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# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons  
Action Group, Inc. Free

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 50, Number 6 June 2023

Authoring your  
life (story). - page 4

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get tested. - page 7

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Meet New Stuyahok  
Elder Mentor  
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### Travel:

Green buses transport visitors into and out of Denali National Park, one of many awe-inspiring National Parks across Alaska. Read about them on page 24, then start planning your visits.

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2022  
National Mature  
Media Awards<sup>SM</sup>  
Winner





# Award-winning public service

*Congratulations to Leonard T. Kelley, center, the recipient of this year's Ron Hammett Award for Public Service. The award is given annually to a nominee whose efforts have improved the lives of seniors in the Anchorage area. A long-time Alaska resident, Leonard started a non-profit organization with his wife, Laura W. Kelley, to provide education and training. He has participated in numerous organizations and volunteered many years on the board of directors for Older Persons Action Group, Inc., including terms as the board president. His daughter, Michaela Kelley Canterbury, pictured left, submitted his nomination and attended the award event May 3 at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. Anchorage Senior Citizens Advisory Commission Chair and former OPAG executive director Jim Bailey, right, presented the award."*

DAVID WASHBURN/SENIOR VOICE

# Summer begins the moving season, here's what to know

By ROSEANN FREITAS

Better Business Bureau

For countless Americans, summer signifies a major transition in their lives. Whether it's graduating from high school or

college, starting a new job, or receiving that highly anticipated acceptance letter, summer is the busiest time of year for movers.

In 2022, 40% of all business inquiries on BBB.org for moving compa-

nies occurred from May through August, and over 5,300 complaints were filed with BBB against moving companies throughout the year. Additionally, consumers reported to the BBB Scam Tracker more

than \$1.2 million lost to moving scams in 2022. This year, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is launching Operation Protect Your Move, deploying dozens of investigators around the country to crack down on the uptick in moving scams and complaints, including investigating moving brokers.

With the amount of moving activity during summer, the potential of being a victim of a moving scam also increases. There are several versions of moving scams reported to BBB every year, including:

Moving companies not showing up. Consumers re-

ceiving a quote and paying a deposit, but the movers never show up.

Changing quotes after loading the truck. The moving company provides a quote based on expected weight and, after loading the truck, they inform the consumer that the load is over the expected weight and an additional fee will have to be paid. Most of the time, the additional fee is significantly more expensive per pound, sometimes as much as double the original estimate.

Holding your belongings hostage. The most disruptive and difficult to

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# OPAG board vacancy

Older Persons Action Group, Inc.

Do you want to be more involved with helping Alaska's seniors? Older Persons Action Group, Inc. has openings for board members and welcomes inquiries. OPAG publishes the monthly Senior Voice and the Directory for Older Alaskans, coordinates monthly Provider's Breakfast networking events, and other projects to meet the needs of the fastest-growing senior demographic in the country. We are based in Anchorage but value perspective and ideas from all around the state and will accommodate for distance using digital means. To learn more, email your contact information with a CV or resume to [executivedirector@opagak.com](mailto:executivedirector@opagak.com).

# New name, same support for Alaska's LGBTQ+ seniors

Alaska Rainbow Elders

The LGBTQ+ organization, SAGE Alaska, is now Alaska Rainbow Elders, or ARE for short. This change was made at the request of the national organization, SAGE USA, hoping it would encourage all its partners to concentrate on issues unique to their area.

Under the new structure, ARE continues to partner with SAGE USA but will no longer use its name or logo. It will retain access to SAGE USA's many resources.

Alaska Rainbow Elders was created after using

community input to guide the rebranding. ARE joined the national SAGE USA in 2016, having operated locally as A Little Gay A Little Gray for several years.

ARE is a program of Identity, Inc., and provides opportunities for older LGBTQ+ adults to form and strengthen meaningful relationships, identify, and utilize trusted vendors and service providers, find support and encouragement when needed, and learn about valuable resources.

ARE will also provide outreach and education opportunities for health

and business partners to understand the experiences and needs of older LGBTQ+ Alaskans.

ARE is helping to build a state where LGBTQ+ Alaskans can grow older with a sense of confidence, safety and community through enduring and meaningful partnerships with constituents, allies, policymakers, businesses and service providers.

For more information, see the Facebook page for Alaska Rainbow Elders, find us on the Identity, Inc. website, or contact us at [are@identityinc.org](mailto:are@identityinc.org).

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## 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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# Relax and let the driver take you to your destination

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

First, I’m going to tell you a true story. Then we’ll talk about how your public transit driver can pick you up and take you where you want to go for free, or sometimes for just a buck or two.

In the late 1990s Christy (my wife) and I lived for nearly a year in Huntsville, Alabama, while I did research for a book I was writing. On weekdays she took our car to her job, and I took a city bus to the law

office where I was doing the research. After a few months I got to know the bus drivers pretty well on that particular route.

One day the driver—a short, round, jovial kind of guy—seemed to be in an especially good mood. No one else was on the bus so we were blabbing away having a good time. He was all atwitter because he had just purchased a new car.

Suddenly he turns to me and says, “Hey, do you want to see it?” I said sure, thinking maybe he would invite me over on

the weekend for a burger, brew and car viewing. But no, he had a different idea. He said, “I’m running a few minutes early, and I don’t live too far from here, so let’s go take a look at it right now.” And so we did—errant city bus and all.

The moral of the story is that public transportation can be unexpectedly entertaining. It’s also good for the environment, allows you to do something other than stare at the car in front of you and, compared to car ownership, it’s inexpensive. Talking about

inexpensive, how about “free.”

**Girdwood**

Christy and I have taken the Glacier Valley Transit (GVT) buses all over Girdwood. Ride them all you want – they are completely free. And you can actually call the bus driver to find out when the bus will get to your stop. In addition, the system has excellent services for those who have trouble getting to bus stops. Schedules and more on the web, [glaciervalleytransit.com](http://glaciervalleytransit.com), or call the office at

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**Ketchikan**

Did you know that the

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# Age-Friendly Anchorage: One small park

*AARP Alaska*

What does it mean to be a Livable Community? As defined by the AARP Livable Communities project, a Livable Community supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and rural areas to be great places for people of all ages. Communities should supply safe, walkable streets, affordable housing, safe transportation options, access to needed services and opportunities for residents of all ages to take part in community life. How does that translate to life in Anchorage?

This is the first in a series of articles that will highlight examples of what has been done, is currently in progress and will be done soon to make Anchorage a more Age-Friendly and livable community for all residents.

Tucked away in the U-Med district of Anchorage you can find Folker Park. Land acquisition for the park began in 1983 with the purchase completed in 1984. In 1990, a log cabin was removed from

the property by the city. In 1996, the University Area Community Council worked with the Parks and Recreation Dept. to develop a concept site plan and priorities list. Unfortunately, the park suffered through many years of neglect and negative use behind the increasing dense undergrowth until 2015 when the neighborhood worked with the city to clear the undergrowth and improve visibility into the park.

In 2016 a 10-year vision for the park management, maintenance and development began; this plan is known as the “Folker Site Plan Update.” The city conducted extensive public outreach, including many people and organizations in creating the plan for improvements in Folker Park.

Today Folker Park has many carefully designed features to enhance the lives for people of all ages and abilities. The manual work to implement the vision for the park got off the ground in 2017 with the award of an Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant for fitness equip-

ment that seniors, adults, and youth of all ages can use together. Construction began in the summer of 2018 for an ADA-accessible pathway in the shape of a Celtic Healing Knot, the all-ages fitness area that includes a Tai Chi wheel for improving mobility and balance and a meditative

labyrinth. In June 2022, following another set of enhancements to Folker Park, the community was invited to celebrate at a grand re-opening to honor the park’s transformation into Anchorage’s first-ever intergenerational health park.

These enhancements

were funded by members and friends of the Alaska Reflexology Association (AKRA), the Anchorage Park Foundation, and AARP Alaska. The newest features in the park included a new walking path, referred to as the Community

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## Send us your letters

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# How I met my life (while writing it down)

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

**Q:** When I was younger, my uncle gave me a copy of his manuscript detailing his life. Now in my advanced years, I am thinking about writing my own life summary. Where do I start?

**A:** Chronicling your story can be a way to leave memories for your family, record information for historical purposes, or just be remembered. It can be a way to capture your lifetime of experiences, lessons learned, failures, triumphs, and share memorable moments with others.

While a written legacy may seem daunting, it doesn't have to be. Your inspirational essays may ignite others to review their own life span. Or, writing can be a way toward gaining insight and clarity to help you heal past wounds. Well-crafted words highlight a powerful and unforgettable story.

## Basic steps to writing your life story

**Why?** First you'll need to determine why you are choosing to compile these events.

**How?** What's the best way to record your life? From what point of view? Autobiography, memoir, life review, creative non-fiction (i.e. graphic novel), or guided autobiography are some formats.

**What?** Choosing themes helps you keep focused on one aspect of your life. Key points in a guided framework of logical sequences zone in on the essence of your stories.

**Are the details clear?** Replace generalizations and be sure you have a beginning, middle and end



to each theme of your life. Establish you have helped your audience reach a conclusion. Example: What lesson did you learn? Have you come full circle from that lesson?

You will also need to choose which details to include, and which facts (or secrets) to tell. How could you represent the people in your stories artfully and fully on the page? How do you portray family members, friends, partners/spouses, exes, and children without damaging your relationship with them? Writing with honesty, vulnerability and integrity can be a tricky balancing act.

## Types of writings

► A memoir is, by definition, the story of an author evaluating their life experiences. It can be a way to understand some aspect of his/her/their life, and the desire to make sense of those experiential events.

► An autobiography focuses on the author themselves, and is a self-written compilation. It is an intimate firsthand account of detailed recollections.

► Spiritual or religious printings are very personal—written with intentional expression of beliefs in order to pull others into their viewpoint, or hoping to improve others' lives by reading about their thoughts.

► A publication about overcoming adversity experienced through kidnapping, murder, horrific accidents, disabilities, cultural inequities, and life-threatening illnesses are common topics when delving into the struggles and triumphs of life. Sharing a very personal story can lift up others while also tapping into deep emotions to heal oneself.

► People who have done something very alarming may find it helpful to write down and share their story. Embracing their culpability

may make one feel they are making amends to those harmed, or perhaps hope that others will learn and avoid the same mistakes through their confessional.

## Resources

Whatever type of work you decide to write, here is a web resource to find specific guidance for the kind of publication you wish to create. There are many useful associations, guilds, clubs or services providing tips and tools to compose your life story:

<https://writersrelief.com/writers-associations-organizations/>

com/writers-associations-organizations/

For writing prompts, editing or publishing, here are additional resources:

<https://writingcooperative.com/16-incredibly-useful-resources-for-aspiring-authors-730012a4d91c>

Happy penning!

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

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# Studies debunk long-held cholesterol misconceptions

By DR. EMILY KANE

For Senior Voice



Most of us seniors have grown into adulthood “knowing” that total cholesterol levels over 200 “cause” premature death from cardiovascular disease. Like most medical facts, the truth is complex, nuanced and dependent on multiple variables. It is intuitively obvious that cardiovascular disease is more complex than the number 200. I hope we can agree on that. I have a family of Finnish patients who are hearty athletes (the type that skin up the mountain for spring skiing long after the lifts are closed) and they all have total cholesterol in the 600s.

The idea that cholesterol levels directly contribute to premature (before age 65) cardiovascular disease started in a small town in Massachusetts in 1948. The Framingham Heart Study is a long-term, ongoing cardiovascular study on residents of that town which began with 5,209 adult subjects and has been conducted in three generations of participants. The study has been used to identify risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

One of the myths that the study debunked is that the higher your cholesterol, the shorter your lifespan. In fact, in the Framingham Study, the people who actually lived the longest had the highest cholesterol.

That is not to say that high cholesterol is never a problem. But it is more complicated than just cholesterol -- it's also cardiac tone (fitness level) and

positive outlook (protective) and access to good nutrition and clean water.

The initial phases of the Framingham study showed a slight correlation between high total cholesterol and premature cardiovascular disease, which was later reversed with higher numbers of participants and more sophisticated data analysis. However, the pharmaceutical industry, which excels in the “silver bullet” approach to health, latched onto this potential target for cardiovascular disease—a huge market, since cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., second only to cancer. The era of statins was ushered in starting in the late 1990s and Lipitor (atorvastatin) has the dubious distinction of being the first drug to be dubbed a “blockbuster,” earning Pfizer worldwide sales of more than \$12 billion a year for many years until the patent expired.

## Cholesterol's many critical functions

Our brains are largely made of cholesterol, an important molecule without which there would be no mammalian life. Cholesterol is produced in the liver and has many critical

**Cholesterol is the ‘mother hormone’ from which all our steroidal hormones directly derive: progesterone, testosterone, estrogen, cortisol. Which is why taking statins absolutely lowers testosterone levels.**

functions. For example, every cell of the three trillion cells in a human body is surrounded by a double layer of cholesterol to protect the internal environment of the cell, including the nucleus with our DNA masterprint for tissue repair and rejuvenation, the mitochondria which pump out energy, and the filtering/cleansing effects of the cytoplasm.

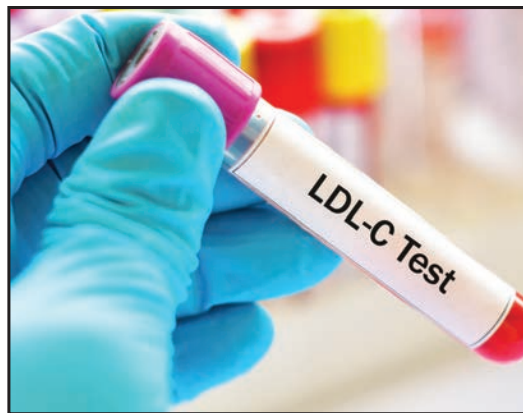
This is why folks taking statins long term have a higher risk for cancer. If cholesterol production in the liver is hampered, there will not be enough to repair cell walls, and they become more permeable to toxins and other agents of disease. Further, cholesterol is the “mother hormone” from

(high density lipoprotein) collects fat from around the body and brings it back to the liver through the bloodstream to be re-processed. The so-called bad cholesterol, LDL (low density lipoprotein) delivers fresh cholesterol out to the body where it is needed for brain and cell wall repair, production of myelin sheath around nerves, hormone production and more.

Think of cholesterol as a liquid Band-Aid. It goes where it needs to go to improve cellular and tissue integrity, and to make our hormones.

## Health risks

The way high cholesterol can contribute to cardio-



© Jarun011 | Dreamstime.com

vascular disease is when it becomes atherosclerotic plaque. The reason nutritionally-oriented health-care professionals are constantly admonishing you to eat your

fruits and vegetables (especially the veggies) is because the rainbow array of healing pigments, as well as vitamins, minerals and fiber, in vegetables are critical in keeping the interior of our arteries nice and smooth.

Every night during deep sleep, tissue repair occurs. This includes the

inner lining of our blood vessels, which can get a bit dinged up by microbes or improperly digested food or heavy metals. Cholesterol lays down a smoothing layer to try to prevent the insides of our arteries from turning into Velcro.

However, if we just don't eat veggies or don't get enough sleep or have high stress, the vessels will get tacky and eventually start to attract not only cholesterol but also calcium and bacteria. It's kind of like the plaque on your teeth, but vascular plaque also contains cholesterol. Which is why it was targeted in the silver bullet fashion over 25 years ago.

Sadly, that concept is not only too simplistic but has caused damage through increased rates of cancer, and more rapid progression to dementia. Remember, your brain is largely made of cholesterol.

There is one type of cholesterol that is emerging as a true risk factor: Lipoprotein A. Folks with high Lp(a) have a three to four times greater risk of heart attack, a three times greater risk for aortic stenosis and a five times greater risk for coronary artery stenosis. This can be measured, and tends to be genetic, and the reason you haven't heard much about it is because there is no drug (yet) to reliably lower Lp(a).

Nevertheless, judicious lifestyle remains the best bet for your goal of healthy longevity.

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

# Medicare coverage for mental health

By SEAN MCPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

Mental health care can diagnose and treat mental illnesses or mental health conditions. A mental illness or mental health condition may affect your thinking, feeling or mood. Examples of mental health conditions include depression, anxiety and schizophrenia. Some

also consider addiction, like opioid use disorder and alcoholism, to be mental health conditions.

Mental health conditions are typically not the result of any single event or circumstance. Rather, they are complicated conditions involving multiple factors. Treatment is intended to improve both the condition and your entire well-being.

## Part B coverage

Medicare Part B covers outpatient mental health care, like individual and group therapy, activity therapies such as art therapy, partial hospitalization programs, and annual depression screenings. Medicare also covers outpatient substance use disorder treatment, such as services you receive from a clinic, hospital outpatient depart-

ment, or opioid treatment program.

When choosing mental health care providers, make sure they accept assignment so that you avoid paying more. Accepting assignment means that a provider accepts Medicare's approved amount as full payment for a service. If you see a non-medical doctor, like a psychologist or clinical social worker, it

is additionally important that they be Medicare-certified. Medicare will only pay for the services of these types of providers if they are Medicare-certified and accept assignment.

If you have Original Medicare, you still owe 20% of the cost for most services after meeting your Part B deductible. For

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## Movie theaters and hearing loss



By **DONNA R. DeMARCO**

*Accurate Hearing Systems*

Going to the movies can be challenging for people with hearing loss. Two challenges are that the sound in the movie theater can be deafeningly loud and the dialogue too soft.

If you are able to change programs on your hearing aids, a program to cut down background noise can be set aggressively to help. Or, you might want to wear a noise-canceling headset to cut the sound out altogether. If you have sensitive ears this might be a good option. Many movie theaters offer headphones just for the movie and you control the volume. This works great for cutting down background noise and the dialogue is much easier

to understand.

Before going to a movie, contact the theater to confirm what shows and times are available with the captioning.

There are two kinds of captioning that I know of available for theaters. One fits into a theater seat cup holder and has a built-in privacy visor to prevent the captions from bothering those seated around you. You can adjust the arm anywhere you like. Most try to center it at the bottom of the screen like closed captions at home. The other is glasses with caption display. Some people have great luck with the glasses and others not so much. Some find them bulky, heavy on their face and sometime the words are blurry. Others love them.

For more information and a free hearing test call 907-644-6004 or go to [accurate-hearingsystems.com](http://accurate-hearingsystems.com) or find us on Facebook.

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



### ADVERTISEMENT

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

# Beware scams around 'new' Medicare cards

*Alaska Medicare Information Office*

In 2018, Medicare updated the Medicare card from containing a person's Social Security number to a random identifier that includes numbers and letters. That was the last time the card was updated and there is no plan to update it again.

### What does the card look like?

The card from Medicare is a paper card that has a blue banner on the top, a white middle, and a red banner on the bottom. However, you can print your own in black and white.

### Examples of Medicare card scams

Someone calls you claiming:

- ▶ You are getting a new, plastic Medicare card.
- ▶ Medicare is switching to a card with a chip in it.
- ▶ It's a new year so you need a new card.
- ▶ You need a black and white card. They need your Medicare number to see if you have received your new one yet.
- ▶ They need you to verify your Medicare number so they can confirm you have the correct Medicare card.

### What can you do to stop new Medicare card scams?

- ▶ Do not answer calls

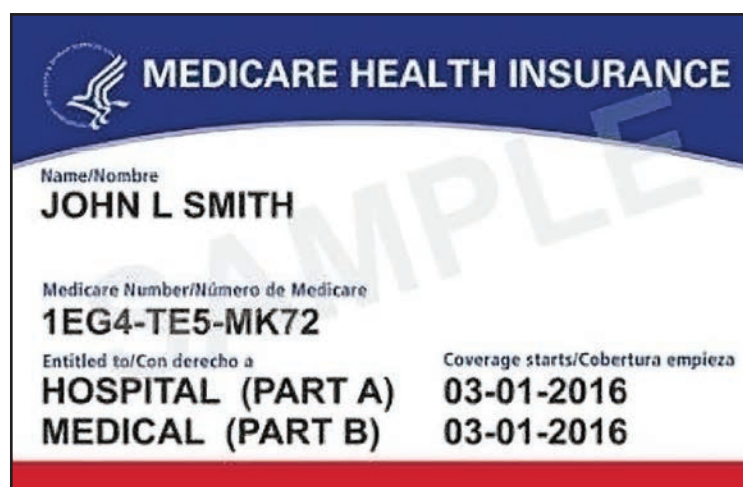
from numbers you do not recognize.

- ▶ Do not confirm your Medicare number or answer "yes" to any question.
- ▶ Guard your Medicare card and number like a credit card. Don't share your number, laminate it, make copies or let anyone else make a copy.

### How can your Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) help?

Your local SMP is ready to provide you with the information you need to protect yourself from Medicare fraud, errors and abuse; detect potential fraud, errors and abuse; and report your concerns. SMPs and their trained teams help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also can provide information and educational presentations.

Contact the State of Alaska Senior Medicare Patrol office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680.



## Medicare

*continued from page 5*

most preventive services, however, including annual depression screenings, you pay nothing and do not need to meet your Part B deductible.

### Part A coverage

Medicare Part A covers inpatient mental health services. These are services you receive in a psychiatric hospital or general hospital, both for inpatient mental illness treatment and inpatient substance use disorder treatment. Your covered days in a psychiatric hospital have a lifetime limit, but your covered days in a general hospital do not. Medicare covers up to 190 days of inpatient care at a psychiatric hospital in your lifetime. If you have used your lifetime days at a psychiatric hospital but

need additional inpatient mental health care, Medicare may cover your care at a general hospital.

General and psychiatric hospitals have the same out-of-pocket costs. After meeting your Part A deductible, Original Medicare pays in full for the first 60 days in your benefit period. A benefit period begins when you enter a hospital as an inpatient and it ends when you have been out of the hospital or a skilled nursing facility for 60 days in a row. After day 60, you owe a daily amount to the hospital.

### Part D coverage

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plans (PDPs) are required to cover many drugs used to treat mental health conditions. If you have trouble accessing your prescriptions at the pharmacy, contact your doctor. Before signing up for a Part D Prescription Drug Plan,

make sure that drugs you need are on that plan's list of covered drugs (known as the plan's formulary).

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

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

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

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# Celebrating Men’s Health Month: Get informed, get tested

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

June is Men’s Health Month, a time to raise awareness about the unique health issues men face and to encourage early detection, treatment and prevention. Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is proud to support this important initiative, and we’re here to help you take control of your health. In this article, we’ll discuss the importance of men’s health and highlight the blood tests we offer that can help detect potential health problems.

Men’s health issues can often go unnoticed or undiagnosed, which is why it’s crucial to prioritize regular checkups and screenings. By taking an active role in your health, you can reduce your risk of developing serious conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers.

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. offers a variety of blood tests that can provide valuable information. Here are

some key screenings that can be particularly informative for men:

**Comprehensive Blood Chemistry Panel.** This test measures various components of your blood, providing insight into your kidney and liver, as well as glucose, electrolyte and lipid levels. Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) Test. This test is recommended for men over 40 or those with a family history of prostate cancer. It measures the level of PSA, a protein produced by the prostate gland, to help detect potential issues like prostate cancer or an enlarged prostate.

**Testosterone Level Test.** Testosterone is a vital hormone for men, responsible for regulating bone density, muscle mass, and mental well-being. Insufficient testosterone levels may result in symptoms such as fatigue, depression and diminished sexual drive. While the testosterone test is typically performed as

a diagnostic test based on specific symptoms, rather than as a routine screening, Alaska Health Fair encourages individuals to consult with their healthcare providers to determine whether this test is necessary and to discuss the results. This personalized approach ensures that each man receives the appropriate care and guidance for his unique health needs.

**Vitamin D Test.** Vitamin D is necessary for healthy bones, and a deficiency can result in bone pain, muscle weakness and increased risk of fractures.

**Hemoglobin A1C Test.** This test measures your average blood sugar levels over the past two to three months, helping to identify potential risks for diabetes or pre-diabetes.

**Blood Pressure Screening.** This is an important test offered by Alaska Health Fair. Nearly half of adults in the U.S. have hypertension or are taking medication for hyperten-

sion. A greater percentage of men (50%) have hypertension than women (44%).

Although our spring health fair season has come to an end, we’ll be back with more health fairs at the end of August. To stay informed about upcoming events and the latest health news, sign up for the AHF newsletter on our website at <https://alaskahealthfair.org>. Hold your phone over the QR code below.

Alaska Health Fair, Inc. is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting wellness and disease prevention throughout Alaska. For over 40 years, we’ve been organizing health fairs and providing affordable, comprehensive

blood tests to empower individuals to take control of their health. With our team of dedicated staff and volunteers, we strive to create healthier communities across the state.

Don’t miss the opportunity to take charge of your health this Men’s Health Month. Remember, prevention is the key to a healthy future.

*The Alaska Health Fair, Inc. team.*



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# Controlling appetite with electrical stimulation

## Also: Blueberry benefits; mental health and wearables

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Forget about dieting. A new electrical “pill” may be able to regulate a person’s appetites without any drugs or invasive medical procedures. It is a promising advance in treating eating disorders and other medical conditions that benefit from adjusting someone’s food intake.

Developed by a research team from NYU Tandon School of Engineering and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the pill has been dubbed



gut to modulate hormones that regulate brain activity on the gut-brain axis.

“By using the nervous system to alter the release of certain gut hormones, FLASH can potentially treat

to modulate hormones, reducing overall hunger and providing a treatment for metabolic disorders like obesity or diabetes. With further development it also has the potential to treat neuropsychiatric disorders, like depression and substance addiction. Further testing is now underway.

### Blueberries pack a powerful hidden health benefit

A cup of wild blueberries a day may keep low energy at bay. Berries have long been hailed as a superfood and are known for a plethora of health benefits. Now, a new study from Cal Poly Humboldt in California is suggesting that blueberries may help burn fat during exercise.

The study, published in the journal *Nutrients*, is the first to examine wild blueberries’ fat-burning effects during exercise in non-elite athletes. The researchers found that wild blueberries may help accelerate fat oxidation, which is the process of breaking down fatty acids or burning fats for energy.

The study included 11 healthy, aerobically-trained males. Each was instructed to follow a diet, which included consuming 25 grams of freeze-dried wild blueberries (equivalent to 1 cup of raw fruit) daily for two weeks. Participants exercised on a bike for 40 minutes a day. Researchers collected urine and blood before and after cycling, and blood samples every 10 minutes during the workout.

Results showed participants burned notably more fat after consuming wild blueberries. Overall, the research found that consuming roughly 1 cup of wild blueberries daily for two weeks increases the ability to use/burn fat during moderate-intensity exercise, like cycling. While it accelerates fat burning, it also decreases the use of carbohydrates. Burning more fat while using less carbs is significant for athletes, according to study lead investigator Taylor Bloedon with Cal Poly Humboldt.

“Increasing the use of fat can help performance, particularly in endurance activities, as we have more fat stores to keep us going longer than we do carb stores,” says Bloedon. “Saving stored carbs also helps when we need to increase our intensity, often toward the end of the race or training session, or when challenged by an opponent.”

While blueberries are hailed for their many nutrients, one compound (anthocyanins), which give fruits and vegetables their blue, red and purple colors, may be responsible for the increased fat oxidation. Wild blueberries are rich in anthocyanins. Other anthocyanin-containing foods include elderberries,

blackberries, raspberries and black and red grapes.

### Wearables capture well-being

New technology is drastically changing how health problems are detected. Applying machine learning models, a type of artificial intelligence (AI), to data collected from wearable devices can identify a person’s degree of resilience and well-being, according to investigators at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York. The findings support wearable devices, such as the Apple Watch, as a way to monitor and assess psychological states remotely without requiring the completion of mental health questionnaires.

“Wearables provide a means to continually collect information about an individual’s physical state. Our results provide insight into the feasibility of assessing psychological characteristics from this passively collected data,” said first author Dr. Robert P. Hirten, who is the clinical director at the Hasso Plattner Institute for Digital Health at Mount Sinai. “To our knowledge, this is the first study to evaluate whether resilience, a key mental health feature, can

next page please

**The findings support wearable devices, such as the Apple Watch, as a way to monitor and assess psychological states remotely without requiring the completion of mental health questionnaires.**

FLASH. It delivers electrical impulses to the stomach lining once it’s swallowed. This targeted stimulation triggers the brain to modulate gut hormones that regulate hunger.

In a study published in *Science Robotics*, the researchers demonstrated that the pill was able to affect the release of the ghrelin, an appetite hormone, by using FLASH.

“The gut and brain communicate through a neural pathway known as the gut-brain axis, which regulates many bodily functions, including eating,” said study investigator Khalil Ramadi, an assistant professor of Bioengineering at NYU Tandon.

FLASH is the first ingestible electronic device shown to engage with the

a host of disorders related to metabolism and eating without pharmaceuticals or surgery. This is a big step forward in how we approach these diseases,” Ramadi said.

FLASH, with the absence of any side effects, overcomes drawbacks of the conventional methods used to boost appetite. It proves that pills don’t have to contain drugs, and can instead be designed to deliver electrical impulses to regulate physiology. The investigators report that unlike drugs, which have broad uptake in the gut, electrical pulses can be designed to target specific cells and locations for targeted therapy.

By adjusting the type and location of stimulation, the technology may be able



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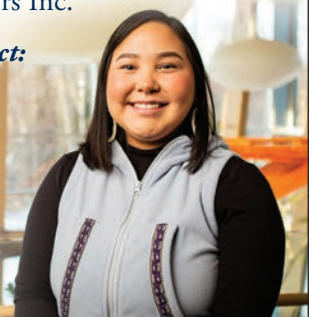
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The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program at APIA has partnered with several non-profits to meet community needs by encouraging and supporting volunteerism for people ages 55 years and older in the Anchorage and Mat-Su region. We are currently looking 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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# Alaska’s high COVID-19 vaccination rate pays off

By JOHN SCHIESZER  
Medical Minutes

COVID-19 transmission continues to occur in many communities across Alaska, although overall case counts continue to slowly decline, according to state officials who are tracking the virus. Most COVID-19 infections in Alaska at this time are caused by viruses belonging to either the XBB.1.5 lineage or to BQ lineages.

**In Alaska, 72% of the population has received at least one dose and 64.4% are fully vaccinated.**

While many infections with the virus that causes COVID-19 are not detected or reported, changes over time in the number of reported cases still provide useful information about the trajectory of COVID-19. In Alaska, 72% of the population has received at least one dose and 64.4% are

fully vaccinated. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) the states with the lowest full vaccination rates are Wyoming (52.8%); Alabama (52.9%); Mississippi (53.5%); Louisiana (54.8%), Tennessee (56.1%); Idaho (56.2%); Arkansas (56.6%); Georgia (56.9%).

In early 2023, a new Omicron subvariant called XBB.1.5, the most transmissible strain of the virus so far, was predominant in the U.S. Cases were also believed to be rising with people spending more time indoors and attending family gatherings. Further, fewer people are wearing masks and taking other mitigation measures. As the virus evolves, new variants with the ability to evade a person’s existing

immunity can appear and lead to an increased risk for reinfection. Reinfections may occur during the first 90 days, and as early as several weeks after the previous infection, although this does not happen frequently.

**Recommendations change over time**  
Protection against getting infected wanes over

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## Wearables

from page 8

be evaluated from devices such as the Apple Watch.” Mental health disorders are common, accounting for 13% of the burden of global disease, with a quarter of the population at some point experiencing psychological illness. Yet, there are very limited resources for their evaluation.

“There are wide disparities in access across geography and socioeconomic status, and the need for in-person assessment or the completion of validated mental health surveys is further limiting,” said senior author Zahi Fayad, PhD, who is the director of the BioMedical Engineering and Imaging Institute at Icahn Mount Sinai. “A better understanding of who is at psychological risk and an improved means of

tracking the impact of psychological interventions is needed. The growth of digital technology presents an opportunity to improve access to mental health services for all people.” To determine if machine learning models could be trained to distinguish an individual’s degree of resilience and psychological well-being, the researchers examined the data from wearable devices. They looked at

329 healthcare workers enrolled at seven hospitals in New York City. The participants wore an Apple Watch Series 4 or 5 for the duration of their participation. The watches provided accurate measures of heart rate variability and resting heart rate throughout the day. Surveys were collected measuring resilience, optimism and emotional support at the beginning of the study. The metrics collected

were found to be predictive in identifying resilience or well-being states. Now, further assessments of psychological characteristics from passively collected wearable data are being investigated. 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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# Risk of malnutrition increases as you age

NHCOA Media

The term “malnutrition” is used when a person has an inadequate diet. This diet does not allow them to obtain the necessary nutrients for their body and organs to function properly. In older adults, malnutrition manifests itself in increased fatigue due to a lack of vitamins and minerals. The body seeks to maintain the rhythm of a healthy organism and uses energy reserves to function properly.

## Changing needs

Due to the changes in this stage of life, older adults have different nutritional requirements. The functioning of many body systems begin to change and, therefore, nutritional needs change with them. It is important to pay attention to these adjustments and, at the same time, take into account the limitations of underlying diseases or conditions that may affect the nutritional status of an older adult.

The National Consumer Service of the Government of Chile indicates that there are elements related to aging that are directly associated with malnutrition. Among them is a lack of control in emotional states, which often leads them not to eat, as a way of protesting or calling for



*Loneliness and emotional distress can affect eating and lead to nutritional deficiencies.*

*Diverse Elders Coalition photo*

attention. It also points out excessive intake, as a result of anxious states or loneliness, which can also lead to poor nutrition.

In terms of physical effects, there is a decrease in the sense of taste and smell. The taste buds that are most affected are those on the front of the tongue, which differentiate between sweet and salty flavors. This can lead to a reduced desire to eat. It is important to provide older adults with healthy options to overcome these limitations.

Moreover, older adults have lower gastric acids, delayed intestinal emptying, and decreased intestinal motility. They may also suffer interference caused by the intake of several medications at

the same time.

In addition, the mouth, the place where nutrition begins, undergoes multiple changes. Progressive loss of teeth can happen and with it the discomfort of using dental prostheses. These barriers cause other discomforts when eating food, such as being embarrassed to eat in front of other people and adopting a softer diet and different flavorings to supplement nutritional needs.

## Signs of malnutrition

To know if we can deal

with malnutrition in older adults, we must pay attention to the following symptoms. Remember, it is necessary to always have medical attention that can monitor and verify the person's health regularly.

- Unintended weight loss in large percentages during the last few months.
- Decrease in muscle mass that can be seen in the arms or calves.
- Loss of appetite.
- Loss of strength in the muscles. It can be detected when trying to pick up an object or lift something heavy.
- Constant coughing and choking when eating or drinking.
- Increased tiredness when getting up, walking or doing any other type of physical activity.
- Fatigue.
- Dizziness.
- Irritability.
- Depression.
- Diarrhea or constipation.
- Dry skin and hair.

## Healthy choices

As previously mentioned, the older adult's body begins to demand the intake of certain nutrients

that allow it to meet all the nutritional needs that are essential to maintain a healthy life. This is why a change of eating habits and a diet suitable for nutritional needs will be the best tool to protect older adults from malnutrition. Fruits, vegetables, lean meats and whole grains should be included in the diet and the intake of solid fats, salt and sugars should be reduced.

Having a balanced diet with foods that are easy to chew and digest is essential for older adults. This will allow them to maintain good health and even gradually improve it for the rest of their lives. Physical exercise will also keep their bones and muscles strong and even improve their appetite. All these recommendations will prevent malnutrition in older adults and encourage healthy food choices.

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

## Senior Farmer's Market checks available now

Senior Voice Staff

This year's Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition program check booklets arrive June 1, distributed through local senior centers and other agencies. Each booklet includes \$35 worth of checks that can be used to buy fresh Alaska-grown fruits, vegetables, fresh-cut herbs and honey at participating farmers' markets, authorized farms, and roadside stands within

Alaska. Applicants must be at least 60 years old and meet low-income eligibility guidelines. Links to program information and a downloadable application are at <https://bit.ly/3B-fGvLV>. Or call your local senior center or meal program for details. There's also a proxy application form that allows someone to apply on behalf of someone else.

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# Father's Day: A meaningful, historic tradition

By MAUREEN HAGGBLOM  
Anchorage ADRC

ADRC ANSWER  
OF THE MONTH

How did Father's Day begin? According to Wikipedia, there has been a customary day to celebrate fatherhood since at least 1508 in Europe. The national day honoring dads in the United States is recognized as being started by Sonora Smart Dodd, who was raised by a widower. Sonora Smart Dodd became a well-known poet, scribe and sculptor. She studied at the Chicago Art Institute and later taught at the school. She first became concerned about acknowledging fathers after listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. She noted that there wasn't a day to honor her civil war veteran father who raised her and five younger brothers alone. She became an influential promoter of Father's Day and through her advocacy, the first Father's Day was celebrated in 1910 in Spokane.

Over time, the idea

gained momentum in other parts of the country with President Lyndon Johnson signing a presidential proclamation in 1966 declaring the third Sunday of June as Father's Day. The date chosen was close to the birthday of Sonora Smart Dodd's father.

Honoring and celebrating those who have been a father-figure to us is a great way to spend the day and honor those who are no longer in our lives.

Here are a few ideas that senior fathers may enjoy:

- ▶ Visit a local museum together or drive to a favorite outdoor spot to enjoy the scenery.
- ▶ Take a stroll on one of Alaska's many trails or through the neighborhood and enjoy nature together.
- ▶ Enjoy a fancy meal at home, perhaps catered from a favorite restaurant, invite family and friends. Maybe pair this with a

favorite movie to watch or sports event.

- ▶ Share a barber shop appointment or have a mobile barber come to the house (yes, I did see a mobile barber shop van in Anchorage).
- ▶ Does your loved one have a special memory or photo that can be framed in a fancy frame for them to keep close by?
- ▶ Check out what the local senior center activities are

for the month and attend an activity together.

- ▶ Ask your loved one if there is a place they have been wanting to visit and make the arrangements to attend together.

Wishing everyone a beautiful summer and a meaningful Father's Day.

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

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

## Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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 state-

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

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (June 8 and 22), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information,

907-299-7198.

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



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# Safety in and on the water for older Alaskans

## Being Safer

By **CHRISTIAN M. HARTLEY**

For Senior Voice

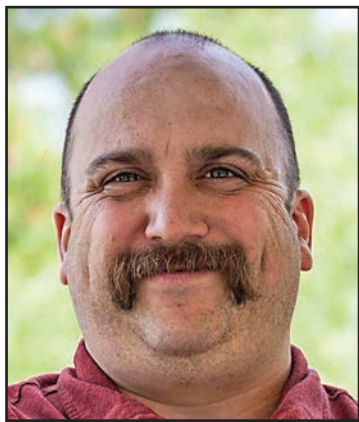
Water safety is essential for all ages but particularly important for seniors. As people age, they often experience changes in their physical abilities and health that can make them more vulnerable to accidents and injuries in and around water, but self-awareness doesn't always keep up with those limitations. Understanding water safety is critical to prevent accidents and enjoy the many benefits of water activities.

The most important aspects of water safety for seniors are the risks associated with activities. Swimming is a great form of exercise, but you need to know your limits and avoid overexertion. Also, be cautious when swimming in natural bodies of water, such as lakes or oceans, because currents and tides can be unpredictable and dangerous. It is also crucial to have a plan in place for emergency situations, such as knowing how to call for help and being aware of nearby lifeguard stations or emergency services.

Going fishing? Know where those lures are headed and be careful of your balance – don't lean too far over the boat or the shore to get a look at your catch or you may become the next catch. It is always best to fish in a group of people for many reasons.

### Medications matter

One of the most overlooked points of water safety is understanding the risks associated with medications and medical conditions. Many medications can affect a person's balance, coordination and judgment, which can increase the risk of accidents in and around water. Speak with your doctor or pharmacist about any medications you are taking and how they may impact your ability to participate in water activities, or how any ailments you may have might increase the risks.



### Dress for safety

One of the most important precautions is wearing appropriate safety equipment, such as life jackets, when participating in water activities. Life jackets can help seniors stay afloat in the water, even if they become tired or disoriented. Also, wear proper footwear to avoid slipping and falling on wet surfaces. Wear clothes in layers so you can take some off or put some on as the weather dictates. Knowing the weather forecast can make a huge difference.



© Giovanni Seabra | Dreamstime.com

### Hydration on the water

Another important precaution is staying hydrated. Seniors are more susceptible to dehydration than younger people, and dehydration can lead to dizziness, confusion and other symptoms that can increase the risk of accidents in and around water. It is crucial to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated and prevent these symptoms.

Be aware of the signs of heat exhaustion and heat stroke, as these conditions can be particularly dangerous when participating in water activities. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include nausea, dizziness and weakness, while symptoms of heat stroke include a high body temperature, confusion and loss of consciousness. It is important to take breaks and rest in

shaded areas to prevent these conditions from occurring.

### Safety with others

Finally, seniors should be cautious when participating in water activities with others. It is essential to communicate clearly and set boundaries to ensure that everyone is on the same page about the risks and expectations of the activity. Be cautious about participating in activities that require lifting or supporting other people, as this can be particularly challenging

and increase the risk of accidents. When you are responsible for watching the grandchildren or other small humans, maintain awareness of their location at all times and remind them of what you expect from them about staying close and staying safe. Have your phone with you to call for help if you or anyone else in your party gets lost or injured.

Understanding the risks associated with various water activities, medications and medical conditions is critical, as is taking

precautions to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries. By staying hydrated, wearing appropriate clothing, and communicating clearly with others, seniors can enjoy water activities safely and confidently.

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

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# Tree swallows return with the summer to Alaska

By **RACHEL GINGRAS**  
*For Senior Voice*

With the arrival of summer, you will begin to catch glimpses of a small but speedy bird in flight, looping through the sky, searching for insects to eat. Its underside is white, and it sports a dark iridescent back that flashes varying hues of blue as the sunlight passes through its feathers. The tree swallows are back!

The tree swallow is one of several swallow species that come to Alaska to breed. This small songbird, weighing around 20 grams,

arrives from regions as far south as Cuba, Costa Rica, Panama and the Yucatan Peninsula. Some tree swallows cross the Gulf of Mexico in one to three days of non-stop flight.

Here in Alaska, tree swallows are found throughout the southeast up through the Brooks Range and from the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta to Canada. Their preferred habitat is open country near marshes, bogs and meadows, with plenty of flying insects to eat.

The Alaska Swallow Monitoring Network, a program of the Alaska



Jeff Wagner photo

Songbird Institute, is a collaboration formed in 2016 between researchers and Alaskan communities to monitor how climate change may be impacting the phenology and breeding habits of tree swallows. With monitoring sites that ranged across the state, including as far north as Anaktuvuk Pass, this research network allowed scientists, schools and communities to work together to study tree swallows at the northernmost extent of their range.

Tree swallows are aerial insectivores (birds that forage on insects while in flight). They, and other ae-

rial insectivores, are facing steep declines. Since 1970, the North American avifauna has experienced an estimated net loss of 3 billion birds, approximately 29% of total avian abundance. Within that same period, the abundance of aerial insectivores declined by 32%, a decline equal to or greater than declines in all other groups of North American birds. By monitoring their breeding success and arrival and departure timing from their breeding grounds, scientists hope to gain insight into how tree swallows adapt to our changing climate.

If you live near a wetland or bog, you can help tree swallows by putting up nest boxes in your yard. Check the Cornell Lab of Ornithology NestWatch website for the proper dimensions for nest boxes for tree swallows.

You can also participate in Cornell's Nestwatch program. Participants track data such as when nesting occurs, the number of eggs laid, how many eggs hatch, and how many hatchlings survive.

Rachel Gingras is the Bird Treatment and Learning Center Administrative Assistant.



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## Living with antiques

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**  
*Senior Voice Correspondent*

“Dad, we would like to replace your stove. Is that okay with you?” I asked back in the spring of 2004. He said he supposed so.

I was planning a two-month visit with him in Homer and the thought of trying to cook a regular meal on his kitchen stove was discouraging. The General Electric electric range matched the refrigerator. Both were probably top-of-the-line when purchased back in the 1950s when the house was new. Dad had replaced the element in the oven a few years back, but the metal hardware was getting too fragile to put in replacement burners on the cook top. Dad had removed the parts of the burners that were no longer working, so there were big gaps between the coils. One burner didn't work at all.



Al Clayton with the first loaf of homemade bread he baked in his new kitchen range, March 2004.  
Photo courtesy Maraley McMichael

So, when my husband Gary and I drove from our home in Slana to Dad's place in Homer, we stopped in Anchorage and purchased a brand new 30-inch electric range and loaded it in the pickup. The next day Gary expertly exchanged the old for the new. A few hours later I could cook whatever I

wanted, but the kitchen had lost some character.

Dad didn't want his house to lose too much character. As it was, it was like living in a museum. Just inside the front entry were the 75-year-old leather chaps he bought with his own money. He needed





# New Stuyahok Elder Mentor Anna Neketa

Rural CAP Elder Mentor Program

The Elder Mentor Program is pleased to continue our monthly feature in Senior Voice, each article highlighting an Elder Mentor who has generously offered their time, support, wisdom and care to their local communities throughout Alaska. For the next three months, our New Stuyahok Elder Mentors will be sharing their stories and recipes. Elder Mentors volunteer in school with students, serving as role models, tutors and, often, also Culture Bearers. Culture Bearers pass down their knowledge to the next generation, and the youth listen and honor them in return. New Stuyahok Elder Mentors serve as Culture Bearers at their local school, Chief Ivan Blunka School.

New Stuyahok is a primarily Yupik community located on the Nushagak River in Southwest Alaska. There is a post office, school, store and health clinic in the village. The village is accessible by air from Anchorage and Dillingham. Chief Ivan Blunka School was built in 2008. There are about 150 students in the school. The primary economic base in New Stuyahok is the salmon fishery; 43 residents hold commercial fishing permits. Many trap as well. The entire community relies on subsistence foods. Subsistence items are often traded between communities. Salmon, moose, caribou, rabbit, ptarmigan, duck and geese are the primary sources of meat. (This information is sourced from the Southwest Region School District website at [www.swrsd.org](http://www.swrsd.org). Visit online to learn more.)

## Anna Neketa

My name is Anna G. Neketa, and I was born in Nunacuak, Alaska, which is a few bends away from my current village of New Stuyahok, where I live now. I am the daughter of the late Cavelila Gust and Anuska Gust, granddaughter to Vera Nicholai, whom they call Mar'aq. My grandmother and her siblings populated Koliganek, New Stuyahok, and Ekwok. My



Anna "Aanu" Neketa is New Stuyahok's most senior elder. "Aanu" is a term of endearment meaning "Mom".

grandmother walked from the Bethel area to Igayak, which is the Mighty Nushagak River, with her siblings. They'd go to Lewis Point every spring and summer to put up fish and come back up the channel of Nushagak River.

New Stuyahok is populated with approximately 600 people, and at present I am the eldest in our village. All my peers have gone, but maybe three of us in my age group stand now. I married my husband Peter on Aug. 12, 1994. We continued to live in New Stuyahok.

I've been in the Elder Mentor Program since I was invited. I love this program very much. Money is not the issue when it comes to our children, but it helps me. I enjoy the kids. The children keep me alive, and have the eagerness and willingness to be attentive. I learn from the kids as they do from us. Kids are so smart, puqik, and are fast learners. My message to the kids is to stay away from drugs and alcohol, listen to your parents, and continue to strive to be your very best. Learn one thing a day if you're not teaching, and share your wisdom, for God gave you a mind to use and two working hands. I will go until I am not mobile because we are strong and indigenous.

## Become a Mentor

Aanu's daughter, Sophie Neketa Johnson, says, "My mom has been working in



Anna admires a fresh batch of her fish akutaq. She shares the recipe on the Senior Voice website.



Anna carries on the subsistence lifestyle she grew up with.

Photos courtesy Sophie Neketa Johnson

this program for a while. She really loves what she does in the Yupik room. She does not know a word of English and cannot hear. There are other Elders in the room with a few school staff members, and they love her. She's the eldest in the village. She says kids keep her alive and thriving. She loves the age groups that she works with. She

loves the school staff."

The Elder Mentor Program is currently accepting applications for the coming school year. Benefits for qualifying seniors 55+ include paid time off, a tax free stipend, paid holidays, free meals and travel assistance. Please call for more information and to apply, 907-865-7276, and check out the online application

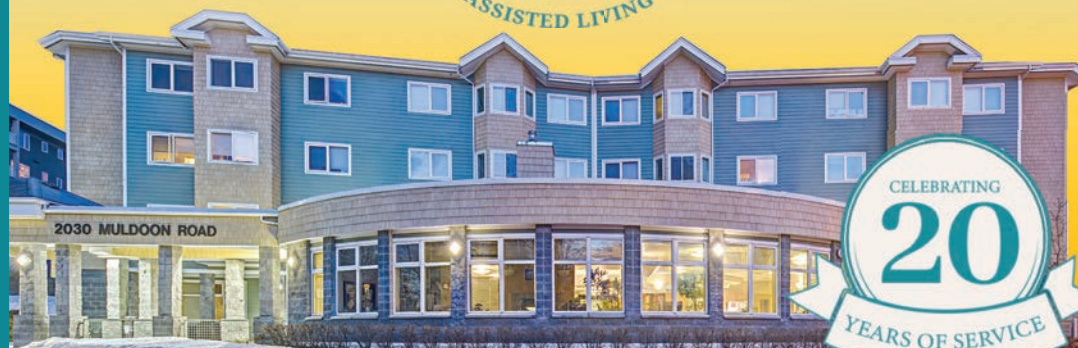
and learn more at <https://eldermentor.org>. Reach the team via e-mail at [eldermentors@ruralcap.org](mailto:eldermentors@ruralcap.org). Search "Elder Mentor" on Facebook.

Read this same article online via the Senior Voice website to get Aanu's Famous Fish Akutaq recipe. It is a very popular dish, even among folks who don't often enjoy fish.

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# How Rick Mystrom found his groove

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS  
For Senior Voice

Nothing seems to stop Rick Mystrom. From the quest to hold the Olympics in Anchorage, to building an ad agency, to running for mayor of Anchorage, to facing the scourge of Type 1 diabetes, Mystrom has not backed down.

Born in Minnesota in 1943, he moved to Alaska in 1972 and three years later established Mystrom/Beck Advertising, now the Nerland Agency.

He’s contributed a lot to the life of Alaska.

“I started Big Brothers Big Sisters after doing it in Los Angeles,” he said. “I called the headquarters in Philadelphia and told them we don’t have one. It was the only place there wasn’t one, they told me.”

He campaigned and won a seat on the Anchorage Assembly and served from 1979 to 1985, then ran to become the fourth Mayor



Former Anchorage mayor Rick Mystrom was diagnosed early in life with Type 1 diabetes and has written several books on the topic, including most recently, “Glucose Control Eating: Lose Weight, Stay Slimmer, Live Healthier, Live Longer.”

Photos courtesy Rick Mystrom

of Anchorage and was in office from 1994 to 2000.

Perhaps more significant than any of those accomplishments has been his campaign to bring awareness to Type 1 diabetes.

Type I diabetes surfaces in childhood, adolescence or in adulthood. It is chronic, has no cure, but can be

managed through lifestyle changes.

Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in 1964, Mystrom has written several books on living a full life with the disease: “My Wonderful Life With Diabetes,” and “What Should

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## Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Wasilla Area Seniors, Inc. (WASI) hold their Miles for Meals fundraiser race/walk June 24 at Wasilla Senior Center, 1301 S. Century Circle. The annual event raises funds for WASI’s **home-delivered meals program**. The in-person sign-in is at 9 a.m., and the running, walking and rolling (whatever works best for you) starts at 10. Participation can also be done virtually, with individuals tracking their own miles, from June 1 through June 24. For more information and online registration, visit [www.wasillaseniors.com](http://www.wasillaseniors.com) or call 907-206-8800 ... Congratulations to Fairbanks area seniors who earned achievement awards at this year’s Senior Recognition Day event on May 11. Here is the list, provided by the Fairbanks-North Star Borough: Dave Watson, Lifetime Fitness (male); Mary Matthews, Lifeimte Fitness (female); Honored Caregivers Dawn Nelson and Christine Goff; and Outstanding Volunteers Dave Minto, Meredith Nava, Bev Byington, Martha Markey, Rev. Dr. Anna Frank, Lois Kincaid, Linda Denton, Linda Thorn, Diane Jewkes, Dee Dalen, and all Meals and Wheels drivers. Thank all of you for all you do ... Also in Fairbanks, in June the Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation senior program is moving to Joy Community Center, formerly Joy Elementary, 24 Margaret Ave. The June Senior Social will be at this new location, Friday, June 16, 10 a.m. to noon. Join in for games, snacks and

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# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

chatting. Call 907-459-1136 for more information ... The adult-sized **tricycles** are available again at **Wasilla Senior Center**. Members can check them out for use, no charge. There's a single person trike and one that fits two, side-by-side. Call the center for details, 907-206-8800 ... Wednesdays are **game days** at **Kodiak Senior Center**. Bring a friend or two with your favorite board game (they have a few games there, too) and enjoy companionship in the beautiful lounge area, 1 p.m. ... Grab your walking poles and meet at the **Seward Senior Center** on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 2 p.m., for **group walks**. There are two routes to choose from, and the center will provide the poles if you don't have your own. Don't want to walk outside? The center offers Staying Active and Independent For Life **group classes**, or Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention classes. Call for more information. 907-224-5604 ... The **Senior Veterans Group** (age 50 and older) meets at noon on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at the **Anchorage Senior Activity Center**. Meetings are an opportunity to catch up on current issues, upcoming events, watch a documentary, and socialize with other senior veterans. Sometimes there is a guest speaker, and the format is always informal. Anyone interested in being a guest speaker or volunteering should contact the center at 907-770-2008 or 770-2000.

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

# Antiques

continued from page 13

them for protection while working his trap line as a teen in Montana, riding his horse, Buck. Next to them hung a 1940s-era military survival suit. A wicker fishing creel was displayed on the wall across from a 29-inch mounted pike from Scotty Creek.

In the kitchen, the refrigerator looked like it was from the same era as the eggbeater hanging on the wall. And yet, a new Vita-Mix food-processing machine had prominent space on the counter, where at the end, an old-style circular towel hung for hand drying. An ancient two-foot-tall metal cream canister sat near a cupboard door. Dad remembered when it was sent by train from his folk's ranch to a creamery in Dillon. The \$7 to \$8 received from the cream and credit for eggs at the local store in town helped his family during the depression.

The highlight of the living room was the (fossilized) bison skull from the Birch Creek area that Dad called "Ole Bonehead". During his individualized "museum tours" for guests

that came to his house, he would play a song on the Edison hand-crank, cylinder phonograph player (with metal horn), similar to the one his family had when he was a teen. Then

pie left over and the cook told him to take it home, pan and all. Later that night the ship ran aground, split in two, and sank. Eleven passengers perished. Mementos from his 1979



Al Clayton's 90th birthday celebration, May 2004.  
Photo courtesy Maralee McMichael

he would explain each of the 8x10 inch black and white photos displayed on a 20-foot shelf he'd made that wrapped around the top perimeter of the living room walls. They were taken mostly during the 1940s – many developed in his own dark room back then. His parents' binoculars (likely 100 years old at the time) sat on a display shelf. Bamboo fishing poles framed the picture window and a very old rifle hung over the fireplace.

When he did any sewing or mending, he used the Montgomery Ward treadle sewing machine that belonged to his mother in the beginning of the 20th century. Several nights during our visit, he and I watched movies he'd made with his 16mm Eastman camera he bought in his early years in Alaska. Of course, they were shown using his 1940-era movie projector. The apparatus for splicing the 16mm film sat nearby. We could also have a slide show or look at slides individually with one of the two old hand-held metal slide viewers.

100-year-old carpentry tools of his father's sat next to the fireplace. Fox, lynx and martin furs, as well as bear and moose hides looked right at home near the bear and beaver skulls. A pie tin that was accidentally saved from the sinking of the SS Yukon back in 1946 had a special place of honor. Dad had been invited to have dinner aboard the SS Yukon with friends of his from Seward that night. There was a piece of

retirement from Copper Valley Electric included an inscribed gold plated gold pan. Other memorabilia from Pioneers of Alaska and numerous Alaskan objects and art adorned the walls and shelves. On one shelf sat a canteen, next to an Army cook skillet, and an unopened U.S. Navy aircraft emergency ration – all vintage World War II.

Dad felt right at home surrounded by his belongings, which were coincidentally antiques. I made these observations about a month after the new kitchen stove had been installed and about a month before he turned 90. He wouldn't have wanted to hear me say it aloud, but I thought Dad was an antique himself. Only he was certainly not ready to slow down and "sit on a shelf". As I wrote those thoughts, he was outside modifying a snow machine trailer so it would be ready to load his four-wheeler for a trip to McCarthy later that summer.

It has been 19 years since that wonderful spring visit with Dad in Homer and almost 15 years since his passing. With his recent May birthday and now Father's Day, I find myself thinking about Dad and how much he enjoyed living life. I am not surrounded by antiques in my current home, but having his bear skull on display in my living room is a special reminder of him.

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

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# Get ready for the 2023 Alaska Senior Games in Fairbanks, Aug. 5-13

Senior Voice Staff

Registration is open for this year’s Alaska International Senior Games, taking place Aug. 5-13 in Fairbanks. The online registration portal is at [www.alaskaisg.org](http://www.alaskaisg.org). The annual event brings together athletes and recreation enthusiasts age 50 and older from all around the state and beyond. This year’s events include archery, basketball, bocce, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, ice hockey (co-ed), indoor shooting, mini golf, pickleball, power walk, road race, swimming, table tennis, team toss, tennis, track and field and triathlon. Competition is organized into 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. 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

## Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about fellow businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the event begins at 8

a.m., second Wednesday, at a different host location each month. Breakfast provided. The next date is June 14, hosted by Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center. 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.

# MOVING?

# Let us know!

Send your change of address information to Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage, AK 99503  
Or call 276-1059 (Anchorage area) or 1-800-478-1059 (toll-free statewide)

# Calendar of Events

**June 6 Kenai** Tech Time at the Kenai Community Library, Tuesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bring your basic technology questions. Appointments preferred. Sign up at main desk or call 907-283-4378 to reserve your spot.

**June 8 Fairbanks** Grandparents and Grandkids Crafts at Joy Community Center, 24 Margaret Ave., 4 to 5:30 p.m. Call North Star Borough Parks and Recreation senior program, 907-459-1136.

**June 9 Kodiak** Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. annual meeting at the senior center at noon. There will be brief reports and other business, prize drawings and a meal. Call for information, 907-486-6181

**June 9-10 Soldotna** Kenai River Festival at Soldotna Creek Park. Food booths, live music, Alaska Artisans Market, Run for the Rover (for all ages and abilities), kids’ fun zone and more. [www.kenaiwatershed.org](http://www.kenaiwatershed.org)

**June 9-11 Palmer** Palmer Colony Days. Family-friendly community festival with contests like comical bed races, rhubarb recipe contest, cornhole tournament, parade, local food and craft vendors, much more. Full schedule online at [www.palmerchamber.org/colonydays](http://www.palmerchamber.org/colonydays)

**June 14 Nationwide** Flag Day

**June 15 Worldwide** World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Annual United Nations observance to promote better understanding of elder neglect and abuse. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2rMLJ3i>

**June 15 Anchorage** “Rally for Access” protest demonstration, downtown on corner of 7th and F Street, 5:30 p.m. Organized by Alzheimer’s Association. Join to urge Medicare and Medicaid to cover the cost of FDA-approved Alzheimer’s treatments. For more information and to sign-up for participation, visit <https://p2a.co/ys6ryih>, call 907-313-2944 or email Elizabeth Bolling at [ebolling@alz.org](mailto:ebolling@alz.org).

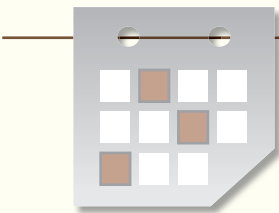
**June 18 Nationwide** Father’s Day

**June 18-25 Utqiagvik** Nalukataq Whaling Festival. Traditional Inupiaq cultural celebration with singing, dancing, blanket toss, more. [www.utqiagvik.us/](http://www.utqiagvik.us/)

**June 20 Juneau** Juneau Commission on Aging meets via Zoom, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Public participation welcome. For code and information, call the Juneau Economic Development Council, 907-523-2300.

**June 21 Nationwide** Summer Solstice

**June 24 Soldotna** Senior Prom at Soldotna Senior Center, 6 to 9 p.m. Annual event with music from the 50s and 60s, see friend from all over the Kenai Peninsula. Concessions and beverage available. \$20 cover at the door. 907-262-2322



### Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503  
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# Surprising history of once-booming town

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL  
Senior Voice Correspondent

Thousands of gold seekers flooded into the North country during the late 1800s and settled around new towns such as Nome, Juneau and Dawson. Several also streamed into Cook Inlet. They hacked out primitive trails connecting scattered camps and eventually unified the region between Cook Inlet on the south and the Talkeetna Mountains on the north, and the Matanuska River on the east and the Susitna River in the west.

Although few of the prospectors who entered Cook Inlet became rich, by the early 1880s a small Tanaina Athabascan settlement called Knik had enough commercial activity that George W. Palmer opened a store there in 1880 and the Alaska Commercial Company, which had taken over the assets of the Russian American Company, opened a trading post in 1882.

Knik served as a supply center for the Willow Creek Mining District, organized in 1898, and the small settlement’s population grew to several hundred as hard rock followed placer mining. But the \$30,000 miners gleaned from their diggings between 1897 and 1914 wasn’t enough to nourish their hopes and dreams (a little more than \$1 million in today’s dollars).

However the discovery of gold in the Interior in 1902 by a miner named Felix Pedro helped keep their hopes afloat. That discovery near what would become Fairbanks led to more intense mining everywhere.

Discoveries of gold north of Knik in the Talkeetna Mountains, as well as placer gold northwest on the Iditarod River, made the community across the Turnagain Arm from modern Birchwood the major trading center for the gold and coal mines in the region. Shopkeepers expanded into supplying the various sawmills in the Matanuska Valley, the Susitna River Basin and Willow Creek Mining District. At its peak, Knik boasted a population close to 500.

By 1914 the town had its own weekly newspaper, the Knik News, and two trading posts, three roadhouses and hotels, a restaurant, a general hardware store, a saloon, a transfer and fuel company, a school and a construction business. And residents and passersby alike could find candies, tobacco, magazines, stationery and postcards at The Place of Sweets. Two dentists and two doctors looked after the physical needs of the population, and itinerant priests of the Russian Orthodox Church looked after their spiritual needs.

Knik prospered for several years, but the Alaska Railroad Act of 1914, which led to the birth of Anchor-

age, resulted in the demise of the once-thriving community. While Anchorage blossomed, Knik wilted when the railroad bypassed the town. The post office, which opened in 1904, closed for good in 1917. Residents abandoned their homes or moved them to new locations, and businesses moved either to Wasilla or Anchorage.

A vestage of days gone by is located about 14 miles down Knik-Goose Bay Road, where the Knik Museum & Townsite, operated by the Wasilla-Knik Historical Society, welcomes visitors to explore relics from the town’s heyday. The museum is also home to the Mushers Hall of Fame.

*This column features tidbits found in Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at [www.auntphilstrunk.com](http://www.auntphilstrunk.com).*



Knik was a thriving supply center for miners in the area long before Anchorage began growing along Cook Inlet.

Alaska State Library

## Feathered Friends

### Across

- 1 Book after Joel
- 5 It’s sold in bars
- 9 Swell up
- 14 Cavort
- 15 Santa \_\_\_, California
- 16 Colossal
- 17 Goony bird
- 19 Planetary shadow
- 20 Vermont city
- 21 Headache intensifier
- 23 Bando of baseball
- 24 Aired again
- 26 Netherlands Antilles island
- 28 Black-and-white predator
- 30 Ledge sitter
- 34 Make a seam
- 36 Riding the waves
- 39 Primed
- 40 Wanted-poster letters
- 41 Great bowerbird
- 43 Go for the gold
- 44 Anatomical sac
- 46 Having the means
- 47 Dollfaced guy who dated Skipper’s sister for 43 years
- 48 Small Old World finch
- 50 Bar order, with “the”
- 52 Hat-tipper’s word
- 54 Fine thread
- 57 Racehorse lineage figure
- 60 Pursue
- 63 Metric volume
- 65 Creighton University site
- 67 Large voracious dark-colored long-necked seabird
- 69 “The \_\_\_ of Wakefield”
- 70 Burn soother

### Down

- 1 Burnoose wearer
- 2 One may be crowned
- 3 3-person card game
- 4 Small brownish European songbird
- 5 “Catch-22” pilot
- 6 Grebe relative
- 7 Old gas station sign
- 8 Spring locale
- 9 Colorful North American thrush
- 10 Cut and run
- 11 Planets and such
- 12 Indian tourist site
- 13 Dabbling river duck
- 18 Drop from Niobe
- 22 Plant production
- 25 Final Four org.
- 27 Biographical bit
- 29 Movie pooch
- 31 Gutter site
- 32 Scandinavian war god
- 33 Nevada’s largest county
- 34 Gull-like jaeger of northern seas
- 35 Bring home the bacon
- 37 Flow’s partner
- 38 Feels punk
- 40 “Poison Arrow” band
- 41 Long-legged carrion-eating hawk
- 42 Not fake
- 45 Uncle of note
- 47 Small North American falcon
- 49 Cry of disgust
- 51 Soybean paste
- 53 Cousin of a cockatoo
- 55 He took many trips
- 56 Pulitzer winner Pyle
- 57 Squab
- 58 Surrounded by
- 59 Nutmeg-based spice
- 61 It’s under a foot
- 62 Cupid’s counterpart
- 64 J.F.K. postings
- 66 Lunch meat
- 68 Assembled

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Crossword answers on page 26





# Calling all Knuckleheads: Touring with the Three Stooges

By NICK THOMAS

*Tinseltown Talks*

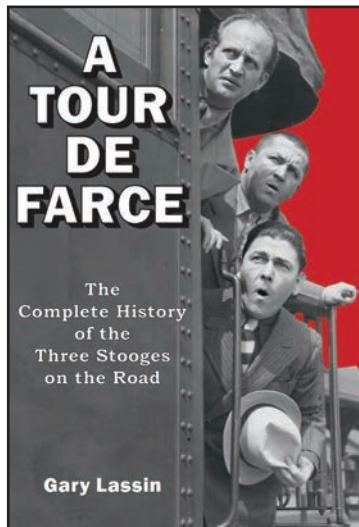
Despite extensive on-screen credits throughout their long careers, the Three Stooges comedy team only spent about a month or two a year in front of the cameras, rarely producing more than 10 of their beloved comedy shorts a year. According to long-time Stooges fan Gary Lassin, the slapstick legends were on the road for up to six months a year, crisscrossing the country to perform largely vaudeville-like acts on stage.

Those journeys, from the 1920s to the 1960s, are now recounted in exquisite detail in more than 750 pages of Lassin's new book, "A Tour De Farce: The Complete History of the Three Stooges on the Road."

As president of the Three Stooges fan club and owner/curator of a Three Stooges museum (The Stoozeum, see [www.stoozeum.com](http://www.stoozeum.com)) in Ambler, Penn., Lassin began assembling touring data over two decades ago.

"I just opened a blank Excel spreadsheet and began going through my Stooges memorabilia – playbills, programs, ticket stubs, photographs – to compile their travel history," said Lassin from his suburban Philadelphia home.

He also began searching newspaper archives back in the day before online databases existed. "Twice a year I'd drive to the Library of Congress in Washington to search their archives of



*The Three Stooges' extensive touring history is recounted in a new book.*

*Courtesy Gary Lassin*

major newspapers stored on microfilm."

The book, currently available directly from the author (see [www.tourdefarce.net](http://www.tourdefarce.net)), is also crammed with over 1,400 images mostly from Lassin's private collection, hundreds being published for the first time.

Comprising the two Howard brothers Moe and Curly (Curly being later replaced by third brother Shemp, followed by Joe Besser and Joe DeRita) and Larry Fine, the Stooges are famous for the 190 short films produced by Columbia Pictures from 1934 through 1959. The trio of turmoil were masters of vintage Hollywood madcap mayhem, famous for brutalizing each other with any heavy object at hand, initiating food fights, and flattening their surroundings faster than a professional demolition team.

So what would audiences



*The Three Stooges, Moe, Shemp, and Larry, with Emil Sitka in 1947's "All Gummed Up."*

*Columbia Pictures photo*

attending their live stage shows have experienced?

"Nothing like their films, really," said Lassin. "They didn't have the benefit of movie special effects or other actors they could play off. So they usually did a 10 to 15 minute act consisting of two basic routines. There were skits where they'd play roles and act out a little and the other was called patter where they would go back and forth with silly jokes."

An example of the latter, says Lassin, is when one would ask, "You goin' fishing?" To which another would respond, "Yeah, you got worms?" followed by the punchline, "Yeah, but I'm going anyway."

Lassin estimates his book documents up to about 95% of live appearances by the Stooges. "We'll never come up with all of them," he said. "They also visited hospitals, military bases, and other places

that weren't advertised to the public."

The author, who is related to Larry through marriage, has amassed over 100,000 pieces of Stooges memorabilia with thousands of items displayed in his museum. Like many adult Stooges fans today, he originally became enamored by the comedy troupe as a child.

"We only had three TV channels to watch when we came home from school," he recalled. "So it was impossible for a kid not to see them and like them."

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



*Larry, Curly and Moe in the 1937 short, "Dizzy Doctors."*

*Columbia Pictures photo*

## Mystrom

*continued from page 15*

I Eat? Solve Diabetes, Lose Weight, and Live Healthy." He also figures he has given over 200 talks about living with diabetes.

His newest book, "Glucose Control Eating: Lose Weight, Stay Slimmer, Live Healthier, Live Longer," a guide to what low-glucose foods to eat, was published in 2021.

"I've had it for 59 years with no health problems," he said. "I found out when

I applied to go into the Air Force ROTC, and when I found out I couldn't go, I was shocked."

At that time he had a reputation for eating a lot of food and not gaining weight.

"But my pancreas wasn't working," he said. "The doctor told me to go to the library and read up on it and bring back as many questions as I could. I had three pages."

He experienced a moment when the effect of the diabetes really hit him.

"I was at Boulder Creek in Colorado and all of a

sudden I felt something different," he said. "I felt confused."

So he ordered a roast beef sandwich and a Coke.

"It was a big blood sugar back up," he said. "It was the first time in six months I didn't feel hungry because I had insulin."

Sugary drinks help raise blood sugar levels when a person has low blood sugar levels and produces a small amount of insulin. That's why Type 1 diabetics are encouraged to carry emergency sweets with them like gumdrops or gummies.

The two rules Mystrom

practices to counter any fatigue he might have in facing the disease are: "1. Never complain; and, 2. Never let it stop me from doing what I want to do."

He tests his glucose levels 10 to 15 times a day and has an insulin pump he uses to keep his glucose level in check. And he studied what foods spike his levels and which do not by using himself as a guinea pig, testing

all kinds of foods.

"I tell people in books, 'Here's what good for you,'" he said. "If you want a treat, have one, but not all the time."

He said that, frankly, he had a choice to learn to control it or die.

"I'm 79 and feel great, and I think this book can help people live healthier, longer and slimmer," he said.

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## Destination

continued from page 3

Ketchikan Gateway Borough motto is “Life is better in boots?” That is so Alaskan. Anyway, the free Downtown Shuttle operates during the tourist season and leaves designated bus stops once every 15 minutes during hours of operation. In addition, there is a more wide-ranging fee-for-service bus system. Routes, schedules, and more at [kgbak.us/145/Transit](http://kgbak.us/145/Transit), and on social media at “ketchikanbus,” or call 907-225-TRAN (8726)

### Anchorage

The public transit system in Anchorage is the 800-pound gorilla. People Mover serves half the population of the entire state. People Mover buses travel 2.1 million miles annually -- that's almost 85 trips around the world. Seniors travel for free on Wednesdays, and half-price every other day of the week. In addition, AnchorRIDES provides

free rides for people whose disabilities prevent them from using People Mover, and for seniors going to health-related destinations. Get the details at: [muni.org/Departments/transit/PeopleMover](http://muni.org/Departments/transit/PeopleMover), or call 907-343-6543.

### Juneau

This is a great deal for local seniors. Senior citizens with a local senior sales tax exemption card ride Capital Transit buses for free. In addition, Capital Transit offers a Ride Free Zone for everyone interested in getting to the Capitol, the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, Dimond Courthouse, the hostel, or other locations at the top of the hill. Find out more at [www.juneaucapitaltransit.org](http://www.juneaucapitaltransit.org), or call (907) 789-6901.

### Fairbanks

Here's another smokin' deal for mature public transit riders in Alaska. If you are 60 or older you can ride the Fairbanks Metropolitan Commuter System (MACS) for free. Your ticket is any government-issued photo identification. In



Ketchikan's free Downtown Shuttle operates during the tourist season and leaves designated bus stops once every 15 minutes during hours of operation. In addition, there is a more wide-ranging fee-for-service bus system.

Hall Anderson photo

addition, there is the Van Tran paratransit service for those people whose physical, cognitive, or sensory disabilities prevent them from using the MACS Transit System fixed-route bus system. Want to know more? See the

website at [fnsb.gov/349/Metropolitan-Area-Commuter-System-MACS](http://fnsb.gov/349/Metropolitan-Area-Commuter-System-MACS), or call 907-459-1010.

There are several more public transit systems scattered across Alaska. If you don't see yours here, inquire locally. And remem-

ber, if you are really lucky, one day you too may get to see the driver's new car.

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.

# Video assistance with Social Security questions

### Social Security Administration

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

The video service locations are available at:

► In Nome, Norton Sound

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

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

► Kodiak Job Center, 211 Mission Road, Suite

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

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

Most Social Security services are available to

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

online service, at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, request

page 22 please

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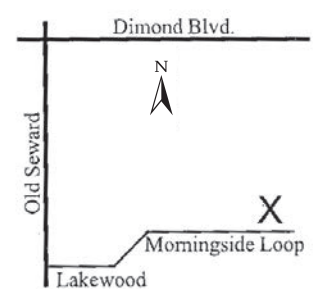
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# MASST supports Alaska senior jobseekers

By **MONICA WAFFORD**

For Senior Voice

Are you 55 or older and seeking work? Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) is a community service and work-based job training program. In Alaska, there are MASST programs covering the state by region: Anchorage, Northern and Interior, Gulf, Southeast and Mat-Su.

## Learn while you earn

Through MASST, subsidized community service assignments are provided in public and non-profit agencies, allowing these agencies to enhance and provide needed services to the community while older workers gain job skills. Program participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the highest of the federal, state or local minimum wage.

Participant services include Individual Employment Plan development, orientation, community service placement, training specific to an individual's community service assignment, and other training as necessary. Supportive services, annual physical exams, assistance in securing unsubsidized employment, and access to local American Job Centers are also available.

## Eligible participants

Program participants must be at least 55 and have a family income of no more than 125 percent of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to individuals with at least one of the following characteristics: are veterans, are over age 65, have a disability, have limited English proficiency or low literacy skills, reside in a rural area, have low employment prospects,

or are homeless or at risk for homelessness. Individual participation is limited to 48 months, unless an extension is authorized based on statutory requirements. SCSEP serves over 60,000 seniors annually.

For more information, visit the Alaska MASST website at <https://labor.alaska.gov/masst/home.htm>.

Monica Wafford is the Southeast Alaska MASST coordinator.

# Can I collect Social Security from my ex-spouse?

By **JIM MILLER**

Savvy Senior

**Dear Savvy Senior:** Is it possible to collect Social Security benefits from my ex-spouse? We were married for 12 years but have been divorced for almost 20 years now. - *Never Remarried*

**Dear Never:** Yes, depending on your specific circumstances, you may very well be eligible for divorced spouses Social Security benefits. Here's what you should know.

## Who's eligible?

A divorced spouse can collect a Social Security retirement benefit on the earnings record of their ex-husband (or ex-wife) if you are at least age 62, were married for at least 10 years, are unmarried, and are not eligible for a higher benefit based on your own earnings record.

In order to collect, your former spouse must also be at least 62 and eligible for Social Security benefits. But they don't have to be receiving them in order for you to collect divorced spouse's benefits, as long as you've been divorced for at least two years.

Even if your ex is remarried, it won't affect your right to divorcee benefits, nor will it affect your ex's retirement benefits or their current spouse's benefits.

## Benefit amount

A divorced spouse can receive up to 50 percent of their ex's full Social Security benefit, or less if they take benefits before their full retirement age, which is 66 for people born in

1945 to 1954 but is gradually increased to age 67 for people born in 1960 or later. To find out your full retirement age and see how much your benefits will be reduced by taking them early see [www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/agereduction.html](http://www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/agereduction.html).

Keep in mind, though, that if you qualify for benefits based on your own work history, you'll receive the larger of the two benefits. You cannot receive benefits on both your record, and your ex's work record too.

To find out how much your retirement benefits will be, see your Social Security statement at [www.SSA.gov/myaccount](http://www.SSA.gov/myaccount). And to get an estimate of your ex's benefits, call Social Security at 800-772-1213. You'll need to show your marriage certificate and divorce decree to prove your marriage lasted at least 10 years along with their Social Security number to get it.

## Other factors to know

You also need to be aware that working can affect your divorced spouse's benefits. If you start taking benefits while working, and are under full retirement age, your benefits will be reduced \$1 for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit, which is \$21,240 in 2023. In the year you reach full retirement age, however, the annual limit increases to \$56,520 and the reduction lowers to \$1 for every \$3 above that limit. See [www.SSA.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf](http://www.SSA.gov/pubs/EN-05-10069.pdf) for more details.

Another factor that can reduce your divorced

spouse's benefits is receiving a pension from an employer that did not withhold Social Security taxes (like a government). This is a rule known as Government Pension Offset (see [www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/gpo-calc.html](http://www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/gpo-calc.html)) which can reduce your benefits by two-thirds of the amount of your pension.

## Divorced Survivor's Benefits

You also need to know that when your ex-spouse

dies (and if you were married for 10 or more years), you become eligible for divorced survivor benefits, which is worth up to 100 percent of what your ex-spouse was due.

Survivor benefits are available to divorced spouses as early as age 60 (50 if you're disabled). But if you remarry before 60, you become ineligible unless the marriage ends. Remarrying after age 60 will not affect your eligibility.

Also, note that if you are receiving divorced

spouses benefits when your ex-spouse dies, you will automatically be switched over to the higher paying survivor benefit.

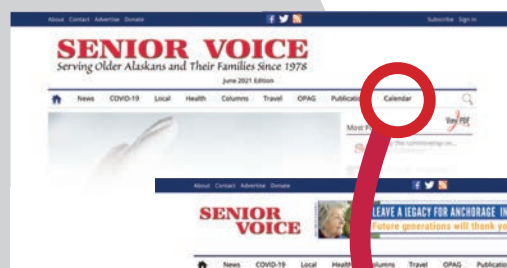
For more information visit [www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html](http://www.SSA.gov/benefits/retirement/planner/applying7.html) and click on "Benefits for Your Divorced Spouse."

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

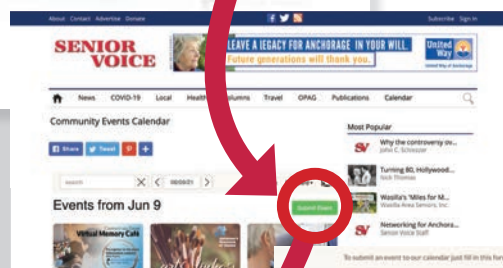
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# Senior Voice

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





# Something big is coming, and soon

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

I really dislike all of the sensationalism out there. Everywhere you look, it's teaser, click-bait, outrage-inducing headlines and hotlinks, exaggerating or even outright lying to get you to look. If something online says "NBA World Reacts to Horrifying News About LeBron James", the actual story will be that three people on Twitter noted that his free-throw percentage is down slightly.

The result of this constant bombardment is that most of us develop a kind of defensive shell against this manipulation. Back in the day we used to call this having a good BS detector.

On the other hand, I do need to tell you that YOU'RE PROBABLY GOING TO PRISON NEXT YEAR!

Okay, maybe that is a slight exaggeration. But not nearly as much as you think.

This is about the Corporate Transparency Act.



Now it may be that at this point, you have just let out a sigh of relief, and said to yourself "that sounds good to me. These big corporations need to be more transparent." But like so much of what the Congress passes, the name of the bill does not actually reflect what the bill does.

In fact, this Act slipped through a couple of years ago because it was done as part of a routine defense reauthorization bill. Those things get passed regularly, usually without much if any opposition, because nobody wants soldiers and sailors to miss a paycheck. But sometimes they insert

things in these non-controversial bills that only come up later. This one has been flying under the radar screen for a while, and it is only coming to people's attention now because it has a big deadline which hits at the beginning of next year.

The Corporate Transparency Act requires every small corporation or LLC (limited liability company), as well as certain partnerships and other entities, to file a report showing their ownership. This is not going to be a quick and easy thing; if you have ever had to file a FinCEN report, this is going to be like that. The entity itself has to file a report showing the business name, tax ID number, current address, and the state in which the entity was formed. But then each "beneficial owner" also has to report, showing their name, address and date of birth, and also providing a copy of a government-issued photo ID.

And should you think that you will just flip Uncle Sam the bird on this one and ignore it, please be aware that the penalties

for noncompliance include fines of up to \$10,000, and up to two years in federal prison.

I repeat: up to two years in federal prison. What I said in all caps at the beginning of this article was only a slight exaggeration.

Maybe you're still not worried. You are thinking, "Yeah, but they always have these de minimus exceptions for really small businesses like mine. I just have an LLC for my rental house, and I'm the only owner. This won't apply to me."

Guess what? There is no de minimus exception on this one. In fact, larger businesses don't have to report. If you have 20 or more employees, at least \$5 million in annual revenues, and meet a few other requirements, you're exempt. This only hits the little guys.

Incidentally most trusts, and businesses which are sole proprietorships, probably won't have to file these reports. I say "probably" because they are still sorting out the details of how all this will work. But again, the deadline is at the be-

ginning of this next year, so you may want to be ready.

Aside from the annoyance this will cause, and the potential for ruining a lot of small businesses which might not hear about this and miss the deadline, there are serious privacy concerns. The government is insisting that this information will be kept very confidential, and used just for law enforcement purposes. But there have been plenty of instances of employees of government agencies leaking supposedly confidential information. Remember Joe the Plumber?

Oh, and here's the kicker: when you file these reports, you will be doing it through a new database which, I kid you not, they have named the Beneficial Ownership Secure System. Notice the acronym?

*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. Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.*

## Video

continued from page 20

a replacement SSA-1099, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account. People

not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized Social Security Statement, which provides their earnings information as well as estimates of their future benefits. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services.



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# Event photo sharing, internet plumbing, USB cables

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

**Q.** We are hosting a family picnic this summer and wish everyone could share their photos with everyone else. Any ideas?

**A.** Dropevent lets you set up an invitation-only online photo gallery. The gallery allows everyone at the party to submit photos, which are then available to everyone who has access. There are a couple of different methods, but one simple option is to print a QR code for the event. Any smartphone can scan the code and help the user submit photos. You control access by how you distribute the invitation links and QR codes.

The service is not free. Pricing includes single gallery passes or subscriptions. For \$49, an event gallery remains online for 45 days.

Personally, I think services like this are worth every penny. Our smartphones are amazing devices, but in cases like this they are too hard to use. Social networks, probably the most common free tool used for this kind of job, are far too user-hostile to be the guardians of our shared memories.

The way to do this job right is a service like Dropevent. Everyone can share. Each person can download the full-quality original photos precious to them. And as the host, you (or others you add) can download every single image and preserve them for as long as you want.

**Q.** Is it possible to explain how the internet

**USB cables are different in every way possible. So much so that calling USB a “standard” is practically a punchline. The entire mess would be laughable were it not the root cause of so much user confusion.**

works in simple language?

**A.** The internet is a global network of connected devices and computer networks that exchange information. It uses a system of protocols, such as the Internet Protocol (IP), that enable devices to communicate with each other. All data sent over the Internet is divided into small packets like unique jigsaw puzzle pieces. Each packet contains a portion of data wrapped with a destination address. These packets are then routed through a series of routers (sort of like a switchboard), which examine the addresses of each packet and determine the most efficient delivery path.

When the packets arrive at the destination, the data is extracted from each packet and re-assembled. The result matches the data that exists on the sender's computer. In some sense, the internet is the world's largest copy machine.

**Q.** Are all USB cables the same?

**A.** USB cables are different in every way possible. So much so that calling USB a “standard” is practically a punchline. The entire mess would be laughable were it not the root cause of so much user confusion. Here is how it breaks down. Cables are a commodity where quality and durability matters. It is possible to use really in-

expensive cables like the kinds you often find for sale in a drug store or truck stop. But high-quality (expensive) cables can stand up to more handling before fraying, breaking or shorting out. Nevertheless, even the sturdiest cable will eventually fail.

There are over a dozen different-shaped connectors on various USB cables. Whenever you need to buy a USB cable, be sure to take along the old cable to make sure the connectors match up with your devices.

Sadly, it gets worse. Even if the connectors match, that is no guarantee the cable will deliver maximum performance. Matching cables are likely to work, but in order to choose the best cable there is no choice except to dig into the technical specs for each device and match the technical designation of each port with a suitable

## Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

### Color Me Curious

Spend a few hours on this site and you will never see the same way again. Explore how our eyes perceive color and contrast.

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

### Air Traffic Control Radio Live

Eavesdrop on air traffic control. Use the Settings button to remove the somewhat annoying music that plays in the background. Choose an airport or try the random button.

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

### Population Explosion

Watch an animated map that illustrates how quickly children are born across the world. We live on a busy planet.

[www.neal.fun/baby-map](http://www.neal.fun/baby-map)

cable.

There is no single solution to clear up this mess. Hopefully, this answer helps clarify the things you need to consider. In most cases, matching the connectors is enough.

When performance matters, such as with ex-

ternal drives and camera connections, check under the hood (the tech specs for the device's port) to confirm which cable is the best choice.

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

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# Alaska's awe-inspiring National Parks and Monuments

## Glaciers, bears, mountains and trinkets await you

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel  
Correspondent

Recently, a press statement came in from online travel guide Travel Lemming that reported on national parks ranked by affordability, accessibility, biodiversity, crowds, reviews and weather.

The overall rankings of Alaska's National Parks are: Kenai Fjords, No. 13; Katmai, No. 21; Denali, No. 36; Wrangell-St. Elias, No. 39; Lake Clark, No. 43; Glacier Bay, No. 48; Gates of the Arctic, No. 62; and Kobuk Valley, No. 63.

All eight of Alaska's National Parks were in the top 15 for crowds. Gates of the Arctic, a remote wilderness area in the Brooks Range, ranked No. 1 for the least crowded. This is a no-brainer because the park is so hard to get to and visitors rarely come across anyone else.

Alaska's national parks were all over the map when it came to reviews. Reportedly, weather was a determining factor in the low rankings of Alaska's parks. Kenai Fjords, Katmai, Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, Lake Clark and Glacier Bay all tied at No. 53 for weather. Meanwhile, Gates of the Arctic came in at No. 63, and Kobuk Valley at No. 62.

I have to ask, where did these people think they were visiting—Bermuda? And why didn't they take the age-old advice given out to every tourist — “dress accordingly and in layers”?

### The diversity of Alaska's parks

Head in any direction in Alaska and you'll hit a national park, and each one offers distinctly different geography and choice of adventure from adrenaline crazy to on-your-seat safety.

### Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

Welcome to its 2.7 million acres on the Seward Peninsula in Northwest Alaska, and one of the most remote protected areas of the United States.



*Muskox and geese roam a large grass prairie in the Cape Krusenstern National Monument, which is north of the Arctic Circle.*  
NPS photo

There are no roads so access to the preserve is by small airplane, boat or foot, and in the winter by snowmachine.

Visitors to the preserve find themselves in the midst of natural hot springs, ancient lava flows, and the largest maar lakes in the world. A maar is a broad, low-relief volcanic crater caused by an explosion occurring when groundwater comes into contact with hot lava or magma, then fills with water to form a shallow crater lake.

More than 114 beach ridges provide evidence of human use for 5,000 years. The Inupiat people continue to use the area today.

It's a perfect place for you to camp, bird watch the 170 species of migratory birds, hunt, gather berries, trap, fish, and in peaceful isolation soak in the Serpentine Hot Springs.

<https://www.national-parks.org/explore/parks/bering-land-bridge-national-preserve>.

### Denali National Park and Preserve

One late winter, I drove from Anchorage to Fairbanks in severe minus temperatures so cold that my engine sounded like a dying airplane engine, but I was rewarded by seeing a meteor zoom over the top of Denali.

One of Alaska's most

accessible and spectacular parks, Denali National Park and Preserve has the nation's highest peak at 20,310 feet, which comes with its own weather system. The six million-acre wilderness landscape ranges from dense forests to high alpine tundra. Grizzlies, caribou, wolves, porcupines, ptarmigan, and many other species roam the land and some pass by if you drive in or take a bus.

Aside from the wild animals and awesome views, Denali has an abundance of lodging, restaurants and souvenir shops. There are tours galore.



*A bus trip into Denali is a safe way to see wildlife and snap some photos.*  
Dimitra Lavrakas photo

When is a good time to visit? The National Park website says all summer, but I prefer spring before the tourists and when the land is just waking up along with the groggy bears.

<https://www.nps.gov/dena/index.htm>

### Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve above the Arctic Circle has no roads – it's fly-in, walk-in, or come by river.

In the summer, the sun barely sets, which can be confusing, and in the winter there's hardly any light, which can be depressing. But with no lights to obscure the view of the skies, northern lights dance and the Milky Way and the Big Dipper shine bright.

In the Brooks Range, with peaks ranging from 4,000 to 9,000 feet, it ex-

tributor and collaborator to visiting wildlife biologists and the author of several books. Find more info at the museum website, [www.north-slope.org/departments/inupiat-history-language-culture/simon-paneak-memorial-museum/](http://www.north-slope.org/departments/inupiat-history-language-culture/simon-paneak-memorial-museum/).

There's hiking and backpacking, camping, river kayaking, and wildlife viewing – especially of the Western Arctic caribou herd.

[www.nps.gov/gaar/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/gaar/index.htm)

### Katmai National Park and Preserve

You may have seen the film “Grizzly Man” about Timothy Treadwell, who, with his girlfriend was killed and eaten by a grizzly bear. However, be advised that tours are professionally guided and this will not happen to you.

It has been managed by the National Park Service since 1918 to protect the abundant sockeye salmon that spawn in its wild rivers, as well as the bears that catch the salmon. You can watch them fish Brooks Falls on its webcam <https://explore.org/livecams/brown-bears/brown-bear-salmon-cam-brooks-falls>.

You will have to fly in to visit in person. [www.nps.gov/katm/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/katm/index.htm)

*next page please*





# Nat'l Parks

from page 24

## Kenai Fjords National Park

This very accessible park 126 miles south of Anchorage on the Seward Highway has nearly 40 glaciers flowing from the Harding Ice Fields all the way to the sea. You can take a tour out



Visitors lean way out while taking pictures at Kenai Fjords National Park.

NPS/Victoria Stauffenberg

to see them.

Like Denali, the jumping off point of Seward has plenty of places to stay, and lots of shopping for trinkets.

For hardier souls there's kayaking or fishing tours to take you out on the water.

[www.nps.gov/kefj/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/kefj/index.htm)

## Kobuk Valley National Park

There may be no truer example of what makes

national parks in Alaska so unique than Kobuk Valley National Park. The park is not only home to wild rivers and conifer forests, but also vast swaths of sand dunes that wouldn't look out of place in the Utah desert. Enormous herds of caribou migrate across the park every year, and native people hunt them just as they did thousands of years ago. There's sightseeing and flightseeing, backpacking and backcountry camping, fishing, and floating and boating. You'll have to fly in.

[www.nps.gov/kova/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/kova/index.htm)

## Sitka National Historical Park

Take an Alaska Marine Highway ferry from Juneau to Sitka, a nine-and-a-half hour ride. But with a senior discount ticket in hand, you'll be able to wander the boat and sleep on one of the lounge chairs on the solarium deck.

But stay alert to see the parade of marine mammals and eagles along the way.

In Sitka, Tlingit and Haida totem poles stand watch along the coast and visitors can tour the battle site where invading Russian traders once clashed with indigenous Kikisnoo Tlingit people.

There are ranger-guided programs and tours, hiking and sightseeing, and children's programs.

[www.nps.gov/sitk/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/sitk/index.htm)

dex.htm

## Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

The largest national park in the United States, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is also one of the country's most diverse. With 13.2 million acres that range from temperate rainforest to frigid tundra, this is a park not for the faint of heart. The Wrangell and St. Elias Ranges contain some of the largest volcanoes and greatest concentration of glaciers in North America. It also contains the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark ([www.nps.gov/wrst/planyourvisit/kennecott-visitor-center.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/planyourvisit/kennecott-visitor-center.htm)).

Visitors are encouraged to visit the Chitina Ranger Station. Services available at Chitina include a post office, gas station, food store, café and telephone.

Beyond Chitina, the 61-mile gravel road follows the abandoned Copper River and Northwest Railroad bed to the Kennicott River,

where the McCarthy Road ends and you can walk into the park. [www.nps.gov/wrst/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/index.htm)

## Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

While the historic Chilkoot Trail may be closed for repairs, the town of Skagway is open for visitors. Stroll down Broadway and visit the park's restored Klondike Gold Rush Era buildings, including a saloon and Soapy Smith's notorious parlor where he fleeced cheechakoes.

Do you think you may have ancestors who took part in the Klondike Gold Rush? Stop in at park headquarters to ask for information.

Take a ride on the Klondike Gold Rush Era White Pass and Yukon Route Railway for a ride up the White Pass or into Canada.

There's lots to do here and lots of stores.

Reachable by a six-hour ferry for a plane from Juneau, or an 18-hour drive from Anchorage.

[www.nps.gov/klgo/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/klgo/index.htm)



While in Skagway visiting the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, take a ride in a carriage to see the town or on the Klondike Gold Rush Era White Pass and Yukon Route Railway up to the White Pass.

Dimitra Lavrakas photo

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| 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 |
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| 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.



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Folker Park in Anchorage offers a variety of recreational and restorative opportunities, including a Reflexology Path created by volunteers with the Alaska Reflexology Association.

Courtesy Anchorage Park Foundation

# Age-Friendly

continued from page 3

Reflexology Footpath, and six new pieces of outdoor music equipment from Freenotes Harmony Park, a company known for its inclusive design and ability to appeal to users of all ages and abilities.

The location of the park and the continued involvement of the community is part of what makes the park and the features so exciting. Folker Park is located close to many medical providers and to the assisted living facility, Providence Horizon House. Some medical providers

use the park for outdoor therapy. Horizon House has a four-wheeled pedal bike with seats, so residents can go for a ‘bike ride’ in the park. Since the park is accessible, the residents and their visiting family and friends can go to enjoy the healing powers of being out in nature.

Additionally, the entire mixed residential neighborhood benefits from the possibility Folker Park brings as an oasis for fitness, healing, togetherness and even music in between several extremely busy roadways that traverse the city. That possibility is a true win for making Anchorage a more livable and Age-Friendly community.

# Moving

continued from page 2

anticipate moving scam is when everything appears to be going well. The movers provide an estimate, arrive on time and load your belongings onto a truck. However, this is where the interaction turns disastrous. When the truck fails to arrive at its destination, either your belongings are simply gone or the company requires the consumer to pay an additional fee to have them delivered, holding the possessions hostage.

## Moving advice

To avoid becoming a victim of a moving scam, BBB recommends following these guidelines:

Watch out for warning signs. When reviewing a company’s website, if there is no address or information about a mover’s registration or insurance, it’s a sign that it may not possess the proper policies to protect a consumer’s belongings. Additionally, if the mover uses a rented truck or offers

an estimate over the phone prior to conducting an on-site inspection, it may not be a legitimate business.

Be wary of unusual requests. If a mover asks for a large down payment or full payment in advance, that may be an indication of a fraudulent business. If an individual’s possessions are being held hostage for additional payment that was not agreed upon when the contract was signed, contact BBB or local law enforcement for help.

Get everything in writing. When moving between states, check licensing with the U.S. Department of Transportation. An identification number issued by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is required of all interstate moving companies, which can be verified at ProtectYourMove.gov. Also, check with your state to verify any registration or licensing requirements prior to signing a contract. Make sure to carefully read the terms and conditions of the contract, as well as the limits of liability and any

disclaimers. The pickup and expected delivery date should be easily identified.

Keep an inventory of your belongings. Having an inventory sheet is one of the best ways to keep track of your possessions. BBB recommends labeling every box with details on which belongings are packed in each. In general, movers are not liable for lost or damaged contents in customer-packed boxes unless there is provable negligence on the part of the mover. Taking photos of the contents prior to packing is a great way to prove if damages were incurred during the moving process.

Ask questions. Don’t be afraid to ask questions about anything you don’t understand. If the moving company either can’t or won’t answer your questions, look for another company. Trust matters when hiring a moving company.

Visit [BBB.org/moving](https://www.bbb.org/moving) to find a company you can trust.

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

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## Crossword answers from page 18

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | M | O | S |   | O | L | E | O |   | B | L | O | A | T |   |
| R | O | M | P |   | R | O | S | A |   | L | A | R | G | E |   |
| A | L | B | A | T | R | O | S | S |   | U | M | B | R | A |   |
| B | A | R | R | E |   | N | O | I | S | E |   | S | A | L |   |
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| B | U | R | S | A |   | A | B | L | E |   | K | E | N |   |   |
| C | A | N | A | R | Y |   |   |   | S | A | M | E |   |   |   |
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| V | I | C | A | R |   |   | A | L | O | E |   | E | R | I | A |
| E | D | E | M | A |   |   | W | E | S | T |   | L | Y | E | S |





COVID-19

continued from page 9

time. Protection against death and severe disease also drops over time, but more slowly. You can increase your protection by getting a booster from six months after your primary course. Following FDA regulatory action, the CDC has taken steps to simplify COVID-19 vaccine recommendations and it is allowing more flexibility for adults at higher risk who want the option of added protection from additional COVID-19 vaccine doses. These changes include the CDC’s new recommendations to allow an additional updated (bivalent) vaccine dose for adults age 65 years and older and additional doses for people who are immunocompromised. This allows more flexibility for healthcare providers to administer additional doses to immunocompromised patients as needed.

Vitamin D may help fight COVID-19

Treatments for COVID-19 are available and should be considered for people at increased risk for severe disease. The treatments work best when given as soon as possible after symptoms start. Studies have increasingly shown that patients with low vitamin D levels have a greater chance of COVID-19 infection as well as severe disease and death. Now, scientists from Lankenau Institute for Medical Research (LIMR) in Pennsylvania have discovered an explanation for the link. The study found that vitamin D strengthens the lung lining, preventing COVID-19 as well as other viruses from penetrating the body’s airways to cause infection. Vitamin D may help reduce fluid leakage into the airways, which causes pneumonia. “Your body is mostly sacs and tubes,” said senior author Dr. James Mullin, professor and director of research for Lankenau Medical Center’s gastroenterology division. “If their linings are in good shape, you’re in good shape. If they’re leaking and fail to provide a proper barrier, it’s a problem. When you

have a respiratory infection, that means the barrier in your lungs is leaking. Our research gives evidence that vitamin D strengthens the barrier function of the lung lining, likely helping to prevent or stop an infection.” The study examined cell cultures from human lung linings and found Vitamin D increased barrier function by up to 40%. Previously published studies have indicated that patients with vitamin D deficiency are up to five times more likely to become infected by COVID-19. “The benefits, however, are so clear and the risks so minimal that we believe physicians should be recommending supplemental vitamin D right away,” Mullin said. “Cytokine storms, where the body’s immune response kicks into overdrive and can result in severe disease and death in COVID, compromise the body’s airway barrier function. We already know from past studies that vitamin D blunts cytokine storms in cases of flu. In cases of COVID-19, vitamin D therapy may allow time for a patient’s own immune defenses to kick in before it’s too late.” Be kind and isolate when ill Stay home if you think you might be sick with a respiratory virus, even if your symptoms are mild. People with COVID-19 should isolate for at least five full days and should wear a mask after leaving isolation. People who have been exposed to COVID-19 should wear a mask for at least 10 full days and get tested at least five full days after exposure. Public health officials believe that staying home when sick, washing hands, and improving ventilation can protect you, your family, and the community from COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. 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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