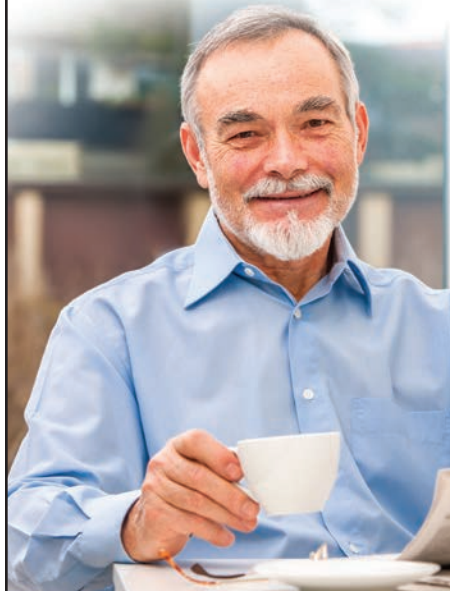
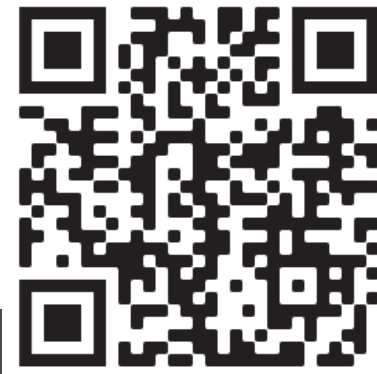


# Senior Voice SUBSCRIPTION



Just pick up the phone and call 276-1059 or toll free, 1-800-478-1059 to start your Senior Voice subscription today or subscribe at [www.seniorvoicelaska.com](http://www.seniorvoicelaska.com). The QR code below will take you to the subscription page.

Or complete and mail this form to:  
Older Persons Action Group, Inc.  
Publisher of the Senior Voice  
401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102  
Anchorage, AK 99503



Your subscription includes your OPAG membership.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New: One year - \$36          | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift subscription: One year - \$36     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal: One year - \$36      | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift subscription: Out of State - \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Out of State: One year - \$40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My donation                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Address change                         |

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## PAYMENTS

Credit Card  Visa  MasterCard  other \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Card# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_ Sec code \_\_\_\_\_

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Make checks payable to Senior Voice*

# Senior Voice

A publication of  
Older Persons  
Action Group, Inc. Free

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 49, Number 6 June 2026

**Mysterious SS Northwestern sailed Alaska waters.** - page 19

**Capital gains loophole is not what it once was.** - page 20

**Travel opened up the world to young Alaskans.** - page 22

**Weaver gives away the best of her.** - page 26



*Eileen Johnson surrounded by her nine children at her birthday celebration in 2005. Her children are Pat, Steve, Tim, Paul, Tom, Verna Loosli, Maureen Johnson-King, Sylvia Thompson, and Teresa Mordaunt. Pat and Tom have since passed.* - page 25  
*Photo courtesy Johnson family*





# Eating disorders affect Alaskans of all ages

By JESS RUDE

Executive Director, Alaska Eating Disorder Alliance

When most people think of eating disorders, they picture teenagers or young adults. But eating disorders don't disappear with age. For many Alaskans, they can quietly begin, intensify, or resurface as they age.

Eating disorders are complex, serious physical and mental illnesses affecting an estimated 65,000 Alaskans. They affect people of all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, body shapes and weights, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic statuses. Like many health conditions, physical impacts of eating disorders take an even greater toll on an aging body than a young one.

And, eating disorders in older adults are more common than many realize.

Some individuals have struggled for years, carrying disordered eating into later life. Others develop symptoms for the first time during midlife and beyond, often in response to major life transitions like grief, retirement, caregiving stress, chronic illness, menopause, loss of a partner, an empty nest, or even an adult child returning home. These moments can disrupt routines, identity, confidence, and a sense of control.

Plus, aging itself brings natural physical changes. Hormones shift. Metabolism and appetite change. Weight distribution and energy levels fluctuate. Physical limitations may alter how frequently or intensely someone exer-



Eating disorders can manifest or intensify as people age. They are complex, serious physical and mental illnesses affecting an estimated 65,000 Alaskans.

Photo via AKEDA's Canva account

cises. Bodies that once felt familiar may suddenly feel unpredictable.

For many people, these changes are not only physical, but emotional. In a culture that often ties value to youthfulness and appearance, aging can bring feelings of invisibility, loss, or shame. Older adults are constantly exposed to messaging about "healthy aging," weight loss, anti-aging products, and body improvement. At all ages, from social media and advertising to conversations with friends and healthcare providers, there is relentless pressure to shrink, control, or "fix" the body. Dieting and weight loss are often normalized and even praised, making harmful behaviors harder to recognize.

As a result, eating disorders in older adults frequently go unnoticed.

Changes in appetite or weight may be dismissed as simply "part of aging." Restrictive eating can be framed as "being healthy" or "eating clean." Excessive exercise may be viewed

as discipline or dedication. Even healthcare providers may not think to screen older adults for eating disorders, especially men, despite the very real medical and psychological risks.

Those risks are significant. Eating disorders are among the deadliest mental health conditions, second only to opioid use disorder. Physical impacts of an eating disorder like malnutrition, heart complications, bone loss, and weakened immune function can escalate more quickly in older bodies that may already be navigating age-related changes in cardiac, metabolic, gastric, and musculoskeletal health. Left untreated, eating disorders can reduce quality of life, worsen existing medical conditions, and increase the risk of serious health complications.

Alaskans may face additional barriers such as fewer local providers, geographic isolation from specialized care, and longstanding stigma around mental health. Many grew up when eating disorders

were poorly understood and not openly discussed, making it harder to notice when something is wrong, or recognize symptoms or to ask for help.

Families, friends, and providers can play a critical role in noticing concerning signs. A growing preoccupation or anxiety with food or weight, rigid eating patterns, withdrawal from shared meals, or sudden changes in body weight are not simply "normal parts of aging." They are signals to pay attention to. While finding specialized care may not always be straightforward, treatment and recovery are possible at every age.

Eating disorders are isolating illnesses that can make people feel profoundly alone. And while we are seeing important progress in reducing stigma around mental health, many of the harmful messages tied to weight, aging, appearance, and worth remain deeply ingrained across generations. Because these messages can shape how people relate to food, their bodies,

and even one another—they influence not only individual health, but family dynamics and community wellbeing over time.

That is why prevention, awareness, and support matter across the lifespan. At the Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance, addressing eating disorders from youth through older adulthood is not only about helping individuals heal, but interrupting patterns that can quietly pass from one generation to the next. When people of all ages have access to compassionate support and spaces free from shame, we create healthier families, stronger communities, and a culture where everyone can feel safe, resilient, and at home in their bodies.

Alaska Eating Disorders Alliance (AKEDA) provides help and inspires hope for Alaskans affected by eating disorders through education, advocacy, and support. For those who may be struggling, or supporting someone who is, resources are available. No one should have to navigate an eating disorder alone. [www.akeatingdisordersalliance.org](http://www.akeatingdisordersalliance.org)

## Send us your letters

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

## OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

### Mission statement:

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

### Vision statement:

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

Senior Voice Alaska will consider submissions to its Perspective pages. Submissions should relate to what we cover: people 50 years old and older and their needs and lives. To submit a piece for consideration, email [editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com). We require full names, addresses and a contact number and will consider letters from and about Alaska and Alaskans.



OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
Phone 907-276-1059  
Toll free 800-478-1059  
[www.opagak.com](http://www.opagak.com)  
[www.seniorvoicealaska.com](http://www.seniorvoicealaska.com)

SeniorVoice, established in 1978, is published monthly by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., a statewide non-profit corporation serving the interests of all older Alaskans.

Partially funded by a grant from the Alaska Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.

Subscription price is \$36 a year to Alaskan residents. All subscriptions outside Alaska are \$40 a year.

Copyright © 2026  
by Older Persons Action Group, Inc.  
ISSN 0741-2894

For advertising information please call (907) 276-1059. The printing of ads in Senior Voice does not constitute endorsement by Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

### OPAG BOARD MEMBERS

Sharon White-Wheeler (Emeritus), Eileen Hosey, Leonard T. Kelley (Emeritus), Yvette Tousignant, Gail Opalinski, Christine Merki  
Board President ..... Dylan Webb  
Vice President ..... Yvonne M. Chase  
Treasurer ..... Carol Allen  
Secretary ..... Amanda Biggs

Executive Director ..... C. Kelly Joy

### EDITORIAL

Editor ..... Paola Banchemo  
[editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)  
Correspondents ..... Laurel Bill, Dimitra Lavrakas, Maraley McMichael, Lawrence D. Weiss  
Advertising sales ..... Anne Tompkins  
[A.Tompkins@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:A.Tompkins@seniorvoicealaska.com)  
Page design ..... Rachel Gebauer, Gebauer Design



# Seniors are the hot demographic in Alaska

By LAWRENCE D. WEISS

Senior Voice Correspondent

We have a lot of official state things in Alaska. I know, “things” is a little vague, but I’ll give you some examples. We have an official state bird, the willow ptarmigan. We have an official state gem, jade. We even have an official state insect, the four-spot skimmer dragonfly (Did anyone tell mosquitoes about this?) But, and this is the curious part, we have no official state word.

We Alaskans are a literate people, and, in my humble opinion, I think we need an official state word. As you might expect, I have just such a word which will also fit nicely with the theme of this commentary: “kriechen.”

I don’t know much Yiddish but I know “kriechen.” Apparently borrowed from German, it means “moving slowly.” It can refer to a person’s physical or mental state, or it can refer to an inanimate object such as the wheels of bureaucracy. The word carries with it a hint of humor or irony. Perfect.

Moving on to the main event, we have a very readable three-page report released April 2026: “Population change so far in the 2020s,” by David Howell, state demographer. Maybe you’re thinking, “Boring statistics for eggheads.” But no. This is about you, your life, and your future. Keep reading. First, the big picture context:

“Our latest population estimates show Alaska grew by about 0.2 percent from 2024 to 2025, reaching 738,737. That slow growth was in line with the very minor population changes we’ve seen each year so far this decade.” That’s kriechen.

But look specifically at young people in Alaska: “A compounding factor is the youth population decreasing steadily over the past decade.... The number of Alaskans under 18 fell by 5,000 over the first five years of the 2020s, primarily in the youngest age groups. Since 2020, the number of kids in Alaska from birth to age 4 has decreased from 48,100

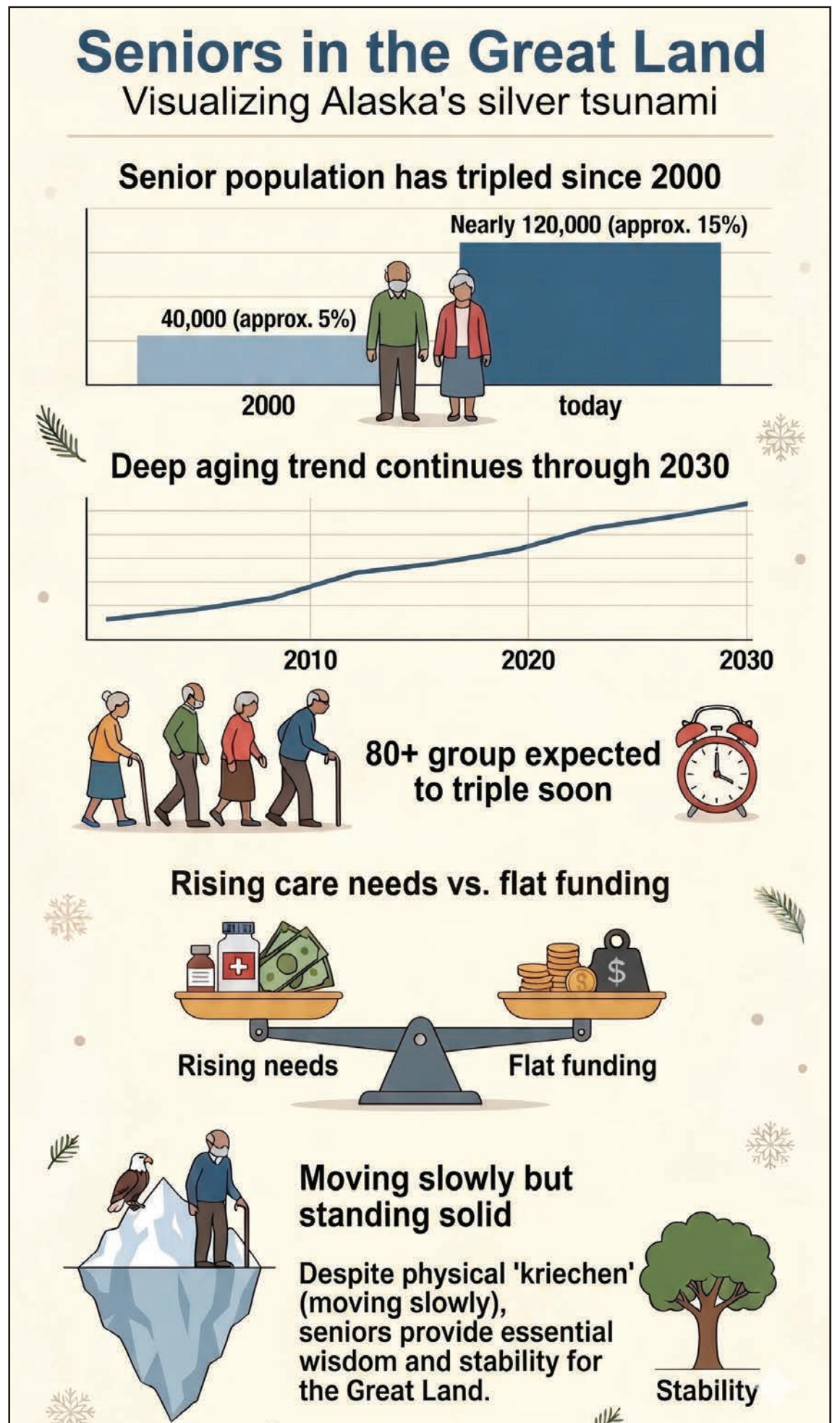
**Today there are nearly 120,000 seniors in Alaska representing approximately 16% of the population.**

to 43,300.” That’s going backwards.

Regarding seniors, please indulge this little illustrative story. I first came to Alaska in the early 1980s. When I went out to eat, older diners were indeed pretty sparse. The dominant demographic was typically somewhat rowdy younger folks. I know because I was one of them. It was a much younger state then. Nowadays when I hit the local restaurants it’s a sea of silver hair. Diners who are coming and going are sedately kriechen about. There is a reason for this change.

According to the author of the report, in the year 2000 there were fewer than 40,000 seniors in Alaska 65 or older. They represented about 4% of the total population. Today there are nearly 120,000 seniors in Alaska representing approximately 16% of the population. That’s an extraordinary growth rate. We may be kriechen around as individuals, but as a demographic we are winning the marathon.

How about our future? Not only will we be around, but there will be more of us. A lot more of us. By 2030 projections are there will be 165,000 Alaskans age 60 and older, according to “The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FFY 2024 – FFY 2027.” And the population 80 and older will almost triple over the next 30 years. That’s us enjoying the good life in the Great Land (fingers crossed). But at the risk of putting a damper on this “Golden Years” vision, we’ve got a few challenges coming up. The State Plan also notes that, “The State of Alaska resources for funding senior services and housing are flat or declining, due primarily to inflation. Alaska must plan for how to provide services for active seniors, those needing assistance to live independently, and those



By 2030 projections are there will be 165,000 Alaskans age 60 and older, according to a new report.

Infographic created by Lawrence D. Weiss using Google NotebookLM and Google Gemini

with more complex medical and social needs. People are living longer and the numbers of seniors with dementia, chronic health conditions, and behavioral health needs are also increasing proportionately.”

Sometimes I whine to friends and family about the unending parade of health and well-being issues that follow me and most of us along the path to our next birthday and into our next decade. A snarky

friend of mine described growing older as “death by a thousand cuts.”

But his rants usually conclude with an observation that these troubles “beat the alternative.”

Well, true enough. And the other side of it is that we seniors have the wisdom of experience. We made mistakes and learned from them. We were young and know what happens next. We understand each other. We can be terra firma for

younger people as well as our peers trying to survive a chaotic world. And the good news is that every year there will be more of us in Alaska to make our important contributions.

On the outside we may be kriechen but on the inside we are solid.

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.



# Transforming your conversations about aging

By **KAREN CASANOVAS**

For Senior Voice

**Q: How can I encourage my friends to shift our conversations away from the negatives of aging or feeling overlooked, and start discussing the positive aspects?**

A: As we age, conversations among peers often gravitate toward the challenges of growing older. While feelings of invisibility or worthlessness among older individuals are very real, dwelling on these sentiments creates a narrow, negative narrative that overshadows the richness of our current lives.

### Why focus on negatives?

This trend is often fueled by a society that celebrates youth while viewing aging with trepidation. Because our culture frequently dismisses older adults as irrelevant, we can internalize these biases, leading to feelings of being



undervalued and unseen. When we gather, our social circles may unintentionally become "echo chambers of concern." Instead of fostering connection, we reinforce the idea that our best days are behind us, magnifying worries rather than discovering ways to thrive.

### Transitioning conversations

To counteract this cycle, consider implementing some straightforward conversational strategies. First, practice the art of redirection. When a negative comment arises,

respond with an uplifting anecdote or observation. For example, if someone laments their loss of energy, share a story about a recent activity you have embraced. This shift not only alters the conversation, but may also inspire others to identify their own positive experiences.

Another valuable technique from psychology is reframing—presenting a situation in a different light. Instead of discussing the limitations of aging, highlight the newfound freedom that retirement can offer. Talk about exciting adventures you're eager to pursue, new places you want to explore, or skills you wish to learn.

Lastly, consider introducing interactive elements into your gatherings. Bring along a book or article that explores the positive aspects of aging or provides insights into happiness in later life. Sharing this knowledge can stimulate engaging dia-

logues and shift the group dynamic.

Here are some thoughtful movies that explore aging and reflection on one's life, perfect for sparking conversation and introspection in your gatherings:

1. "The Bucket List" (2007): This film follows two terminally ill men who embark on a road trip to fulfill their last wishes. It beautifully illustrates themes of friendship, adventure, and the importance of living life to the fullest at any age.

2. "The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel" (2011): A group of retirees travels to India to live in a luxurious hotel, only to find it not as advertised. The film explores the dynamics of aging, second chances, and finding joy in unexpected places.

3. "Cocoon" (1985): In this heartwarming film, a group of senior citizens discovers a fountain of youth while swimming in

a pool that is home to some extraterrestrial beings. It touches on rejuvenation and the joy of new beginnings, regardless of age.

4. "About Time" (2013): While primarily a romantic comedy, this film presents a poignant narrative about appreciating time and the moments that shape our lives. Its themes resonate deeply with aging and reflection.

5. "Man Called Ove" (2015): This Swedish film tells the story of a curmudgeonly old man whose life is changed by his new neighbors. It highlights themes of loss, community, and the impact of connection at any age.

6. "The Straight Story" (1999): Based on a true story, this film follows an elderly man who travels across the country on a lawnmower to reconcile with his estranged brother, showcasing themes of family and second chances.

page 30 please



## Alaskans 50+ decide elections.

In the last election, **174,000**

**Alaska** voters were 50+.

AARP Alaska provides nonpartisan voting information and resources. For information on when, where, and how to vote, text 'AKVOTES' to 22777.



# Amblin' for Alzheimer's drew crowds and energy

By C. KELLY JOY

Senior Voice

Family members, friends, and caregivers gathered on the morning of May 2 at the Anchorage Golf Course for the 2026 annual Alzheimer's Resource Alaska (ARA) "Amblin' for Alzheimer's" event.

ARA hosts the event to raise awareness about the growing incidence of Alzheimer's and related dementias in Alaska. Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia, but there are many others. <https://www.webmd.com/alzheimers/alzheimers-dementia> Dementia causes issues with thinking, behavior, and memory. Current (2024) estimates that 22% of Alaskans are 60 years old and older. Tracking for Alzheimer's starts at age 65 and show that 10,145 Alaskans are experiencing a form of dementia. As the Alaska population ages, it is reasonable to expect the incidence of dementias to increase.

During the 2-mile walk for awareness and unity, I spoke with several family members about their ex-

periences of coping when a form of dementia became a reality for a family member. One walker described how his father's condition developed quickly over months, and that the geographical separation created logistical issues for the family. He also described how his mother-in-law's condition had developed over nine years.

Another walker described how her father has been a master woodworker and as the dementia developed, how he had lost the strength to use tools and focus to follow the blueprint for a project. A granddaughter said that she had always gone with her grandfather on walks, so he did not get lost. All of the walkers I spoke with said that their parent had been resistant to losing their independence but had eventually come to accept help with activities for daily life, such as dressing.

Common themes for recovery echoed in the conversations. When a family member develops a medical condition, the priorities for the family change. Scaling one's personal plans to



Although May 2 was chilly, hundreds of people came out to support Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska as the nonprofit helps those affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

take one day at a time and placing their career on hold was by far the most difficult change that many walkers expressed.

When asked what advice they have for future caregivers, these are a few of the responses:

- ▶ The No. 1 response is "expect to develop the patience of the Biblical figure Job."
- ▶ Remain respectful. Engage with normal conversation, courtesies, and family traditions. The degradation is progressive, not immediate.
- ▶ Develop a consistent daily routine and environment. Constant change will only create confusion, frustration and angry outbursts.
- ▶ Self-reliance remains important so continue to challenge them to do the

- tasks that they can do for themselves, for as long as they can. Patience and encouragement convey love, honor and acceptance during this difficult time they are experiencing.
- ▶ Supporting is not a task for a single person—it takes a crew. Caregiving tasks become time-intensive, physically intensive, and emotionally intensive, so share the workload. The team at ARA can advise your family on strategies for sharing the workload. Use them.



## Enjoy your Retirement!

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

### Safe, Secure Senior Living

For more information or a tour please call:

907-333-8844

[www.chesterparkcoop.com](http://www.chesterparkcoop.com)



## — ADVERTISE IN —

# Senior Voice

Alaska seniors have buying power!



Senior Voice advertising representative

**Anne Tompkins**

can help you reach our readers.

Email her at

[A.Tompkins@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:A.Tompkins@seniorvoicealaska.com)

or call 907-276-1059

toll-free 1-800-478-1059



# Summer activity is exhausting; ask for help

By LISA SAUDER

For Senior Voice

There are moments in life when wellness does not look like green smoothies, exercise classes, or perfectly balanced schedules. Sometimes wellness looks like sitting at the kitchen table late at night, wondering how you are going to keep up with appointments, paperwork, caregiving responsibilities, and the emotional weight of watching someone you love change before your eyes.

For many Alaskans affected by Alzheimer's disease, related dementias, or other disabilities, that feeling of being overwhelmed can arrive quietly. One day you are helping with reminders or transportation, and before long you are navigating medical systems, trying to understand insurance plans, Medicaid waivers, coordinating services, and making difficult decisions about safety and care. It can feel isolating, confusing, and exhausting.

And in Alaska, summer has a way of intensifying that exhaustion.

The midnight sun keeps our days stretching later and later. Calendars quickly fill with fishing trips, family visitors, graduation celebrations, festivals, markets, and community events. Roads are busy with tourists exploring Alaska, while many families try to make the most of the short summer season by packing every moment with activity. It becomes easy to fall into a rhythm of going, doing, and pushing through fatigue because there is always one more thing to prepare for or one more obligation waiting.

For caregivers, that pressure can feel even heavier.

While everyone else seems to be enjoying the energy of summer, caregivers are often quietly balancing medication schedules, appointments, safety concerns, disrupted routines, and the emotional toll of supporting someone living with dementia or another disability. The season that looks joyful from the outside can still feel deeply lonely behind closed doors.

That is why wellness



is not just about staying active or keeping busy. True wellness also means recognizing when you need support. It means giving yourself permission to pause, ask questions, lean on resources, and accept help without guilt.

At Alzheimer's Resource Alaska (ARA), we believe wellness includes emotional support, connection, stability, and having trusted people to walk beside you when life feels uncertain. That is why Care Coordination Resource Alaska (CCRA), a program of ARA, exists. CCRA helps Alaskans living with Alzheimer's disease, related dementias, and other qualifying disabilities access services and support with clarity, compassion, and dignity.

Navigating care systems can be incredibly complex, especially when families are already under stress. CCRA works with individuals and caregivers to create personalized care plans that reflect each person's unique needs, goals, and living situation. The program supports eligible Alaskans in Anchorage and Mat Su through one-on-one guidance, ongoing coordination with service providers, advocacy, and culturally responsive care rooted in decades of experience serving Alaskans.

Care Coordination services may help eligible individuals:

- ▶ Access Home and Community Based Waiver Services (HCBW)
- ▶ Coordinate Medicaid Waiver and Community First Choice Personal Care services
- ▶ Monitor and adjust support services as needs change
- ▶ Advocate for personal goals, safety, comfort, and quality of life

CCRA serves Alaskans of all ages who qualify for



Care Coordination Resource Alaska (CCRA), a program of ARA, exists to help Alaskans living with Alzheimer's disease, related dementias, and other qualifying disabilities access services and support with clarity, compassion, and dignity.

Courtesy Alzheimer's Resource Alaska

## Summer wellness tips for caregivers

- Pause when you can. Even a few quiet minutes can help.
- Protect simple routines, such as meals, rest, and medications.
- Ask for specific help with errands, paperwork, or caregiving breaks.
- Plan ahead for outings with water, medications, emergency contacts, and comfort items.
- Watch for burnout, including exhaustion, irritability, sadness, or feeling overwhelmed.
- Reach out early. You do not have to wait for a crisis.

a Medicaid waiver due to a physical, developmental, or intellectual disability, including adults living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementias. The process begins with an intake completed by one of our Care Coordinators (CCs) to determine whether you may meet waiver level of care requirements. From there, our team gathers medical records and submits the necessary application paperwork to request an assessment. This assessment helps determine whether you meet the required level of care for waiver services. For some waiver programs, this includes meeting Nursing Facility Level of Care (NFLOC) criteria. If you do

not meet NFLOC requirements, we may still be able to connect you with other helpful resources and supports.

Our talented team of Care Coordinators walks alongside individuals and families every step of the way, helping reduce confusion, connect people to services, and support individuals in living as safely and independently as possible.

Sometimes the most meaningful step toward wellness is simply hearing someone say, "You do not have to do this alone."

As we move through Alaska's busy summer season, this is your reminder to check in with

yourself and the people around you. Rest matters. Support matters. Asking for help matters. Wellness is not about carrying every responsibility on your own. It is about building the support systems that allow individuals and families to continue forward with dignity, balance, and hope.

If you or someone you love could benefit from Care Coordination services, Alzheimer's Resource Alaska is here to help.

Learn more at [AlzAlaska.org/care-coordination](http://AlzAlaska.org/care-coordination) or contact Care Coordination Resource Alaska directly at 907-746-3445 or [Connect@AlzAlaska.org](mailto:Connect@AlzAlaska.org).

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



**Anchorage Senior Activity Center**  
"A Place to Stay Young!"

- ✓ MEDICARE INFORMATION & BENEFITS ENROLLMENT
- ✓ FITNESS CENTER, TAI CHI, CHAIR YOGA and more!
- ✓ HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS
- ✓ BILLIARDS ROOM & LIBRARY
- ✓ ARTS & CRAFTS CLASSES, CARD GAMES
- ✓ SOCIAL EVENTS & DISCUSSION GROUPS
- ✓ ARCTIC ROSE CAFE (breakfast and lunch)

 907-770-2000
  [AnchorageSeniorCenter.org](http://AnchorageSeniorCenter.org)







# Ideas for getting more veggies into your diet

By Dr. EMILY A. KANE

For Senior Voice

A major component of both physical and psychological well-being is to have a happy, functioning digestive system.

This means your appetite is good and you stop eating when about 80% full, to not over-eat, which prematurely ages our bodies over time. Also, you have a bowel movement every day (nothing better than pooping before having to get out the door!), and nothing hurts after eating. One component of having a happy belly (thus setting yourself up for living your best life) is to eat vegetables



every day. The thing about veggies is that they go bad (rot, ferment) quickly. This is a sign that they are healthy foods. All real food will eventually break down into compost. A Twinkie (or other processed food) will sit on your back porch for years, intact. A squirrel

may run off with it, but it won't decompose on its own because processed food typically contains preservatives to make the food more "shelf stable." Ideally you will commit to buying produce several times a week, then chop and cook and eat it!

There are hundreds of species of bacteria in your intestines, and they are vital for your health. Collectively these good bugs are called the microbiota. Each species plays a different role in your health and requires different nutrients for growth. Generally speaking, a diverse microbiota is a healthy one. This is because the more species

of bacteria you have in your intestines, the greater number of health benefits they contribute to. A diet consisting of different food types can lead to a diverse microbiota. Unfortunately, the Western diet is not very diverse and is rich in fat and sugar. About 75% of the world's "food" is produced from only 12 plant and five animal species. (Think wheat, corn, soy, sorghum, potatoes; also, pork, chicken, beef).

Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of nutrients for a healthy microbiota. Fruit, because of being high in fructose, should ideally be eaten alone—fruit makes a per-

fect snack and ideally not eaten on top of protein. Veggies are the single most nutrient dense category of food (minerals, vitamins, healing pigments) as well as being high in fiber. Fiber cannot be digested by the human gut, but it IS the main nutrient for the good bugs in your gut, which stimulates their health and growth. Beans and legumes, in particular, are very high in fiber. Other high fiber foods include artichokes, green peas, broccoli, celery, apples, steel-cut oats. A number of studies have shown that vegetarian diets benefit

page 9 please

# Beware the seduction of slip-on shoes

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Correspondent

If you're like me and walk more than drive, consider solidly built walking shoes to be your best to avoiding any injury or sores and blisters.

You've seen the ads all over touting slip-on sneakers and shoes, but this seems counter-intuitive.

If sustaining flexibility is a goal for later years, what does lifting your foot onto a chair to lace them do to you instead of bending over and lacing them?



A foot in the sand shows off a good arch.

Photo by Dimitra Lavrakas

Makes you less flexible.

Also, walking shoes or sneakers that must be

laced add an additional solid base for your feet as the laces keep your feet from slipping side to side, possibly causing a fall and surely prevent blisters. When it comes to warding off foot pain, experts say that shoes with proper arch support are key. In fact, the best sneakers for arch support are designed to reduce strain, promote proper alignment, and improve stability—ultimately helping to keep your feet comfy and pain-free.

## Avoiding pain

You don't want to experience

the pain of plantar fasciitis (a strong, fibrous attachment similar to a ligament that runs from your heel to the ball of your foot and your toes) caused by the plantar fascia becoming over-stretched.

This is pain you cannot ignore and needs to be seen by a podiatrist.

One way I found of dealing with the pain, when I lived remotely with no medical access, was to walk in cold ocean water along the sand. It helped with the swelling.

Think of good shoes like the foundation of any

house. They need to be strong and balanced to keep you upright.

I know this only too well because I was born with feet like Donald Duck—narrow at the heel and wide through the instep and toes. Heels were always a problem, and I'd usually fall when wearing them. The best were Capezio's dance shoes.

Luckily, as the years went by, shoe manufacturers made footwear that have widths that accommodate the size of my feet.

page 30 please

# Medicare telehealth coverage across Alaska

By SEAN McPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

Medicare's telehealth coverage has been expanded across Alaska to allow more people to access care at home. Let's learn about what you can expect now and into the future with Medicare's telehealth coverage.

## What is telehealth?

Telehealth includes certain services that you receive from a healthcare provider outside of an in-person office visit. A telehealth service is a full visit with a provider using telephone or video technology that



allows for both audio and video communication. It is different from a virtual check-in or health portal messages. Some examples of Medicare-covered telehealth benefits include lab test result consultations, prescription management, health screenings, and vis-

its to evaluate urgent care issues like colds or coughs.

Virtual check-ins allow you to communicate with your doctor briefly through audio and video communication technology or by sending photo or video images for remote assessment. Your doctor can respond by phone, secure text messaging, email, or use of a patient portal. Unlike a telehealth visit, a virtual check-in is not a full appointment. Medicare covers both virtual check-ins and telehealth visits.

## How telehealth was covered in the past

To understand what Medicare telehealth cov-

erage is now, it's helpful to know what telehealth coverage was like before the COVID-19 public health emergency. Previously, Medicare telehealth coverage was very limited. Telehealth services were generally only covered in remote areas. You would still have to go to a specific "originating site" to receive the telehealth. So, you probably couldn't be at home getting telehealth. You'd likely have to go to a different medical office or clinic. Telehealth was generally only covered if it was provided via interactive, two-way audio and video technology. And it was limited to certain specified providers.

## How telehealth is covered by Medicare today

Telehealth services are covered for all beneficiaries in any part of Alaska, and you can receive these services in your own home. Also, any health care professional that is eligible to bill Medicare can provide and bill for telehealth services. This means you can access telehealth from more providers, like physical therapists or speech language pathologists. Additionally, telehealth could be delivered using audio only sometimes, so not audio and video. These

page 8 please



ADVERTISEMENT

# FAQ about hearing aids



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

When you come in for your first visit, we cover your questions and make sure you understand the answers. Here are a couple of the common questions we get.

Hearing aids do not restore your normal hearing. They do help with hearing things easier. If you are in background noise and you're filling in the blanks, you might lose your understanding of the word. Hearing aids help you hear the words and that will help you keep your understanding. Hearing aids will only help you understand words you already know, they don't teach you a foreign language. This is like if you learned a foreign language in high school and did not speak it for many years, then someone spoke it to you. You might think that word sound familiar,

but you don't understand. The same thing applies with your first language: If you don't use it, you could lose it. Understanding and hearing are two different things.

When you buy a hearing aid make sure you know the difference between hearing aid and amplifier. Amplifiers are now being called hearing aids, and what we knew as hearing aids are now being called prescriptions hearing aids. There is more of a difference than just price. Prescriptions hearing aids are set just for you with a prescription your specialist will load into your hearing aid for you and make sure you are being amplified in the individual frequency you need to be. Amplifiers now have little more adjustment than they did before, but they are still common adjustments not prescribed for you.

If you have questions, please reach out at support@accuratehearingsystems.com

Call Accurate Hearing today for a FREE hearing test 907-644-6004. We are here to help.

*Donna R. Demarco, AAS, BC-HIS, CDP, Tinnitus Care Provider, holding a Certification from the International Hearing Society.*



**Accurate Hearing Systems**  
DONNA R. DEMARCO, AAS, BC-HIS, LLC  
*Your hearing care provider...*

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

# Medicare

*continued from page 7*

flexibilities have been set to expire, but then extended multiple times over the last few years. Most recently these flexibilities have been extended through Dec. 31, 2027.

## What is remote patient monitoring?

Remote patient monitoring allows your doctor or health care provider to monitor parts of your health from your home using medical devices such as scales, glucose monitors, and blood pressure cuffs. When medically necessary and properly managed, remote patient monitoring can support ongoing care, help manage chronic conditions, and reduce the need for in-person visits.

However, not all remote patient monitoring offers

are appropriate, medically necessary, or legitimate. Some companies may try to enroll you in services or send devices that are not medically necessary, not clearly explained, or billed without your full understanding or consent. These offers may come through phone calls, internet ads, or television promotions. To protect yourself, it's important to confirm that any remote patient monitoring service is recommended by your trusted doctor or health care provider, and that you understand how it works and how it will be billed.

Fraud and billing abuse does occur far more often than you might expect. Warning signs of scams include being offered a "free" device, like a smartwatch to track your daily steps, in exchange for your Medicare number. I recommend reviewing your Medicare Summary

Notice (MSN) which details the services billed, Medicare payments, and out-of-pocket costs. It is not a bill, but a tool to review for errors or fraud.

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

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

# Medicare counseling by phone

By **LEE CORAY-LUDDEN**

*For Senior Voice*

I am a Certified Medicare Counselor working

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

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



**HomeWell**  
CARE SERVICES

## Personalize Your Home Care with HomeWell™ of Anchorage

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

**Call HomeWell of Anchorage today at 907-868-3100**

Trusted Care. True Compassion.™ | [homewellcares.com](http://homewellcares.com)

©2020 HomeWell Senior Care, Inc. All rights reserved. Rev0320



**RBC HOME MAINTENANCE, LLC**  
RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTING

*Over 13 years of professional and personable service in the MatSu and Anchorage. Licensed, bonded and insured.*

## Age in place with an Accessibility Remodel!

Nearly any home can have

- ▶ Roll In Shower
- ▶ Exterior ADA Compliant Entry Ramps
- ▶ Door Widening
- ▶ Roll Under Bathroom Sinks
- ▶ Complete Interior Remodeling

**Free Consultations**

*D. Christopher McMullins*

**907-315-0886**

[rbc\\_hm@rocketmail.com](mailto:rbc_hm@rocketmail.com)

[rbchomemaintenance.com](http://rbchomemaintenance.com)

license# CONH40091



# Affordable Care Act Marketplace deductibles posted sharpest increase in history

Senior Voice staff

The average Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace deductible saw the steepest increase in history—growing by 37% or more than \$1,000, from \$2,759 in 2025 to \$3,786 in 2026 as enhanced pre-

mium tax credits expired, according to an analysis by KFF, a nonpartisan health policy organization which also runs a health-related news service. The full analysis is here: <https://bit.ly/4a478VQ>

Between 2021 and 2025, Americans searching for

healthcare coverage in the ACA Marketplace 2010 benefited from premium tax credits put in place by the American Rescue Plan in 2021 and extended through 2025 by the Inflation Reduction Act. These measures expanded ACA affordability, pushing enrollment

to record highs. When those subsidies expired at the end of 2025, insurance premium payments rose for many enrollees, particularly those with incomes above 400% of the federal poverty line, who had been newly eligible for subsidies under the enhanced credits. In Alaska, a

one-person household is at 400% of the federal poverty line if they earn \$79,640 per year.

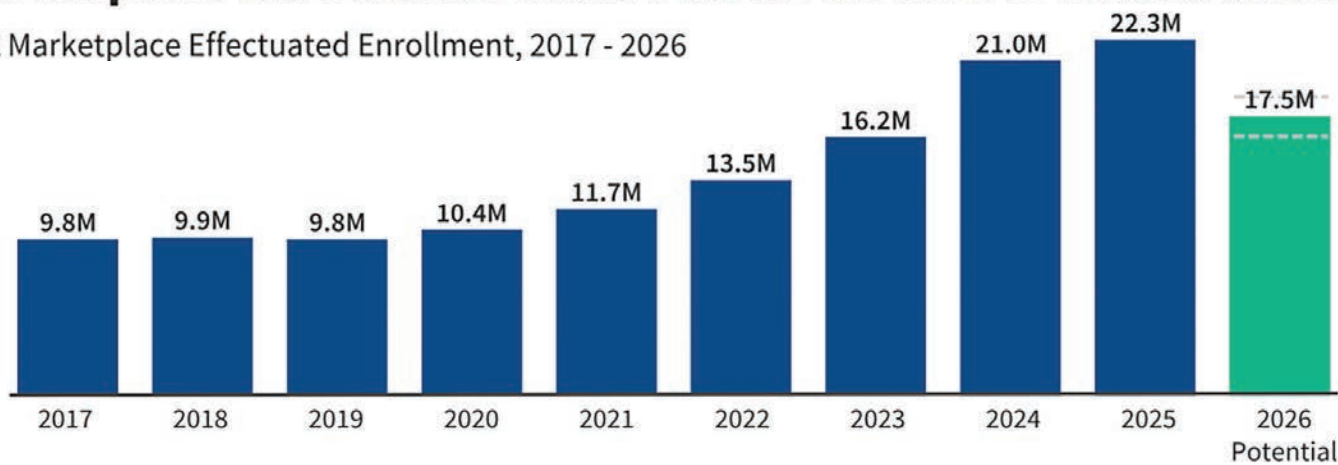
KFF's analysis draws on data from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and state-based Marketplace (SBM) Open Enrollment reports, as well as KFF survey data and individual market enrollment estimates from Wakely Consulting Group, to examine indicators of how the expiration of enhanced premium tax credits has affected enrollment levels, plan selections, and out-of-pocket costs in 2026. You can see CMS data here: <https://bit.ly/4nI40EE>

After the enhanced tax credits ended, many Marketplace shoppers chose lower-premium, higher-deductible plans. Between 2025 and 2026, sign-ups for bronze plans jumped from 30% to 40%

page 31 please

## Marketplace Enrollment Could Fall to About 17.5 Million in 2026

ACA Marketplace Effectuated Enrollment, 2017 - 2026



Note: See methods in issue brief: *What We Know So Far About 2026 ACA Marketplace Enrollment, Premiums, and Deductibles*. Dashed grey lines represent low and high estimates of 2026 enrollment.

Source: KFF analysis of estimates from Wakely Consulting Group (an HMA company) and CMS Effectuated Enrollment Reports data

## Veggies

continued from page 7

the gut microbiota; this may be due to their higher fiber content. One study found that a vegetarian diet significantly decreased disease-causing bacteria, such as *E. coli*.

You don't have to become a vegetarian to promote health and longevity. Here in Alaska, we are privileged to often have access to wild salmon and venison and other game. These are high-quality proteins which can help you rely less on processed meats, which undeniably contribute to various cancers. But I would challenge you to get vegetables into your diet every day, ideally twice a day.

I like to take some time every weekend to prep my veggies ahead. I choose three to six roastable and robust veggies such as mushrooms, onions, celery, zucchini and other squashes, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, carrots, peeled yams, rutabaga, peeled beets, green beans, kale stems, potatoes, colored peppers. The list is much longer but you get the



*Increasing your intake of vegetables, particularly green leafy choices, can improve your health. You can sauté kale, chard or mustard greens to ease digestion.*

Photo by Paola Banchemo

idea. Choose a pleasing array of veggies and cut them up into bite-sized pieces. Place in a large bowl and season with salt, pepper, turmeric, oregano, marjoram, thyme, a touch of cayenne or paprika. Drizzle with olive oil (no need for "virgin" which is best for using raw, such as in a salad dressing) and toss. Put into baking pans so the blend

is only one veggie deep, then bake at 375 degrees F for 35 minutes or until they start to smell good. When cooled a bit, place into 1-serving sized glass tupperware. They will keep nicely in the fridge for at least a week and if needed can be frozen for a month or more. These servings of delicious roasted veggies are a standard part of lunch

for me during the week—delicious and nutritious!

Another way to get more veggies into your diet is to make green smoothies. I'm not a big fan of juicing, unless you need to semi-fast because of a more serious illness, because juicing removes all the healing fiber from the juicy foods. I prefer smoothies, where the fiber content is preserved.

This may sound weird, but you can make a salad, then put that into the blender which improves the ease of digestion. Many people with a touchy digestive system cannot tolerate raw foods such as salads, because raw food, while often healthy, is more difficult to digest. Human's discovery of fire, and cooking, is one of the main reasons we have much bigger brains than other primates today; because cooking not only sterilizes food, it starts to break it down, making it easier to digest, thus allowing for much improved absorption of nutrients. You may have heard of a Spanish soup made from tomatoes and other raw veggies called gazpacho. Look it up for recipe ideas (there are many) and if you want a movie recommendation on the side, this soup has been rendered immortal in my mind by Pedro Almadovar's brilliant movie "Women on the Verge of Nervous Breakdown." Laugh out loud funny while still conveying an important social message.

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



# Breast cancer treatment strategies and prostate cancer guideline updates

By JOHN SCHIESZER

For Senior Voice

## New tools for combatting breast cancer

Immunotherapy has become a standard of care in treating high-risk, early-stage breast cancers, yet it has had limited success in shrinking tumors, so new biomarkers that can improve outcomes for patients are urgently needed. Now, researchers at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center in Nashville, Tennessee, have found that repeated blood sampling (liquid biopsy) can assess and predict the evolving antitumor immune response to therapy.

This minimally invasive and cost-effective alternative to tissue biopsy offers “an accessible tool for tailoring treatment strategies in breast cancer,” they reported April 22 in the jour-



nal Science Translational Medicine. The researchers performed RNA sequencing on 546 peripheral blood samples from 160 women with high-risk, stage 2 or 3 breast cancers during treatment with either chemotherapy alone or in combination with immunotherapy.

While validation is needed, this new liquid biopsy has the potential to “guide immunotherapy decision-making, tailor treatment regimens, and advance precision oncol-

gy, not only in breast cancer but potentially in other solid tumors as well,” the researchers concluded.

## New guidance for men with prostate cancer

The Urology Care Foundation (UCF), the official foundation of the American Urological Association (AUA), and the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) recently released a new educational guide on genetic tests to guide treatment decisions for men with advanced prostate cancer. The guide, called “Somatic and Germline Genetic Testing for Patients with Advanced Prostate Cancer: What You Should Know,” explains two types of genetic tests that can help patients and their doctors choose the best treatment.

“Advanced prostate cancer isn’t the same for everyone. A treatment that helps one person might

not help someone else,” said Dr. Harris M. Nagler, president of the Urology Care Foundation. “These tests give patients and doctors important information to help choose the best treatment at the right time. We’re proud to work with the Prostate Cancer Foundation to help more people learn about these options.”

Somatic (tumor) testing looks at changes in the genes and proteins of the tumor itself. Germline (hereditary) testing checks for inherited gene changes that can run in families. Together, these tests can show which treatments are most likely to work and help reveal eligibility for clinical trials of new therapies. They also can identify patients and their families who may be at higher risk for certain cancers, so they can take preventive steps.

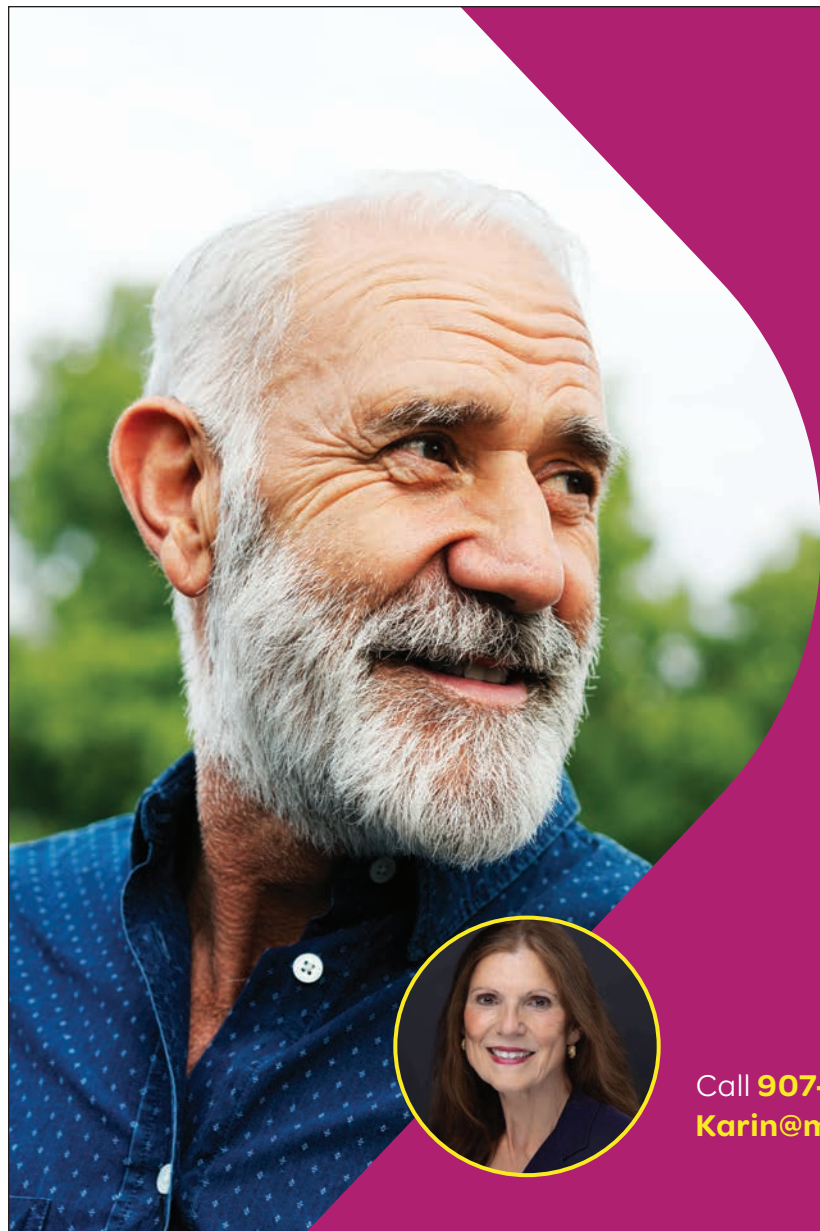
“Every patient with

advanced prostate cancer should feel empowered to ask their doctor about somatic and germline genetic testing,” said Dr. Phillip J. Koo, who is the chief medical officer of the Prostate Cancer Foundation. “These tests are now an essential part of advanced prostate cancer care and can improve outcomes.”

There is currently no way to completely prevent prostate cancer. Many of the most common prostate cancer risk factors such as older age, ethnicity and family history cannot be changed. However, adopting certain lifestyle habits may help lower your risk.

These healthy habits include not smoking and maintaining a healthy weight. There is some evidence to suggest that obesity may increase a man’s risk for prostate cancer. Eating a well-balanced diet is paramount. Studies have shown that high-fat diets

next page please



## Find the **Medigap plan** you want!

### Nationwide protection that helps you save!

Ask local expert Karin Woofter about Medicare Supplement (Medigap) plans and Moda Health extra perks\* like:

- ✓ Gym membership discounts
- ✓ Health and wellness coaching
- ✓ A 24/7 Nurse Advice Line



Call **907-201-3607** or email her at **Karin@myPoMInsurance.com** to get started today!



\*These additional services are not insurance, may not be available in all areas, and may be discontinued at any time. Health plans provided by Moda Health Plan, Inc. This is a solicitation of insurance. A licensed agent may contact you. Moda Health complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, hay disponibles servicios de ayuda con el idioma sin costo alguno para usted. Llame al 877-605-3229 (TTY: 711). CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói tiếng Việt, có dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí cho bạn. Gọi 877-605-3229 (TTY:711).



# Strengthening Senior Care Infrastructure bill passes legislature

Senior Voice staff

The Alaska Senate passed HB 96, which creates a Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board by a vote of 19-1.

The legislation is meant to expand access to affordable home and community-based care. The legislation also empowers

an advisory board that will develop policy recommendations for senior care improvement, and requires agencies that provide personal care to allocate a certain percentage of funding to Personal Care Assistants.

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in the state of Alaska, with an expected 500% increase

by 2050. This rapid growth will likely create a large demand for senior care, and according to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, care services will be one of the fastest growing occupations in the state.

HB 96 will be transmitted to Gov. Mike Dunleavy for his signature.

## Alaskans support cancer research



The Alaska Run for Women (June 6) and the Alaska Men's Run (June 13) raise money respectively for breast cancer and prostate cancer research.

Photo by Paola Banchero

## Prostate

from page 10

may increase the risk for prostate cancer. It is recommended that men choose a low-fat diet and limit processed and fatty foods, red meat and dairy.

Men are urged to eat a diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and exercise regularly. The recommendation calls for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week of moderate exercise. Alcohol consumption matters. The American Cancer Society (ACS) strongly recommends not drinking alcohol. If you do drink alcohol, the ACS recommends no more than two drinks per day for men.

### Prostate cancer detection guidelines updated

This year, the American Urological Association (AUA), in partnership with the Society of Urologic

Oncology (SUO), released the 2026 amendment to the Early Detection of Prostate Cancer Guideline. This Guideline is intended to provide a framework to facilitate clinical decision-making in the implementation of prostate cancer screening and follow-up.

“This amendment reflects our continued commitment to ensuring that patients and clinicians have access to the most current, evidence-based recommendations for early detection of prostate cancer,” said guideline amendment chair, Dr. Daniel Lin. “As the science evolves, so must our guidance. These updates incorporate the latest data to support more personalized, informed, and effective screening and follow-up strategies for patients at risk.”

This guideline has 35 recommendations and serves as a useful reference on prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening,

initial and repeat biopsies, and biopsy techniques as it relates to early detection of prostate cancer. The guideline changes include new information on digital rectal examination. It also contains new information on 5-alpha reductase inhibitors that are commonly prescribed to men over the age of 60.

“The Society of Urologic Oncology is proud to partner with the AUA on this important update,” said Dr. Adam Kibel, president of the Society of Urologic Oncology. “These revisions strengthen our shared mission of advancing high-quality, patient-centered care by integrating new research, new technologies, and the best available evidence into everyday clinical practice.”

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](mailto:medicalminutes@gmail.com).

ADVERTISEMENT

## Testosterone therapy: more than just libido

Many people assume testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) is only used to improve libido—but current research shows its benefits may extend far beyond sexual health, particularly for aging men with clinically low testosterone levels.

Low testosterone has been linked to fatigue, loss of muscle mass, increased body fat, reduced bone density, insulin resistance, and cognitive decline. Properly monitored TRT may help address many of these concerns.

The landmark T4DM trial found that men with low testosterone and prediabetes who received testosterone therapy alongside lifestyle changes had a significantly lower risk of progressing to type

2 diabetes compared to lifestyle changes alone. Research has also shown improvements in insulin sensitivity, waist circumference, and lean muscle mass.

Testosterone plays an important role in maintaining bone strength, helping reduce age-related bone loss and lowering the risk of fractures. It may also help preserve muscle mass, mobility, and physical independence as we age.

Emerging studies suggest testosterone may support mood, memory, and cognitive function in men with deficiency.

When prescribed appropriately and monitored by a qualified provider, TRT can be an important tool for healthy aging—not just sexual wellness.

(907) 202 9768  
 Megan@basecampmedak.com  
 www.basecampmedak.com  
 2507 Fairbanks St, Suite 2  
 Anchorage AK 99503  
 @basecamp\_medical

A UNIQUE INDEPENDENT LIVING ALTERNATIVE

“Thomas Center is the premier housing community for seniors (60+) who want to live in Alaska!”

## SENIOR APARTMENTS FOR RENT

• Call today • Schedule a tour • Learn about our activity offerings

(907) 538-9995 | [www.ThomasCenterAK.com](http://www.ThomasCenterAK.com)

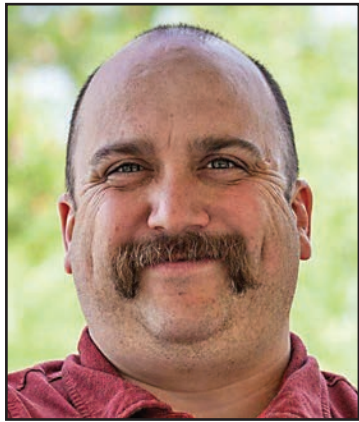
2190 E. Tudor Road | Anchorage, Alaska  
 on the west side of the St. Mary's Episcopal Church Campus



# Animal bites or scratches need to be treated quickly

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice



Living in Alaska means sharing our beautiful state with wildlife and the pets we love at home. Dogs and cats bring comfort and joy, but even gentle animals can cause accidental injuries. Knowing how to respond can prevent serious problems, especially when medical help may be far away.

Animal bites and scratches happen more often than people think. A dog might nip during play. A cat might scratch while jumping off a lap. These injuries can lead to infection if they are not treated quickly and correctly.

If a bite breaks the skin, the first step is to wash the area with soap and warm water. Let the water run over the wound for several minutes. This helps remove bacteria and dirt. Do not use harsh chemicals like hydrogen peroxide inside the wound. They can damage tissue and slow healing. After washing, apply a clean bandage and watch for signs of infection. These include redness, swelling, warmth, and pus. If any of these appear, see a doctor as soon as possible.

Cat scratches deserve special attention. Cats carry bacteria on their claws and in their mouths. Because their teeth and claws are

sharp and narrow, the wound may look small but can drive bacteria deep into your tissue. If a cat scratch becomes red, tender, or swollen, seek medical care. Always wash cat scratches with soap and water right away, just like a bite.

Dog bites can cause deep wounds and heavy bleeding. If bleeding is serious, apply firm pressure with a clean cloth or towel. Keep the pressure steady for at least ten minutes. If the bleeding does not slow, call for emergency help. Deep bites need professional cleaning to prevent infection.

After any bite or scratch, check when you last had a tetanus shot. Tetanus is a dangerous infection that enters through broken skin. Most adults need a booster every ten years. If your last shot was more than five years ago and the wound is dirty or deep, you may need another one.

Rabies is rare in Alaska, but it does exist, mainly in foxes and bats. If a wild



*Without meaning to, sometimes our pets can injure us or others. These injuries can lead to infection if they are not treated quickly and correctly.*

Photo by Paola Banchemo

animal bites you, or if a pet bites you and its vaccination record is unknown, contact a doctor or the Alaska Section of Epidemiology right away. They can guide you on whether rabies treatment is needed.

Rabbits and squirrels live in many suburban and rural neighborhoods. They may look harmless, but

they can bite or scratch when they feel trapped or startled. A squirrel may bite if you try to feed it by hand. A rabbit can kick and scratch with its strong back legs if you attempt to pick it up. These bites and scratches break the skin and carry bacteria that can lead to infection. Wash the wound with soap and warm

water, apply a clean bandage, and watch for signs of infection. Never try to handle wild animals, even the small ones that seem friendly. Admire them from a safe distance and keep your hands at your sides.

Prevention is the best protection. Let a dog see and sniff you before you pet it. Avoid sudden movements around animals. Do not disturb a dog that is eating or sleeping. Keep your own pets up to date on rabies vaccines. Trim your cat's claws regularly to reduce the chance of deep scratches.

For more information, contact your local health clinic or visit the Alaska Department of Health website. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also offers free guides on animal bites and rabies. Your local animal control office can answer questions about pet safety and vaccination requirements in your area.

Christian M. Hartley is an Alaska resident with three decades of public safety and public service experience. He lives in Big Lake with his wife and their three sons.

**FREE LEGAL HELP FOR SENIORS**

Call your local ALSC office to learn more:

Anchorage	907-272-9431		888-478-2572
Bethel	907-543-2237		800-478-2230
Dillingham	907-842-1452		888-391-1475
Fairbanks	907-452-5181		800-478-5401
Juneau	907-586-6425		800-789-6426
Kenai	907-395-0352		855-395-0352
Ketchikan	907-225-6420		877-525-6420
Kotzebue	907-442-3500		800-622-9797
Nome	907-443-2230		888-495-6663
Palmer	907-746-4636		855-996-4636

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

Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services

 Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) provides free legal help to seniors and elders age 60+ with housing, benefits, wills, health care, and more. Cases are prioritized based on need.

**MARLOW MANOR**  
ASSISTED LIVING

Premier **Assisted Living**  
in Anchorage, Alaska!  
*Where You Are Family*

- 48-apartment community all with private fully accessible bathrooms
- 14 apartments on a secured floor for memory care and special needs
- RN on staff during business hours and on-call 24/7 to triage concerns
- Activities Coordinator provides recreational opportunities
- Restaurant-style Dining • Utilities and DISH TV • Secured Entry System
- Resident Call Buttons • Wi-Fi in Common Areas • Microwave & Refrigerator

[www.MarlowManor.com](http://www.MarlowManor.com) 907-338-8708

*Providing your loved ones with privacy, dignity and individualized care.*





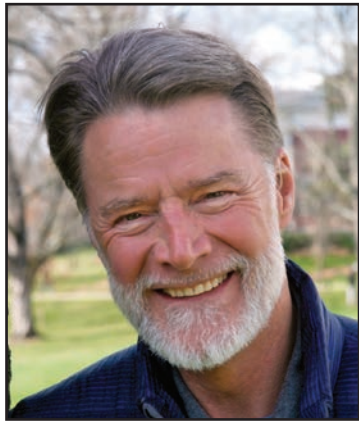
# Volunteerism ripples throughout community

By **JIM WARREN**

For Senior Voice

For two days in May, the arena of the Carlson Center in Fairbanks was alive with seniors. On May 7, more than 400 seniors attended the Senior Recognition Day luncheon hosted by the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks & Recreation Department and the Senior Citizen Advisory Commission. On May 8, hundreds of seniors took part in the Healthy Living Summit, strolling from one vendor to another, gathering information about topics like safe, affordable housing; transportation and walkability; social and civic activities; fitness, nutrition, and a healthy lifestyle. Presentations and demonstrations ran all day on Friday, from HomeFit Guidance and fall prevention to tai chi and yoga. There was a constant hubbub of voices, laughter, and snatches of conversation.

One presentation, titled "The Ripple Effect of Volunteering," featured six leaders of volunteer organizations, both state and local. JR Lewis was the



emcee, using his skills as an interviewer for KTVF to keep the conversation moving among the panelists and the 20 or so people in the audience. As the panelists spoke, major themes emerged. The organizations all focus on community service, and most depend on volunteers for much of the work they do. The Fairbanks Community Food Bank, for instance, provided 3 million pounds of food last year to people in need, and they had 2,000 volunteers work to process donations. The American Red Cross work force is 90% volunteers, responding to emergencies, greeting service members, and working with other agencies in relief aid. The Salvation



From left to right: JR Lewis, KTVF; Joe Torma, Greenstar of Interior Alaska; Julie Swisher, American Red Cross; Maddy Stokes, Rural CAP (Americorps Seniors); Jim Warren, MASST; Anne Weaver, Fairbanks Community Food Bank; Jon Tollerud, The Salvation Army.

Photo by Kris Capps, Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. (published with permission)

Army thrift store works especially with seniors as volunteers, sorting donations and preparing them for shoppers. Greenstar of Interior Alaska operates two recycling facilities, mainly run by volunteers. The two other organizations, Rural Community Action Program (AmeriCorps Seniors) and MASST (Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training), recruit seniors to volunteer at community agencies and

schools, in return for a modest stipend or wage.

A major message from the leaders was gratitude for the volunteers.

"Time is our most precious commodity," noted one panelist. For every agency, the volunteers' time is a valuable gift, and any amount of giving is deeply appreciated. It's important to tell the volunteers directly and often how much they are helping. "What you do matters," says one leader to her volunteers. Another calls her volunteers to thank them for their work. A third notes his motto: Food, Fellowship, Family. The result is that volunteers often form a meaningful community within the organization. Everyone understands that seniors may need to take a break because of health issues or other commitments, and any time one can give is welcome.

Simple acts create big effects. Several years ago, a third-grader helped her mom put together food boxes on a Saturday morning, and now that child has become a school nurse. An elder in the Rural CAP program decided to take excess food items donated to a school to make new dishes for congregant meals in the Senior Companion Program. A volunteer found himself becoming general manager of the nonprofit agency. Now he tells his volunteers, "You guys saved my life."

Senior volunteers get to interact with younger folks, teaching and learn-

ing together. Some young people may be court-ordered to volunteer, and seniors can become mentors or form a meaningful friendship with them. In some cases, the experience leads them to continue volunteering on their own. Organizations recruit volunteers by spreading the word through their long-time volunteers. They support their volunteers by making them feel appreciated, heard, and effective. They create fun events, as simple as a birthday party or a cookout for staff and volunteers to celebrate the work they do.

A key word for the experience of volunteering might be reciprocity. The ripple effects run both ways, from the organizations to the volunteers and from the volunteers to the organizations. Audience members noted that in their experience as volunteers, they received as much as they gave. They broke out of their comfort zone and found a place to make an impact in the community. It wasn't really about the birthday cake or the roasted hot dogs. It was about relationships, the back and forth. They felt a strong sense of filling a need, and then they got a second, warm feeling of fulfillment.

Jim Warren is the MASST coordinator for Northern and Interior regions, based in Fairbanks.

**THANK YOU**  
to our advertisers.



*Elevating quality of life  
in Alaska since 1998.*

- Stairlifts
- Elevators
- Wheelchair Lifts

Lift and accessibility solutions for your home and business.

EXPERIENCE YOU CAN TRUST.

**(907) 245-5438**  
www.alaskastairlift.com



1200 E. 76th Ave | Suite 1201  
Anchorage



# Satisfaction in finding the right riding lawnmower

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**  
Senior Voice Correspondent

After I recently I moved my riding lawnmower from its winter home to its summer home, I found myself thinking about lawn mowing in general and then more specifically about my dad's attitude about lawn mowing. There was no lawn at our home during my growing up years in Glennallen. Dad did clear acreage and plant timothy grass and oats, which he used to feed a horse that was acquired after I left home.

When Dad and Mom retired to Homer in 1988, their house came with a lawn. Dad was not a complainer, but he certainly grumbled about that lawn. How could the "dumb" lawn keep growing so fast when he didn't water or fertilize it? He had better things to do with his time than mow it. In the early years, he would let it grow tall and then cut it with a hand scythe or his vintage 1940s sickle bar mower. He would stack it up in a tall haystack in the backyard which moose would browse, but he also gave much to a neighbor who had a horse.

In his early 90s, Dad surprised us by purchasing a John Deere riding mower, and I never heard any more grumbling about the lawn. In fact, he was proud of that



Al Clayton Sr. mowing his Homer house lawn in September 2008, a few months before he died.

Photo courtesy Maraley McMichael

riding mower. During one of my visits, he wanted to teach me to use it. But I was busy with other things and didn't want to learn. I never liked loud noisy machines, and my husband Gary took care of lawn mowing at our house. So, I told Dad, "Not today, maybe another time." Another time never came.

Too bad I didn't recall any of this when I needed to purchase a riding lawn mower a few years ago. In early April 2023, my brother came to my house to get Gary's tractor running and move it to the shop after it had sat outside all winter. He also got the engine

of our Craftsman riding lawnmower running, but when he moved the lever to engage the mower blade, nothing happened. So, I knew I had a problem but was too busy to do any research.

The end of May, my nephew Isaac was at my house and got the mower blade to work. (Something about the belts.) Isaac then

mowed my lawn for the first time. He mowed it again in June while I was in Colorado for my son's wedding. After that, when I tried to use it, I could not engage the blade. The previous two years, it had been very difficult for me to engage the blade, but it was impossible after Isaac fixed it.

I would have to lean so

far forward (while using all my body strength) to move the lever, that I couldn't keep my bottom firmly on the seat. Every time I almost got the lever to engage, the engine would die. Talk about a vicious circle. It literally wore me out trying. When I complained about the poor design, someone told me the exciting news that some riding mowers have a push button feature to engage the mowing blade.

In early June, I went to the Wasilla Library, to seek information about riding lawn mowers in the Consumer Digest magazine. The article I found recommended John Deere. Through internet research I learned that Craig Taylor Equipment (north of Wasilla on the Parks Highway) sold that brand. I put it on my Wasilla list but never had the time to follow up.

Back from Colorado in July and not being able to use the Craftsman, I began mowing with our little walk-behind Honda that was hard to start and stuck in the slowest speed. My

page 16 please

**One Team. Comprehensive Care.**  
*Every Step of the Way.*

We're your partner in health—providing personalized **primary care** and seamless access to trusted **specialists** when you need them.

- PRIMARY CARE**  
Prevent. Monitor. Manage. We know you and your health history.
- SPECIALTY CARE**  
Seamless referrals to trusted specialists when you need more.
- BETTER TOGETHER**  
Coordinated care. Better outcomes. Peace of mind.

Your Health. Our Priority.  
Here for you today, tomorrow and beyond.

Contact us for your first appointment today  
**907-268-2737**

**Midnight Sun Home Care**  
Helping Alaska's Seniors Stay Happily In Their Homes

For over 20 years, Midnight Sun Home Care has been a proud, Alaska-owned provider of heartfelt care - supporting seniors and their families with trust, compassion, and the power of staying home. We're not a chain; we're your neighbors, deeply rooted in Anchorage.

Whether you need a few hours of help or 24-hour live-in support, our local team is available 7 days a week. We personalize every care plan to fit your unique needs.

At Midnight Sun, we believe home is healing. It is a place of comfort, dignity, safety, and independence. Our care helps families navigate sensitive decisions with clarity and heart.

Each of our caregivers is carefully screened and trained to ensure safety, skill, and compassion. We are guided by our core values of:

- Compassion
- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Consistency

Our clients often tell us it's not just what we do, it's how we do it - with empathy, reliability, and a local voice on the other end of the phone when you call. Thinking about in-home care? Let's start the conversation.

We'd love to meet you, hear your story, and explore how local care with heart can support your journey.

- ✓ Caring companionship
- ✓ Meal planning & preparation
- ✓ Light housekeeping & laundry
- ✓ Transportation & errands
- ✓ Personal hygiene & bathing
- ✓ Medication reminders
- ✓ Post-surgical & respite care

...and more

**Mention This Ad to Receive 6 hrs of Complementary Care**

Call (907) 677-7890 or visit [midnightsuncare.com](http://midnightsuncare.com) for your **FREE** consultation today!



# Madeline Holdorf earns Ron Hammett honor

By PAOLA BANCHERO

Senior Voice

There is a throughline in Madeline Holdorf's life.

Holdorf, the former volunteer statewide AARP president, received the Ron Hammett from the Municipality of Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission on May 6.

When she graduated from high school more than 60 years ago, she received the outstanding service award.

"It takes my breath away, actually," said Holdorf in a conversation after the award ceremony, held at the Anchorage Senior Activities Center.

"In my retirement and when I had a career, I find time to look more deeply into issues of importance to myself and my peers," she said.

"I'm always looking for opportunities for moving things forward in a fair way for all people to have opportunities to live their lives as they wish."

Holdorf, who studied sociology and has a master's degree in education, worked in several fields, from public school education to non-profit administrative work. She and her twin brother



*Madeline Holdorf, the former statewide volunteer president for AARP, was honored with the Ron Hammett Award, which recognizes individuals whose outstanding service, dedication and leadership has had a significant impact on the quality of life for seniors in the Municipality of Anchorage. The luncheon, part of Older Americans Month, was held May 6. Jim Bailey, chair of the Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission, is behind her.*

Photo by Paola Banchero

learned volunteerism from their mother, she said. Nowadays she is commissioner on the Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission (which separately considered this award).

The Municipality's Senior Citizens Advisory Commission established the Ron Hammett Award in 2005, recognizing individuals whose outstanding service, dedication and leadership has had a significant impact on the quality of life for seniors in the Municipality of Anchorage. At the time of his death on October 24, 2004, Hammett was a commissioner for the SCAC.

Hammett was a World War II veteran and served in the occupation of Japan. Hammett spent his professional career in Oregon and Alaska, primarily in the field of vocational rehabilitation and health services. After his arrival in Alaska in 1976, he became involved with Bean's Café, the Boys and Girls Club, and other boards and commissions that addressed human needs.

To nominate a person for this honor next spring, access the nomination form here. It has a mid-April deadline. <https://bit.ly/4u13vYV>

## National database reporting abandoned boats in operation

Senior Voice staff

As Alaskans head into the water, it's a good time to note abandoned and derelict vessels sitting along shorelines. These boats are more than just an eyesore. They can leak fuel, damage marine habitats, and create safety concerns for other boaters trying to navigate waterways.

Last year, the BoatUS Foundation for Boating Safety and Clean Water teamed up with NOAA's Marine Debris Program to launch a national database

that tracks abandoned vessels across the U.S., including territories and freely associated states. This spring marks the first full boating season with the technology in place.

The tool lets anyone report a vessel they come across, helping build a clearer picture of where these problem boats are and how communities can prioritize removing them.

"With boating season around the corner, boaters have an opportunity to spot and report abandoned vessels that might otherwise

go unnoticed," said BoatUS Foundation Director of Outreach Alanna Keating in a news release. "Each report helps communities better address the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels by supporting both removal efforts and prevention."

Reporting an abandoned vessel takes just a few minutes, and each report helps support cleanup efforts that can cost more than \$24,000 per boat. To report an abandoned vessel, go to <https://mycoast.org/boatusfoundation>

## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Daylight floods the state in June. Fairbanks receives roughly 21 hours and 49 minutes to 22 hours and 10 minutes of daylight, while Anchorage receives 19 hours and 20 minutes. Take advantage of all the activity ... The **Celebration Native festival**, organized by the **Sealaska Heritage Institute** during even years, in Juneau is **June 3-6**. <https://sealaskaheritage.org/shi-celebration/> ... The **Three Barons Renaissance Festival** is held over two weekends 801 Pine Street in **Anchorage, June 6-7 and 13-14**. The first weekend is pirate-themed and the second weekend is fantasy-themed. <https://www.3barons.org/> ... There are numerous **solstice music festivals** as well... A **Beatles tribute band** will go head-to-head with a **Rolling Stones tribute band** at the Discovery Theatre in **Anchorage June 17, 18, 24 and 25**. The concerts benefit Alaska American Legion Baseball. Tickets for "Beatles vs. Stones-A Musical Showdown" are available at [alaskapac.org/theatres/discovery-theatre](http://alaskapac.org/theatres/discovery-theatre), or <https://centertix.com/events/beatles-vs-rolling-stones-musical-showdown>, by phone at (907) 263-2787 or at the Theatre Box Office. The Discovery Theatre, 621 W. Sixth Avenue, Anchorage ... **Seldovia** features live performances, artist-led workshops, open mic events, vendor booths and more. It runs June 18-20. <https://www.seldoviaartscouncil.org/festival> ... The **Midnight Sun Festival in Fairbanks** is **June 20** from noon to midnight. Downtown Fairbanks is packed with live performances, food vendors, and shopping booths. <https://midnightsunfestivalfairbanks.com/> ... The famous **Midnight Sun baseball game** in Fairbanks is between the **Alaska Goldpanners** and the **Utah Yaks**. It will be played **June 19**. Tickets here: <https://goldpanners.pointstreaksites.com/view/goldpanners/> ... The **Mayor's Marathon** is just one of the many solstice-related events in **Anchorage**. It is **June 20**. You can run a full marathon, but there is also a half marathon, the solstice classic, and a kids mile on June 18. To register: <https://www.anchoragemayorsmarathon.com/Race/Register?raceId=97495>. Town Square and Fourth Avenue is jammed with activity between noon and 6 p.m. June 20 as well. Expect live music and other entertainment, along with food trucks and vendors, a chalk art gallery, petting zoo, bouncy houses, and dance performances.... Not to be outdone, the **Kenai Peninsula** features several festivals. One of the most noteworthy of all is the **Moose Pass Solstice Festival June 20 and June 21**. <https://www.facebook.com/moosepasssummersolsticefestival/> ... **Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Program** is organizing a **barbecue on June 26** from noon to 2 p.m. It's a chance to relax, connect and enjoy classic grilled favorites together. Bring a side to share. It's at 5th Avenue Park in North Pole.

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

## MOVING? Let us know!

Send your change of address information to  
Senior Voice, 401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102,

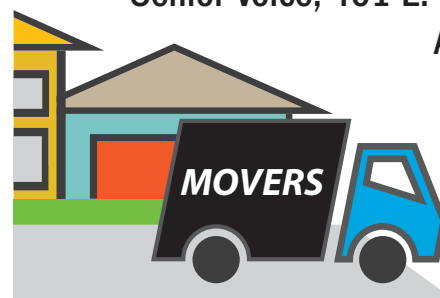
Anchorage, AK 99503

Or call 276-1059

(Anchorage area) or

1-800-478-1059

(toll-free statewide)



Senior Voice Alaska.com



# Lawnmower

continued from page 14

frustration level grew. (I have since taken the Honda to Eagle River Small Engine Repair and it runs well.)

In early August I finally checked out the Craig Taylor Equipment website, and noticed they would have a display at the Alaska State Fair. I work four days each fair in the flower department, but it wasn't until attending on a day I didn't work (the last day of the fair) that I was able to stop by the Craig Taylor booth. A young woman gave me the name of the salesman (Mitchell) who specialized in John Deere lawn mowers and agreed that I needed to visit their "store."

On Sept. 5, I drove to Craig Taylor and met Mitchell. We discussed my needs, especially about engaging the mower blade. We checked out his available mowers in the rain, but they were all too big for me. He said he would do the research and work



Maraley McMichael mowing her Palmer lawn in July 2025.

Photo courtesy Maraley McMichael

up a quote with the various features I wanted and call me when it was complete. He said they had just received a small mower like I was looking for (with a lever to engage the mower blade) but it was still in the shop being put together. The soonest he could help me test drive it would be

on Sept. 14.

Near the end of my daily bike ride on Sept. 7, I unexpectedly was able to ask a neighbor who had a John Deere if he liked his. Long story short, when he came to my house Sept. 10 and cut my lawn, he offered to let me give his machine a try. I was surprised how

easy the lever moved on his mower.

Because of that "test drive," when I went to Craig Taylor on Sept. 14, I told Mitchell I was leaning toward a lever -tyle engagement, rather than push button. We went out into the yard and he wiped the rain off the seats of two

machines so I could try them. One was the smaller version with a lever and the other was a larger version with a push button. When it was all said and done, I decided on the push button feature.

I'd been there over an hour by the time I signed my name to the quote to order a machine. I wasn't required to put any money down, because Mitchell said if for some reason I decided not to buy it, they wouldn't have any trouble selling it.

Mitchell had help from Consumer Digest and a neighbor's test drive to make this sale. After mulling over the purchase of a riding mower for a whole summer, I walked out of Craig Taylor that day feeling good about my decision. Had I remembered Dad and his John Deere, that decision would have come quicker and been easier. And the old Craftsman mower continues to work fine for my brother.

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

## Alaska ADRC Aging & Disability Resource Centers

## Connecting Seniors, People with Disabilities and Caregivers with Long-Term Care Information & Services

- **Identify** your long-term support needs
- **Explore** your options for meeting those needs

- **Connect** you with the resources you choose for yourself or your loved one
- **Follow Up** to ensure your needs are met

### Anchorage

Municipality of Anchorage, Anchorage Health Department  
825 L St., Ste 200, Anchorage, AK 99501  
907-343-7770

[www.muni.org/adrc](http://www.muni.org/adrc)

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

Independent Living Center  
47255 Princeton Ave., Ste 8, Soldotna, AK 99669  
907-262-6333 | 800-770-7911

[www.peninsulailc.org/adrc](http://www.peninsulailc.org/adrc)

### Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska Independent Living Center (SAIL)  
8711 Teal St., Ste 300, Juneau, AK 99801  
1-800-478-SAIL (7245)

[www.sailinc.org](http://www.sailinc.org)

### Mat-Su Borough

LINKS Resource Center  
777 N. Crusey St., Ste 101, Wasilla, AK 99654  
907-373-3632

[www.linksprc.org/adrc](http://www.linksprc.org/adrc)

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

ADRC North - Fairbanks Senior Center  
1424 Moore St., Fairbanks, AK 99701  
907-452-2551

[www.adrcnorth.org](http://www.adrcnorth.org)

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

Bristol Bay Native Association  
1500 Kakanak Rd., Dillingham, AK 99576  
907-842-4139 | 800-478-4139

[www.bbna.com/our-programs/social-service-programs/elderly-services/](http://www.bbna.com/our-programs/social-service-programs/elderly-services/)



# 1-877-625-2372

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



# Author of “Firecracker Boys” to give talk at Anchorage Museum

Senior Voice staff

The Anchorage Museum’s exhibit “Cold War to the Cosmos” was a big hit with family who visited the state this spring. It closes Sept. 7. Part of the exhibit features an interview with Dan O’Neill, author of “The Firecracker Boys,” which tells the nonfiction story of Project Chariot, a 1958 U.S.

government plan to detonate nuclear bombs in Point Hope, Alaska, to create a harbor, which was stopped by local Inupiat people and environmental activists. He is giving a lecture at 6:30 p.m. June 17. Register here: <https://ancm.ticketapp.org/portal/product/81/event/40c3f82e-879a-454e-b857-264e8ed54870>

# Highlights from senior centers around the state

Senior Voice staff

## Golf tournament organized by Anchorage Senior Activities Center

The Anchorage Senior Activity Center is holding “Summer Blast,” a golf tournament and barbecue June 17. The event is June 17 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Russian Jack Springs Park. A team of four participating in the golf tournament costs \$100. For more information or to RSVP, call 907-770-2000. Russian Jack Springs Park is at 801 Pine Street, but the chalet is at 1600 Lidia Selkregg Lane.

## Nome senior center is organizing outings in June

The XYZ Senior Center in Nome is organizing outings in June to pick greens and to plant in their garden beds. Contact program manager Melanie Johnson to learn more. 907-442-5238 or [mjohnson@nomecc.org](mailto:mjohnson@nomecc.org). Johnson said the center will know more as June gets underway.

## Homer Senior Center has annual meeting this month

The Homer Senior Center has its annual meeting this month, which you can attend via Zoom. <https://www.homerseniors.org/> The board meeting is at 4 p.m. June 16.

## Fairbanks Senior Center raises money for vet care

Last spring, the Fairbanks Senior Center launched the 2026 “Pets Need Love Too” campaign to support veterinary care for seniors’ pets. The campaign ensures seniors can spend their final years with healthy, well-cared-for pets, covering essential veterinary needs and the costs that keep their animal companions by their side. The goal is to raise \$25,000 to continue providing essential veterinary care for the pets of low-income seniors in the Fairbanks community. Donations can be made online at: <https://fairbanksseniorcenter.networkforgood.com/admin/projects/296923-2026-pets-need-love-too-campaign>

# Senior Voice is on Facebook!

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



# Calendar of Events

**June 1 Nationwide** National Cancer Survivors Day.

**June 1-30 Nationwide** Gun Violence Awareness Month.

**June 1-30 Nationwide** Men’s Health Month. Anchorage has a Men’s Run on June 13, which proceeds going toward prostate and testicular cancer research and awareness. <https://alaskamensrun.com/>

**June 14 National** Flag Day

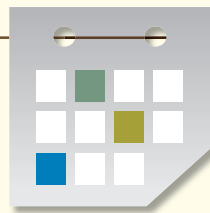
**June 19 Nationwide** Juneteenth. Commemorates the day in 1865 that enslaved people in Galveston, Texas, learned of their freedom. It is celebrated as a day of freedom, resilience, and a reminder of the struggle for equality and justice. It is now a federal holiday.

**June 21 National** Father’s Day

**June 21 Northern Hemisphere** Summer solstice. The astronomical start of summer. Those in the Southern Hemisphere are entering winter. Summer solstice officially is at 12:24 a.m. ADT.

**June 27 Nationwide** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Day.

**June 28 Nationwide** Anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising in New York, which led to the LGBTQ+ rights movement and Pride events throughout the month of June. The Anchorage Pride parade begins at 11:30 a.m. on the Delaney Park Strip, West Ninth Avenue, on June 27. Other events take place this month in Fairbanks, Homer, Seward, Valdez and other communities.



## Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice  
401 E. Fireweed Lane, #102, Anchorage AK 99503  
[calendar@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:calendar@seniorvoicealaska.com) or  
[editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)  
Deadline for July edition is June 15.

# August 7-16, 2026 in Fairbanks



## Sport events include:

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Archery          | Mini Golf       |
| Basketball       | Pickleball      |
| Bocce            | Power Walk      |
| Bowling          | Road Race       |
| Cycling          | Swimming        |
| Golf             | Table Tennis    |
| Horseshoes       | Team Toss       |
| Ice Hockey: Coed | Tennis          |
| Indoor Shooting  | Track and Field |
|                  | Triathlon       |



Member of National Senior Games



Like us on Facebook!

Questions?  
Call (907) 978-2388

Register at [www.Alaskaisg.org](http://www.Alaskaisg.org) by July 27

Register by June 30 to get the Early Bird Special!

Must be 50 years of age or older by December 31, 2026 to participate. No experience necessary.



# Wrangell enjoys heritage from four nations

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

The Union Jack flapped briskly in the damp Southeast Alaska wind on June 2, 1840, rising for the first time over the log palisades of Fort Dionysius. With ceremony, the British flag replaced the Russian tricolor and men of the Hudson's Bay Company, clad in wool and bearing the formal letter of authority from Saint Petersburg, stepped forward. In one flourish, Wrangell entered a new chapter. Its Russian name, St. Dionysius, was replaced with Fort Wrangell, in honor of Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell, the renowned Arctic explorer. He also was chief manager of the Russian-American Company, effectively serving as the governor of Russian settlements in Alaska.

But the act was more than a change of banners. Fort Wrangell stands on land steeped in Tlingit history, where for centuries the Káa Ts'áak Héeni—People of the Thundering Water—fished, traded, and enforced their laws. The river mouth was a vital artery for trade and culture, guarded fiercely by the Naanyaa.aayí clan. As officialdom shifted, local Tlingit leaders watched, measuring the new foreign presence, acutely aware that the true authority belonged to those who understood the land and tides.

For the British, Wrangell was a strategic prize. The Hudson's Bay Company, eager for furs, tea, and profitable negotiation, swiftly established itself. The fort became a bustling center of commerce; its storehouses brimmed with otter pelts, blankets, beads, and the stories of dozens of nations. The town's harbor, once dominated by Tlingit canoes and Russian sloops, now saw bustling traffic from company ships flying the Union Jack, San Francisco whalers, and Sitka traders.

Yet, beneath this British order, the memory of Russian presence lingered. Only six years before, the Russian-American Company had arrived, constructing the first European-style fortifications—a stockade bristling with cannons and Orthodox icons. Tensions ran high in those days. Russian ambitions collided with Tlingit sovereignty, with uneasy truces and wary commerce keeping outright war at bay. The Russians persisted, conducting trade and imposing tribute, but always under the watchful gaze of Tlingit elders. The land never truly changed hands.

Before Russia and Britain, the island's soul belonged to the Tlingit. It was alive with clan memory, ceremonial poles, soaring eagles, and the rhythms of the Stikine River. Traders from the interior came



By 1897, Wrangell was a bustling town with miners on their way to find their fortunes in gold.

Courtesy Alaska State Library

for eulachon oil, ivory, and copper and paid respects or tolls to the local clans. The Tlingit controlled not only access, but narrative and cultural survival, negotiating on their own terms while adapting to each new arrival.

The flag over Wrangell would change again. By 1867, the U.S. Army—charged with enforcing

new American authority after the purchase of Alaska—raised their standard. Fort Wrangell became U.S. Military Post No. 4. And after a few short decades, the small village transformed into a throbbing gold rush town. Stikine Tlingit merchants, Hudson's Bay Company traders, Russian Orthodox settlers, and American prospectors alike took their chances on these shores.

Each transition brought challenge and opportunity. Tlingit leaders found new ways to protect their people. Russian priests left behind stories and icons. The British introduced a global network of commerce and shipping.

The Americans brought rail ties, boomtown law, and a steady tide of fortune-seekers. In time, Wrangell would become a hub for fishermen, loggers, and—today—visitors, drawn as much by history as by wild Alaska.

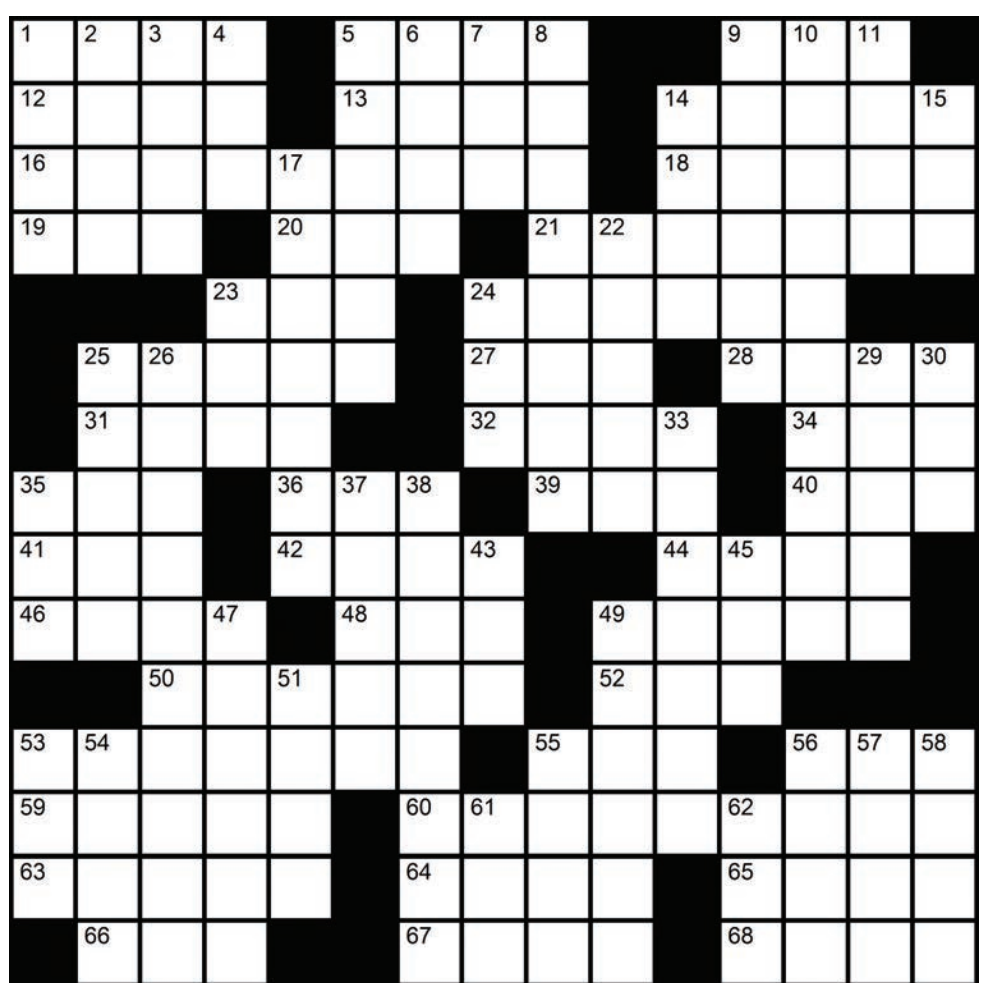
And so it is that Wrangell has the distinction of being the only Alaska town to have been under the flags of four nations. Every flag left a mark; every nation added a verse to Wrangell's enduring song. This is a town where history comes ashore, carried on the tides and carried forward in memory.

This column features stories researched for Aunt Phil's Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. Along with Bill's latest book, *Pioneers From Alaska's Past*, the books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphilstrunk.com](http://www.auntphilstrunk.com) and Amazon.

## That's a No-no

### Across

- 1 Agitate
- 5 Bellyache
- 9 Genetic material
- 12 Blue-pencil
- 13 Facts, for short
- 14 Cries like a cat
- 16 Lacking in etiquette
- 18 Slicker
- 19 Córdoba cry
- 20 The soap *Days of \_\_\_\_\_ Lives*
- 21 Impossible words
- 23 Jeans brand
- 24 Most inferior
- 25 Regarding
- 27 Columbus Day mo.
- 28 Kind of spirit
- 31 Well-behaved
- 32 Blood-related
- 34 Baseball card stat.
- 35 Stadium cheer
- 36 Summer shade
- 39 \_\_\_\_\_ Paulo, Brazil
- 40 Moray, e.g.
- 41 Docs' org.
- 42 Wind instrument
- 44 Endure
- 46 Helgenberger of *CSI*
- 48 *The Name of the Rose* writer
- 49 Pub orders
- 50 Grackles
- 52 Friend in France
- 53 Words for when the actors go on strike
- 55 \_\_\_\_\_ Lanka
- 56 Cable channel
- 59 Zagreb native
- 60 Baseball game rarities
- 63 Charters
- 64 Coagulate



Copyright ©2026 PuzzleJunction.com

- 65 Seed coat
- 66 Behold
- 67 Small whirlpool
- 68 Jumping stick
- 11 Blown away
- 14 Cheese nibblers
- 15 Box office sign
- 17 On and on words
- 22 Old Roman port
- 23 DiCaprio, to fans
- 24 Fancy neckwear
- 25 Small terrestrial lizard
- 26 Minor accident
- 29 Assists, illegally
- 30 Linear unit
- 33 Without restraint
- 35 Ewe's mate
- 37 Crosswise, on deck
- 38 Success out of the question
- 43 Aurora's counterpart
- 45 Cuckoo
- 47 Whirl
- 49 Equality
- 51 Turner and others
- 53 ATM maker
- 54 Assayers' stuff
- 55 Not barefoot
- 56 Life saver
- 57 Two-masted sailing vessel
- 58 Norway's capital
- 61 Aged
- 62 Faucet

Crossword answers on page 30



# Mysterious SS Northwestern sailed Alaska waters

By **GEORGE DARROW**

For Senior Voice

The SS Northwestern was launched on November 28, 1889, by the Delaware River Iron, Shipbuilding and Engine Works of Chester, Pennsylvania, under the name of the SS Orizaba and was an iron-hulled combined passenger/freighter ship that was powered by a coal-fired steam-driven engine and a four-bladed screw propeller. The first owner of the Orizaba was the Ward Line (also known as the New York and Cuba Steamship Company), and she sailed for nine years carrying passengers between New York, Mexico, and Cuba. During this period the United States became involved in the Spanish-American War, and as a result the Orizaba was chartered by the U.S. Army and became a U.S. Army transport.

After the war the Orizaba returned to the Ward Line and continued her runs into South and Central America. One of these runs was a trip to Colon, Panama, in early 1906 as a banana freighter for the Panama Railroad. In March 1906 she changed ownership to the Northwestern Steamship Company, and that summer sailed around the southern tip of South America to Seattle. After arriving in Seattle on June 1 she then went on her first voyage to Nome, which was completed on June 25, 1906. That August the SS Orizaba was renamed the SS Northwestern.

Ownership of the Northwestern was transferred to



By Alaska Railroad Alaska Railroad Tour Lantern Slide Collection, 1923

Courtesy Alaska State Library

her final owner, the Alaska Steamship Company, in January 1908. She then sailed the waters of Alaska as a combined passenger/freighter for the next 34 years. Typical services (other than for passengers) that she supplied were:

1. Laying telegraph cables from Unalaska to St. Michael.
2. Carrying copper from Kennecott
3. Ferrying gold from Nome
4. Carrying livestock
5. Transporting mail

There were few navigation aids such as buoys or lights that were available in Alaska's waters in the early 1900s, plus the Northwestern had a single screw propeller and a narrow rudder, which (according to historian Bob DeArmond) made her hard to maneu-

ver. As a result, she was involved in 18 accidents and one smallpox quarantine. The Northwestern's final voyage under the Alaska Steamship Company ended in October 1937.

World War II started in September 1939 with the German invasion of Poland.

In August 1940 the Northwestern was taken to the Lake Union Dry Dock Company in Seattle, where she was converted into a floating barracks, mess hall and power plant. Then, at the beginning of September 1940, she was sent under her own power to the Naval Operating Base at Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

The United States' entry into World War II began on December 7, 1941, when the Empire of Japan bombed U.S. Naval installations at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

The Aleutian Campaign in Alaska began on June 3, 1942, when four bombers and 15 fighters attacked Dutch Harbor. On June 4, a second attack occurred with a squadron of nine Japanese Val dive bombers led by Lieutenant Zenji Abe (who had bombed the USS Arizona in the Pearl Harbor attack) attempted to bomb the seaplane tender SS Gillis and the transport President Fillmore. They were driven off by intense anti-aircraft fire and transferred to secondary targets. One of which was the Northwestern. Two of the Japanese VALS targeted the ship. Of the two bombs that were dropped, one missed and the other scored a direct hit. As a result, the ship's fuel ignited and fire swept across the ship. The residents onboard were safely evacuated, even though one lamented the loss of the pork chops he never got to eat for lunch. Even though the ship burned for three days, fire crews managed to save the ship's boilers and power plant, and within a week she was able to provide heat, steam and electricity to the naval base until a new, fortified,


power plant was installed that September.

Once the new power plant was installed and operational the Northwestern was made seaworthy enough by the Seabees to survive a tow to Seattle, then piled full of scrap metal, a lot of which was welded to her hull in order to help with stability in heavy seas, then—in the fall of 1943—towed to Captains Bay on Unalaska Island to await a tow to the south. And there she waited.

Navy records affirm that the Northwestern was towed to Seattle in 1944, where she yielded 2,700 tons of scrap metal. This was confirmed in 1959 by Alaska Steamship Company officials, who also stated that the ship had been scrapped in Seattle. However, local Unalaska citizens had always believed that the Northwestern was still aground in Captains Bay. In the 1970s local divers explored the Captains Bay wreck and brought back parts that indicated they were part of the ship. In July 1984 historian Austen D. Hemion identified the bow of the wreck as the Northwestern. In 1986 a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey team officially confirmed the wreck as the Northwestern when they matched pictures of the ship's wartime bomb damage against the wreck's hull and verified that the wreck still contained a wartime cargo of scrap metal. The engineers also identified faint lettering on the bow of the wreck that says "Northwestern"


So, there she waits—still.

George Darrow is a historian and newsletter editor for the Alaska Veterans Museum. He is retired from the Anchorage Veterans Administration and the USAF where he served as an enlisted NCO as a communications specialist and a security policeman. He graduated from UAA in history and music.






Call today to schedule or confirm benefits.

www.metrochiroak.com      907-276-6325



- Convenient midtown Anchorage location and hours.
- Providing customized treatment plans, including gentle care options, since 2009.
- Preferred providers and accepting VA Community Care, Auto Injury, Worker's Comp, Premera, Aetna, and Medicare.
- Providing Chiropractic, Myofascial Release, Massage Therapy, Rehabilitation Exercises, Shockwave Therapy, and Health Coaching.

Subscribe to  
**Senior Voice**

Call 276-1059 in Anchorage  
or 1-800-478-1059 toll-free statewide



# Capital gains tax loophole may not be what you think

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice

The Internet is a wonderful thing, with a lot of useful applications, but it does have a few downsides. One of them is that when information becomes outdated, it usually remains there on the Web, waiting to potentially mislead people.

I was reminded of this recently, during a conversation with a young man who was doing some household repairs for me. He mentioned that he and his wife were thinking of selling their small home and buying a bigger place for their growing family. If they did that, he mused, they might hold onto their old house and rent it out.

And then he hit the kicker: “And years from now when the kids are grown and we’re ready to sell the new house, we can move back into the old house for two years, and then we won’t have to pay any taxes on the sale.”

Unfortunately, I had to burst his bubble. What he was describing used to be a very nice loophole, but then things changed.

Here is how the strategy used to work. As you may know, when you buy a property and then sell it later for more, you pay capital gains tax on the profit. But if that has been your primary home

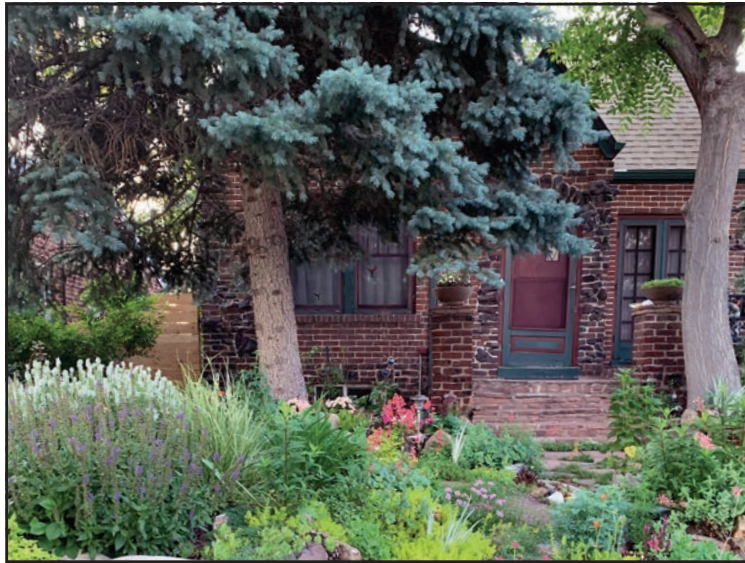


for two years, there is an exemption from capital gains tax. The exemption is \$250,000, or double that for a married couple.

So, if my wife and I buy a house for \$300,000, and live there as our primary home, and then years later we sell it for \$600,000, we don’t have to pay any capital gains tax. Our combined exemptions of \$500,000 are more than the \$300,000 profit on the sale.

But what if we rent it out for a few years? The old rule was that as long as we lived in it for two years out of the last five years before we sold it, we would still get that exemption.

Let’s take that young man’s situation and move it back in time. He and his wife bought a house for \$150,000 and lived there for 10 years. Then they bought a new house and moved into that one, and lived there for the next 18 years, while they rented out the old house. Next, they moved back into the old house for two years,



*If you rent a house out, and then you move back into it for the requisite two out of five years before selling it, you can still get an exemption. But the exemption is not as generous as it once was. Photo by Paola Banchemo*

selling the newer one. They wouldn’t pay any capital gains tax on the newer home, because they applied the exemption. Two years later they sold the original, smaller house for \$500,000. They would have been able to exempt from all the sales proceeds on both homes. That is, under the old rule.

I keep emphasizing that that was the old rule—I’m even going to put it in caps: **THE OLD RULE**—because a lot of people think you can

still do this. Unfortunately, sometimes when a loophole is just too juicy, they close it. And Congress did that several years back.

Here’s the new rule. If you are renting a house out, and then you move into it for the requisite two out of five years before selling it, you can still get an exemption. It is not, however, the full exemption that you used to get. It is a fraction based on how long you lived in the house as opposed to how long you rented it out.

So if that young man lived in the smaller house as his primary home for 10 years, rented it out for 18 years, and then lived in it again for two years, he would get a 40% exemption since he lived there for 12 years out of the 30 years he owned it (which is 40%). Which is a nice exemption to have, but not nearly as good as the old one.

There are a lot of details that go into calculating capital gains on a property sale, including depreciation, improvements, costs of sale, and so forth. Please don’t rely on this article in making a decision such as that one. This is the kind of thing you work out with an accountant.

And please, any time you get information off the Internet, make sure it’s current. There is a lot of old gunk in those cyber webs.

*Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning attorney. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. As they say on the Web, “I said what I said.”*

**DELUXE SENIORS COMPLEX**

Tour our property and view our Quiet & Spotless Apartment Homes

- For Seniors 62+ years old.
- Income eligibility required.
- Keyed access bldg. w/ elevator.
- Washer/dryer in each unit.
- Security Deposit \$200.
- Pets upon pre-approval.
- Pet deposit \$50.
- Convenient to shopping.





**Southside Apartments**

9480 Morningside Loop 907-344-0281  
www.manormanagementak.com



**Icons of Modern Art. Only at the Anchorage Museum.**



Experience works on loan from other renowned museums, in dialogue with the Anchorage Museum’s Northern collections and galleries.

**ANCHORAGE MUSEUM**

Featuring works by Georgia O’Keeffe, Mark Rothko, and Nancy Graves on loan through the National Gallery of Art’s Across the Nation program.

Image: Mark Rothko, *Untitled*, 1958, oil and acrylic on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Gift of the Mark Rothko Foundation, Inc., 1986.43.150, © 1998 Kate Rothko Prizel & Christopher Rothko/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Made possible by National Gallery of Art



# Call screening, Libby superpowers, bedtime stories

By **BOB DeLAURENTIS**

For Senior Voice

**Q. Can I screen incoming phone calls on my iPhone?**

A. The simple answer is yes. But nothing is simple in tech, because it depends on which model iPhone and operating system version is on your device.

I'm going to first explain how to set this up on the newest models, and then I'm going to explain how anyone can search for info about their specific device.

Call screening only requires one setting. Go to Settings -> Apps -> Phone, tap "Screen Unknown Callers-Ask Reason for Calling"

Now, when someone calls and the phone does not recognize the number, it prompts the caller for a real response before alerting you.

Call screening offers other options, including sending unknown callers to voicemail and letting you see the voicemail live as text while the system records the message.

Here is what to do whenever you have a question, especially about a previous

version of the device.

Consider an iPhone 16 running iOS 18. Go to support.apple.com/guide/iphone/welcome/ios, which takes you to the top level of the iPhone help system. Note that the "Select Version" pop-up menu allows you to focus your search on a specific iPhone version. Type "manage unknown callers" into the search box to see a list of help documents.

I wish the screening settings were simpler; however, you can configure your phone to serve you, rather than the other way around.

**Q. My local library is not especially large, and it does not offer much in the way of eBooks. Are there intra-library loans for eBooks?**

A. I adore libraries. Last year I wrote about Libby, an app that accesses thousands of eBook titles on behalf of local libraries. It is one of my most used apps.

Unfortunately, not every library system supports Libby. And for those who do participate, the inventory can be limited.

My personal fix was to get a library card from a different

library. What started small has become an obsession. Now I collect library cards with the same zeal I once had for baseball cards.

The good news is that the Libby app supports multiple libraries. Searching for a desired title means repeating the search for each library card you hold.

Hopefully as this becomes more common the Libby app will search across all your library cards in one action.

Nevertheless, adding additional libraries is worthwhile.

This site is a search engine for a list of reciprocal library card offerings that offer Libby. (reciprocard.com).

While visiting that page, you can conduct a search to identify libraries that have reciprocal agreements, enabling access to various library systems. Not the same as those magical inter-library loans we used to know, but a great way to access more free eBooks and audiobooks. And support libraries everywhere.

**Q. Can my smartphone help me get a better night's rest?**

## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

**Browser privacy checkup**  
Visit this link to display a page that presents everything your browser quietly reveals about you. [sinceyouarrived.world/taken](https://sinceyouarrived.world/taken)

**iPhone help online**  
Bookmark this URL today, and search here the next time you need help. [support.apple.com/guide/iphone/welcome/ios](https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/welcome/ios)

**Silly pudding**  
This whimsical site presents hundreds of visual essays about a wide range of topics. Something for everyone. [pudding.cool](https://pudding.cool)

A. That a great question with more answers than I can fit into limited space. Here are a few of my favorites:

Meditations. The big music services all have meditation-friendly recordings, including appropriate music and vocal guidance. If you subscribe, Apple Fitness+ offers hundreds of meditations on everything from sleep to resilience.

Sleep tracking. There are many different levels of tracking, from just using the phone to remind you to keep a regular bedtime all the way to hardware/app combinations that assess the quality of your sleep.

Bedtime stories. Humans have used bedtime stories for centuries to help quiet

the mind and let go.

YouTube is a great source for bedtime stories, especially if you pay a monthly fee to disable advertising. You do not have to watch; the visuals are not the point.

There is so much material it can be a challenge to find titles that fulfill your desires. Start by searching in the YouTube search box for "Stephen Dalton Sleep Stories." Stephen's stories are aimed toward adults, but other searches will reveal stories appropriate for different ages.

Getting a good night's rest can be a challenge, but your smartphone can help if you give it a chance.

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

## NEED HELP STAYING INDEPENDENT AT HOME?

### Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. Chore Services Can Help!

Daily household tasks can become difficult with age. Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI) offers Chore Services to help seniors remain independent in their own homes.

If you are a senior, family member, or caregiver looking for support, we are here to help.



**WASI'S trained staff can assist with routine household tasks such as:**

- Light housekeeping
- Laundry and linen changes
- Trash removal
- Vacuuming & floor care
- Bathroom & kitchen cleaning
- Organizing & decluttering pathways for safety

To learn more or request services, contact  
**WASILLA AREA SENIORS AT**  
907-206-8800

Supporting seniors throughout the Mat-Su Borough  
*"Rooted in Dignity. Serving with Respect."*

Payment Options: TriWest for Veterans, Medicaid Choice Waiver, or Private Pay



### CAREGIVER & ANTICIPATORY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP



Meeting Wednesday's  
6:00-7:00PM  
2612 E. Northern  
Lights Blvd.  
Anchorage, AK 99508

907.561.5322  
[info@hospiceofanchorage.org](mailto:info@hospiceofanchorage.org)

### Themes:

<b>4/8:</b> Caregiving Foundations
<b>4/15:</b> Caregiver Burnout & Self-Care
<b>4/22:</b> Healthy Boundaries & Asking for Help
<b>4/29:</b> Communication Skills
<b>5/6:</b> Emotions in Caregiving
<b>5/13:</b> Stress Management & Relaxation
<b>5/20:</b> Finding Hope & Meaning
<b>5/27:</b> Navigating Transitions
<b>6/3:</b> Holidays & Special Dates
<b>6/10:</b> Preparing for What Comes
<b>6/17:</b> Life After Caregiving
<b>6/24:</b> Closing & Celebration





# Young Alaskans in Europe in the early 1970s

By **KIMBERLY METCALFE**  
with **DAVID KENWAY** and  
**MAC METCALFE**

For Senior Voice

Mac Metcalfe was back in Juneau in the spring of 1969, after serving a tour in Vietnam. He was one of the fortunate ones, having served as a teletype operator in relative safety just south of Saigon. Despite experiencing shelling and a night attack by sappers, he returned unharmed to Juneau. He picked up a job at the Juneau Cold Storage, a fish processing plant, where he and his cousins Jeff Prather and Patrick Gullufsen and a group of friends spent the summer months as the “inside crew.” They worked in a part of the plant where fish were deep frozen and piled in stacks for shipment. It meant spending the summer inside huge, ice-fogged freezer rooms, but the money was excellent. It was a union job that paid well and there wasn’t time to spend it.

After the season ended, Mac called his childhood friend, David Kenway, who was in college at Oregon State University in Corvallis. “Out of the blue, he called me at OSU at the end of the first term of my second year. He was back from Vietnam, out of the Army, and said he and Jeff were going on a trip around the world. Did I want to go? It sounded fun, and I had money saved. That’s how quickly it came together.”

The three met in Seattle in early January 1970, and after bar hopping in the big city, they made their way to Pullman, Washington, where they picked up a Drive-Away car. The vehicles were a frugal travel option that allowed drivers to pay for gas and deliver a car to the owner in another part of the country. Their destination was Albany, New York. They drove



*Top: Mac and David push the Volkswagen van up a hill in the Alps. They weren’t prepared for the snow and were happy when they got to Italy.*

*Middle: Mac Metcalfe and Jeff Prather took a swim when they got to Yugoslavia.*

*Bottom: David and Mac were World War II history buffs. They knew this was a German panzer*

*Photos courtesy Kim Metcalfe*



Interstate 90 in the dead of winter. On their way to the Little Bighorn National Monument, the weather went from snowy to a raging blizzard. They drove off the road and were fortunate to be rescued by a trucker who towed them out of a ditch. They were OK and the car wasn’t damaged.

After brief stops to see Mount Rushmore, Jeff’s college friends in Madison, Wisconsin, and relatives in Chicago, they delivered the car and were off to New York City to catch their flight on Icelandic Airlines (known then as the “Hippie Airlines” for its budget fares), to Luxembourg.

After separating for two weeks of travel on their own, they met up at the youth hostel in Amsterdam where they purchased a battered, colorfully painted Volkswagen van from three Japanese students. They realized later why the students seemed amused as they handed over the paperwork for the van.

“We got as far as the German border and were unceremoniously turned back. It happened that when the van was purchased years earlier it was good for six months in Europe and then had to be exported or the waived taxes had to be paid. The taxes were never paid, of course, and the van was



*Cousins Pat Gullufsen, Mac Metcalfe, and Jeff Prather pose with large halibut in the freezers at the Juneau Cold Storage, a fish plant in Juneau. The Cold Storage closed in 1987 following a devastating fire.*

sold and resold to unwary buyers like us,” David said.

Being resourceful Alaskans, they devised a plan to look for small town border crossings, often waiting until nightfall to cross. Jeff talked their way through the Italian border by “playing dumb” until the utterly frustrated Italian border guard impatiently waved them through. Besides Italy, the three quietly slipped into Belgium, France, and Switzerland. The tax status issue was ignored in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey. The van died in Turkey where they abandoned it.

“Someone was grateful for the parts,” Mac quipped.

The trio split up after Athens. David flew home around the world via Israel; Jeff returned to Alaska from Istanbul after the van died. Mac completed his round the world adventure, hitching, riding buses or trains through Turkey into Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, ending up in India where he flew back to the U.S., briefly stopping in Vietnam to visit friends he made while stationed there.

Motivated by the travels

*next page please*





# Europe

from page 22

of Mac, Jeff and David, I made plans to go to Europe. Juneau was isolated, but we were up on the latest news, reading newspapers and magazines and listening to news on the radio. In July 1968, Life magazine featured a spread titled, “The New Odyssey of American Youth: A Restless Generation Roams Abroad, House-keeping in Caves in Crete and Keeping Home Far Away.” A publication called “Europe on \$5 a Day,” was a guidebook for cheap travel on the continent. I wanted in on the action.

My friend Joan, who I worked with as a long-distance telephone operator, decided to go with me. We flew Icelandic Airlines to Glasgow, Scotland, where we purchased membership cards from the Scottish

Youth Hostels Association. My card was issued on November 5, 1970, and its colorful stamps from hostels in Scotland, Ireland, England, Spain, France, Italy, and Greece show my progress across Europe. It was a time when thousands of American, Canadian, and Australian youths were hitchhiking with backpacks, or using Eurail passes to see the wonders of Europe.

Joan and I made it to the Scottish Highlands but were put off by the strict rules regarding women in pubs, and the judgmental stares we got from the rigid Scots. We heard from other travelers that Ireland was a lot more fun, so we crossed the Irish Sea by ferry to the Emerald Isle. Our first stop in Northern Ireland was at the port of Larne. It was late in the evening and we were tired. We knocked on the door of the first B&B we came across. A kind woman showed us our room and

came back with cookies, hot chocolate, and hot water bottles to warm our beds—a great introduction to Ireland.

We made it as far as Cork, hitching from one town to the next, enjoying the pubs and Irish hospitality. The pubs were community gathering places where musicians played and everyone sang along to the tunes. We kept going and headed for London where Joan decided to stay on a bit longer. I took the ferry to Calais and got a ride as far as Paris. I was let out in the middle of the city, and everyone I tried to speak with ignored me. In 1970s Paris, the French had little use for someone who only knew English. I came across a train station and, frustrated with being unable to figure out Paris, grabbed the first train to Barcelona.

Barcelona was fun. Cheap wine, bars with incredible tapas, late-night

dancing, and lots of young people. From Barcelona I hitchhiked through Spain, and across the Riviera into northern Italy where I met three Canadian women. I teamed up with Carol from Saskatchewan, and we hitched south to Florence, Rome, Naples, and the tip of “the boot,” Reggio Calabria. We got rides in fancy sports cars and learned that stopping for coffee meant a quick shot of espresso, and zip!—back on the road.

From Calabria we crossed the Strait of Messina to Sicily. It was spring and the almond trees were blooming in Taormina, an incredible mountainside town. From Taormina we could see Mount Etna, an active volcano. At night bright red flames lit up the sky directly across from the Greek amphitheater where we watched the show. Carol talked me into going to Corleone, the Mafia stronghold we learned about from the newly released book, “The Godfather.” I thought the town was fictional, but it was real, perched on the side of a hill.

From Sicily, we headed for Greece. We ended up on the island of Crete after spending time on Corfu and in Athens. Because I spoke English and was almost broke, I landed a job in a tourist shop in Heraklion, Crete’s largest city, where I worked for a month until the police came by to check out my work papers. No papers? No work. I moved to the village of Malia, on the Mediterranean Sea,

and spent the next three months savoring amazing Greek food chosen from cooking pots in the taverna kitchens. I hung out with young Americans and British travelers on the beach and got the best tan of my life.

My money finally ran out, and it was time to go home. Ten months on the road. What an education. I saw the great capitals, small towns and villages of Europe, saw famous works of art, ate in bistros, cafes and tavernas. We were young and navigated with paper maps, and left notes for friends on bulletin boards to let them know where we were headed. We stayed in B&Bs, youth hostels, and pensions with no prior reservations. There were different currencies and languages in every country, and somehow, we survived. As the Simon & Garfunkel song of that era, “Bookends,” said: As the Simon & Garfunkel song of that era, “Bookends,” goes:

Time it was, and what a time it was, it was

A time of innocence  
A time of confidences  
Long ago, it must be  
I have a photograph  
Preserve your memories  
They’re all that’s left you

Kim Metcalfe and her brother, Mac Metcalfe, were born and raised in Juneau and still live there. David Kenway was raised in Juneau and lives in Utah. Jeff Prather, a cousin of Kim and Mac’s, was also born and raised in Juneau and was raised in the same house as the Metcalfes. He died in 2021.



*Top: Author Kim Metcalfe with Pappousi Yianni (or Grandfather John) in the village of Malia, Crete. He spoke a little English and liked to talk about how the soldiers and civilians fought the Germans during World War II.*

*Middle: Carol, Marg, and Lois, all women people Kim Metcalfe met while traveling in Europe, in Venice, 1971.*

*Bottom: Carol, a Canadian Kim Metcalfe met on her travels, with Sicilian school children.*

Photos courtesy Kim Metcalfe

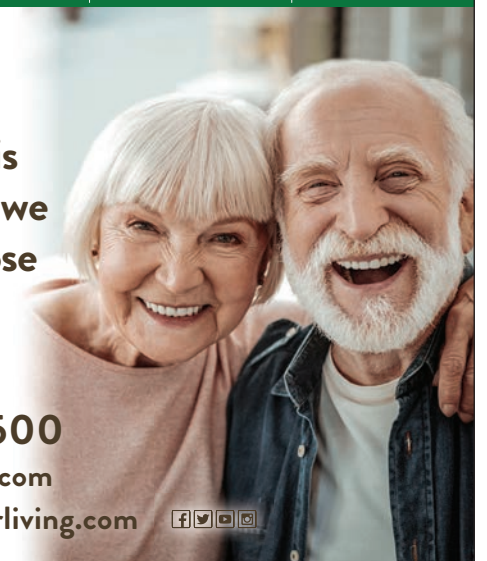


Home is not the house you live in. Home is the memories we make with those around us.

(907) 865-3500

baxterseniorliving.com

info@baxterseniorliving.com





# Take a hike! To Monument Valley, Utah/Arizona

By NICK THOMAS

For Senior Voice

If you're a die-hard fan of old western movies, especially those featuring John Wayne, but have never made the pilgrimage to Monument Valley, it's definitely a trip to consider. Five of Wayne's movies contain scenes from the iconic location, including "Stagecoach" in 1939, "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon" 10 years later and, what many would argue was his best western, "The Searchers" in 1956.

Dotted with towering sandstone buttes (steep-sided formations with broad, flat tops rising up to 1,000 feet), these natural "monuments" stand within a valley that straddles the Utah-Arizona border. Many of the buttes have names, including the West and East Mitten Buttes on the Arizona side, so-named because of rock projections resembling thumbs on a mitten. They are clearly visible just before the Indian attack scene around the 1-hour 9-minute mark into "Stagecoach." The area is also surrounded by some of the American Southwest's most spectacular National Parks, including Arches, Canyonlands, Zion, and the Grand Canyon, all must-see destinations in their own right.

Entry to the park, officially called Monument Valley Navajo Tribal Park, is \$8 per person (children under 12, free). While there are several trails within the Monument Valley area, only one is self-guided: the 3.9-mile Wildcat Trail that starts near the hotel parking area and takes about 2 hours to complete. All other tours require guides and last from 1½ to 2½ hours and cost extra (\$78 to \$132).

The Wildcat Trail is sandy and begins with a slow descent into the valley, eventually leading to the West Mitten. Calling it spectacular would be an understatement. This is sacred Navajo Nation (Diné) land, so hikers must remain on the trail and make no attempt to climb the butte. While summer is a busy season with



Above: Monument Valley scenic drive showing the West and East Mitten Buttes. Right: Monument Valley, one of the many buttes. Photos by Nick Thomas

tourists pouring in from all over the world, it can also be brutally hot in the canyon, so take the necessary precautions (hat, water, sunscreen). The most challenging part of the hike is the return – an uphill climb (with some up and down sections) while walking in sand. So be sure everyone in your party can handle a 2-hour western summer hike.

You can also enjoy Monument Valley from the air-conditioned comfort of your car by taking the 17-mile scenic drive. When we last visited, I would have rated the condition of the road as one of the worst I have ever travelled without a four-wheel drive vehicle. The potholes and bumps along this dirt road meant we could barely go over 5 mph and if I'd had false teeth, they would have been dropping in my lap throughout the drive. I'm not sure whether the road is periodically maintained or left in the poor state to slow drivers down, but a quick check online revealed comments like "notoriously rough" and "challenging for low-clearance vehicles." Nevertheless, take it slow and the views will be amazing.



Whether planning to hike or drive, an especially good time to visit is on a partly sunny day. It's hard to take a bad Monument Valley photo when the deep blue western sky is sprinkled with white fluffy clouds hovering over

the iron-rich red/orange buttes. You'll bring home vivid desert photo memories that are always fun to try and match with scenes from a Duke Wayne film.

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

written features, columns, and interviews for many newspapers and magazines. His "It's A Wonderful Hike" website describes short trails, hikes, and walks from around the country that seniors might enjoy while traveling. See [www.itsawonderfulhike.com](http://www.itsawonderfulhike.com).



**Anchorage Senior Activity Center**

**BENEFITS ENROLLMENT CENTER**

*Do you need assistance with food, utility, medical, or prescription drug costs?*

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) supports a network of Benefits Enrollment Centers (BECs) that help people find and enroll in benefits programs. BECs are free, private community organizations that can help people with low income, disabilities, or other challenges.

BECs can help people enroll in programs such as:

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

907-770-2025 | [ANCHORAGESENIORCENTER.ORG](http://ANCHORAGESENIORCENTER.ORG)



**Senior Center membership is not required.**

**Take advantage of this FREE public service and schedule an appointment today!**



# A life full of family and art fueled Wasilla centenarian

*Editor's Note: National Centenarian's Day is Sept. 22. The day honors those who've celebrated 100 birthdays or more. We're publishing profiles of people who have hit this milestone. The Alaska Commission on Aging is working with the Governor's Office, Pioneer Homes and Long Term Care Ombudsman to celebrate Alaska's centenarians. If you know someone who is 100 or older and would like us to profile them, contact editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.*

By **PAOLA BANCHERO**

Senior Voice

Eileen Johnson, who just turned 101, has long had an artistic bent.

Raised on a dairy farm in Wadena, Minnesota, she headed to Fargo, North Dakota, to attend beauty school.

"I guess I was born in my folks' home, in the farmhouse," she said on a recent gray afternoon.

After graduation, she bought a beauty shop in Menahga, Minnesota.

One of her clients had a son soon to return home from serving in the Pacific theater in World War II. Would Eileen like to meet him? Sure enough, that client's son became her husband, Verne, and the client became her mother-in-law.

They married on July 21, 1947.

Verne converted to Catholicism for Eileen, who was born into a sprawling Irish Catholic family.

The young couple lived its salad days first in Minnesota and then in Southern California before finally settling in Wasilla. They endured financial ups and downs and even an house fire, when her oldest son, Pat, was an infant.

"I had to grab my son and run," she said.

Eileen and Verne had nine children as the years passed. But the artist in Eileen continued to find expression in multiple ways. She sewed many of



Steve, Eileen, Verna Loosli, Tim, and Teresa Mordaunt celebrate Eileen's 101st birthday with her in May. Eileen had nine children in total; two are deceased.

Photo Tim Johnson

her children's garments, including mother-of-the-bride and mother-of-the-groom dresses.

She also is regarded as an accomplished baker, a skill she learned as the second oldest of 11 children. She would bake a couple dozen loaves of bread each week for the family. Later, a regular activity with grandchildren was baking cinnamon rolls together. Her rhubarb upside-down cake is also a specialty.

"I always entered something in the state fair," she said.

In the 1980s, Eileen began to paint. She discovered she could enroll in art classes at the Mat-Su College, where she took drawing and painting classes. Over the years, she has been recognized with several blue ribbons at

the Alaska State Fair. Her family members consider the hand-made cards and paintings she made among their most cherished possessions.

Her home features some

page 31 please



Verne and Eileen Johnson on their wedding day in 1947. They met and married in Minnesota.

Photo courtesy Johnson family.



From left: Verne and Eileen, and Barbara and Maurice Malone (Eileen's brother).

Photo courtesy Johnson family

## THEY DON'T NEED TO LEAVE HOME TO LIVE BETTER

Going on vacation?  
Need a break  
to run errands?  
We can help!

- Respite Care
- Companion Care
- Chronic Disease Care
- Parkinson's Certified
- Demetia and Alzheimer's Certified
- Personal Hygiene Assistance
- Appointment Transportation
- Light Housekeeping & Meal Prep
- Daily Activities & Hobbies

Experienced  
Caregivers  
Available  
24/7



**907-337-5972** SENIORHELPERS.COM

1142 North Muldoon Rd. Ste 116, Anchorage



A painting by Eileen Johnson of a scene in Ireland.

Photo courtesy Johnson family



# Weaver finds satisfaction giving away creations



*This is the third in a series about people finding or rediscovering creative pursuits later in life. The reporting project is funded by a grant from the Alaska Center for Excellence in Journalism. If you have a suggestion of a person who has explored their artistic*

*or creative impulses upon retirement or when other life demands lessened, email editor@seniorvoicealaska.com*

By **PAOLA BANCHERO**  
*Senior Voice*

A couple of tragedies have bracketed Laurie Murdock's craft of weaving, but she keeps going with a sense of humor despite it all.

Laurie first became interested in weaving when a close friend and neighbor had breast cancer.

The friend had a table weaving loom, and Laurie became interested in it.

Her friend was selling off a lot of her possessions. Laurie asked if she could buy her loom. "I was so brazen to even ask this of her."

But her friend said no, that she hoped weaving would help with her recovery. A few months later, the friend knew she wasn't going to overcome cancer. But she told Laurie she had sold the loom to someone else.

"I took it like a woman," Laurie said, characteristically dry.

On Christmas morning more than 30 years ago, Laurie's husband Rod came tromping across the street with the loom, books and supplies.

In large part, Laurie's second act as a weaver is a tribute to her friend.

"Weaving was something that just fascinated me," she said. "The loom—it came with all kinds of books, a bunch of material. There was a book there by Deborah Chandler, and I worked my way through all the pages."

She and another friend started weaving together, essentially teaching themselves out of the books Laurie had received secondhand.

Laurie, who grew up in New Hampshire, had had some exposure to needlecrafts. "4H was a thing," she said, by way of explanation.

Laurie knew how to knit and she knew about yarn. But she had never woven

anything until the early 1990s.

## **Kodiak—an ideal place for weaving**

Laurie is a longtime employee of Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. She started out as an executive assistant.

"It will be 20 years next year," she said.

But it's more complicated than that. She retired a few years ago. Then her husband died in a plane crash in Old Harbor.

"My retirement was maybe four months long," Laurie said. "I couldn't see myself sitting around."

She returned to the senior center. She is a certified Medicare counselor and a "project specialist."

That just means if the toilet is clogged, the question to her is "Why don't you unplug it?"

She's kidding, of course. But she is involved in a number of activities at Senior Citizens of Kodiak, where she spends most mornings.

When she's not working, she is often working at her loom. As her artistry developed, she put aside her late friend's table loom and got a floor loom, also secondhand. She makes blankets, shawls, towels, and other items for friends, family, or to give away. Anything that is square or rectangular,



*Top: Laurie Murdock bought her table loom secondhand, just as she bought her first loom from a friend who was dealing with cancer.*

*Bottom left: Laurie Murdock working on a project at her home in Kodiak.*

*Bottom right: Laurie Murdock recently had a pattern published in Handwoven magazine. It is called "Kodiak Colors," and it reflects the hues of her island home.*

*Photos courtesy Laurie Murdock*

she quips.

Laurie got to Alaska in the typical fashion. She joined the Air Force and asked for warm-weather postings. Instead, she and her husband wound up in Anchorage. It was there that she studied as a legal secretary at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The couple moved with their two small children to Kodiak in 1989 for Rod's work.

Kodiak has turned out to be conducive to her weaving.

"It's just the fact the winters are long. We get a lot of rain. It's a 'good in the house' kind of deal," she said.

*page 31 please*





# The letter your loved ones will treasure

By **JIM MILLER**

Savvy Senior

**Dear Savvy Senior,**  
I want to leave something meaningful for my children and grandchildren, beyond just money or property. I've heard about "legacy letters," but I don't really know what they are or how to start one. Can you help?

- *Legacy Seeker*

**Dear Seeker,**  
You're asking a wonderful question. A legacy letter – sometimes called an ethical will – is a personal note to your loved ones where you can share your values, life lessons, cherished memories, hopes, and guidance. Unlike a traditional will, which focuses on legal matters, a legacy letter comes straight from the heart.

## Why write one?

Many people think a legacy is just money or property. But often, it's your words, values, and

life lessons that leave the deepest mark. A legacy letter gives your family something to hold onto – your stories, your traditions, and the experiences that shaped who you are. Children and grandchildren often return to these letters for comfort, guidance, or inspiration long after you're gone. In many ways, it becomes an emotional last will and testament, answering some of the most important questions about your life.

A legacy letter can also help explain the "why" behind your estate plan in a personal, thoughtful way. While a will handles the legal and financial details, a legacy letter adds context – why you made certain decisions or what you hope your loved ones will do with what you leave behind. That added perspective can ease misunderstandings, strengthen family connections, and leave a lasting sense of closeness.

## Getting started

Take a moment to reflect on what matters most to you. Consider asking yourself:

- ▶ What values or principles have guided my life?
- ▶ What moments or experiences am I most grateful for?
- ▶ What mistakes or regrets taught me the most?
- ▶ How do I hope to be remembered by my loved ones?
- ▶ What lessons, advice, or guidance do I want to leave for my family?
- ▶ Which family traditions, stories, or dreams do I want future generations to carry forward?

Keep it personal and sincere. You can write one letter or several for different family members. Most letters run one to three pages, though there's no strict rule.

If you'd like a little guidance as you get started, Trust & Will has a free legacy letter writing guide with step-by-step prompts

to help you organize your thoughts and begin writing. You can find it at [trustandwill.com/learn/legacy-letter-writing-guide](http://trustandwill.com/learn/legacy-letter-writing-guide).

If writing isn't your thing, consider creating a legacy video. Speak directly to your loved ones, sharing stories, guidance, and heartfelt reflections. Most smartphones now record high-quality video and sound, making it easy to create, store, and share. A video captures your voice, expressions, and surroundings in a way that a letter simply can't.

## Storing and sharing

Keep letters or videos in a safe, easy-to-find spot. Physical letters can go in a secure file, safe, or with your attorney, while digital files can be backed up to the cloud or an external drive.

You can share them now or wait until later, after you're gone. Be sure to include instructions in your will so family members know where to find them.

When it comes down to it, a legacy letter or video is truly the heart behind your will. It gives you the chance to share your values, tell your stories, and even explain the intentions behind your estate plan, leaving your loved ones with words that will matter long after you are gone. Written with generosity, empathy, and positivity, a few thoughtful pages or a short video can create an emotional imprint that money alone cannot provide.

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

## YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

Older Persons Action Group continue its mission. Call 1-800-478-1059 to donate.



Call Now!

*Opus Memoria*  
*The Work of Memories*  
**Compassionate Care for Those with Dementia**

## Preferred Care at Home

- Meal Preparation
- Dress/ Hygiene Assistance
- Housekeeping/ Laundry
- Holiday & Vacation Coverage
- Live-In Services & More

We are committed to making your choice possible with quality services at affordable prices.

**Preferred Care at Home**



Call For Your Free In-Home Assessment

Lynetta Hagel-Grant, Owner

**907.868.1919**

[LynettaH@PreferHome.com](mailto:LynettaH@PreferHome.com) | [PreferHome.com/alaska](http://PreferHome.com/alaska)



Suzanne Hickel, Owner

**907.677.1919**

[Hickel@OpusMemoria.com](mailto:Hickel@OpusMemoria.com) | [www.OpusMemoria.com](http://www.OpusMemoria.com)

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

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

To schedule a personal tour or to receive additional information please contact us today.





# Scams near you: Alaskans share their stories

By **KATIE SEVERIN**

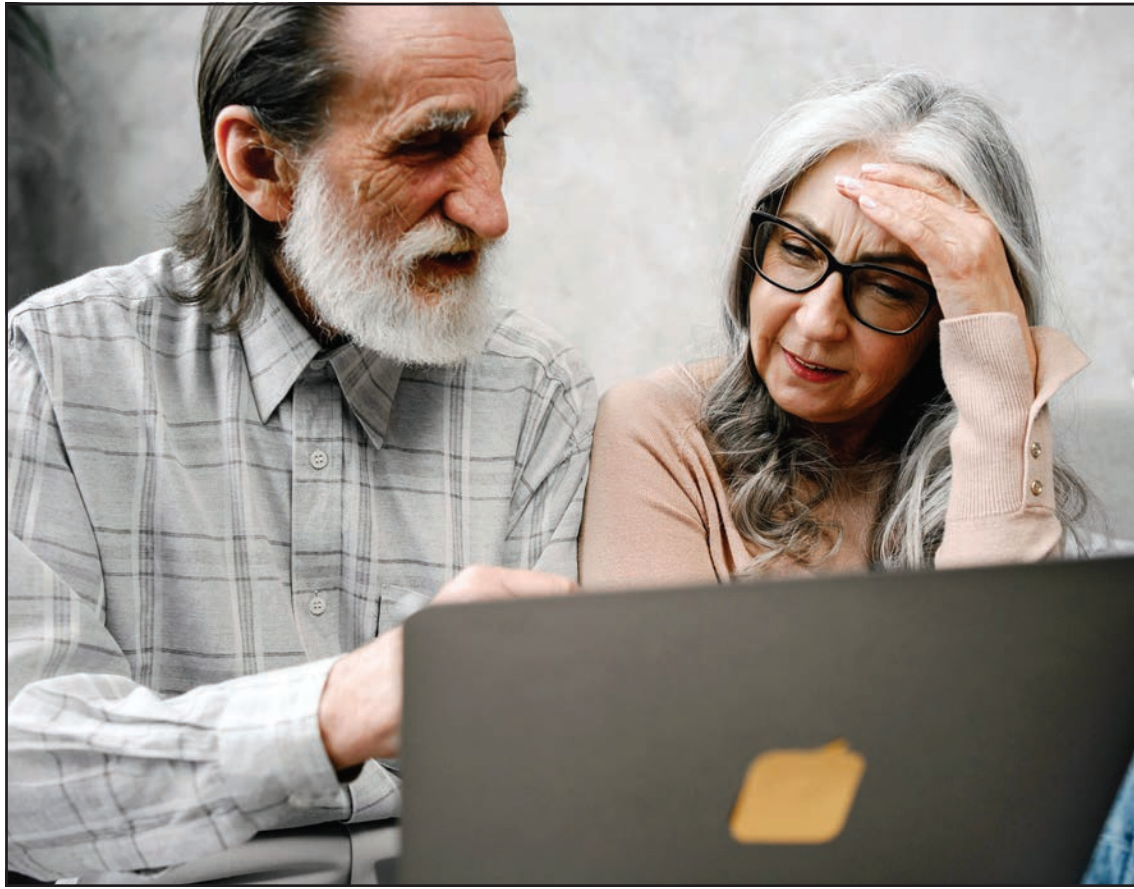
For *Senior Voice*

Alaskans are contacting the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline regularly to report suspicious activity, seek guidance, or recover from a scam. What they've experienced is not unique. In fact, it reflects trends we are seeing nationwide: Scammers are persistent, sophisticated, and constantly evolving their tactics.

In recent months, we've heard from several callers who were contacted by scammers posing as law enforcement. The impostors told the victims that they had missed jury duty and needed to pay a fine to avoid legal penalties. Each victim lost between \$1,000 and \$9,000 to the scam. In a similar scam, a victim lost over \$15,000 trying to clear their name in an alleged police investigation. Another Alaskan sent bail money after a scammer impersonated a friend, pretending to need legal assistance. Scammers posing as law enforcement can be particularly persuasive. They prey on our respect for authority and feelings of shame over wrongdoing.

Online shopping scams are also being reported in Alaska. One man clicked on an ad that appeared to be from a trusted brand, which led him to a website where he purchased a mower. Or so he thought. The money was traced back to a clothing company in China, and no product ever arrived. In rural Alaska, a woman sent more than \$4,000 to a seller on Facebook Marketplace for an ATV. She never got the vehicle.

We also hear from Alaskans who continue to receive calls after a fraud has



*Scams often use urgent or emotional requests for money or help. They also often request using gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency or payment apps. If you spot these red flags, you can protect your savings.*  
Photo by Gustavo Fring via Pexels

already occurred. In these cases, scammers pose as "recovery agents" and promise to recover money. This is another scam. Once someone has been targeted, criminals often try again.

These stories are shared anonymously, but they represent real people in our communities—neighbors, friends, and family members. And they point to a common theme: Scams succeed because they create urgency, fear, or trust in the moment.

### What to watch for

While scams vary, the warning signs are often the same:

- ▶ Urgent or emotional requests for money or help
- ▶ Unexpected contact from someone claiming to be a trusted person or organization
- ▶ Payment requests using gift cards, wire transfers,

cryptocurrency, or payment apps

- ▶ Pressure to act quickly without time to verify

If you notice these red flags, stop and take a moment. That pause can protect your hard-earned savings.

### What you should do

If a scam targets you:

- ▶ Pause and verify. Hang up or stop communicating and contact the organization or person directly using a trusted number.
- ▶ Do not send money or personal information.

Legitimate organizations will not demand immediate payment or request sensitive details in this way.

- ▶ Talk to someone you trust. A second perspective can help you spot a scam.

And importantly, report what happened. Reporting scams helps protect others and gives you access to support.

If you or a loved one has been targeted by a scam or fraud, you are not alone. You can call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 877-908-3360 (open 4 a.m. to 4 p.m. Alaska time Monday through Friday) to talk to a fraud specialist who can provide support and guidance on next steps. Whether you've lost money, shared personal information, or have a question, you can call.

You can also find tools, alerts, and prevention tips through the AARP Fraud Watch Network. Visit [aarp.org/fraud](http://aarp.org/fraud) for more resources. Remember: if you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam!

*Katie Severin is associate state director for communications for AARP Alaska.*



**SKY RIDGE**  
ASSISTED LIVING

## Southside Senior Living

At Sky Ridge, compassionate care is at the heart of everything we do. Our dedicated team provides personalized support that promotes independence, dignity, and comfort creating a warm family-like environment.

Each bedroom features an en-suite bathroom and closet for privacy and oversized heated garages ensure safe transportation year-round.

Discover a community where care and comfort come together.



907-531-2485

www.SkyRidgeALH.com



SCAN ME!



Proud Member



SERVING THE BOOMER & SENIOR MARKETS



# Retirement security, consumer protection are AARP Alaska wins

By MARGE STONEKING

For Senior Voice

As Alaska's 2026 legislative session concludes, AARP Alaska is grateful for the Legislature's bipartisan work to advance three key priorities that help Alaskans age with dignity, security, and independence. Representing more than 76,000 members statewide, AARP's 2026 agenda focused on two fundamental needs for older adults: financial resilience and strong consumer protections.

AARP has made both public and private-sector retirement policy a top priority, recognizing that increased savings empower older Alaskans to maintain independence and avoid reliance on public assistance giving them choices as they age.

After more than three years of advocacy, Alaska Work and Save SB 21 passed with strong bipartisan support. Led by Sen. Bill Wielechowski (D-Anchorage) and Rep. Mia Costello (R-Anchorage), along with

15 bipartisan co-sponsors, this effort demonstrates what is possible when leaders work together to address real challenges facing Alaskans.

Alaska Work and Save is a portable retirement savings program designed for private-sector workers who lack access to employer-sponsored plans. Today, nearly half of Alaska's private-sector workforce has no workplace retirement option, and the smaller the business, the less likely it is to offer one. Without payroll deduction, participation drops significantly—just 5% of workers open a retirement account on their own.

By implementing Alaska Work and Save, the state can help thousands of Alaskans build long-term financial stability while reducing future reliance on public assistance. If enacted, Alaska Work and Save, effective in 2027, is an auto-enrollment IRA for all employers who have more than 5 employees and have been in business in

**Alaska Work and Save is a portable retirement savings program designed for private-sector workers who lack access to employer-sponsored plans. Today, nearly half of Alaska's private-sector workforce has no workplace retirement option, and the smaller the business, the less likely it is to offer one.**

Alaska for at least 3 years. Employers who have or want to provide their own company retirement plan with or without a company match are exempt. Smaller employers including sole proprietors can opt into the program. Employees can opt out at any time.

Retirement security for public employees depends on access to a modest pension. Defined-benefit plans remain the standard in public service, and without them, Alaska cannot effectively compete with other states in recruiting and retaining qualified workers. AARP supports pensions because older households without one are nine times more likely to live in poverty, and public-sector employees generally earn less than their private-sector counterparts. While HB 78 passed both chambers,

it was ultimately vetoed by the governor. Pension reform will remain a key issue in the 2026 elections and a priority for the 35th Alaska Legislature in 2027.

AARP Alaska's consumer protection priority also saw significant progress this session. SB 249 Virtual Currency Kiosks, sponsored by Sen. Cathy Tilton with companion legislation by Rep. Elexie Moore, passed unanimously with 21 bipartisan co-sponsors. The bill addresses the rapidly growing threat of cryptocurrency kiosk fraud, which disproportionately targets older Alaskans. These kiosks, now common in convenience stores and gas stations statewide, operate without the safeguards required of traditional financial institutions.

If enacted, the law will take effect in October and require crypto-kiosk operators to:

- ▶ Obtain a money transmitter license in Alaska;
- ▶ Refund transaction fees tied to fraudulent transactions;
- ▶ Clearly disclose fees and exchange rates;
- ▶ Implement daily transaction limits to reduce losses and deter fraud;
- ▶ Post fraud warnings with guidance for suspected scams; and
- ▶ Provide detailed receipts to support timely law enforcement investigations.

## Additional AARP-supported wins

- ▶ HB26 – Community Transit Plan (Rep. Mina): Strengthens public and community transportation planning and supports rural mobility.
- ▶ HB48 – Civil Legal Services Fund (Rep. Hannan): Expands funding authority for legal aid. Over 40% of clients are age 50+, and demand ex-

ceeds available funding.

▶ HB77 Mail Theft increases penalties for mail-related crimes by making the theft of mail, or an item contained within mail, a distinct offense classified as mail theft in the second degree under Alaska law. This bill was stuffed into the omnibus crime package HB239 that passed.

▶ HB110 – Social Work Compact (Rep. Gray): Reduces licensing barriers and improves workforce recruitment.

▶ HB 173 – Occupational Therapy Compact (Rep. Jimmie): Expands access to care amid workforce shortages.

▶ SB64 – Elections Reform: AARP supported provisions that improve voter access, though the bill was vetoed.

▶ HB244 – CNA Training: Increases dementia care training requirements which supports family caregivers, quality care and a stronger caregiving workforce.

▶ SB 237 – Data Sharing: Streamlines replacement Social Security card applications.

Finally, the Conference Committee on the operating budget approved AARP-supported investments that will help older Alaskans remain in their homes and communities, including:

- ▶ Non-Medicaid Senior Community Grants for senior centers;
- ▶ Adult Day Services; and
- ▶ Statewide Independent Living Council: Support a \$403,000 increase (total \$603,000) to preserve more than \$1.4 million in federal Independent Living funds.

▶ Increased Medicaid provider payment rates for Direct Support Professionals and Personal Care Attendants.

Visit [aarp.org/akadvocacy](http://aarp.org/akadvocacy) for more information on AARP Alaska public policy advocacy. To sign up as an e-activist and help advance AARP public policy priorities next year, visit [aarp.org/getinvolved](http://aarp.org/getinvolved).

Marge Stoneking is the AARP Alaska associate state director-advocacy.



## Work that matters. For people who matter.



If you are committed to providing exceptional support to Alaskans, apply and be a part of our impactful and fulfilling journey! This position has flexible hours to meet your schedule.

Start your journey in the healthcare or special education fields.

Advertise in Senior Voice. Call 1-800-478-1059.



# Conversations

continued from page 4

7. "Amour" (2012): A powerful and moving exploration of love and aging, this film follows an elderly couple facing health challenges together. It's a poignant reminder of the depth of love and com-

mitment throughout life's stages.

Each of these films offers unique insights into the aging experience and can serve as fantastic conversation starters. Also, a well-written comedy television show is "A Man on the Inside" starring Ted Danson as a retiree turned amateur private investigator. It is based on the 2020

documentary film "The Mole Agent" directed by Maite Alberdi.

In terms of literature, explore works by authors like Carl Jung, who delve into the psychology of aging and advocate for embracing growth at any age. Atul Gawande's "Being Mortal" also offers valuable insights into aging and the importance of autonomy.

### Conclusion

While discussing the negatives of aging may feel familiar, it is crucial to recognize the power of perspective in our conversations. By focusing on the positive aspects of life, we can celebrate aging and remind ourselves—and each other—that the best may still be yet to come.

As a resilience strategist

Karen Casanovas guides individuals as they move from shock and paralysis to stability and forward motion after a life-altering event. Her framework addresses the immediate aftermath of disruption—when everything changes and people do not know what to do next. If you have questions write to her at [info@karencasanovas.com](mailto:info@karencasanovas.com).

# Feet

continued from page 7

That still didn't prevent me from getting a bunion, calluses and yes, bone spurs, but wearing good-fitting shoes means I don't feel them.

The brands I usually buy are the appropriately named New Balance and I buy the men's because they're usually made sturdier than the women's. Keen also produces shoes that fit the bill, although they do look like Hobbit/hippie shoes, but who cares when you walk in comfort?

If you have diabetes or neuropathy, talk with your doctor about prescription orthotics that are supports, or devices worn in your shoes. You may be eligible for custom orthotics partially covered by Medicare.

When going outdoors, always wear shoes, preferably closed-toe, to prevent cuts, scrapes and falls. Also, it's best to wear shoes as much as possible while indoors to protect your feet.

Keep your toenails in tip-top shape by trimming your toenails correctly (straight across and no

shorter than the tip of your toe) to prevent ingrown toenails. If you have diabetes or trouble reaching your feet, see a podiatrist, not a nail salon technician, for regular medical pedicures and nail trimming.

Get the blood flowing to promote healthy circulation by elevating your feet on a stool or a couch when sitting, or wiggle your toes.

Give yourself regular foot massages, especially when you wake up. It puts a step in your day.

Change your socks regularly and make sure your feet aren't damp from sweat or a shower before putting on your shoes, but not too dry.

Moisturize them to prevent cracking, itching and calluses. Use gentle soap and apply cream or lotion daily after your shower or bath.

See a podiatrist regularly for foot checks and they will catch problems like bone spurs, hammer-toe, neuromas, bunions, warts, ingrown toenails, or wounds before they cause more serious problems.

Stay upright and strong by keeping alert for any signs of pain or injury, and by being kind to yourselves.

# IT NEVER HURTS TO ASK

Many businesses offer a discount to seniors, but don't advertise it. Speak up - it may save you some money.

## Dinner Solutions for Seniors!

### Alaska Fresh

- Single Serving
- Fully Cooked
- Includes entree, starch and veggie
- 7 dinners weekly
- Weekly delivery \$125/week



### Delivery Club

- 3-serving or 6-serving sizes
- Cooking required
- Includes entree
- 12 dinners monthly (36 servings)
- Monthly Delivery \$245/month

5905 Lake Otis Pkwy, Ste. E  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
Call (907) 677-6633 for information  
[www.AlaskaDinnerFactory.com](http://www.AlaskaDinnerFactory.com)

*Alaska Dinner Factory*

## OPHTHALMIC ASSOCIATES

Bringing Specialty eye care to the last frontier since 1972

### Trusted, Board-Certified Eye Specialist



### Comprehensive Specialty Eye Care

- Cataract & Glaucoma Care
- Cornea Conditions
- Ocularplastic & Orbital Surgery
- Diabetic Eye Disease
- Urgent & Acute Eye Issues

Downtown Anchorage Location  
**542 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave**  
Anchorage AK, 99501  
**(907) 276-1617**  
[www.akeyedoc.com](http://www.akeyedoc.com)



Learn more about our providers and services

### Crossword answers from page 18

R	I	L	E		M	O	A	N			R	N	A						
E	D	I	T		I	N	F	O			M	E	O	W	S				
N	O	M	A	N	N	E	R	S			I	C	I	E	R				
O	L	E		O	U	R					N	O	C	A	N	D	O		
				L	E	E					B	A	S	E	S	T			
		A	N	E	N	T					O	C	T		T	E	A	M	
		G	O	O	D						A	K	I	N		R	B	I	
		R	A	H		T	A	N			S	A	O		E	E	L		
		A	M	A		O	B	O	E						L	A	S	T	
		M	A	R	G		E	C	O			P	I	N	T	S			
				M	Y	N	A	H	S			A	M	I					
		N	O	D	R	A	M	A			S	R	I		H	B	O		
		C	R	O	A	T					N	O	H	I	T	T	E	R	S
		R	E	N	T	S					C	L	O	T		A	R	I	L
			S	E	E						E	D	D	Y		P	O	G	O



## Deductibles

continued from page 9

of total plan selections—growing from 7.3 million to 9.2 million people.

At the same time, sign-ups for silver Marketplace plans, which have higher premiums and lower cost-sharing, hit the lowest levels in the program's history. Silver plan sign-ups fell from 57% to 43%, from 13.7 million to 9.8 million people. The share of Marketplace enrollees who signed up for cost-sharing reduction (CSR) silver plans—which reduce out-of-pocket costs for deductibles, copayments, and coinsurance for lower income enrollees—also fell to the lowest level on record: 37%.

Higher deductible plans have lower premiums, but they result in bigger out-of-pocket costs for patients, which KFF says can strain household budgets and lead to medical debt and poorer access to care.

The analysis also looked at how ACA Marketplace enrollment could fall. Enrollment could decline by 21.5% or nearly five million people this year.

About 23 million people signed up for Marketplace plans during the 2026 Open Enrollment Period—over a million fewer than in 2025 and the sharpest single-year drop in raw numbers since the ACA Marketplaces launched—and more enrollment declines are likely this year due to higher out-of-pocket premiums with the enhanced tax credits expired.

## Weaver

continued from page 26

### Projects small and large

Laurie has discovered a few truths about her craft.

“It’s much more fun, much more fulfilling, to donate your work.”

She has made many project for friends and family and for local organizations.

Early on, she made a few projects she sold, such as chenille scarves. But if they unraveled, she didn’t want to be on the hook to repair them.

“I don’t like to sell my items,” she explained. “I feel that there is too much pressure. I don’t need the pressure.”

Now, she mostly gives away or trades her work in return for others’ art.

One of her favorite projects is called the “Kodiak Colors” throw, and the pattern is featured on the Handwoven magazine’s website: <https://handwovenmagazine.com/library/QM50INyKsU6pN-SCE1-cow>

“It starts out with the green of the sea, the gray of the cliffs, the magenta of the fields, the spruce of



Laurie Murdock learned needlecrafts during her childhood in New Hampshire and became intrigued with weaving as a young mother living in Kodiak. She says the craft is quite linear—everything you can make is either a square or a rectangle.

Photo courtesy Laurie Murdock

the trees and the azure of the sky,” she said.

One of the blankets she made on this pattern is destined to be a wedding present for a couple.

Another one is going to be raffled off in July to raise money for the Fort Abercrombie State Historic Park in Kodiak.

“I’m really proud of that,” she said. “I’m glad I have the resources in my life that I can donate to my favorite organizations,” she said.

### A project borne of love

Recently, Laurie has had her hands busy making quilts out of the Pendleton shirts her husband collected.

She insists she is not a quilter, that she makes fabric.

“I could feel his spirit,” she said about her late husband when she started on the quilts. “The force was not happy when I started cutting up the shirts. He was in the beyond saying, ‘What are you doing?’”

But she knew she couldn’t just sell them or give them away. Now, she’s working on a second quilt made of the Pendleton shirts for her daughter.

In July, it will be three years since Rod was killed.

“He and I were really good friends,” she said. “He left me in a good place. I’m a pretty resilient kind of person.”

## The Alaska Legislature passes bill that benefits classic car aficionados

Senior Voice staff

A streamlined registration and titling process for legally imported vintage motor vehicles will be the law after the passage of SB 239.

“This legislation is a significant win for Alaskans who value automotive history and the freedom to enjoy classic imports,” Rep. St. Clair said in a news release. “By clarifying that 25-year-old legally imported vehicles do not need to meet 2026 safety standards, we are protecting the rights of collectors and ensuring these unique vehicles can stay on the road where they belong.”

The bill, which drew bi-

partisan support, removes regulations that previously hindered the enjoyment of classic imported vehicles in the state.

Under the legislation, the Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles is now prohibited from requiring that a vehicle comply with current federal motor vehicle safety standards as a condition of registration, provided the vehicle is at least 25 years old and was legally imported into the United States.

This change recognizes the historical value of these vehicles while acknowledging that older models cannot reasonably be expected to meet modern safety specifications designed for new cars.

## Johnson

continued from page 25

of her paintings, as well, including a landscape made while on a family trip to Ireland in 1996.

Her deep Catholic faith is also key to Eileen’s life. She keeps a small bottle of holy water in her home as well as a replica of Leonardo da Vinci’s Last Supper and other mementos of her spirituality. A highlight of her life was

a trip to Rome, where she climbed all 551 steps up to Saint Peter’s Basilica. Going to mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church on Sundays is still a priority, and her sons, Tim and Paul, try to make sure she gets there.

These days, Eileen enjoys a Klondike bar and visits from her numerous family members. This year for her birthday, family gathered to celebrate with her. Grandchildren and children played music for her, and she beamed.

## AK Wills and Trusts

### Free Estate Planning Workshops

with Attorney  
Constance A. Aschenbrenner



It’s all about family. Have you protected them?

#### Proper Planning Ensures You:

Maintain control of assets, Give control to those you trust, Remain home with less stress, Keep family business private

#### If Crisis Strikes, You Risk:

Losing control, Additional stress on family, Loss of your assets

#### If something happens to you, do you want to:

Protect your family? Be clear so loved ones know what to do? Ensure your hard earned money doesn’t go to the government?

Yes? Then your first step in creating your asset protection plan is attending this workshop.

### IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS:

**Anchorage Senior Activity Center**  
1300 E. 19th Avenue, Anchorage  
Jun 16, Jul 14 | 9:30–11:30 a.m.

**Wasilla Senior Center**  
1301 South Century Circle, Wasilla  
Jun 23, Jul 22 | 9:30–11:30 a.m.

To reserve your spot call or text (907) 334-9200  
or go to [www.akwillstrusts.com](http://www.akwillstrusts.com)

Unable to attend in person? Call to request the link to a recorded webinar.

# Enjoy the Ride!



## Stay active and stay connected.

Ride with friends, family, or caregivers comfortably and affordably. Getting around Anchorage doesn't have to be stressful or expensive.

**SENIORS RIDE FREE ON WEDNESDAYS & FRIDAYS.  
HALF-PRICE FARES ALL OTHER DAYS.**

\*Seniors 60+ just show your ID and ride.



SCAN ME



transit

PLAN TRIPS, BUY TICKETS,  
& TRACK REAL-TIME BUS ARRIVALS.

**DOWNLOAD TRANSIT TODAY!  
THE OFFICIAL APP FOR PEOPLE MOVER**

PEOPLEMOVER.ORG | (907) 343-6543



PEOPLE  
MOVER