

# Get word out about your upcoming event!

Publicize a program or class. Post an invitation to a new Zoom offering. The Senior Voice online calendar is here for you.

It's easy to post your events to seniorvoicealaska.com – and it's **FREE**.



The image shows three screenshots of the Senior Voice website. The first screenshot shows the homepage with the 'Calendar' tab highlighted in the top right navigation bar. The second screenshot shows the 'Community Events Calendar' page with a 'Submit Event' button circled in red. The third screenshot shows the 'Senior Voice Calendar of Events' submission form, which includes fields for 'Your Name', 'Your Contact Email', 'Private notes for the calendar owner', and 'Event Title'. A red arrow points from the 'Submit Event' button in the second screenshot to the form in the third.

**1** Go to the Senior Voice website: seniorvoicealaska.com Click on the “Calendar” tab in the upper right corner

**2** You will see the list of upcoming events. To add your own event, click the “Submit Event” button on the upper right.

**3** You will be taken to a forms page where you can quickly enter your details.

In addition to the date, time, location and description, you can include other items:

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- Links to your website
- A button linking to the event and your site
- Zoom, Skype and other conferencing links
- Your email and other contact information

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Our website readers are all around the state, and beyond. If you run into problems, call 1-800-478-1059 or email [editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)

# Senior Voice

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



# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 47, Number 5 May 2024

Reaching out to veterans about their benefits. – page 3

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Pickleball: ‘Nobody looks stupid when they’re having fun.’ – page 10

**Travel:** Smithsonian’s service is a surprise and delight for Alaska couple. – page 20

### MOTHER’S WATCHFUL EYE

A caribou calf checks in with mom at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, a nonprofit sanctuary for Alaskan wildlife located outside Anchorage at mile 75 on the Seward Highway. The center offers free admission to all moms on Mother’s Day (May 12), 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, call 907-783-0058 or visit [alaskawildlife.org](http://alaskawildlife.org).

Courtesy Anchorage Wildlife Conservation Center





# Meet your Older Persons Action Group board of directors

## Dylan Webb, Anchorage

Born in the heart of Anchorage and raised amidst the breathtaking landscapes of Willow, I developed a connection with the great outdoors from a young age. Fishing, hiking, four-wheeling, and snowmobiling became not just hobbies, but cherished parts of my identity.

Professionally, I wear multiple hats. A graduate of the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, I hold a certificate degree as a holistic health coach and am board-certified through

the American Association of Drugless Practitioners. My passion for holistic wellness led me to establish and operate a medical weight loss clinic, with a special focus on Metabolic Syndrome. With offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks, we strive to empower individuals on their journey to optimal health.

In addition to my professional endeavors, I am a devoted husband and proud father of two beautiful children. My commitment to family fuels my dedica-



Photo courtesy Dylan Webb

tion to improving the lives of others, especially our cherished seniors.

Since 2019, I've had the privilege of serving on the board of OPAG, working

tirelessly alongside our dedicated team to advocate for and support Alaska's senior community. It has been an honor to intertwine my professional expertise with our organization's mission, assisting countless seniors in their pursuit of healthier lifestyles.

And let's not forget the other incredible members of our board, each bringing their unique talents and perspectives to the table. It's our collective passion and drive that propels OPAG forward.

Behind the scenes, our publication owes much

of its success to the remarkable dedication to our award-winning editor, David Washburn. His keen eye for detail and commitment to excellence ensures that each issue of Senior Voice reflects the heart and soul of our senior community.

Let's continue to uplift, empower and celebrate the vibrant spirit of our older Alaskans.

If you are interested in serving on the Older Persons Action Group, Inc. board of directors, send a query and resume to [executivedirector@opagak.com](mailto:executivedirector@opagak.com).

# Resources offered year-round, thanks to support

By LISA SAUDER

Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska

Spring is a season of renewal, symbolizing hope, and growth. As snow melts away and nature awakens, its impact on Alaskans living with Alzheimer's and dementia and their caregivers is profound. The changing season may spark memories and enhance cognitive function. The sight of blossoming flowers or the smell of freshly cut grass can evoke nostalgic feelings, fostering moments of clarity and connection. Additionally, exposure to natural light can help regulate sleep patterns and improve mood, reducing agitation and anxiety commonly associated with these conditions. The longer days and warmer weather can uplift spirits and provide opportunities for outdoor activities, which benefit both physical and mental health.

A great way to get out and enjoy spring in Alaska, as well as support Alaskans

**The need for our services is growing as the number of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Alaska grows exponentially.**

with Alzheimer's and related dementias, is to join Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska at our 19th Annual Amblin' for Alzheimer's fun walk. This event to be held on May 4 at 9 a.m. at the Anchorage Golf Course is a relaxed amble (walk) along the cleared cart paths of the golf course's front nine holes. It will also be a morning of fun featuring live music, breakfast, educational booths, door prizes, a silent auction, and more. Please register to join us at Amblin' 2024 at [www.ALZalaska.org](http://www.ALZalaska.org).

All funds raised through our Amblin' for Alzheimer's fun walk and all other fundraising efforts stay here in Alaska to support Alaskans affected by Alzheimer's disease, related dementias, and other disabilities to ensure quality of life and support for their caregivers and families.

We provide education

and support statewide and care coordination in Anchorage and Mat-Su for those with Alzheimer's, related dementias, and other disabilities. Education and support services are critical in helping those impacted by this complex disease, especially with early detection, how to live with the disease, and empowering family caregivers and service providers to understand how to improve quality of life and care. In addition, our care coordination providers identify and help connect people to in-home and other services and resources available to ensure they are connected to the services they need. In addition, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska offers free memory screenings, training for medical and service providers, and mini-grants for family caregivers.

Alzheimer's Resource of

Alaska is an Alaska-based, grassroots, not-for-profit organization founded in 1984 by two sisters caring for their mother with dementia. Since then, the organization has grown to serve Alaskans statewide. We have staffed offices in Anchorage, Mat-Su, and Fairbanks, and do outreach across Alaska. The need for our services is growing as the number of people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia in Alaska grows exponentially. It is projected that the number of these Alaskans will nearly double to 23,900 by 2030. That is only six years away. Your support

of Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska will help ensure that everyone walking this difficult path will have access to support and services. Our vision is for our elders to live safely in their homes, with proper support, for as long as possible.

Please visit our website at [www.alzaska.org](http://www.alzaska.org) for more information and to learn how you can help provide hope and a renewed sense of community for Alaskans living with Alzheimer's and related dementias and their caregivers and families.

Lisa Sauder is the executive director for Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska.

### 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."



OLDER PERSONS ACTION GROUP

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# Alaskan veterans served and deserve services

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

For Senior Voice

In 2022, there were 53,692 veterans living in Alaska, making it the number one state with retired American military.

While that's a 25.25 percent decrease since 2012, the statewide population total of 733,583 state population of that same year, means 10.10 percent of the adult civilian population in Alaska were considered

veterans.

## Looking after soldiers

Joint Base Elmendorf/Richardson Retired Soldiers Council has a free newsletter, "Soldier for Life," which can be viewed on its Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/Alaska.Military.Retiree.Council/](http://www.facebook.com/Alaska.Military.Retiree.Council/) or emailed on request. Here is a sample from their latest news:

TRICARE insurance has some 2024 updates for

beneficiary out-of-pocket expenses and enrollment fees.

1. The TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select beneficiary out-of-pocket expenses for calendar year 2024 was effective Jan. 1, 2024. Federal statute and corresponding implementing regulations established rates for TRICARE beneficiary out-of-pocket expenses and how these expenses may be increased by the annual cost of liv-

ing adjustment percentage used to increase military retired pay or via budget neutrality rules. The retiree COLA for 2024 is 3.1 percent.

2. Tricare Prime: Annual enrollment fees for those in Group A will increase from \$351.96 to \$363 for the year for individuals; families' costs will increase from \$703.92 to \$726. For those in Group B, the individual's cost goes from \$426 to \$438.96; and families'

costs go from \$852 to \$879.

3. Tricare Select: Annual enrollment fees for those in Group A will go from \$171.96 for individuals to \$177.96; and for families, from \$345 to \$355.92. For those in Group B, the fee will go from \$547.92 for individuals to \$564.96; for families, from \$1,095.96 to \$1,131.

4. Tricare Young Adult: For TYA Prime, an increase

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# Older Americans Month: In celebration of seniors everywhere

By **STEPHANIE WHEELER**

For Senior Voice

Older Americans Month is an annual celebration that serves as a platform to honor and appreciate the vital contributions that older persons play in our communities and in our society as a whole. Established in 1963, Older Americans Month is celebrated every May. It is also an opportunity to highlight aging trends and reaffirm commitments to serving the older adults in our communities.

The federal agency, the Administration for Community Living (ACL), typically provides us with an annual theme. This year's theme is "Powered by Community," which focuses on the profound impact that meaningful connections have on the safety, well-being and health of older adults. Meaningful connections is also one of the strongest predictors of health and happiness as we age.

It's not just about having someone to chat with, it's about the transformative potential of community engagement in enhancing mental, physical and emotional well-being. By

recognizing and nurturing the role that connectedness plays, we can mitigate issues like loneliness, ultimately promoting healthy aging for more Americans.

There are so many ways for seniors to connect in our communities—attending senior citizens centers, adult day programs, fitness clubs and other social, cultural or recreational clubs. Too, we often find many seniors volunteering, working, teaching and mentoring others. These are just a few ways to connect with others.

As we all know, the senior population in Alaska has been steadily growing over the years. Alaskans age 60 and older represent more than 21% of the state's total population. As Alaska's senior population continues to grow, it is important to ensure that their rights, welfare, independence and dignity are honored. We also want to ensure seniors have the support services they need to thrive. This is an opportunity to thank the network of agency providers who provide those critical support services for seniors in our Alaskan communities. Thank you!

By the way, if you are a

senior and are looking for volunteer opportunities, feel free to connect with agencies like Red Cross of Alaska, AARP-Alaska, Rural CAP's Elder Volunteer Program, or connect with Volunteer Match at [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org).

Our office, The Alaska Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, provides resident centered advocacy to protect the rights,

health, safety and welfare of residents residing in long term care facilities. We are always looking for volunteers to do friendly visits with seniors in assisted living homes or skilled nursing facilities.

Look around you, take advantage of the opportunity to honor seniors in your community this month—seniors in your neighborhood, seniors in

your work space, seniors in your social club, seniors at your gym, and seniors in your family.

Seniors of Alaska, we honor and appreciate you and thank you for all that you do to make life better for all Alaskans. Celebrate you!

Stephanie Wheeler is the Alaska Long Term Care Ombudsman.

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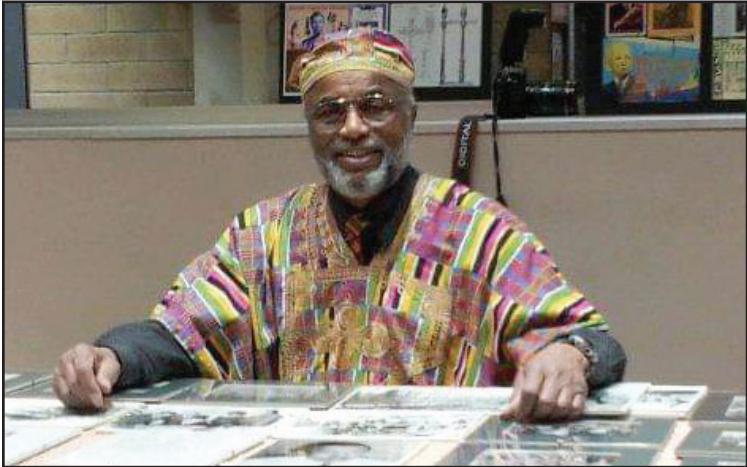
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# Cal Williams: A community activist comes to Alaska



Cal Williams at a book-signing at the 2024 Bettye Davis African American Summit in Anchorage, Feb. 10.

Photo courtesy Cal Williams

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

Senior Voice contributor Lawrence Weiss sat down in late March for an interview with longtime Anchorage resident Cal Williams. Here is their Q&A.

*People often refer to you as a "community activist." Why is that?*

Just prior to coming here, I was involved with CORE, the Congress of Racial Equality, in Monroe, Louisiana —marching picketing, doing voter registration and voter education with CORE—the summer of 1964. Then in September of 1964, I, along with six other black students, was accepted at Northeast Louisiana State College, which had been segregated until that moment that we applied and were accepted. I don't know if they knew we were Black. I don't think they did.

Then, everybody knew it was just a white school and nobody had applied, but we applied and got accepted. And that was September of 1964. I came here to Alaska in January 1965. Having completed that lesson—my only intent was to integrate the school, not to stay there —yet, I don't know. It got interrupted by this friend who said, "Hey, you ought to come to Alaska." So, a fork in the road.

I don't know if I would have stayed and graduated there, but at the fork in the road I turned left and came to Alaska. Having done that, I started working

immediately at Providence Hospital and, later, Alaska Psychiatric Institute. But I ran for the presidency of the NAACP in 1968. I became president because of this inflated reputation that preceded anything that I had said or done. "He was down in the South. He's a real civil rights worker. We need him for the President." And I got elected president of the NAACP.

I worked with the Native corporations on Native land claims issues. I worked with Housing and Urban Development to get the F and S apartments condemned and torn down. This was a slum area in Fairview. We had those torn down.

We had an agreement from the city to allow neighborhood people to learn asbestos removal. A training opportunity came from that effort. And so I got, I guess, the unofficial title of, "He's an activist."

*What activities are you involved in these days? I know you're teaching a film course with OLE! [Opportunities for Lifelong Education] because my wife took it.*

I am currently in the OLE! program. I am the chaplain at Chappie James Post 34 of the American Legion. I am a deputy grand knight with the St. Anthony's Parish Knights of Columbus. I also direct the choir at St. Anthony's Parish Church. I do a gospel Filipino combination mass there. I am the

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There is currently a need in Alaska for licensed foster homes for children of all ages. You can be single, married, or in a partnership. If you want to learn more about how to become a foster parent, please contact the Alaska Center for Resource Families toll free at 1-800-478-7307.



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# So many benefits with home cooking your meals

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Shifting from processed to home-cooked meals offers numerous advantages, from improved nutritional quality to enriching personal and social experiences. Here's why making this change can be profoundly positive.

One significant advantage of home cooking is the control it gives over ingredients. This allows you to avoid harmful additives and excess sugars, fats and salts common in processed foods. Instead, you can choose fresh, wholesome ingredients that boost your intake of vital nutrients, vitamins and minerals, contributing to better overall health and preventing diet-related illnesses. You can opt for natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup over high fructose corn syrup. Use healthier fats like olive or avocado oil instead of trans fats or



© Pojoslaw | Dreamstime.com

**Shared meal preparation leads to shared meals and deeper connections. Cooking with a partner can be intimate and cooperative, strengthening relationships.**

highly processed vegetable oils. Reduce sodium intake by flavoring dishes with herbs and spices instead of relying heavily on salt.

### Enriching experiences

Preparing your own meals can be a meditative

and mindful activity. You can focus on ingredient quality and origins, understand the nutritional benefits, and appreciate flavors and textures.

This leads to more

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## Reacher/Grabber Assistive Gizmo of the Month

Assistive Technology of Alaska

Reacher/grabber tools help those who have trouble bending or those with limited mobility to pick up lightweight objects around the house. Each reacher/grabber has slight variations from length, head rotation, magnetic tips, folding capabilities, materials and more. There are many on the market for purchase.

The one shown in the picture is 32 inches in length, weighs less than one pound, has a rotating and magnetic head, folds in half, and has non-slip silicone rubber coating to make it easier to grab onto things.

Reacher/grabbers can re-

duce injuries by helping get an item from up high without requiring a step stool or from down low without over extending the back.

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



# Creating a better doctor-patient experience

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

**Q:** When I see the doctor, I give them my symptoms over and over, but they are dismissive of my pains and concerns. What can I do?

**A:** As adults age, it is crucial to take control of one's health and wellness. By being consistent about preventive care, prioritizing medical issues, and actively engaging with healthcare providers to avoid ageism,



one can optimize outcomes and quality of life.

**When patients feel that healthcare providers are not listening to them when communicating symptoms, this can lead to misunderstandings, misdiagnosis and inadequate treatment.**

### Prioritize healthcare

First, stay informed about age-related health concerns, medications and treatment options. Do your part to get preventive tests and vaccinations which are essential to manage chronic conditions, and

detect potential health issues early. Schedule regular check-ups including screenings for high blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes, bone density and cancer. Get annual prostate, mammograms, dental exams, a dermatology body

scan and colonoscopies as appropriate for age, past medical history and family risk.

### Engaging communication

Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients is essential for accurate diagnosis and treatment. However, when patients feel that healthcare

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# Medicare and federal employee benefits

By SEAN MCPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

This month's article will focus on how Medicare may work with health benefits for federal employees, retirees and annuitants. Employees and retired employees of the federal government are eligible for Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) coverage, subject to those positions



that are excluded by law or regulation. Currently

this includes employees of the U.S. Postal Service. The Office of Personnel Management administers the FEHB program. When someone becomes eligible for Medicare, most commonly when turning age 65, there can be some challenging decisions to make, as someone eligible for coverage under both Medicare and FEHB may elect to obtain coverage under one or both programs.

### Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB)

The Office of Personnel Management website describes how the FEHB Program helps the eligible recipient and dependent family members meet health care needs. "Federal employees, retirees and their survivors enjoy the widest selection of health plans in the country." Participants may "choose from

among consumer-driven and high deductible plans that offer catastrophic risk protection with higher deductibles, health savings/reimbursable accounts and lower premiums, or fee-for-service plans, and their Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO), or Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO) if you live (or sometimes if you work)

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# Dementia in Alaska



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

According to the State of Alaska's Chronic Disease Prevention Health Promotion, "An estimated 10% of Alaska seniors have Alzheimer's disease and related types of dementia. The number of Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease is expected to reach 11,000 in 2025."

At Accurate Hearing we are excited to be putting together a treatment plan to help prevent or delay dementia. Donna R. DeMarco just received her National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners Certification and will discuss treatment plans in upcoming articles.

Symptoms of aging and decline:

**Healthy aging.** Sometimes forgetting which words to use,

losing things from time to time, and missing a monthly payment occasionally.

**Mild cognitive impairment.** Difficulty coming up with words, losing things often, forgetting to go to important events.

**Dementia.** Losing things often, forgetting to go to important events, trouble having a conversation and/or reading and writing, asking the same question or repeating the same story over and over, difficulty with basic daily activities, problems handling money and paying bills, becoming lost in familiar places, hallucinations, delusions, paranoia.

If you or a loved one experience any of the mild to dementia symptoms, please see your family doctor right away.

Treatment of hearing loss may slow the progression of dementia by 75%. Call Accurate Hearing today for a free hearing test at 907-644-6004. We are here to help.

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

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# Medicare

continued from page 5

within the area serviced by the plan." Additionally, starting in January 2025, the Office of Personnel Management will oversee and administer a new, separate Postal Service Health Benefits program, replacing FEHB program coverage for eligible participants.

## FEHB and Medicare enrollment decisions

When someone enrolled in the FEHB program becomes Medicare-eligible, three basic options are available.

► First, you may keep FEHB and enroll in Medicare Parts A and B. The two programs work together to cover health care costs, but you will owe premiums for both.

► Second, you may disenroll from your FEHB coverage and enroll in Medicare Parts A and B. Note that you might not be able to enroll in FEHB again in the future if you change your mind.

► Third, you can keep FEHB and turn down Medicare. If you choose this option, you may still want to enroll in Part A, which is usually premium-free, and only turn down Medicare Part B. Unlike other retiree insurance, FEHB retiree coverage will remain your primary coverage if you don't enroll in Medicare.

Whether to enroll in Part

B or use FEHB as primary coverage is a personal decision, based on your individual circumstances. You should look at the costs and benefits of each insurance plan and make the choice that is best for you. Questions to consider include: Which forms of insurance do your providers take? Which kind of services do you use regularly? And which coverage offers the flexibility you need?

If you decide to enroll in Part B, you should do so within eight months after you no longer have FEHB coverage from current employment, since you will qualify for a Special Enrollment Period to enroll in Medicare. Note that your options are different if you are a U.S. Postal Service employee, retiree, or qualifying family member. Starting in 2025, these employees and retirees will transition from FEHB to Postal Service Health Benefits (PSHB). You must have Medicare to keep these PSHB health benefits.

## Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) choices

FEHB prescription drug coverage is creditable for Medicare-eligible retirees. This means that it is as good as or better than Medicare's prescription drug benefit, called Part D. If you have FEHB, then you may delay Part D enrollment without having a late enrollment penalty.

Be sure to compare the costs and benefits of the FEHB plan and Part D to decide which best suits your needs. You may want to keep FEHB drug coverage if the plan covers more of your drugs with fewer coverage restrictions than Part D plans available. However, if you are also eligible for the Social Security Administration's Extra Help program, you should consider enrolling in Part D. Extra Help lowers Medicare drug costs, and copays under Part D with Extra Help are typically lower than the copays under FEHB. If you enroll in both Part D and FEHB drug coverage, Part D is typically the primary payer for your prescription drugs. Note that FEHB drug coverage cannot be suspended separately from FEHB health coverage. If you want to keep your FEHB health coverage, you must keep drug coverage, even if you enroll in Part D.

If you find yourself overwhelmed by any Medicare issue, including what to do when you are also eligible for other health care coverage, please feel free to contact the State of Alaska Medicare Information Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP), and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) program.

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

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

## Medicare counseling by phone

By **LEE CORAY-LUDDEN**  
For Senior Voice

I am a Certified Medicare Counselor working under SHIP. My office is in the Soldotna Senior Center, but I serve the state via phone. If you

are local, I can help you as a walk-in.

I am here Mondays through Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Fridays, 8 a.m. to noon.

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



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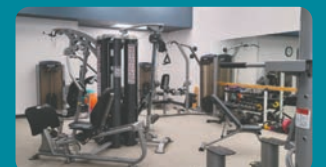
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907-770-2000



AnchorageSeniorCenter.org





# Spring health fairs around the state

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair has been delivering health fairs and affordable comprehensive blood screenings since 1980. May is the final month of our spring health fair season. After that, we will go on a short break and begin work on fall health fairs. Now is the perfect time to visit one of our remaining fairs, connect with local health and wellness resources, and take advantage of the affordable, comprehensive blood screenings (prices begin at \$20).

Schedule an appoint-

ment online ([www.alaskahealthfair.org](http://www.alaskahealthfair.org)) or simply walk-in at any of our events.

**May 1, Anchorage** Lounsbury & Associates, 3230 C. St. Suite 201, 8:30 to 11 a.m. Anchorage AK 99518

May 4, Houston Community Health Fair at Mid-Valley Senior Center, 11975 W. Mid-Valley Way, 8 a.m. to noon.

**May 9, Fairbanks** 50+ Art and Science of Aging, day one, Carlson Center Exhibit Hall, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**May 10, Fairbanks** 50+ Art and Science of Aging, day 2, Carlson Center. Blood draw offered from 8 a.m. to

2 p.m., with health screenings, exhibitors, demos and lectures between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

**May 11, Gustavus** Community Health Fair, Gustavus School, 8 a.m. to noon.

**May 11, Wasilla** Mat-Su Community Health Fair at Evangelical Covenant Church, 5201 E May Flower Lane, 8 a.m. to noon.

**May 14, Fairbanks** Alaska Health Fair Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**May 18, Anchorage** Anchorage Community Health Fair, St. John United Methodist Church 1801 O'Malley

Rd., 8 a.m. to noon.

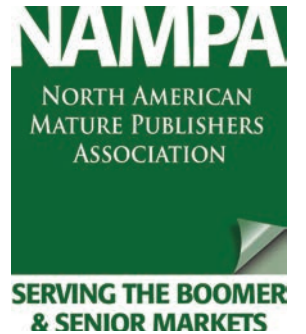
**May 18, Central** Central Community Health Fair, Circle District Historical Society Museum, Mile 128 Steese Hwy., 8 to 11 a.m. May 18, Nikiski Community Health Fair, Nikiski

Community Recreation Center, 50097 Kenai Spur Hwy., 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**May 21, Fairbanks** - Alaska Health Fair Office Draw, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Senior Voice

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## Meals

continued from page 5

thoughtful eating habits, promoting better digestion and satisfaction with smaller, healthier portions. Cooking at home also offers social and emotional benefits. It can be a communal activity involving family members, teaching valuable skills and strengthening bonds. Shared meal preparation leads to shared meals and deeper connections. Cooking with a partner can be intimate and cooperative, strengthening relationships. Finally, home-cooked meals create cherished memories, from special holiday dishes to

simple family favorites. From the economic standpoint, buying ingredients in bulk, planning meals, and cooking at home can significantly reduce food costs while improving nutritional quality.

### Tips for successful home cooking

Embarking on the journey of home cooking is exciting, but it can also be life-changing. The key is to start small, setting manageable goals for a smooth and enjoyable transition. Here are practical tips to help you begin cooking at home with confidence.

**Begin with simple recipes.** Choose recipes with fewer than five ingredients, such as stir-fries, simple pastas,

salads, or one-pot meals.

**Organize your kitchen.** A tidy, well-organized kitchen makes the cooking process smoother and more inviting.

**Plan ahead.** Start by planning a few meals for the week. As you get comfortable, batch cook on weekends, preparing larger quantities that can be stored for the week.

**Cooking is a skill.** It improves with practice, so each attempt is a step

forward in your culinary journey.

**Stay inspired.** Keep your motivation high by seeking exciting recipes from family and friends, watching cooking shows, or exploring food blogs.

In conclusion, choosing home-cooked meals over processed foods can have a profound impact on your health, offering benefits that transcend nutritional content. By preparing your own meals, you have

control over what goes into your body. Every minute spent in your kitchen is an investment in your health and future, delivering dividends in the form of enhanced well-being and vitality. Embrace the journey of home cooking; savor the flavors, cherish the shared moments, and reap the health benefits. Here's to a healthier, happier you—one delicious meal at a time.



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- Anchorage..... 272-9431 or (888) 478-2572
- Utqiagvik..... 855-8998 or (855) 755-8998
- Bethel..... 543-2237 or (800) 478-2230
- Dillingham..... 842-1425 or (888) 391-1475
- Fairbanks..... 452-5181 or (800) 478-5401
- Juneau..... 586-6425 or (800) 789-6426
- Kenai..... 395-0352 or (855) 395-0352
- Ketchikan..... 225-6420 or (877) 525-6420
- Kotzebue..... 442-3500 or (800) 622-9797
- Nome..... 443-2230 or (888) 495-6663
- Palmer..... 746-4636 or (855) 996-4636

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

\*Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Preference for seniors in social and economic need.



# Do you know how well you fit your car?



CarFit photo

## CarFit

Older drivers are some of the safest drivers on the road. They're more likely to wear seatbelts and less likely to speed or drink while driving. Still, they're more likely to get hurt in a crash.

As we get older, our bodies become weaker and injuries from accidents can be worse. Getting older also changes how well we can see, think, move and react quickly. These changes can make it harder for us to feel comfortable driving our cars safely. Older drivers might need new ways or special tools to make sure they stay safe and comfortable.

## CarFit can help solve these challenges

There's a program called CarFit that can help with these challenges. It was created by AAA, AARP and the American Occupational Therapy Association. CarFit helps seniors get their cars set up just right so they're more comfortable and safer in case of an accident.

CarFit is free. CarFit staff use a checklist to help drivers adjust their cars' safety features. They might change things like how the seatbelt fits, the angle of the steering wheel, or how easy it is to reach the gas and brake pedals. Drivers can also talk about driving safety without worrying about losing their license. CarFit wants to help older drivers keep driving safely, which is important for staying healthy as we age.

## How can you participate in a free 20-minute CarFit check?

Center for Safe Alaskans is hosting CarFit events all summer. Look for them on the Senior Voice's Community Activities calendar at [www.seniorvoicealaska.com](http://www.seniorvoicealaska.com). (Click the "Calendar" tab in the upper right, near the magnifying glass.)

If you live in Anchorage, you can also make an appointment by calling Safe Alaskans at 907-929-3939. Each checkup takes about 20 minutes and is free. CarFit staff will suggest changes to your car and help you find special tools you might need.

For more info about CarFit, call the Center for Safe Alaskans at 907-929-3939, visit [www.safealaskans.org](http://www.safealaskans.org), or visit the national CarFit website at <https://car-fit.org/>.

Center for Safe Alaskans is a nonprofit group supported by the Alaska Highway Safety Office. They offer safety programs for all ages, including car seat checks, tips for walking and biking safely, campaigns to help teens drive safely, and CarFit.

Here's a quote from someone who tried CarFit: "You did a Car Fit Appointment with myself and my husband Bruce on winter solstice day; it was a very cold day, yet you persisted in helping us... Everything you taught me was so helpful." -Wendy.



This program is supported by the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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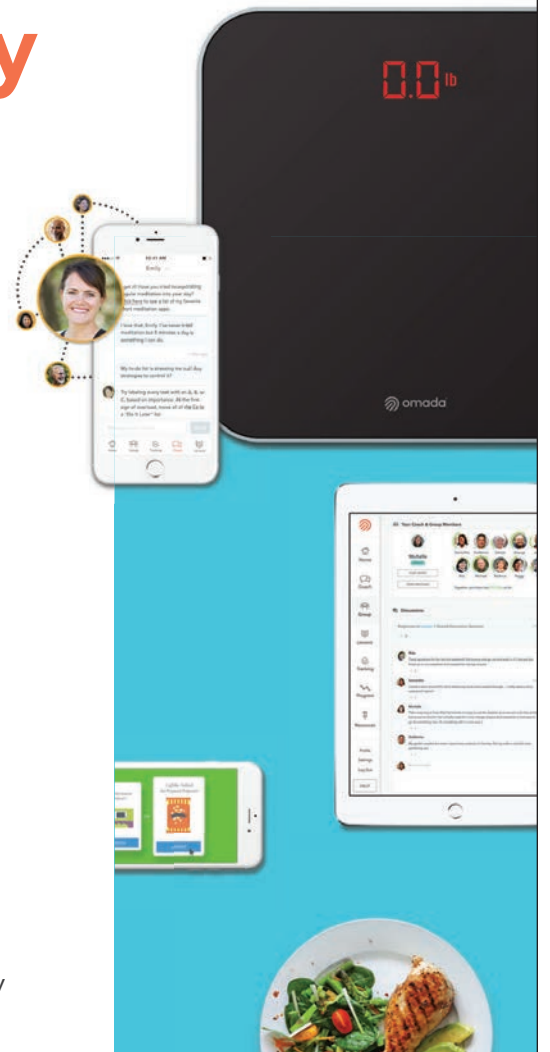
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## DONATIONS ALWAYS APPRECIATED

To benefit OPAG and Senior Voice projects

Older Persons Action Group, Inc. is a non-profit organization. Donations may be tax-deductible. Call OPAG at 276-1059 in Anchorage or toll-free statewide at 1-800-478-1059



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Please contact Allysa Fernandez at [afernandez@northstarsl.com](mailto:afernandez@northstarsl.com) or 206-761-0809 for a complimentary lunch created by our own Chef Roberto Dominquez.



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# AI-powered chatbots are changing medicine

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

## A chatbot app to quit smoking

Researchers in Seattle, Wash. have now developed an artificial intelligence (AI) -powered chatbot app called QuitBot to help more people successfully quit smoking cigarettes. The app is available for free on Apple and Android devices and is a comprehensive app that provides users personalized support.

Developed using scientifically backed answers vetted by scientists and experienced smoking cessation clinicians, QuitBot combines evidence-based structured conversations to guide users through the process of quitting. The app differs from other smoking cessation tools by offering personalized support via mobile device whenever and wherever a user has a craving to smoke.

“QuitBot goes a step further than other cur-



rently available smoking cessation tools by offering users the ability to ask specific questions and receive tailored, scientifically backed responses,” said Dr. Jonathan Bricker, a professor and behavioral science researcher in the Public Health Sciences Division at Fred Hutch in Seattle. “It’s capable of understanding user’s questions about quitting smoking and responding with clinically proven answers. This feature helps make the experience more engaging and meaningful for the user.”

QuitBot is a smoking

*The QuitBot app differs from other smoking cessation tools by offering personalized support via mobile device whenever and wherever a user has a craving to smoke.*

cessation program of 3- to 5-minute focused conversations over two phases: 14 days pre-quit date and 28 days post-quit date. The conversations cover topics such things as “why to quit” and setting a quit date. The conversations also help for identifying and coping with a wide range of triggers and recovering from lapses or relapses. Users can ask QuitBot any question they have about quitting smoking and it will respond with the researchers’ trained AI-based natural language technology.

“We know that quitting smoking has significant health benefits, including preventing many types of cancer, but it is incredibly difficult for people to realize those health benefits

because smoking is highly addictive,” said Dr. Bricker.

Developed by Fred Hutch’s Health and Behavioral Innovations in Technology (HABIT) research group, the tool took six years of iteration, collaboration and testing. “Releasing QuitBot now and making it completely free is highly intentional,” said Dr. Bricker. “We wanted to get the app out to the public as quickly and easily as possible to help make a significant impact on smoking and to ensure that this new technology is available openly and non-commercially.”

Initial funding to develop QuitBot was provided by the National Cancer Institute. The Fred Hutch researchers then collaborated with Microsoft AI for

Good Lab, using their AI expertise to refine the conversational chat function.

## AI changing the practice of medicine

AI involves the simulation of human intelligence by computer systems and machines. It is now transforming how we receive healthcare. Using AI and machine learning it is now possible to quickly analyze huge datasets, such as electronic medical records. Other datasets include results of lab tests and medical imaging such as x-rays, MRIs and CT scans. This information can uncover new insights on how best to treat individuals for a host of illnesses.

It is hoped that AI may have the ability to diagnose diseases much earlier than has ever been possible. Utilizing AI for common diagnostic tests, such as electrocardiograms and echocardiograms, could

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# Quick tips for pickleball improvement

## THE ALASKA CLUB

For Senior Voice

Amy Poehler said “Nobody looks stupid when they are having fun”. In addition to improving your balance, coordination, cardiovascular health and strength, pickleball is fun and along the way you can make new friends and enjoy some friendly competition. But in addition to all that, who doesn’t want to improve their game? Here are some basic tips for doing just that. Pick a couple of these to concentrate on in your next game.

**Get your serves in.** You can’t score any points if your serves land outside the service area. Until you’ve gained some serve prowess, aim for the middle of the serving area. Once you feel good about your basic serve, start practicing putting some spin on the ball or trying to serve to your opponents backhand. Remember too, the deeper the serve the better.

**Work your way up to the kitchen line.** Remember, you have more control



© Robert Hills | Dreamstime.com

from that area on the court. When making your way to the kitchen make sure you’re not still moving when your opponent is returning the ball. Try to have your feet planted. You want to be able to move to wherever they hit to. If you’re moving, it’s harder to adjust to any return shot.

**Communication.** When playing doubles, communicate with your partner.

Clear communication can help coordinate movements, cover the court efficiently, and anticipate each other’s actions. Generally, if a ball is coming up the middle, the person that has a forehand shot should take it. So if that is you, you can say “mine” or “I go”. Likewise, if you don’t want to take a middle court shot, let your partner know – “you go” or “yours”.

**Court awareness.** Take into account that your forehand is better and farther

reaching than your backhand, so if you are right handed you might want to cheat over a bit to your left. Also, be aware of where you are standing in relation to the baseline. If you are a few feet inside the baseline and your opponent hits a hard shot at chest level, most likely it’s going out, so let it go. Also keep tabs on your partner. If they have to run back for a lob and the return is a dink or a drop on their side of the court you might

be in a better position to get to it before them. You may want to communicate to them that you intend to stay on that side of the court—“Switch!”

**Size up your opponent.** Is one of them left handed or not very quick? A shot right up the middle is usually good play. But when that shot up the middle is to both of their back hands, better yet. Do they stay back at the base line? If so, hit deep, driving shots to keep them there. Do they move back into position after going after a line shot? If not, come back at them quickly with a shot to the space they left.

**Shot selection.** Many times your “shot” is more of a reaction to your opponent’s shot, especially when play is at the kitchen. But what if you do have time to decide—do you dink, lob or drive? Consider your skill level. Can you execute a decent drop shot or do you usually put them into the net or set your opponent up for an easy slam? Should you try a shot down the line? Line shots have a greater chance of going out. If you don’t have a chance

at a strong offensive shot, your best choice is likely a drop shot or a dink.

Where are your opponents on the court? If they are not in position and moving, you can hit a shot that takes advantage of that, like a cross court dink or drive shot at them. You also want to consider court conditions like wind speed and direction. Lobs are much harder to execute even with a slight wind.

**Regular practice is key to improvement.** Dedicate a little time to practice your skills, whether it’s doing drills with a friend, solo practice against a wall, or playing with others. Practice your third shot drop, dinking, lobs – any shots or technique you want to improve upon. You should see results with as little as 30 minutes of practice a week.

Lastly, remember to have fun out there. Pickleball is a social sport that offers great opportunities for exercise, camaraderie and enjoyment. Focus on the positive aspects of the game and celebrate your progress and achievements regardless of skill level.

# Free support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program holds monthly support group meetings in Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling and Nikiski. Support meetings allow you to share your experiences as a caregiver, or support someone who is a caregiver. If you are helping a family member or friend by being a caregiver, learn what kind of help is available. There is no charge for these services and everyone is invited to attend. For the May meetings schedule or other information, or to offer suggestions on training topics, call Dani Keschull at the Nikiski Senior Center, 907-776-7654 or email [kpfscsp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org](mailto:kpfscsp@nikiskiseniorcenter.org).

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month

(May 9 and 23), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

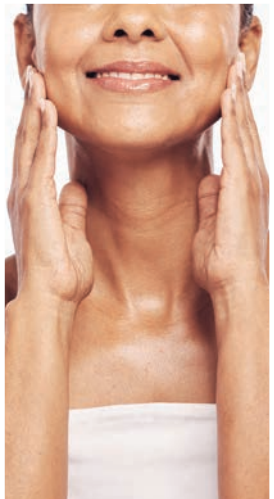
**Kodiak Senior Center** hosts the caregiver support group on the third Thursday of each month (May 16) at 1 p.m. Call for information, 907-486-6181.

## Around the state

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

ARA also hosts a statewide call-in meeting on the first Saturday and third Wednesday of every month, 1 to 2 p.m. For information,

next page please



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& FEEL GREAT  
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THE ALASKA CLUB  
THEALASKACLUB.COM



# Household tips for a safer spring

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice



Spring has sprung and the blooming flowers, buzzing bees, biting mosquitoes and trip hazards abound as you can finally get out of the house more often. With a few simple preparations, you can enjoy the summer months while minimizing potential risks to your health and well-being.

One aspect of summer home safety is ensuring your air conditioning system is in good working order if you have one. Before the heat arrives, schedule a professional to inspect and maintain your AC unit. This will help prevent breakdowns during hot days and ensure your home stays cool and comfortable. The last time you need to discover something needs a repair is when you need it, after all.

If you don't have air conditioning, consider in-

vesting in one or at least a few fans to help circulate air and keep your living spaces well-ventilated.

Proper ventilation maintains a healthy home environment. Open windows when the weather permits to allow fresh air to circulate. If you have ceiling fans, make sure they are set to rotate counterclockwise during the summer months. This will push cool air down, creating a more comfortable atmosphere. Remember to clean or replace your air filters regularly to keep the air in your home clean and free of allergens.

***If you have ceiling fans, make sure they are set to rotate counterclockwise during the summer months. This will push cool air down, creating a more comfortable atmosphere.***

As you spend more time outdoors during the summer, be mindful of potential fall hazards. Keep your patios, decks and walkways free of clutter and well-maintained. Repair any loose or uneven boards and consider installing handrails or grab bars in areas where you might need extra support. If you enjoy gardening or other outdoor activities, wear sturdy, non-slip shoes and take frequent breaks to avoid overexertion.

Back inside your home, help prevent falls by removing throw rugs or securing them with non-slip backing. Keep floors clear of clutter and ensure that electrical cords are out of the way and not posing a tripping hazard. In the bathroom, install grab bars near the toilet and in

the shower or bathtub to provide additional stability. Consider using a non-slip mat or adding non-slip strips to the bottom of your bathtub or shower to reduce the risk of slipping.

Finally, make sure your home is equipped with working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms. Test them monthly and replace the batteries as needed. If you can get one that has a 10-year battery inside of it, you will not have to worry about the batteries at

all. Keep a fire extinguisher somewhere easy to access and know how to use it in an emergency.

These simple steps prepare your home for the summer season, allowing you to enjoy the warmer months with greater peace of mind. Do not hesitate to reach out to family, friends, or local resources if you need assistance in making these important home safety improvements.

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

## Support

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call Gay Wellman, 907-822-5620 or 1-800-478-1080.

In Southeast Alaska, the Southeast Senior Services Senior and Caregiver Re-

source Center is available. Call Jennifer Garrison at 866-746-6177.

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



## Join AARP Alaska's Mat-Su Volunteer Team for

# Night at the Ballpark

Meet us at the Mat-Su Miners game at Hermon Brothers Field at the Alaska State Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 8 at 4 p.m. for free AARP caregiving resources and information. AARP members, guests, and the general public can receive tickets free of cost!

Whether you're a lifelong baseball fan or just looking for a fun night out with family and friends, this event is the perfect way to kick off your summer.

Questions about the event? Contact Patrick Curtis at (907) 268-7919



# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

**Kodiak Senior Center's Senior Art Show** returns this May, an opportunity to show off artistic accomplishments. Take your artwork to the center May 6-10 and the art will be displayed May 13-24. A reception on May 24 from 1 to 3 p.m. brings together the artists to discuss and answer questions about their work. Get more details at 907-486-6181 ... In **Anchorage**, the **ATOM Center** is hosting free (donations accepted) **Community Tai Chi and Qi Gong** classes on Saturdays at 9 a.m. and Sundays, 2 p.m. Bring some peace to your mind and grace to your movements. The address is 6000 C Street. Phone: 907-562-2863 ... **Mid-Valley Senior Center** in **Houston** needs volunteers to help with summer activities: Bingo, trivia, gardening, arts and crafts. Or perhaps you have other creative ideas? Call 907-206-8811 ... **Soldotna Public Library's Banned Book Club** meets May 23, 6 p.m. to discuss the importance of intellectual freedom. May's book is "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," by Maya Angelou. Call for information, 907-262-4227 ... **Registration** is open for this year's **Alaska International Senior Games**, taking place Aug. 2-11 in **Fairbanks**. The online registration portal is at <http://www.alaskaisg.org>. The annual event brings together athletes and recreation enthusiasts age 50 and older from all around the state and beyond. Events range from archery and bocce, to pickleball and track and field events. Competition is organized in divisions by players' age. Anyone age 90 or older pays no registration or entry fees. Doubles and mixed doubles players need to get their own partners prior to registering for bowling, pickleball, table tennis and tennis. If you need a partner, browse the Partner and Team Page on the AISG website. If you don't find someone, you can submit your information for others to find. This is also where to find teammates for 3-on-3 basketball. Not into sports? The Games are always in need of volunteers. Also, for the first time since Covid, the **opening ceremonies** and **gala games** are back, Aug. 2 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Pioneer Park Civic Center. The [www.alaskaisg.org](http://www.alaskaisg.org) website has a wealth of information, including tips for out-of-town visitors. Don't do web? Email [info@alaskaisg.org](mailto:info@alaskaisg.org) or call 907-978-2388.

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

# The garage sale to end them all

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**

Senior Voice Correspondent

For three days in mid May 2022, I held my seventh and final garage sale. (The first was in 1975 in Fairbanks, before we moved to California.) My husband, Gary, and I conducted all the previous ones together, but this time, he had been living in the Palmer Pioneer Home for two and a half months.

Our son Patrick and his girlfriend, Brandi, flew up from Denver a few days prior to help and Patrick's long time local friends, Gary and Kim, provided help beginning in early April. Gary and Kim were moving out of state, so I couldn't put it off another year if I wanted their help, and I certainly did. They maneuvered numerous boxes down from the upper loft and shelves in the shop, set up sawhorse and plywood tables, borrowed and delivered several six-foot tables, hung tarps to hide the not-for-sale items.

Brandi was invaluable with help pricing items with her phone app that could "look" at an item and not just identify, but give current values (some of Gary's shop items were unknown). Her expertise in organizing, creating display signs, and advertising on Craigslist and Facebook were also put to good use. Patrick set out the directional road sign boxes Friday at noon and the three of us had a "soft opening" for friends and my subdivision. Gary and Kim also helped "man" the sale all day Saturday and Sunday.

With those four doing all the actual selling, I took care of details, visited with a few buyers, and disappeared to my bedroom both Saturday and Sunday for an hour rest, knowing everything was in good hands.



Maraley's son and friend getting ready to load the Roto-Hoe onto the trailer of the new owner.

Courtesy Maraley McMichael

We didn't have time to get every last item priced, so I told them to use their own judgment and I would be fine with whatever they decided.

Prior to the sale though, I spent every spare moment for two months going through 49 years of possessions, examining and making decisions about the contents of the whole house, as well as numerous boxes in both the garage and the shop. (I could ignore all the boxes of multiple generations of family history and mementos.) I knew this would be a huge and exhausting project and I was correct. Both Gary and I were collectors of various things—not hoarders, but we definitely had accumulated too much. Gary had many boxes of electrical, plumbing, and other home construction supplies from our years of living in Slana where the nearest store was an hour and a half hour away. I had a lifelong collection of fabric and books.

As I sorted, I set aside things I knew Gary's sisters, my sisters, and our children would like. Before the sale, I took two car-



Roadside directional signs for the McMichael garage sale.

loads of household items (mostly kitchen) to Catholic Services in Anchorage for newly arrived Afghanistan refugees. These good quality things were from our travel trailer/snowbird years, which we kept to outfit a condo in Fort Collins, Colo. (a dream that never happened). I gave a couple of boxes of fabric to the Valley Quilters Guild and shared some things with my sister who lives in Glennallen.

Even so, space was an issue. Thankfully, we had nice weather and we could bring the bigger items out into the driveway and also use the large front deck. Things were organized into categories: household, linens, small appliances, canning jars, clothing, furniture, animal traps, gold panning, home construction, all kinds of guy stuff, grillers and smokers, gardening, fabric, crafts, books, games, puzzles, and more.

We even had an area on the front lawn with boxes



Maraley's hardworking crew during a lull in the sale.

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**Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc**  
**2024 Miles For Meals Online Auction**  
**May 3rd-10th**

The online auction kicks off on Friday, May 3rd at 3:00 PM and wraps up on Friday, May 10th at 5:00 PM.

Please consider donating an item for the auction. We kindly request all donations to be made before April 19th.

Explore the auction at [www.wasillaseniors.com](http://www.wasillaseniors.com)

This year, WASI's Miles for Meals Fundraiser holds special significance as we honor the memory of **Elverda Lincoln**, a passionate advocate for seniors. Whether you make a donation for our online auction or join us as a sponsor, your contribution will directly support our mission to end senior hunger.

Click the QR Code below to register for the Miles for Meals Auction. Don't miss out on the chance to snag some unique items. Remember to bid high and bid often.




**WASI**  
 WASILLA AREA SENIORS INC.



# Alaska Commission on Aging to meet May 15

Senior Voice Staff

The Alaska Commission on Aging will hold a quarterly meeting in Valdez on May 15 at the Valdez Convention and Civic Center. The event will be in-person, online via Zoom and by teleconference, starting at 8:30 a.m., breaking for an hour at noon, and resuming from 1 to 4 p.m.

At the meetings, commission members review policy and activities regarding senior housing, transportation, health care and other topics, with reports and input from representatives from agencies

and organizations serving seniors and their families and caregivers.

There will be a public comment period at 1 p.m., allowing for feedback from individuals and organizations.

To participate via Zoom, use the address <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81968995222>.

To call in by phone, dial 253-215-8782 and follow the instructions. The meeting ID is 819 6899 5222.

For more information or to request special accommodation, call 907-465-3250.

# Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

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



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# Calendar of Events

**May 4 Anchorage** Walk for Hope fundraiser for Hope Community Resources. Starts downtown on the Delaney Park Strip. Registration 10 a.m., walking at 11. Registration, sponsorship information and other details are online at [www.hopealaska.org](http://www.hopealaska.org). Or call 907-561-5335.

**May 6 Homer** Card games each Monday at Homer Senior Center, 3935 Svedlund Street, noon to 4 p.m. 907-235-7655

**May 9-10 Fairbanks** Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Recognition luncheon and awards ceremony, May 9, starting at 11 a.m. This is a catered lunch, free to local. The Fairbanks 50+ Summit and Health Fair follows on May 10, with speakers, exhibitors, much more. Events take place at the Carlson Center, 2010 2nd Ave. For information, call the Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Program, 907-459-1136.

**May 12 Nationwide** Mother's Day

**May 17 Petersburg** Little Norway Festival Parade, 5 p.m. Lineup is at 4:45, at Trading Union. Anyone can walk in the parade. Bring yourself or a group, no registration required. Questions? Call Parks and Rec., 907-772-3392.

**May 17 Juneau** Friday Noon organ concert at the State Office Building, 8th floor lobby, 333 Willoughby Ave. Hear performances on the historic Kimball Theatre Organ. Free.

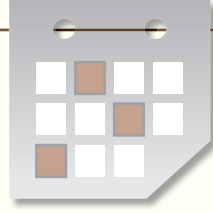
**May 18 Chugiak** 9th Annual Military Appreciation Gala at Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center, 5 p.m. Prime rib dinner, guest speakers, presentations, more. Free for active duty military members, veterans, surviving spouses. Everyone else, \$30 per ticket or two for \$50. A limited number of sponsored tickets available. Reserve a seat or table at 907-688-2683.

**May 23-27 Kodiak** Kodiak Crab Fest. Weeklong festival with parade, blessing of the fleet, foot and kayak races, fishing skills contests, live music, lots of king crab. Info at [kodiakcrabfest.com](http://kodiakcrabfest.com)

**May 24 Wasilla** Memorial Tree Dedication ceremony at Wasilla Senior Center, to honor Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. members who have passed away the past year. Time TBD, call to confirm. 907-206-8800

**May 27 Nationwide** Memorial Day

**June 1 Anchorage** Northwest Parkinson's Foundation HOPE Conference, at the Lakefront Anchorage Hotel, 9:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. "A day of education, insight, movement and connections" for people with Parkinson's, care partners, family members and industry providers. Free admission. Information on speakers, registration at <http://bit.ly/3JuIKz4>. For questions or assistance registering, contact Kristine Pedigo at [kristine@nwpf.org](mailto:kristine@nwpf.org) or 360-305-8297.



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# Strange sight soars over Teller

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

The people of Nome were planning a grand celebration in mid-May 1926. They'd decorated their fine city, set up committees, arranged receptions and lined up wagon teams to take school children to the airfield to see the landing of the dirigible Norge N-1.

Slated to be the event to top all events, Nome residents were none too pleased when they learned that the huge craft—which had left Norway to fly over the North Pole a few days earlier—had missed their beautiful town and landed in Teller instead.

Famous explorer Roald Amundsen, who twice before had attempted to reach the North Pole in conventional aircraft, realized his dream in the 348-foot airship after he joined forces with a couple other men who were familiar with dirigibles.

Lt. Riiser-Larsen of the Royal Norwegian Navy steered him toward the N-1, of Italian construction, because it was small enough to be economical. After contacting Col. Umberto Nobile, who had built and flown the ship, Amundsen agreed to pay \$75,000 for its use (almost \$1.3 million in 2023 dollars) – with \$46,000 to be refunded if the craft was returned intact after the voyage.

Financial support of \$90,000 came from Lincoln Ellsworth, son of an American industrialist, as well as the Aero Club of Norway. Nobile agreed to supply the crew for the trip for \$11,000.

The airship, which left Rome on April 10, 1925, was filled with highly flammable hydrogen held in envelopes of rubberized silk. Balloons filled with air through an opening in the nose helped the ship retain its shape.

After landing in Spitsbergen, Norway, on May 7, the expedition prepared for its flight over the North Pole with 16 men aboard.

The dirigible was pulled from the hangar on the morning of Sunday, May 11, and Nobile ordered the crew to cast off the moorings. The Norge then made its way to the coast of Alaska, traveling at altitudes of between 1,800 and 2,400 feet. After several hours, however, it ran into fog and suffered icing problems. Then harsh winds blew it off course.

By May 13, the crew had been awake for more than 60 hours, and in danger for half that time.

The men spotted a few houses along the shore on May 14 and continued on for a couple more hours. But they ended up back at that spot again. It was Teller.

The crew threw ice anchors

overboard, but they did not hold. Villagers ran to the rescue. Some jumped onto the anchors, forcing them into the ice, while others seized the mooring ropes flung from the craft. The airship finally came to a halt some 300 feet from the nearest building.

So ended the historic flight of Amundsen, who had conquered the South Pole on Dec. 14, 1911. He now added the North Pole to his list of accomplishments. And he and his crew confirmed that no land lay between the pole and Alaska in the Arctic Ocean.

This column features tidbits found



The dirigible Norge traveled from Norway over the North Pole to Alaska and is seen here settling on the ground in Teller on May 14, 1926.

University of Alaska Fairbanks

while researching Alaska's colorful past for Aunt Phil's Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt,

Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphilstrunk.com](http://www.auntphilstrunk.com).

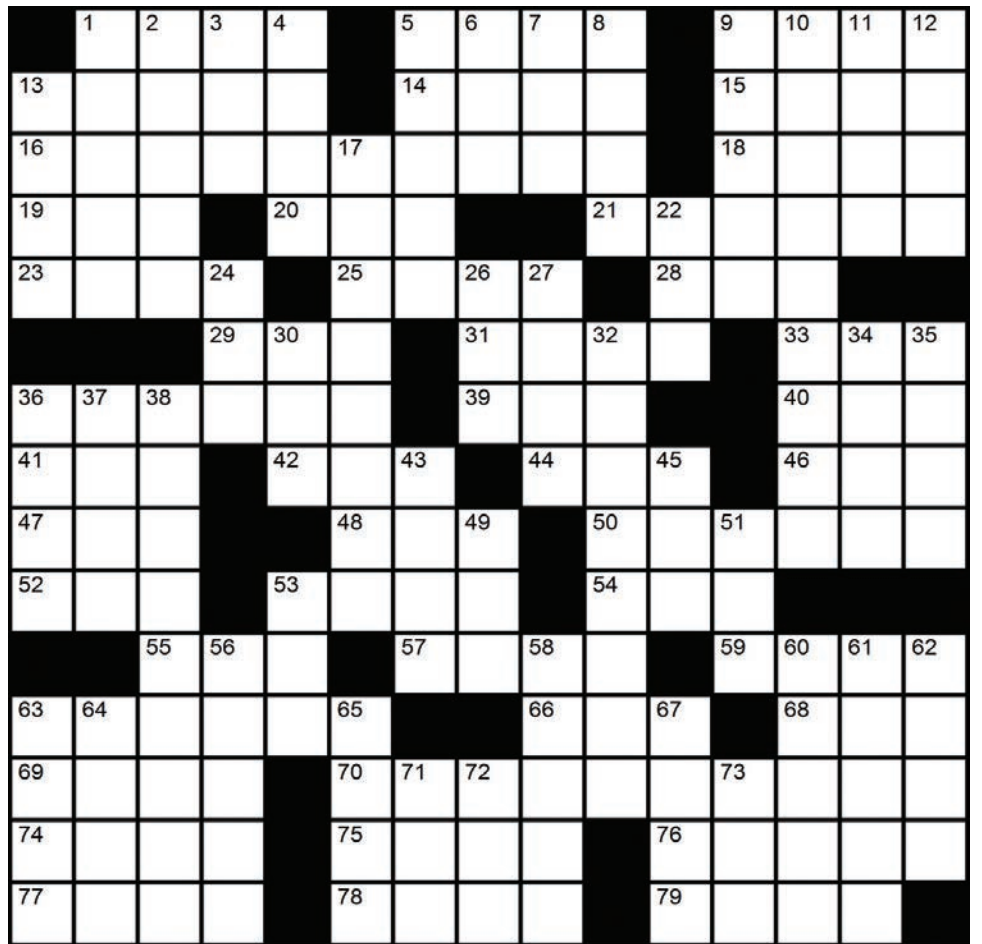
## What's Your Game?

### Across

- 1 National competitor
- 5 Malaria symptom
- 9 Simians
- 13 Ancient marketplace
- 14 Nevada city
- 15 Bar game item
- 16 One of the oldest board games known to man
- 18 Eight furlongs
- 19 Thurman of "The Avengers"
- 20 "The Name of the Rose" writer
- 21 Small piano
- 23 A fisherman may spin one
- 25 Greek god of love
- 28 Polo Grounds legend
- 29 German spa
- 31 Reindeer herder
- 33 Slot machine symbol
- 36 Jesse James was one
- 39 Biblical high priest
- 40 Parisian pal
- 41 Year in Nero's reign
- 42 Quick swim
- 44 "Wheel of Fortune" buy
- 46 Auction unit
- 47 Holiday mo.
- 48 Court ploy
- 50 Ultimatum words
- 52 Took a load off
- 53 Like some rumors
- 54 Elevator part
- 55 Pendulum's path
- 57 Word of honor
- 59 Tiger's game
- 63 Wealth
- 66 Carte start
- 68 Tappan \_\_\_ Bridge
- 69 Bohemian

### Down

- 1 Old World lizard
- 2 Not shy
- 3 Rub the wrong way
- 4 Herb in stuffing
- 5 Combat gear
- 6 Sapphire or ruby, e.g.
- 7 Classic card game
- 8 Years and years
- 9 Come out of denial
- 10 Game of "splats"
- 11 Author \_\_\_ Stanley Gardner
- 12 "Let it stand"
- 13 Border on
- 17 Dealer's call in poker
- 22 Music genre
- 24 Pickled delicacy
- 26 Bullfight cheer
- 27 Hacienda room
- 30 Like some scientists
- 32 Trick-taking card game
- 34 Singer Tori
- 35 Ceremony
- 36 Auto pioneer
- 37 Part of the eye
- 38 Simple pencil game
- 43 Game on horseback
- 45 A Gershwin
- 49 Actress Benaderet
- 51 Work unit
- 53 Hotel freebie
- 56 Limerick
- 58 Stun gun
- 60 Kind of layer
- 61 English university city
- 62 Parker of "Daniel Boone" fame
- 63 Physics units
- 64 Monopoly token
- 65 Roe source
- 67 Movie pooch
- 71 Sapporo sash
- 72 Carnival city
- 73 Witch's work



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Crossword answers on page 22



# Actor David Selby's mom was a big fan

By NICK THOMAS

Tinseltown Talks

Born and raised in West Virginia, David Selby's extensive film, television and stage career included prominent roles in two very different TV shows in different generations: ABC's gothic soap opera "Dark Shadows" in the 60s and the prime-time soap "Falcon Crest" on CBS in the 80s.

"My mother (Sarah) loved that I was an actor," said Selby from Los Angeles, but she had no background in the entertainment world. Her upbringing in a coalmining town was a tough one, being responsible for raising her brothers and sisters.

"She managed to graduate from high school and met my father who was raised on a farm," recalled Selby. "Mom continued to work hard at various jobs including the local Montgomery Wards, in a bakeshop, and her last job was as a bookkeeper in an office supply place. But she never liked to talk about herself – at all. Her focus was always on the family. She was also a meticulous housekeeper and did not like messes."

Tidying, says Selby, is a trait he inherited and for which his family has always ribbed him for his constant dusting, washing and sweeping. "Sarah is among us!" he says his wife, Chip, will lovingly announce.

To honor his late mother and her influence on his life, Selby wrote "They Don't Call Me Sarah for Nothing," a short but compelling monologue he composed for Smartphone Theatre, a live stream digital performance platform presented via Zoom and created during the early pandemic months to showcase original productions. Selby's reading streamed live in March 2022 and can be viewed on



David Selby screenshot in a Smartphone Theatre production. Provided by Todd Felderst

YouTube ([https://youtu.be/cm7mFA\\_VF6c](https://youtu.be/cm7mFA_VF6c)).

"I would act like my mother unconsciously," he said. "The kids would say 'grandma says that' or my wife would say 'you sound like your mother.' So, I wrote 'They Don't Call Me Sarah for Nothing' because it was cathartic for me to talk about her and realize, my God, how much she meant to me."

Despite their loving relationship, young David found her constant working difficult to understand. Nevertheless, he recalled, "she always somehow managed to look like a million dollars, Even taking out the trash or going to the grocery store in our little community, she was always cautious about looking her best."

As he grew older and with no initial interest in acting, Selby planned to enroll in West Virginia University but needed tuition funds. "So, I went to Atlantic City in the summer and worked at a restaurant, then returned with a pocket full of money to pay for my first half-year's tuition. I lived at home so I could walk to class as a freshman, but didn't really know what I was going to do."

That's when an adviser for students whose names started with an 'S' spotted Selby standing in the enrollment line for classes. "He said, 'you look like

remembered. "He talked me into it and, lo and behold, I began doing plays at the university right away."

After completing his degree, Selby moved to Illinois where he completed a Ph.D. in the arts, but not before moving to the East Coast and accepting his first TV role.

"I didn't finish my Ph.D. until after I was in New York doing 'Dark Shadows' – in fact, I copied my dissertation at the office where we shot the show," he recalled. His wife even took a job as an editor and then as a college English teacher so David could

pursue his acting career (see [www.davidselby.com](http://www.davidselby.com)).

But what did his mom really think about his acting career?

"She watched every show I did, from the plays at university and summer stock to 'Dark Shadows,' 'Falcon Crest' and everything else," he says. "Aside from my wife, my mother was my biggest fan. I loved her dearly."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See [www.getnickt.org](http://www.getnickt.org).



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# Medicine

continued from page 9

help diagnose diseases much more accurately. This could help save people's lives by preventing delays in care. Conversely, AI can help individuals avoid therapies that may not provide any benefit but significantly affect their quality of life.

AI algorithms can be applied to digital images of biopsies to identify subtle differences between tumors. This type of information may point to the presence of genetic mutations and open up a new avenue for developing personalized medicines for treating cancer. AI offers the promise of improving and diversifying clinical trials. AI can provide locations where diverse patients are more likely to be treated. Further, AI can help better prioritize eligible patients.

Recently, clinicians used AI to accelerate the design of diabetes prevention software. In a study published online in the Journal of Medical Internet Research, researchers examined the capabilities of a form of AI called generative AI or GenAI. It predicts likely options for the next word in any sentence based on how billions of people used words in context on the internet. A side effect

of this next-word prediction is that the generative AI "chatbots" like chatGPT can generate replies to questions in realistic language, and produce clear summaries of complex texts.

Led by researchers at NYU Langone Health, the current paper explores the application of ChatGPT to the design of a software program that uses text messages to counter diabetes by encouraging patients to eat healthier and get exercise. The team tested whether AI-enabled interchanges between doctors and software engineers could hasten the development of such a personalized automatic messaging system.

"The chatbot drove rapid progress throughout the software development life cycle, from capturing original ideas, to deciding which features to include, to generating the computer code," said study corresponding author Danissa Rodriguez, assistant professor in the Dept. of Population Health at NYU Langone. "If this proves to be effective at scale it could revolutionize healthcare software design."

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

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# Experience

continued from page 5

providers are not listening to them when communicating symptoms, this can lead to misunderstandings, misdiagnosis, and inadequate treatment. It is important for older adults to ask questions, seek second opinions, and advocate for themselves when making healthcare decisions. This ensures appropriate care is being rendered that aligns with client preferences.

In today's fast-paced healthcare environment, providers may feel pressured to see a high volume of patients in a short amount of time. This can lead to rushed interactions and a lack of attention to individual concerns. One successful communication intervention is implementation of patient-centered care models prioritizing active listening during consultations allowing sufficient time for each person. By adopting a patient-centered approach, healthcare providers bet-

ter understand a patient's unique needs, preferences and goals while building a trusted partnership, improving communication, and enhancing outcomes.

## Preventing ageism

Ageism in healthcare is a prevalent issue that affects the quality of care that older adults receive. Ageism refers to discrimination and prejudice against individuals based on their age. Patients must persistently request unbiased care. Overcoming ageism in medical settings is crucial to ensure that older adults receive equitable and respectful treatment.

Fair medical attention requires a multi-faceted approach that involves changing attitudes, implementing policies, and providing training for healthcare professionals. By promoting age-friendly practices and fostering a culture of respect for older adults, healthcare organizations can improve the quality of care for advanced-age patients and negate stereotypes and discrimination that adults

face when seeking medical therapies.

## Successful examples

One way to overcome ageism is through education and instruction on age-related issues. When a better understanding of the unique needs and challenges faced by aging adults is obtained, it can dispel stereotypes and biases that contribute to ageism.

Additionally, healthcare organizations can write guidelines that promote age-friendly practices. This may include implementing age-specific screening tools, creating age-friendly environments, and ensuring that all patients are treated with courtesy and respect. By adopting age-friendly policies, businesses create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for older adults.

Furthermore, raising awareness about ageism in healthcare is crucial to combating this issue. By educating the public about the negative impact of ageism on older adults' health and well-being, everyone

can work toward creating a more age-friendly society. This may involve campaigns, workshops and advocacy efforts to promote value and equality for older adults in all settings.

Another example of a successful strategy to overcome ageism in healthcare is the Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative, developed by the John A. Hartford Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. This program aims to improve care for older adults by focusing on the "4Ms" of: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility. By implementing this framework, healthcare organizations can provide more holistic and person-centered care for older patients. Visit <https://www.johnahartford.org> to learn more.

## Providers, individuals working together

For providers: Overcoming ageism in healthcare is essential to ensure that older adults receive equitable and attentive treatment. By addressing

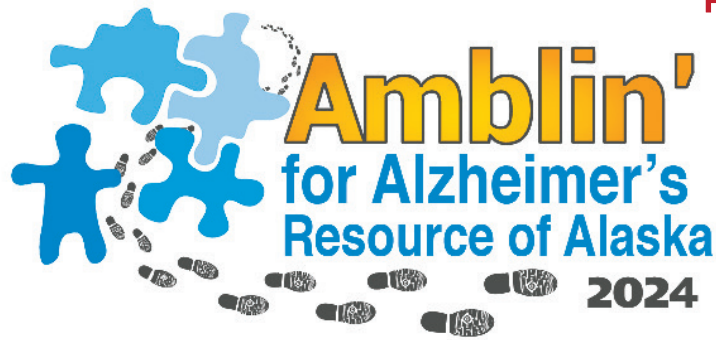
ageism through education, policy changes, and awareness-raising efforts, we create inclusive and age-friendly systems. By promoting age-appropriate practices and fostering a culture of respect for older adults, we can work toward eliminating ageism in medical environments and improving the quality of care for older patients.

For individuals: By taking an active role with healthcare providers, patients can receive essential, personalized care, and make informed decisions about their health. Establishing open and honest communication with medical teams, sharing specific health concerns and goals, and actively participating in treatment plans builds a collaborative relationship. Older adults can then ensure the necessary support is received for maintaining optimal health and well-being.

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

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# Why is it so hard to find a lawyer in Alaska?

By **KENNETH KIRK**

For Senior Voice



In the movie “War of the Roses”, a lawyer (played by Danny DeVito) mentions that he charges \$450 per hour. This was in 1989, but even then, as a young attorney just starting out, the number seemed startling. “Why,” I thought to myself in the darkened theater, “do lawyers cost so much?”

I learned part of the answer pretty quickly. The lawyer doesn't get to put all of that money right into his pocket. There are a lot of expenses that go with running a law office, such as rent, secretarial staff, Bar dues, computers, insurance, and office supplies. All of that, and the fact that the attorney cannot necessarily bill and get paid for every minute of the working week, counts for more than half of it. But it is still a lot of money.

But even at these prices, in Alaska especially, the bigger problem today is how to even get an attorney.

I have been seeing this a lot in probate, although I'm sure it is also a problem for those who need an attorney for a divorce, to evict a nonpaying tenant, to defend a criminal case, or to collect on a judgment, among other things. Why is it so hard to find a lawyer in Alaska now?

Part of the problem is that we have an aging Bar. The number of new attorneys who take the bar exam each year is less than half what it was when I took the exam in 1987. And with so many older attorneys in practice, when the pandemic hit, a lot of them decided to call it a career and fold their law practices. Others have become so overloaded that they have stopped taking new clients.

But that begs the question: Why are new lawyers not coming to Alaska anymore? And the answer to that is that the cost of becoming a lawyer is too high.

You sacrifice a lot to become a lawyer. Almost all law schools require a bachelor's degree to even get in, and that typically takes four years. And then law school is three more years. That is seven years that you could have been working and making a living. But the cost of tuition is really what hurts. I did a calculation last year, and

**There are some states, including California and Washington among others, where someone without a law degree can engage in an internship with a law firm, and then eventually take the bar exam and become a lawyer. But we don't have that option in Alaska.**

adjusted for inflation, the cost of tuition at my law school would have been \$31,560 per year. But the actual tuition there last year was \$74,098 per year. That means that even adjusting for inflation, the tuition has more than doubled. And my law school is not an outlier.

What that means for almost all law students, other than a few with wealthy parents, is a lot of student loan debt. Seven years of these kinds of numbers, and a newly minted lawyer can easily start out with \$300,000 of student loan debt weighing them down.

That means they don't have the option of pursuing the romantic dream of moving to Alaska and starting a practice on the frontier. They pretty much have to take that large firm job that will work them 60

hours a week but will allow them to pay that crushing student loan debt. We don't have those big-firm jobs up here.

So the law schools are largely to blame. But why should a new lawyer need seven years of college and law school to begin practice? It wasn't always that way. In Abraham Lincoln's day, you became a lawyer by working as a clerk in a law office, and studying during your spare time. In my grandfather's day, many lawyers got an LL.B, a Bachelor's degree in law, then they could take the bar exam.

And there are some states, including California and Washington among others, where someone without a law degree can engage in an internship with a law firm, and then eventually take the bar

exam and become a lawyer. But we don't have that option in Alaska.

So in the meantime, what do we do? The court system, to its credit, has been trying to solve the problem. In family law, where the lack of lawyers is probably the worst, they have a “family law self-help center” to assist people who represent themselves. We don't have that for probate cases, but there are forms available on the court system website that people can use. The problem is that people don't know how to use them. Even with the forms, they need lawyers to help them figure out the next steps.

Shakespeare had one of his characters (a villain, for what it is worth) say “The first thing we do, let's kill all the lawyers”. If he lived here today, he would have to find one first.

*Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. I know, good luck with that.*



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

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# Senior Voice

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



# Two-factor authentication explained

Also: Wireless blood pressure cuffs; Gameboy on iPhone

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Bob's Tech Talk

**Q.** What is two-factor authentication?

**A.** The most common authentication method uses an account name and a password. That has been true since the earliest days of computing. The account name/password combination is considered a single factor authentication method.

The problems created by passwords are well documented, and two-factor authentication is a technique developed to enforce security in the event a password falls into the wrong hands.

The second authentication factor typically requires the user to enter a second code in addition to the password. Sometimes this code is delivered via an email address. This route proves the user still has control of the associated email account, which is better than just a plain password. But the best two-factor authentication methods are completely independent of an email address.

The next method is to send a text message to your cellphone. This widely used method is also less desirable because mis-directing text messages is possible.

The last, most secure method uses an app that generates a code that expires every 30 seconds. The app can be standalone, like Google's Authenticator app, or built into the operating system, like Apple's iCloud Keychain.

This last method is still relatively uncommon, but as security requirements continue to evolve, I expect it will become more common.

The bottom line is that two-factor authentication should be used on any site that provides it. In most situations it is optional, but it is worth the effort to learn more about it and use

*The problems created by passwords are well documented, and two-factor authentication is a technique developed to enforce security in the event a password falls into the wrong hands.*

it wherever possible.

**Q.** My old blood pressure monitor has finally stopped working, and it is time for a replacement. What do you recommend?

**A.** First off, I'm a technology writer, not a health care professional. Consider my answer as one person's opinion in that context.

For the last four years I have used a Withings BPM Connect monitor, a battery operated wireless pressure cuff that automatically transmits each test result to the Withings app on my phone.

The BPM Connect is more expensive than traditional cuffs, but the absence of both a power cord and a tabletop console make the entire process feel much more luxurious and, frankly, the ease of use encourages me to test more often. Everything is contained in the cuff, and the only thing I need to do is change the battery every few months.

Doctors love data. I use my smartphone to send my physician a chart that shows the measurements since my last office visit. As a result he has a more complete picture of my cardiovascular health than would have been possible with only office tests.

The Connect can also be shared by multiple people, although the interface for switching users is a bit clumsy.

In tech, once you leave the wires behind, wired seems like a cumbersome throwback. The same as true with personal blood pressure monitors.

**Q.** What is the story behind the Delta Emulator? I get that it plays games but, considering it is free there must be a catch.

**A.** The Delta Emulator

has a long history, and the only catch is that it requires extra work after installing it. Once set up however, it can play classic Nintendo games from an earlier era.

To appreciate emulation, keep in mind that as computers become more powerful, programmers can create special programs (emulators) that mimic older, less powerful hardware on new devices. Often these emulators are hobby projects created by programmers who enjoy using hardware that has long since become obsolete.

There are complex disputes about the legality of emulation. Not because of the emulators themselves, but because of the software that is installed under emulation, often known as ROMs.

These ROMs are typically files that recreate the

contents of game cartridges that were used in early game consoles.

This entire debate has exploded recently because Apple, under pressure from regulators, has for the first time approved a widely used emulator in its App Store, the "Delta Emulator" app. Within days it became the most popular

free app on the store.

That covers the backstory. If you want to explore emulation, I suggest searching the Web for the terms "Delta Emulator", "ROMs," and "legal" to investigate this topic further.

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

## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

### How the Internet Keeps Working

Do not miss this incredible story about how a fleet of repair ships keeps the global Internet healthy.

[theverge.com/c/24070570/internet-cables-undersea-deep-repair-ships](https://theverge.com/c/24070570/internet-cables-undersea-deep-repair-ships)

### Video Game Console Emulation History

A deep dive into game emulators.

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Video\\_game\\_console\\_emulator](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_console_emulator)

[Video\\_game\\_console\\_emulator](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_console_emulator)

### Remember Your First Mobile Phone?

Go ahead and see what you can find in this massive catalog of retired cellphone hardware.

[mobilephonemuseum.com](https://mobilephonemuseum.com)

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# A bucketlist journey to South America

## Smithsonian helps plan dream trip for Alaskan couple

By **LAUREL DOWNING BILL**  
For Senior Voice

First in a four-part series.

Ever since Don and I said “we do” in Fairbanks in November 1973, my sweetie and I have been talking about taking a trip to South America to see Machu Picchu, the Galapagos Islands, and the Amazon rainforest. When we saw an ad for a highly discounted Princess cruise from Los Angeles to Santiago, Chile, we decided to “Just Do It” for our 50th wedding anniversary.

We then Googled how to get from Chile to our three goals and stumbled across Smithsonian Journeys. The Smithsonian Institution’s travel program, which has operated for more than 50 years, offers unique, expert-led trips on all seven continents and partners with Audley Travel to create tailor-made trips to more than 80 countries.

Soon we were chatting with Audley representative Jasmine Scott, the company’s expert on South America based in Boston. She explained that Audley and the Smithsonian specialize in independent, educational journeys customized to travelers’ personal interests, dates and budgets.

My husband, 80, and I, 72, shared our interests with Jasmine. Don, a fish-

eries biologist for 20 years, wanted to see all the birds and wildlife he could while traveling through Peru and Ecuador. My interests, in addition to our top three destinations, included the historical aspects of each country—early civilizations and modern cultures—and wildlife adventures.

### Agency stays within budget

Our research prior to finding Smithsonian Journeys showed an average seven-day tour of the Galapagos Islands on a small ship carrying 16 passengers was around \$10,000 to \$12,500 per person. Or about \$25,000 total. We estimated another \$25,000 would cover the other three weeks of air travel, hotels, food, ground transportation, fees to historical sites, and other miscellaneous expenses.

We told Jasmine we thought we should budget \$50,000 for the trip, as that also is what we had saved over the years for this grand adventure. And we explained that even though we were senior citizens, we still were young at heart and didn’t want to just ride around in cars and buses all day. However, we didn’t think we could do physically demanding excursions, either, like white-water rafting or a four-day hike



Author Laurel Bill and husband, Don, in Peru. After a short hike up a path with ancient stone steps, the magnificent Inca ruins appeared in the middle of a tropical mountain forest more than 7,900 feet above sea level. The sight of the ancient Peruvian settlement, built around 1450 AD and abandoned in 1572, took their breaths away.

Photo courtesy Laurel Bill

on the famous Inca Trail. We also let Jasmine know we were not five-star hotel people—moderately priced and comfortable lodgings were just fine.

Several phone calls and

emails were exchanged during the spring and early summer to refine our plans to fulfill our dream trip in a “doable” timeframe of four weeks during December and January. Once we solid-

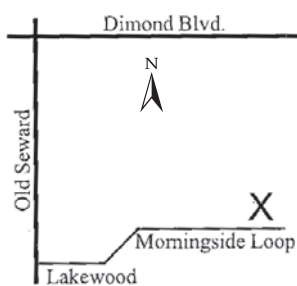
ified our plans, Audley sent a detailed custom-made itinerary that included all airfares, airport transfers, hotels (with breakfasts

next page please

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## Journey

from page 20

included), guide information, and historical and wildlife tour fees costing \$11,000 less than our budget. Also, to our surprise, we would be traveling through South America with our own English-speaking guides and expert drivers—no tour groups.

### Travel agency listens

As we looked at our custom itinerary, we noticed Jasmine had really listened to our desires for this trip. She had booked us into small historical hotels, added food tours so we could try the local cuisines, and scheduled several wildlife excursions to see the birds and animals of each area. There was even a tour of a private home in Lima that dated back to the Spanish colonization days of the 1700s, which delighted both of us.

Once we approved the itinerary, the agency required a payment of 25 percent of the total to secure hotel, airline and guide reservations. The next payments were spread over several months, with the final payment due prior to our tour start date of Dec. 20, 2023.

We then received a beautiful grey, suede-bound book with our official plans, vouchers and tickets for the entire trip. It also included the names of guides at each location and their phone numbers in case we needed to contact them for any reason during our stays in their areas.

Don and I left Los Angeles on board the Sapphire Princess on Dec. 1 and docked in Santiago on Dec. 19. The next morning, we flew to Lima to begin our dream trip.

### Plans exceed expectations

Thanks to the seamless planning and attention to detail provided by Smithsonian Journeys and Audley Travel, our dream unfolded spectacularly. From the moment we set foot in Peru, we were greeted with warmth and hospitality at each airport and whisked away on journeys of discovery that surpassed all expectations.

After navigating our way through several other ancient Peruvian ruins, we reached Machu Picchu. With our experienced guide leading the way, we were able to delve deep into the heart of this mystical Inca citadel, learning about its fascinating history and marveling at its amazing architecture.

Next, we set our sights on the magical Galapagos Islands in Ecuador. While enjoying our suite on-board a comfortable 118-foot yacht, we explored several islands with an expert naturalist, taking in breathtaking landscapes and encountering incredible wildlife that call this paradise home. From viewing myriad sea lions, Galapagos penguins



One of 17 species of macaws, the scarlet macaw is one of the most beautiful of the parrot family. These two are among dozens spotted at a mineral lick while exploring the Amazon rain forest along the Napo River in Ecuador.

Photos courtesy Laurel Bill



The Galapagos penguin is the smallest South American penguin and the most northerly breeding of the penguin species to live near the equator. Laurel and Don saw dozens of these cute little birds while touring the Galapagos Islands.

and blue-footed boobies to strolling along pristine iguana-filled beaches and hiking over black lava trails, every moment was filled with adventure.

The Amazon rainforest was a place of unparalleled beauty and biodiversity. Boarding a ship with only 20 staterooms, we embarked on a voyage into the heart of the wild and untamed wilderness down the Napo River. With an expert naturalist by our side, we daily navigated the winding waterways in a motorized canoe and immersed ourselves in the sights and sounds of the jungle. From vibrant scarlet macaws to pink dolphin sightings, each day brought new discoveries, deepening

our appreciation for the wonders of the natural world.

Throughout our journey, we were struck by the impeccable service and attention to detail provided by Smithsonian Journeys and Audley Travel. From seamless logistics to thoughtful touches that celebrated our milestone anniversary, every aspect of our trip was handled with care and professionalism. Their quality service let us focus on soaking in the beauty of South America and making our 50th wedding anniversary journey an experience that forever will live in our memories.

Next month: Age is not a barrier to a 10-day odyssey through Peru.



While touring historical sites in Lima, Laurel and Don saw pre-Inca burial bundles like this one on display at the Larco Museum. The mummies, wrapped in colorful rope and cloth, date back 1,000 years. Masks made of wood or ceramics, dubbed "false heads," adorned the bundles found at archaeological sites near the Peruvian capital.

## 10 tips for traveling overseas

1. Plan ahead—it takes time to get trip organized.
2. Learn about your destination(s), if you need visas, etc.
3. Make a budget for:
  - transportation
  - accommodations
  - food
  - fees and paperwork
  - unexpected expenses
4. Make sure passport won't expire within six months of return to U.S.A.
5. Make sure carry-ons are no larger than 22x15x10 inches deep.
6. Have a money belt to carry cash and passports discreetly.
7. Build rest time into your itinerary.
8. Pack a power strip for charging electronics and a power adapter if necessary.
9. Use packing cubes to help save space and keep clothes neat.
10. Check available overseas plans for cell service.



# Sale

continued from page 12

of free stuff as well as larger free items, including framed windows, a roto-tiller, and a sleep comfort (number) bed. Gary bought a Roto-Hoe tiller new in 1974 (with attachments) and he used it to break ground in five different home locations. It was too much for me to operate and I was tired of weed whacking around it, so was adamant a new home be found for it. Each time a likely-looking possibility walked up the driveway, Patrick would call it to their attention. If they asked if it ran, he would start the tiller engine. One guy knew fairly quickly that he wanted it, but had to go get a trailer and return. He took it to his father in Talkeetna, who had a similar one and could



Setting of the McMichael garage sale May 2022.

Courtesy Maraley McMichael



Maraley's sister Jeanette and son Patrick, who rarely get to see each other, connect at the garage sale.

use it for parts if nothing else. The guy who took the sleep comfort bed system only wanted part of it, but when my crew told him it was all or nothing, he took it all and left a tip.

Many delighted shoppers left with new treasures. One guy was very happy to find fasteners for commercial type tents in the free pile, because his fasteners had been damaged in the previous winter wind storm. A lady asked

if the tires on the vintage bicycle held air. Then she immediately said, "Never mind. You had me at banana seat!"

With balloons here and there, music playing in the background, Brandi's sales enthusiasm, and the whole crew's lighthearted joking manner, the sale had a party atmosphere at times. Family friends came out from Anchorage and after "shopping" stayed for half an hour visiting in the driveway. The husband went home with Gary's Clive Cussler book collection—I wouldn't take his money, but was willing to trade for the delicious homemade brownies in their picnic lunch. My sister who lives in Soldotna arrived late the second day of the sale and spent the night, shopped the third

day, and took a carload home. Various mini family reunions were enjoyed.

Although we used tarps to hide and placed strategic "not-for-sale" signs, a few items accidentally escaped, but nothing really important. I was standing near the check-out table when I saw my favorite garden tool in one lady's pile and quickly retrieved it.

The sale was very successful (more than \$2,000) but of course there were leftovers, which I had plenty of time to sort into piles for upcoming garage sales for both a local charter school and the Pioneers of Alaska, Title Wave books, the Bright Light Book Project, three different Valley thrift stores, and Mat-Su Rebuild. I do still have a few more valuable items that need homes. Ten years

ago, Gary and I would sell these things on Craigslist, but it seems FacebookMarket Place is now the more popular venue. Since I have yet to set up a Facebook account, I will need my kids' help with these items.

Ever since my sale to end all sales, I take any unwanted items to local thrift stores. No more garage sales for me. My home décor is certainly not "minimalist" nowadays, but at least I've weeded out a huge quantity of belongings my kids won't have to deal with after I'm gone. Goal accomplished.

Maraley McMichael is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Palmer. Email her at [maraleymcmichael@gmail.com](mailto:maraleymcmichael@gmail.com).

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#### Crossword answers from page 14

■	A	V	I	S	■	A	G	U	E	■	A	P	E	S	
A	G	O	R	A	■	R	E	N	O	■	D	A	R	T	
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S	N	E	E	■	■	D	I	O	R	■	A	X	E	S	■



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## Williams

continued from page 4

first vice president of the Anchorage chapter of the NAACP. I am the president of the Bartlett Club, named after Senator Bob Bartlett. We meet weekly at the

Anchorage Senior Activity Center at noon and present programs of interest. We have been focusing on the candidates for mayor, with one coming each week, but the election is winding down now.

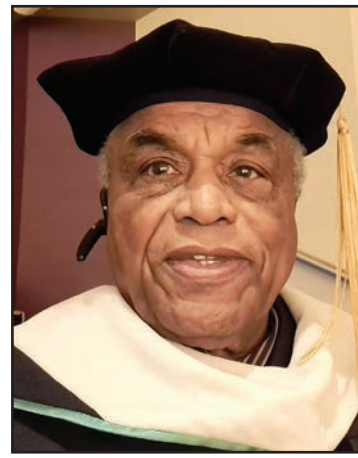
I am a member of the senior activity center, and I'm in and out of that building,

often with different programs. In fact, last night I played the piano there for a presentation done by David Reamer who presented a history of films and movies made in and about Alaska.

*Do you have thoughts about leading your kind of life, where so much has involved making people feel better, helping them with their needs. Yours has been a remarkable life of service.*

My life of service began with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, which occurred seven days after my birthday. My grandmother and my mother went into service basically to help with the war effort. I was witness to that because most of the men, including my father, disappeared and went off to war, and I watched my grandmother helping people throughout the community.

Then she graduated with a class of licensed practical colored nurses. These were women that they had picked to provide treatment to colored men coming back from the war, because they didn't want white women



Cal Williams received a Doctorate of Humane Letters from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Photo courtesy Cal Williams

monthly. My grandmother was able to take that money and put me in the Catholic school across the street from my house. So, my life has been, I like to say "blessed," some like to say "lucky," and some like to say "bouncing from one opportunity to the next," without me having a plan in hand. I was just responding to a strong pull from somebody else's direction.

Throughout my whole life it was just finding out what to do to make somebody happy, and doing it. Service. And it has served me well because I don't get frustrated with some plan that I had that didn't come through because I had no plan. I just was trusting that God or somebody was gonna bring to me what my next step should be.

*Note: This interview was conducted March 20, 2024. It has been edited for length and clarity.*

*Lawrence D. Weiss is a UAA Professor of Public Health, Emeritus, creator of the UAA Master of Public Health program, and author of several books and numerous articles.*

## Veterans

continued from page 3

of 11.8 percent to \$637 a month, compared to the current \$570 a month. For TYA Select, the monthly premium increases to \$311, a 6.9 percent increase from the \$291 in 2023.

5. Tricare Reserve Select: The monthly premiums increase by 7.2 percent for both individual service member coverage and family coverage. It increases to \$51.95 for the individual, from the \$48.47 in 2023. For the family option, the premium is \$256.87, up from \$239.69 in 2023.

6. Tricare Retired Reserve: The premiums increase by 6.5 percent for both individual and family coverage. For individuals, it increases to \$585.24, up from \$549.35 in 2023. For the Tricare Retired Reserve family, it's \$1,406.22 starting in 2024, up from the \$1,320.76 in 2023.

You can find more information at [www.militarytimes.com](http://www.militarytimes.com) and search for the article on new TRICARE rates.

### Get the word out

The Retired Soldier Council's February 2024 newsletter put out a request for people to help soldiers without emails stay informed about benefits and happenings by ensuring they receive the newsletter.

The council figures there's about 1,200 retired soldiers or surviving spouses in the JBER Garrison area of its operations, but has less than 500 email addresses.

The council is currently not sending out information by regular mail, so those without email are missing out and do not know who to contact with

a problem or answers to questions they may have.

The council urges residents to talk to retired friends to make sure they are receiving the newsletter and if not, print and give them a copy. And if they have email, but are not on the council's mailing list, tell them to contact Darryl Morgan at [darryl.w.morgan.civ@army.mil](mailto:darryl.w.morgan.civ@army.mil) or call 907-384-3500 to be added to the distribution list.

### A day at JBER for retiree vets

The JBER Retiree Appreciation Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, at the Arctic Warrior Events Center at 9387 Kutner Avenue in Anchorage, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

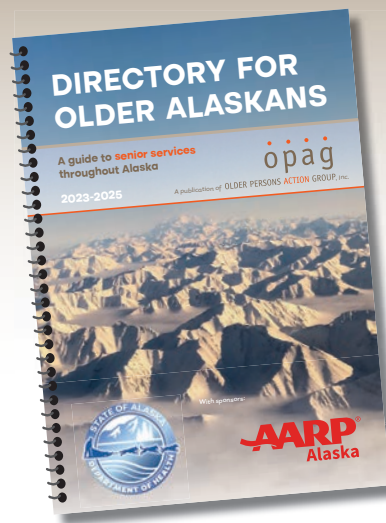
Guest Speaker is Mr. Verdie Bowen, director of the Office of Veteran's Affairs. Since 2009, Bowen has been responsible for the development and establishment of policies and strategic plans that directly affect over 230,000 Alaskans, including all Alaska veterans, active duty, reserve components, dependents, and survivors living in the state's 348 communities.

There's a free health fair offering blood pressure screening, preventive care and health and wellness information, as well as information from TRICARE Humana and Medicare.

Many exhibitors will be on hand, along with food trucks. The event is free and open to all military retirees, those transitioning into retirement, their spouses, and active-duty military.

For more information on available services, call 907-334-0874 or 888-248-3682. You can also go to the website at <https://veterans.alaska.gov/home/> or email [alaska.veterans@alaska.gov](mailto:alaska.veterans@alaska.gov).

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### Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

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

### Bristol Bay Native Association

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



**1-877-625-2372**

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