday through Thursday, 6 to 8 p.m. The helpline is staffed by volunteer attorneys who will answer

rental-related questions from landlords and tenants alike on evictions, leases, deposits, legal responsibilities of landlords and tenants, and other matters. The attorneys will speak for approximately 20 minutes and callers can be helped

regardless of their income or assets.

The line does not have a message or call-waiting function, so if a caller gets a busy signal, they should try calling back in 15 minutes.

The helpline number is 1-855-743-1001.



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The big executor question: Who to pick?

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

When you were a kid, there was a standard protocol for choosing sides in a pickup game. The two best players—and everybody knew who they were—did some little contest to see who would pick first. If it was basketball, whoever made a shot first got to choose first. In baseball they did that funny thing where they went hand over hand on the bat. And then they took turns picking the players for their team. Of course there were only a limited number of choices for each pick, namely whoever was standing there, and neither of these captains was going to dilly-dally, because the point was to get on with the game.

Picking an executor for your will is not quite so easy.

I have found that this is often the most difficult decision people have to make. And I think it is more difficult in Alaska than in most places for two reasons. First, people here are less likely to be connected to a large extended family, since many of them came here from somewhere else and are disconnected from those distant relatives. If you live here, you might only see your cousins every five or 10 years. If you live in Arkansas, you might



see them every week (you might even be married to one of them).

Second, because the options for professional executors are much more sparse here. If you want to name someone who does this for a living, it is slim pickings in Alaska. There are a few trust companies or bank trust departments, but they are really expensive and don't make a whole lot of sense unless you have at least \$2 million in assets. Attorneys or accountants are prohibitively expensive here as well, especially since a lot of it is "grunt work" (like going through storage sheds or holding yard sales), and there just aren't a whole lot of people who are available to do this sort of thing, the way there are in some places Outside.

So most people have to resort to friends or family. For many of them, the heirs themselves can be named as the executors. This makes sense, since they are the ones with skin in the game. But then, if they are

too young, or if they have issues like substance abuse, mental health problems, extreme irresponsibility, or just a really demanding job, obviously you wouldn't want to name them. And sometimes it is not that they have problems, but that naming one of them would cause tension with the others. I have seen executors whose lives have been made miserable by relatives who resent the fact that they were not the one named, and have gone out of their way to make the executor's job difficult.

So with all of that in mind, let me suggest three things you should consider when naming an executor. These are beyond the obvious requirements, such as that they are at least 18 years old, not currently in prison, and would be able to get to where the assets are.

You need to pick someone honest. There are a lot of opportunities for an unscrupulous individual to line their own pockets when serving as executor. Assets are sold for cash, assets could be sold to the executor's friends or relatives for less than they are

worth, or assets may just "disappear".

You need someone who is organized. They do not need to be a financial or legal wiz. There are a lot of complicated tax and legal matters which come up in a probate, but they can seek guidance from an accountant or attorney. If they are unorganized, though, it will be very difficult to construct the accountings which are necessary for probate. I have had unorganized executors, and when they drop off a shoebox of receipts at the end of the process, in which half of the items don't have anything to do with the estate, and I have to reconstruct everything item-by-item, it will take a lot longer and cost them a lot more.

They must be diligent. Probate takes time. There are built-in delays in the system. First you have to wait for the death certificate. Then you file paperwork with the court, and you have to wait for the judge to get around to signing the order. Then you have to publish notice to creditors, and wait four months to see if anybody

makes a claim, even if you know there aren't any actual creditors. You have to wait at least two months after the creditors period ends before you can close the estate, and depending on what time of year the person died, you may have to wait until the following year, so you can file the deceased person's last tax return. These built-in delays are one reason why a lot of people try to avoid probate.

Which causes problems, because it gets harder and harder to pick up that file. At the outset, most people have the attitude that "I'm so honored they named me to be executor. Of course I will take care of this". But then after months go by, and every time they pick up that file they have to think about their loved one who died, it becomes harder and harder. Some people start procrastinating, and the longer you put something off the harder it is to get it back on track.

I'll throw in a bonus point here: If you are doing a living trust instead of

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Bundled software, Silence Callers part 2, and used iPhones

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

Q. I got a new computer this year as a gift, are there any essential apps I should install?

A. If you have been purchasing computers or phones for many years, it's likely you've become habituated to installing special software soon after purchase.

One of the best aspects of new devices is that every PC, Mac, smartphone and tablet sold today comes with a powerful bundle of free software. There is usually no need to go beyond the bundled software unless something does not fit your workflow, and the short list of exceptions grows shorter each year.

Sometimes the bundled apps are pre-installed, and sometimes they are free from their respective app stores.

When it comes to productivity such as word processors, photo editing and general internet usage, the built-in software is powerful enough for nearly everyone.

In 2024, the best advice for new devices is to stick with what is pre-installed. A new purchase is a great time to review your present needs and explore switching to a bundled app. It will simplify your life and save some money in the long run.

Q. I have an iPhone 6 Plus, which does not have a feature you mentioned recently to reduce unwanted calls. Help!

A. I am sorry that your iPhone does not include Silence Unknown Callers. This feature was added five years ago in iOS 13. Unfortunately, the iPhone 6 Plus only supports up to iOS 12. However, there is a workaround that might help.

On the Do Not Disturb settings screen, it's possible to configure different

In 2024, the best advice for new devices is to stick with what is pre-installed. A new purchase is a great time to review your present needs and explore switching to a bundled app. It will simplify your life and save some money in the long run.

options so that the phone only rings if the caller is already in your contacts list. This is not an ideal solution for everyone, but I hope it helps.

Your question is a good example of the challenges tech writers wrestle with when they cover a product that has over a billion devices in active use, and tiers of new features that change from year to year.

Here are a few other observations that I hope are helpful.

When treated with reasonable care, an iPhone will last for five years, and often longer, especially if the battery is replaced.

As a result of their durability and ongoing system updates, there is a vibrant market for used iPhones. (See also the next question.)

Apple releases a major new version of iOS each year. The most recent release is iOS 17, which is the seventeenth major release since the iPhone was invented.

The iOS version number never matches the iPhone model number, which is why your iPhone 6 Plus originally shipped with iOS 9 and continued to support major version updates though iOS 12.

Unless I explicitly note that a feature I write about is new, I tend to focus on features that have been around at least several years. According to a number of different sources, about 97% of active Apple devices use iOS 13 or newer.

Sadly, significant system updates on Android devices are less frequent.

Q. Given the cost of a new

iPhone, are used iPhones a viable alternative?

A. Purchasing a used iPhone comes with risks, but given their solid state construction, the only two things that go wrong most of the time are a weak battery or a cracked screen. Cracked screens are visible and easy to avoid, while recent iPhone models show the battery's overall health in Settings -> Battery.

My advice for locating used iPhones begins and ends online. The safest option is Apple.com/store. The refurbished section is not prominent, but searching for "refurbished" will lead you in the right direction. Refurbished models also qualify for an AppleCare warranty. Keep in mind that Apple's refurbished models are priced at modest discounts. Usually the best deals are

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

Free eBooks

This site is maintained by volunteers who create high-quality tablet-friendly eBooks for titles in the public domain.

standardebooks.org

How a Mechanical Watch Tells Time

Another longtime favorite Wander site, this time with a gorgeous 3D animated look at the inner workings of a mechanical wristwatch.

ciechanow.ski/mechanical-watch/

Strange but True Book Covers

Here is a collection of published books with wild titles that are sure to catch your attention and perhaps tickle your funny bone.

alwaysjudgeabookbyitscover.com

found on mid-level models with generous installed memory compared to the base models.

Amazon is a bit riskier because it's a gateway to multiple different sellers with different reputations. But the volume of offerings tend to keep used prices close to fair market value. In general, I think the

best strategy is to focus on devices that are priced at least fifty percent less than they were new. Much more than that, the risk might not outweigh the potential savings.

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

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Northern lights and Fairbanks nights

Also: Road Scholar's new giveaway contest

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

After some time off, solar maximum has returned to the skies. It's a regular period of greatest solar activity during the sun's 11-year solar cycle.

On Dec. 15, www.space-weather.com reported Sunspot 3514 flared with a strong M7-class event following close on the heels of Dec. 14th's X2.8-class boomer. The X-flare on Dec. 14 was the strongest flare so far of Solar Cycle 25 and the most powerful eruption the sun has produced since the great storms of September 2017.

The smallest flares are classified as B-class, followed by C, M and X, which is the largest.

The University of Fairbanks also has a site to track the Northern Lights in Alaska at <https://www.gi.alaska.edu/monitors/aurora-forecast>.

Fairbanks ranks high in the sky

The AARP reported on its Dec. 4 online post that "Liz MacDonald, a space scientist at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, says 2024 will be a prime viewing year to see the natural phenomenon. The northern lights, also known as aurora borealis, occur when solar winds with electrically charged particles enter the earth's magnetic field. The particles collide with atmospheric gases to create blue, green, red and violet curtains of light in the sky.

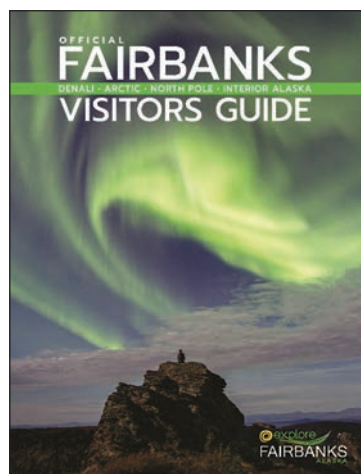
"The sun is entering its most active time, called solar maximum, which means the northern lights will be more strong and more frequent than usual," MacDonald says. "This will be the first solar maximum where people's cellphones can capture the lights easily, which means great opportunities to share these photos ... and help others get accurate, real-time alerts of visibility."

AARP touts Fairbanks as one of the premier sites in the U.S. to see the lights, as Fairbanks is located under what is called the Auroral



Brilliant northern lights danced above Alaska in 2002 during a solar maximum period.

Dimitra Lavrakas photo



The official 2024 Fairbanks visitors guide is now available for free from Explore Fairbanks.

Photo courtesy of Explore Fairbanks

Oval.

"The best place in the U.S. to plan a trip to see the northern lights is always Alaska—because they are reliably spectacular that far north—especially Fairbanks," MacDonald says.

"The months of March and September also tend to be favorable for the lights because of the way the tilt of the Earth lines up with the Earth's protective magnetic field," MacDonald says.

There's even an "Aurora Season" in Fairbanks, from Aug. 21 to April 21, with a range of special tours and events designed especial-

ly for visitors chasing the lights. Pick up a Fairbanks aurora map and guide at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center to plan your adventures. Plenty of operators offer Northern Lights tours via snowcat, evening ice fishing adventures or even flights above the Arctic Circle. There are special heated viewing lodges that provide snacks and photography tips too.

AARP suggests trying Chena Hot Springs Resort, where you can scan the sky while soaking in the mineral hot springs pool, or consider the Aurora Seekers package at Pike's Waterfront Lodge, which includes access to their Aurora Conservatory.

If you live in Alaska and have never seen the lights, well, what are you waiting for?

Fairbanks offers free visitors guide

The official 2024 Fairbanks visitors guide is available for free from Explore Fairbanks. Completely redesigned for this year, the 72-page, full-color booklet provides information for planning a trip to Fairbanks all through the year.

All three seasons are

celebrated in the guide—Midnight Sun, Aurora and Winter—that pave the way for your year-round visit. The publication illustrates features and attractions specific to life in the region as well as ways to journey to Denali National Park and Preserve, the Arctic and Interior Alaska. Additionally, it focuses on Fairbanks' delightful downtown, the contemporary arts and food scene, and local outdoor hotspots.

The guide highlights activities throughout the year in the frontier community that include fishing, wildlife viewing, birdwatching, hiking, visiting museums, and activities on the Chena River. During the winter months, there's dog mushing, mingling with reindeer, ice sculpting, snowmobiling, and skiing. The guide also features exhibitions, attractions and performances focused on Alaska Native peoples, spirited pioneers and nature-inspired artists.

And there's the blockbuster events like the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, Golden Days, Midnight Sun Festival, and the World Ice Art Championships. The guide also lists seasonal and year-round ac-

commodations, services, restaurants, shopping and attractions.

For a free copy of the 2024 Fairbanks Visitors Guide and the companion piece, the 2023-24 Fairbanks Winter Guide, contact Explore Fairbanks at 1-800-327-5774 or 907-456-5774. The guide can also be ordered or viewed at www.explorefairbanks.com/guide.

Road Scholar getaway giveaway to seven continents

Road Scholar, the non-profit world leader in educational travel for older adults, is having an early kick-off of their 50th anniversary celebration with a contest called the "Great Global Giveaway."

Seven lucky winners will win one of seven educational adventures to seven continents, complete with airfare for two people. These seven trips, like all the programs Road Scholar offers, will have an emphasis on learning about the destination the winners are visiting through educational content and immersive experiences.

The winners will be

next page please



Travel

from page 24

drawn from a list of all of Road Scholar’s subscribers, including those already on their mailing list and anyone who signs up in 2024. To enter, starting Jan. 1, 2024, and continuing throughout the year, anyone who’s not already on the Road Scholar mailing list can sign up at www.roadscholar.org/enter. Subscribers can also earn extra chances to win by referring friends who aren’t already on Road Scholar’s mailing list online at www.roadscholar.org/friend. Each friend referral provides another chance to win.

The Great Global Giveaway culminates in January 2025 when the winners will find a golden ticket on page 50 of Road Scholar’s January catalog. Winners will also be notified directly by phone or email so they’re sure not to miss the good news.

The seven trips include: Africa and African Safari,



Macchu Pichu is among the tour package destinations included in Road Scholar’s “Great Global Giveaway” contest beginning in January 2024.

Road Scholar photo

A Close-up on Wildlife; Antarctica “Land Ho!”—Icebergs and Penguins in Otherworldly Antarctica; Asia and The People of the Mekong—Vietnam, Cambodia and Angkor Wat; Australia and Discover a Land Down Under—Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney; Europe French Art Voyage—Paris, the Rhône and the French Riviera;

North America—The Best of the Grand Tetons to Banff and Iconic National Parks; South America and South American Odyssey—Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Machu Picchu and More.

“With more people than ever wanting to find meaningful experiences by studying abroad, we couldn’t think of a better

way to stir excitement than to give away trips to all seven continents,” said Maeve Hartney, Chief Program Officer of Road Scholar.

In addition to the Great Global Giveaway, Road Scholar wants to hear the stories of its participants over the last half-century.

“For nearly 50 years, six million Road Scholar participants have experi-

enced the joys of learning and traveling with us,” said Hartney. “We’re gathering 50 of the most heart-warming, poignant, charming and funny stories from the Road Scholar community.”

Past Road Scholar travelers are encouraged to share a story about their travels with Road Scholar have impacted them at www.roadscholar.org/story.

For more information about Road Scholar’s Great Global Giveaway, visit www.roadscholar.org/enter.

Road Scholar, a non-profit, combines travel and education to provide experiential learning opportunities featuring an extraordinary range of topics, formats and locations, in more than 100 countries and throughout the United States. Alongside renowned experts, participants experience in-depth and behind-the-scenes learning opportunities by land and by sea on educational travel adventures designed for boomers and beyond.

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Safety

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great option, and is often provided by community centers for this reason. Doing a few minutes daily makes a difference over time

Ask physical therapists about assistive devices. In addition to aids like canes and walkers, options like handle attachments for public bathrooms, bathtub transfer benches, and reaching tools improve safety. They make com-

pleting everyday tasks less risky if you struggle with flexibility, range of motion, gripping things, or experience fatigue.

Use a lot of caution on sidewalks and in parking lots. While the primary responsibility falls on property owners and municipalities to promptly clear ice after winter storms, you cannot know how well it was done. Many neglect thorough salting and plowing of public pedestrian areas. Plan ahead and give yourself enough time so you don't feel rushed. Step carefully and consider an

alternative route if needed. Carry salt or kitty litter in your vehicle or bag.

Wear ice cleats or creepers if walking long distance. These slip onto footwear easily, adding metal spiky grips on the bottom to get a grip in ice. Some designs strap across the sole, while others fit more like rubber shoe covers. Having ice cleats can give people more stability navigating icy driveways, walkways, and building entrances. Remember to take them off before walking on someone's carpet, though.

Make use of delivery

services. Many grocery stores offer grocery delivery to designated parking spaces. Consider using these in bad weather to minimize the need to walk carrying heavy packages during the highest risk winter months. Many pharmacies also offer free home delivery for prescriptions, as do meal services geared to seniors. Take advantage of these conveniences all winter long.

The most slippery winter months don't have to be your downfall. Remain vigilant when walking anywhere that hasn't been

properly cleared and de-iced, and use available tools to minimize risk. Above everything else, slow down and give yourself enough time so you never feel rushed.

Christian M. Hartley is a 40-year Alaska resident with over 25 years of public safety and public service experience. He is the City of Houston Fire Chief and 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.

Vacations

continued from page 4

clothing and footwear.

Know medication restrictions. Find out if there are restrictions on medications for your destination country by checking with the foreign embassy. Use the original packaging with a letter from your doctor explaining your condition and need for medications. A pack smart checklist is available at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/pack-smart>.

Immunizations. Research what is recommended or required far in advance. This website is a good place to start: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/faq>

Travel insurance. If you get ill overseas, travel arrangements home can be outrageously expensive without transportation or travel interruption insurance.

Emergency preparedness. Wear a medical ID bracelet or carry a card that clearly states your medical condition, allergies, and emergency contact details.

Obtaining 9-1-1 equivalent phone numbers in foreign countries ensures your safety while traveling. Consider the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free service of the U.S. Department of State to receive destination-specific travel and security updates. This service also contacts international travelers during emergencies.

Location suggestions. San Diego has accessible beaches with free beach wheelchairs and wheelchair-friendly sites, including the San Diego Zoo (free admission for your

attendant), and the Civic Theatre. Barcelona has accessible public transit, and Sicily offers many activities with mobility accommodations, from scuba diving to olive-oil making.

Everyone's experience with an injury or disability is unique, so tailor this list of tips to your specific needs. Prioritize your health and well-being to ensure a smooth and comfortable vacation.

Based on research, individuals who were able to travel at least 15 miles away from home, and who were able to travel frequently

and see more places, were more likely to report better health. This was especially true for those respondents over age 55. Enjoy the journey and bring awe to your life. Despite challenges, take time to appreciate new surroundings, try local cuisine, and create lasting memories.

Numerous resources for travelers: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

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

Glaucoma

from page 9

- Have you had a past eye injury?
- Have you used corticosteroids (for example, eye drops, pills, inhalers, and creams) for long periods

of time?

What to do

Early detection is the key to guarding against glaucoma. So, if you're age 40 or older and have any of the previously mentioned risk factors, especially if you're African American, you need to get a comprehensive eye

examination every 18 to 24 months. Or, if you notice some loss of peripheral vision, get to the eye doctor right away.

If you're a Medicare beneficiary, annual eye examinations are covered for those at high risk for glaucoma. Or if you don't have vision coverage, contact EyeCareAmerica, a national public service program that provides free glaucoma eye exams through a pool of more than 4,600 volunteer

ophthalmologists. Visit AAO.org/eyecare-america or call 877-887-6327 to learn more.

While there's currently no cure for glaucoma, most cases can be treated with prescription eye drops, which reduce eye pressure and can prevent further vision loss. It cannot, however, restore vision already lost from glaucoma. If eye drops don't work, your doctor may recommend oral medication, laser treat-

ments, incisional surgery or a combination of these methods.

For more information on glaucoma, visit the National Eye Institute at nei.nih.gov, and the Glaucoma Research Foundation at Glaucoma.org.

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

Crossword answers from page 16

R	A	H		H	A	U	L		B	A	S	T	E
A	D	O	S		O	S	S	A		A	S	P	E
W	A	R	H	O	R	S	E	S		S	P	A	C
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211

continued from page 12

services information and referral helpline, caregivers can now talk to real people in their community to find local resources for themselves and their loved ones.

The goal of this program is to identify family caregivers via 211 and match them with critical resources to:

- Address necessities such as housing, food and employment that take the focus off caregiving.
- Connect to local services and organizations, with guidance from specialists and experts, for help getting loved ones to medical appointments and access to food delivery services, home safety, veterans’ benefits, etc.
- Simplify access to specialized help while anticipating changes in care situations.
- Help the family caregiver navigate their own personal concerns and challenges that come with caregiving.

“I’ve been a caregiver for years, and I recognize the tremendous mental

and emotional toll it takes, making it even more difficult to navigate the maze of available resources,” said Teresa Holt, AARP Alaska state director. “The partnership with 211 simplifies the process by connecting caregivers with financial, medical, and emotional support right in their community.”

“Across America, 211 is seeing continued demand for local services to help family caregivers and their loved ones,” said Joshua Pedersen, senior director of 211 at United Way Worldwide. “Often, someone might call, text or chat 211 to find out what support is available for their loved one, and the call specialist is trained to hear when they need more support for themselves, too. By joining forces with AARP, this will help fill a critical resource gap.”

211 trained call specialists respond to 50,000 requests for help every day all over the U.S. and tap into 1.5 million locally curated resources. Alaskans can get the local information they need by simply dialing 211 today for free help. Dial 211 or visit www.aarp.org/211care.

Executor

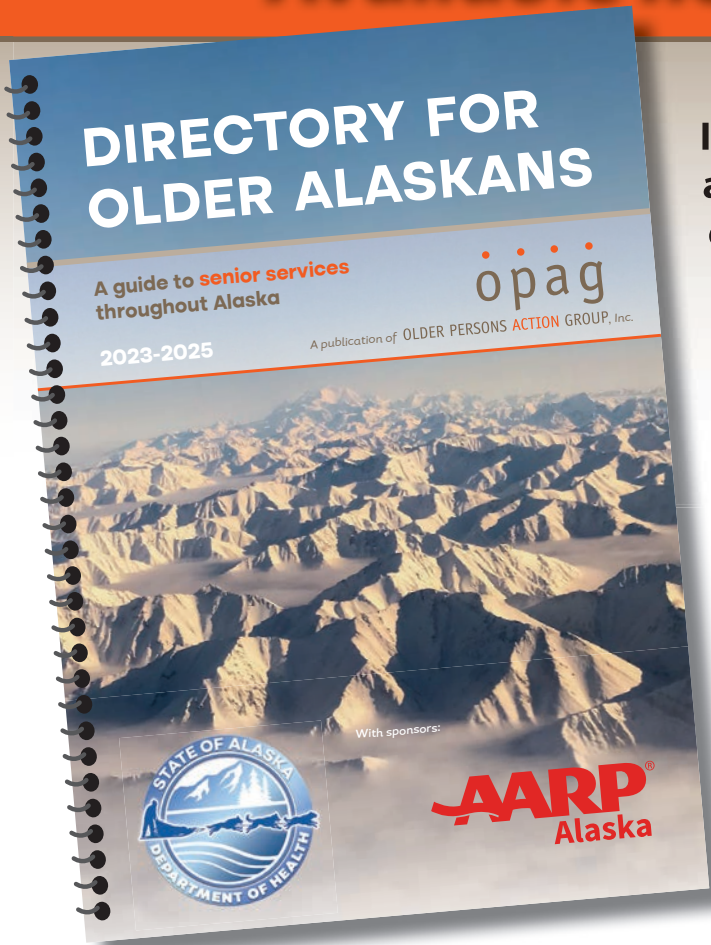
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just a will, you need to be careful. Typically, your named back-up trustee is going to be in charge of your finances if you become incapacitated. So if you name that sister-in-law who hates your guts, but you think she would do a great job of handling the estate for your children, and then you have a stroke and can’t manage your own finances, you may have put her in charge of picking your

assisted-living home. It might even be in Arkansas. (Note from the Kenneth Kirk, PC public relations department: We love people from Arkansas. We’re just picking on them today because we know they have a great sense of humor and can take a joke. Please don’t fire us as your attorneys.)

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. You can pick which one.

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*<https://www.assistedliving.org/power-of-reading-and-libraries-for-older-adults/>

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