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Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons
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Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

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Ice marvels in Fairbanks

"Life Size," by Chris Foltz and Nick Graham, makes an imposing presence at last year's World Ice Art Championships in Fairbanks. The annual event attracts master ice artists from around the world, and returns this year to the Tanana Valley State Fairgrounds, beginning Feb. 17. This is also when the popular ice park opens, featuring a family playground of ice slides and other recreational delights. Visit <https://icealaska.com> for details. For other February activities, see our events calendar on page 15.

Photo courtesy Ice Alaska



2022
**National Mature
Media Awards**
Winner



Your Senior Voice subscription is important

By DAVID WASHBURN

Senior Voice

Many readers pick up their Senior Voice each month at a senior center, apartment complex, office lobby or other public place. We gladly provide bundles to these locations at no charge to get our paper and its information into the hands of as many people as possible.

However, I want to encourage readers who get their paper from these places to subscribe. You

can do this using the subscription form on page 3 of this issue, or just call one of the numbers at the end of this article. Or hold your smartphone camera up to the QR code here, and it



will take you to our online subscription form.

Not only does a subscription result in Senior Voice being delivered directly to your mailbox each month, it helps us keep our expenses down. It costs us much less in postage to mail directly to your address than it does to send large bundles to “a location near you.”

For many readers, a subscription won’t cost a thing. Older Persons Action Group, Inc., the non-profit agency that publishes

Senior Voice, provides the paper at no charge to low-income seniors. By “low income” we mean someone who qualifies for public assistance. We generally give people the benefit of the doubt as to whether they can afford a \$30 subscription, and we don’t require income verification.

We’ve found that many readers who get the paper free will frequently send in a donation because they want to help out, which is greatly appreciated.

Sure, you can keep getting the paper when you’re out and about, but wouldn’t it be nice to get it right at home, without missing an issue? Especially if it doesn’t cost you anything?

To subscribe, call our toll-free number, 1-800-478-1059, from anywhere outside of Anchorage. In Anchorage, call 907-276-1059.

Our sincere thanks for your continued support.

BBB: Watch out for these tax scams

By ROSEANN FREITAS

Better Business Bureau

Tax scams are among the most stubborn cons out there. They reappear often, each time with a slightly different spin. Better Business Bureau advises taxpayers to watch out for these four tax scams:

IRS impersonation scam

According to the 2022 BBB Online Scams Report, impersonating an authority figure or organization accounted for 54% of online purchase scams. IRS impersonation scams most often start with a phone call from a fake IRS agent. The “agent” says you owe back taxes and pressures you into paying by prepaid debit card or wire transfer. If you don’t comply, the scammer threatens you with arrest and fines. This information can later be used for identity theft.

The callers are professional criminals who sound official with fake badge numbers and names. Knowing how the IRS communicates can help consumers avoid this type of fraud.

Tax identity theft scams

Identity theft was the top fraud reported to the FTC in 2021. Tax identity fraud occurs when a scammer uses another person’s Social Security Number to file a tax return and claim a refund. Unfortunately, many people don’t realize there is a problem until they file their return and receive a notice that their taxes have already been submitted.

Email phishing scams

This scam involves an urgent email directing the person to update their file immediately and includes a link to a bogus website that looks like the IRS site. Once on the site, they want to collect your personally-identifiable information, which can lead to identity theft.

Ghost tax preparer

Hiring a tax professional can save individuals time and money, but it’s important to make sure they have the right credentials. A ghost tax preparer is a fly-by-night operator who hasn’t received a Preparer Tax Identification Num-

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ber (PTIN), which the IRS requires for anyone who does taxes in return for compensation.

When hiring a tax professional, ask them for their credentials, verify that they have a PTIN, and check their profile on BBB.org.

Avoiding a scam this tax season can be done by following these steps:

- File your taxes as early as possible before a scammer can use your information to submit a fake return.
- Jot down the six-digit Identity Protection PIN (IP PIN) from the IRS before you file your return. The IP PIN is another way to confirm your identity; however, once you apply for an IP PIN, you must use it each year.
- Verify you are on the IRS website, irs.gov, and not a fake one. Avoid clicking on links that direct you to a website.
- When sharing your tax documents with a tax pro-

fessional online, ask if the preparer has a secure portal to upload documents. If you need to email, make sure your documents are encrypted.

► If you are a victim of identity theft, contact the IRS at 800-908-4490, and begin your identity theft recovery plan at identity-theft.gov.

For more information, visit our Tax Tips and Resources page at www.bbb.org/all/taxtips. To report a tax scam, go to BBB Scam Tracker at www.bbb.org/scamtracker.

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

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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.”



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An interesting take on ageism in the Alaskan workplace

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

Alaska is getting older every day. We expect by 2030 that 30% of us will be 55 and older and still in the workforce, so Alaska has a different issue. We are trying to bring retirees back into the workforce. – Rita Gray, MASST

I had a most interest-

ing conversation in mid-January with Rita Gray, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST). I wanted to discuss ageism against seniors in the Alaskan workplace. Her response was not



what I expected. Selections from the interview follow and have been edited for length and clarity.

Weiss: I wonder if you could say just a few words about what The Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) is and does.

Gray: MASST is a com-

munity service where we bring seniors who have already retired or have been out of the workforce for a while and who are sitting alone or needing something to do so that they're not isolated within their homes. Most seniors that we help are on the verge of homelessness or loneliness because their spouse has passed on and they lost

50% of their income. By the time we see somebody that needs assistance, they're on the verge of despair because they were too proud to tell people that they needed help. And now they need to go back to work.

Think about senior centers where we're helping people get meals, or think

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Retired and broke? Help is on the way

By **JO ANN JENKINS**
AARP

Social Security beneficiaries will soon receive a whopping 8.7 percent increase in monthly checks — welcome relief for retirees fighting the ravages of inflation. This is the largest cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) since 1981 and will add \$146 to the average retired Social Security recipient's monthly benefit, pushing it from about \$1,681 to \$1,827, says the Social Security Administration.

The agency began adjusting Social Security benefits for inflation in 1975 to ensure that the buying power of monthly checks did not evaporate as prices inevitably rose. The amount of the adjustment is based on the difference between the average consumer price index for urban wage earners and clerical workers (CPI-W) for the third quarter (July, August and September) from one year to the next. That's the economist talk for the rise in price of select goods and services tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

These larger Social Security checks will reach millions of older Americans who have seen their cash needs grow these past few years due to levels of in-

Social Security is the largest source of retirement income for most Americans, AARP research shows. It provides nearly all income for 1 in 4 seniors. The guaranteed benefit that Social Security provides is essential to their livelihood.

flation not seen in decades. The extra money can be a critical lifeline for those on fixed incomes.

How critical? Social Security is the largest source of retirement income for most Americans, AARP research shows. It provides nearly all income for 1 in 4 seniors. The guaranteed benefit that Social Security provides is essential to their livelihood.

People collecting Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) — payments that Social Security administers for people largely unable to work — will also get the increase, as will veterans who receive disability benefits and retirement pay.

For many older adults, Social Security works in tandem with Medicare. Some years, an increase in the COLA is offset by higher Medicare costs, which come directly out of Social Security checks.

But older Americans received more welcome news this year when the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced a rare

decrease in Medicare Part B premiums and deductibles. AARP had called for that rollback following a decline in the price and lower usage than expected for the new Alzheimer's disease drug Aduhelm. A predicted surge in costs to cover Aduhelm accounted for about half of

a large premium increase in 2022.

In addition to lower Part B premiums, parts of the Inflation Reduction Act go into effect next month. For those enrolled in Medicare Part D, most vaccines will be free and insulin copays will be capped at \$35 per month.

Ninety percent of people age 50 and older who get Social Security retirement benefits, or will in the future, say they are worried their benefits may not keep

up with inflation, an AARP survey found. That's why AARP is urging Congress to work in a bipartisan way to protect and strengthen Social Security.

Millions of Americans work hard throughout their lives to earn their benefits. Social Security is a promise that must not be broken. We will continue to work with both parties to protect Social Security. The stakes are too high for anything less.

Jo Ann Jenkins is the CEO for AARP.

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Bring art into your life, and so much more

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

Q: As my health declines it is harder to have good days. How can I adapt to my changing life?

A: The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress”. Successful aging is a process. Studies have shown that art can help people with depression, anxiety, and stress, and art has also been linked to improved memory, reasoning and resilience.

There’s something quite beautiful about enjoying the performing and fine arts. For older adults, it is rediscovering a side of themselves that they may have forgotten. Maybe it is because art is one of the few things that transcends time and age. Let’s explore why this interrelation is so important.

Why do arts and older persons make such a great pairing? It’s a love story, really. Arts and aging adults have always had a special relationship. From operas to ballets, seniors are some of the most avid fans. There are many reasons for this: art can be beautiful, complex and emotionally moving. Older adults love the arts, and many benefits come from enjoying these activities.

What are the benefits?

One positive benefit is that it keeps the brain healthy. Researchers found that engaging in the arts improves cognitive function, memory and creativity. In fact, one study even found that aging adults who engaged in the arts scored higher on cognitive function than those who didn’t.

So what is responsible for these benefits? Participating in the arts keeps us neurologically challenged and when learning new concepts our brains are



actively working to process all that information. This keeps our mature minds sharp.

In addition to aiding cognitively, arts immersion has emotional benefits. Art can be a way to express emotions and deal with difficult life situations. It also provides connections and forms social circles. Participating in the arts keeps us more centered and supported—important for mental health.

Host a watch party

While performances experienced, artworks viewed, or seeing sculptures are best done in person, if you cannot travel to feel the excitement live, find works online or through arts and documentary channels. Gather a group together to watch classic operas *La Bohème*, *Don Giovanni*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. For something more contemporary, check out *The Death of Klinghoffer* or *Doctor Atomic*.

Take a tour

Galleries to visit include the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., and the Art Institute of Chicago. These galleries are home to some of the world’s most famous artworks, and will leave a lasting impression on visitors of all ages. For 20th and 21st century collections, check out Tate Modern in London or Centre Pompidou in Paris. These exhibits offer a

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Turning to Tina Turner for transformation

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Music therapy now is moving into a new realm thanks to smartphones. A music app has been developed that provides therapy by consoling, relaxing and uplifting users. Music has the potential to change emotional states and can distract listeners from negative thoughts and pain. It has also been proven to help improve memory, performance and mood.

Music and emotions, with an app

Man Hei Law of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and his team have developed what they currently are calling

Music has the potential to change emotional states and can distract listeners from negative thoughts and pain. It has also been proven to help improve memory, performance and mood.

“The Emotion Equalization App”. The app creates custom playlists to help listeners care for their emotions through music. Law said music is humanity’s universal language and it can significantly impact a person’s physical and emotional state.

“We all know life is not always perfect and smooth. And sometimes, we cannot even let go of some thoughts. Through this app, I hope it will take people to a positive mood where they can escape from all negative thoughts,”

said Law.

The app is designed for individuals who may not want to receive counseling or treatment because of feelings of shame, inadequacy or distrust. By taking listeners on an emotional roller-coaster ride, the app aims to leave them in a more positive and focused state than where they began. Users take three self-led questionnaires in the app to measure their emotional status and provide the information needed to create a playlist.

Current emotion and



Sue Trezona, 72, Oregon. She uses music therapy daily for relaxing in her greenhouse, as well as for doing her housework at her home in Coburg, Oregon.

John C. Schieszer photo

long-term emotion status are gauged with a pictorial assessment tool that helps identify emotions in terms of energy level and mood.

Energy level can run from high, medium, to low, and mood can register as

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Keep an eye on your vision health

By DR. EMILY KANE

For Senior Voice

If you wear glasses (or contacts) try to minimize their use to times when you are reading, driving or doing other precision work. But if you’re just lounging around at home and can bathe, cook, garden, play a game, etc. without your glasses — do it. The more dependent you become on your glasses/contacts, the weaker your eyes become. Limiting your eyewear usage gives your eyes a chance to practice focusing



Photo 59815712 / Eye Health © Syda Productions | Dreamstime.com

unaided, thus strengthening them, and allowing for fewer prescription changes in the long run.

For all you computer

users who want to prevent vision loss, use a screen saver. These are available in most office supply stores, or online. Screen savers not only reduce glare bouncing off the screen, which means less eye strain, but also reduce

the amount of radiation coming right at you from the computer monitor, which is one of the causes of cataract formation.

Also, never, ever watch or try to focus on computer text that is rapidly scrolling for more than a second or two. That’s very hard on the eyes. Focus on something off to the side momentarily, the same way you do when driving at night and an approaching driver forgets to dim their brights. Find some amber-tinted glasses to use when online. These help offset the harmful blue light emitted by most screens. Amber tint can be ordered for a small extra fee to corrective eyewear or you can get amber-tinted

readers in many stores to keep next to your computer.

Prioritize good lighting for sustained reading, writing or other close work.

If possible, use full-spectrum light bulbs at your desk, with high wattage, at least 75, and try to have the light shine straight down onto what you’re working on. If at a desk, arrange to tilt the work up to save your neck and shoulder muscles, then use a gooseneck lamp that shines light perpendicular to the project.

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Here is what’s new in Medicare for 2023

By SEAN McPHILAMY

Alaska Medicare Information Office

Medicare coverage and costs normally change each year, so it is important to understand and review your benefits. Here is an overview of what’s new in 2023.

Part A

Medicare Part A covers inpatient hospital services, skilled nursing facility services, home health care, and hospice. Most people do not owe a premium for Part A, but if neither you

nor your spouse have 10 years of Social Security work credits, you may owe a monthly premium. If you are admitted to the hospital as an inpatient, you will owe a deductible of \$1,600 at the beginning of your stay. If you have multiple hospitalizations, you may owe the deductible more than once. After you meet your deductible, your first 60 days in the hospital and your first 20 days in a skilled nursing facility cost \$0 per day. After that, you owe an out-of-pocket cost for each day of your continued stay.

Part B

Medicare Part B covers outpatient costs, such as doctor visits and lab tests. In 2023, the standard monthly Part B premium is \$164.90, which is a decrease from the 2022 premium. If your income is above \$97,000 as a single person or \$194,000 as a married couple, you may pay a higher premium, known as an Income Related Monthly Adjusted Amount (IRMAA). Part B coverage includes a deductible of \$226 during 2023. You will continue to owe 20% coinsurance

for most services covered by Part B. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, you will pay no more than a \$35 copay for each Part B-covered insulin product, starting in July of 2023. Insulin products that may be covered by Part B include a pump and the insulin that is used with the pump.

Part D

Medicare Part D covers outpatient prescription drugs. Your premium and drug costs vary based on your plan and your prescription drug needs. If your Part D plan has an

annual deductible, it can be no higher than \$505 in 2023. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, all Part D-covered vaccines, including the shingles vaccine, will be \$0. Additionally, copays for each Part D-covered insulin product will be limited to a maximum \$35 copayment.

Insulin products that may be covered by Part D include insulin that is not used with a pump, along with medical supplies used to inject insulin, like

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Outer ear infections and hearing aids



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

If you are prone to acute outer ear infection, hearing aids can be a risk factor, but do not have to be. Outer ear infection, also known as Otitis externa or swimmer's ear, can present ear pain, swelling of the ear canal and drainage.

Without going into too much detail, some causes are: germs, swimming in polluted water, water trapped in the ear canal after showering, especially in a humid climate. Objects put in the ear canal to clear the canal is enough to cause breaks in the skin and allow infection to develop.

Hearing aids should

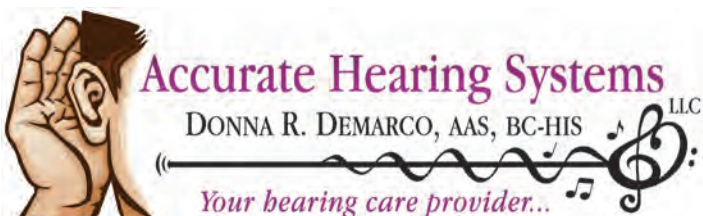
be taken out at night to help prevent outer ear infections. Taking them out allows your ear to breathe and dry out. However, if you are prone to infections this might not be enough.

There are different devices that can help. Having an infection and putting in your hearing aid with the infection still on it will just keep transferring the infection back and forth.

Putting your hearing aids in a dryer with a UV light will help kill any infection that might be on your hearing aids, so you are putting cleaner hearing aids back in.

There is also an overnight hearing aid cleaner that I have had a lot of success with that dissolves ear wax, extracts moisture and sanitizes the aids with a UV lamp.

For more information and a free hearing test call 907-644-6004 or go to www.accuratehearingssystem.com.



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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.

Serious accidental poisoning is on the rise

By **KIMBERLY BLAKER**

Poisoning is the number one cause of injury-related deaths in the U.S., according to a report by the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC). More than 2 million cases of human poison exposure in the U.S. were reported in 2021 alone. While less severe poison exposures have decreased in recent years, more serious exposures have been on the rise,

according to the AAPCC annual report. Since 2000, serious cases have grown by 4.44% per year ranging from moderate severity to death.

This alarming trend reveals the importance of greater awareness of the full range of substances that pose a risk to children and adults alike. As would be expected, children under the age of 6 disproportionately account for 45% of all poisonings. Yet more

serious cases of poisoning are often among teens and adults.

So be aware of these top toxins. Then take precautions to protect your pets, grandchildren when they visit, and yourself from these substances that are commonly found in the home.

The following result in the most poisonings each

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Medicare

continued from page 5

syringes, gauzes and alcohol swabs. Part D coverage gap thresholds and catastrophic coverage limits have also been inflation adjusted.

Enrollment periods and coverages

The Initial Enrollment Period (IEP) is the seven-month period including the three months before, the month of, and the three months following your 65th birthday month. For most people, your Medicare coverage begins on the first day of your 65th birthday month. If your enrollment is completed during your birthday month, or in one of the following three months, then your Medicare coverage will begin on the first day of the next month. This change shortens the gap in coverage for those who enroll

later during their IEP. As a reminder, enrollment into Original Medicare begins by contacting the Social Security Administration.

The General Enrollment Period (GEP) runs from January 1 through March 31. Beginning in 2023, when you enroll during the GEP, your Medicare will begin the first of the month after you enroll. For example, if you enrolled during February in past years, you would have to wait until July 1 for your Medicare to start. Now, if you enroll using the GEP in February, for example, your coverage will instead start on March 1.

Special Enrollment Periods (SEPs) are periods of time outside normal enrollment periods when you can enroll in Medicare or change your coverage. SEPs are sometimes triggered by specific life circumstances that create more enrollment opportunities, reduce gaps in coverage, and prevent late

enrollment penalties. If you missed an enrollment period and think you may qualify for a Special Enrollment Period, contact our Medicare Information Office to learn more.

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

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

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



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Alaska Health Fair kicks off its spring season

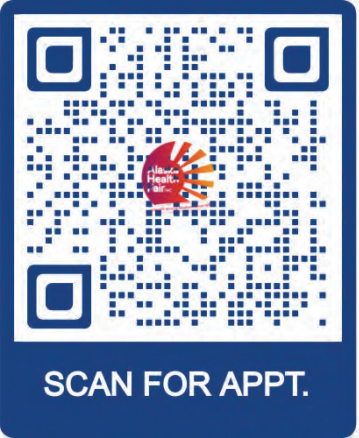
By **SHARON PHILLIPS**
Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

Alaska Health Fair’s Spring 2023 schedule is now online, with most events already posted on our website at www.alaskahealthfair.org. Please check back frequently, as the new season is fluid. We continue to add new dates as they come available and rarely postpone one.

We have provided services to Alaskans for 43 years and continued helping residents see to their needs over the past few difficult years. We offer a selection of draw dates from our offices to a handful of February community events as our busy schedule ramps up for a busy spring. We recommend you make an appointment, as we are now accepting walk-ins. Clients that pre-schedule will be served first and walk-ins may have to wait

to be seen. We recommend attendees wear masks and consider the health of others when attending an event. Our February schedule currently includes:
Feb. 14 Dillingham High School (gym), 565 Wolverine Lane, 7 a.m. to noon
Feb. 14 Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Offices, second floor of the Food Bank building, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Feb. 18 Anchorage Alaska Health Fair offices, 720 W. 58th Ave., Unit J, 8 a.m. to noon.
Feb. 28 Fairbanks Alaska Health Fair Offices, second floor of the Food Bank building, 725 26th Ave., Suite 201, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
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Exercise without the gym; new arthritis drug

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

Making exercise fun and easy

Ongoing research is showing that there are significant cardiovascular benefits at 6,000 daily walking steps at any pace. The evidence-based health benefits of walking are continuing to accumulate, according to ongoing research by researchers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Findings from the latest study led by Amanda Paluch, an assistant professor of kinesiology in the School of Public Health and Health Sciences, show that older adults who walked between 6,000 and 9,000 steps per day had a 40%-50% reduced risk of a cardiovascular event, such as a heart attack or stroke, compared to those who walked 2,000 steps per day.

"We found for adults over 60, there was a strikingly lower risk of a cardiovascular event or disease over an average follow-up of six years," said Paluch. "When accumulating more steps per day, there was a progressively lower risk."

Earlier this year, research by Paluch and the Steps for Health Collaborative showed that more movement, even below the highly touted but unscientific "10,000 steps per day," was associated with longevity benefits. The meta-analysis of 15 studies involving nearly 50,000 people from four continents found that walking between 6,000 and 8,000 steps per day was linked with a lower risk of death from all causes among older adults.

Following those findings, researchers wanted to tackle the less-charted territory of steps per day and cardiovascular disease. The results were similar, in terms of the most beneficial range of steps. While there appears to be a continual additional benefit for those who walk more than 6,000



steps, Paluch said encouraging the least-active older adults to take more steps is perhaps the most important public health message.

"The people who are the least active have the most to gain," said Paluch. "For those who are at 2,000 or 3,000 steps a day, doing a little bit more can mean a lot for their heart health. If you're at 6,000 steps, getting to 7,000 and then to 8,000 also is beneficial, it's just a smaller."

The meta-analysis of eight studies involved more than 20,000 people from the U.S. and 42 other countries. For younger adults, no link between steps per day and cardiovascular risk was detected. "This is because cardiovascular disease is a disease of aging and often doesn't come to fruition until we're at older ages," said Paluch.

Four of the eight studies the researchers analyzed included data about walking intensity, or how fast the steps were taken. "We did not find any striking association with walking intensity," said Paluch. "There was no additional benefit with how fast you're walking, beyond the total number of steps that you accumulated."

For those who don't want to go to a gym

New research is suggesting that just three to four one-minute bursts of huffing and puffing during daily tasks is associated with large reductions in the risk of premature death, particularly from

next page please

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Exercise

from page 8

cardiovascular disease. It is good news for those who don't like playing sports or going to the gym. Published in the journal Nature Medicine, this study is the first to accurately measure the health benefits of what researchers have termed 'vigorous intermittent lifestyle physical activity,' or VILPA.

VILPA is the very short bouts of vigorous activity (up to one to two minutes) we do with gusto each day, like running for the bus, bursts of power walking while doing errands or playing high-energy games with the kids. The researchers found that just three to four one-minute bouts of VILPA every day is associated with up to 40% reduction in all-cause and cancer-related mortality, and up to a 49% reduction in death related to cardiovascular disease.

"Our study shows similar benefits to high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can be achieved through increasing the intensity of incidental activities done as part of daily living, and the more the better," said lead author Emmanuel Stamatakis, who is a professor of Physical Activity, Lifestyle and Population Health at the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre in Australia.

The majority of adults aged 40 and older do not

New research is suggesting that just three to four one-minute bursts of huffing and puffing during daily tasks is associated with large reductions in the risk of premature death, particularly from cardiovascular disease. It is good news for those who don't like playing sports or going to the gym.

take part in regular exercise or sports, but Stamatakis said the study reveals how incidental physical activity can overcome many barriers.

"Upping the intensity of daily activities requires no time commitment, no preparation, no club memberships, and no special skills. It simply involves stepping up the pace while walking or doing the housework with a bit more energy," said Stamatakis.

Researchers used wrist-worn tracker data from UK Biobank, a large-scale biomedical database, to measure the activity of over 25,000 'non-exercisers', participants who self-reported that they do not do any sports or exercise during leisure time. Interestingly, a comparative analysis of the vigorous activity of 62,000 people who regularly engaged in exercise found comparable results. This implies that whether the vigorous activity is done as part of structured exercise or housework does not compromise the health benefits.

New drug may benefit those with hand arthritis

The drug talarozole, which increases retinoic acid, could be a prom-

ising new treatment for hand osteoarthritis. A new study, published in Science Translational Medicine by researchers at the University of Oxford has identified talarozole as a positive new approach to preventing osteoarthritis.

"Hand osteoarthritis is a common and debilitating medical condition that affects mainly women, especially around the time of the menopause. We currently have no effective treatments that modify their disease," said study investigator Tonia Vincent, Professor of Musculoskeletal Biology and Honorary Rheumatologist at Oxford's Nuffield Department of

Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences.

The researchers started by investigating a common gene variant that had been linked to severe hand osteoarthritis. Using patient samples collected at the time of routine hand surgery, as well as a number of experimental models, they were able to identify a key molecule that was especially low in at-risk individuals, called retinoic acid.

More than 40% of individuals will develop osteoarthritis during their lifetime. Hand osteoarthritis is an extremely common form of osteoarthritis and

there are currently no disease modifying treatments that effectively relieve symptoms or stop deformity and stiffness of the joints.

"This project was only possible because of the multidisciplinary approach that we took, working with our hand surgical colleagues, geneticists, data scientists and biologists," said Vincent.

As talarozole has an acceptable safety profile in human subjects, a small proof of concept clinical study is underway to see whether this drug might represent a new disease modifying treatment in patients.

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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Poisoning

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year, according to the AAPCC.

Analgesics. Painkillers and fever reducers are found in nearly every home, and most people use them from time-to-time. These include aspirin, ibuprofen and acetaminophen, among others. As a result, they're among the top causes of poisonings.

When administering analgesics to a child, pay close attention to the recommended dosage. Also, make sure everyone in the home knows the exact time your grandchild took the last dose to avoid the risk of an overdose. The best method to prevent such errors is to keep a written log of the time and dose given. Also, keep containers without child safety caps locked up.

Of particular note, children shouldn't take aspirin because it increases the risk for Reye Syndrome.

Analgesics can also be poisonous to pets, particularly smaller animals. So don't give your pet analgesics without talking to your veterinarian first.

Adults can also accidentally overdose on analgesics. The risk is particularly high when combining them with cough and cold medicines because these sometimes contain ibuprofen.

Household cleaning substances. These toxins result in poisoning through ingestion, inhalation or coming in contact with the skin or eyes. The National Safety Council recommends paying close attention to the labels of all household products and following all safety precautions to protect both yourself and family members from accidental exposure.

If pets or children are in your home, keep these products stored out of reach or locked up. Use particular caution with paint, markers, glue, cleaners and furniture and floor polish.

A danger young children are particularly vulnerable to is laundry and dishwasher packets. Infants and toddlers are attracted to these colorful little packets because they resemble teething products, candy and toys.

Cosmetics and personal

care products. Most people think of these items as relatively harmless since we use them on our bodies daily. Unfortunately, children tend to use them for purposes for which they aren't intended. Ingestion of cosmetics and personal care products can cause mild to severe reactions, including severe burns in the esophagus or mouth. Children also sometimes get these products in their eyes. This can cause severe pain or even damage.

These products can also be unsafe for adults. For example, the FDA has warned of high mercury levels found in some cosmetics manufactured overseas that are illegally sold in the U.S. So check labels for 'mercurous chloride,' 'calomel,' 'mercury,' 'mercuric,' or 'mercurio.' The FDA recommends immediately discontinuing the use of a product if one of these appears on the label.

Sedatives, hypnotics, antipsychotics. Sedative and hypnotic poisonings are most often associated with suicide attempts, according to "Sedative-Hypnotic Toxicity" on Medscape. Still, ample accidental poisonings from these medications occur each year — poisonings from these result from accidental overdosing to adverse reactions that can occur even when taken as directed.

These drugs are particularly toxic to children and pets and can result in death. So store them someplace inaccessible to kids and pets.

Antidepressants. Teens and adults are the most common victims of antidepressant poisonings. These drugs are also often the choice for suicide attempts.

But antidepressants can also result in accidental poisoning. This occurs by accidentally or even knowingly taking a dose higher than prescribed. Certain classes of antidepressants, tricyclics in particular, can be deadly if overdose occurs.

Antidepressant poisoning can also result from interaction when combined with certain medications.

As with all drugs, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before combining these drugs.

Although antidepressants aren't among the top 10 poisonings for children under 13, these drugs, like any other, can be toxic to children if not prescribed for them or if they take too high a dose.

More medications that commonly result in poisoning

The following are among

the top 10 most frequent exposures to poisoning within various age groups. If children or pets are in your home, make sure these hazards have child protective caps and/or are locked up and kept out of reach. For adult safety, always read labels carefully and only use as directed.

- ▶ antihistamines

- ▶ anticonvulsants
- ▶ hormones and hormone antagonists
- ▶ cardiovascular drugs
- ▶ cough and cold medications
- ▶ pesticides
- ▶ alcohols
- ▶ stimulants and street drugs
- ▶ vitamins and supplements
- ▶ foreign bodies - toys, etc.
- ▶ plants

Kimberly Blaker is a freelance lifestyle writer living in Farmington Hills, Mich.

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Vision

continued from page 5

Getting enough vitamin A

Remember being told that carrots are good for your eyes? What makes carrots orange is a pigment called beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A. The scientific name for vitamin A is retinol because it has a specific function in the retina of the eye. Simply stated, vitamin A allows the rods and cones in the retina to adjust to light changes, produce visual excitation and send images to the visual centers of the brain. This mechanism was elucidated in 1950 and the work won a Nobel Prize.

An early sign of vitamin A deficiency is night blindness. Carrots are indeed an excellent source of vitamin A, but so are all darkly colored vegetables. Dark green vegetables have lots of beta-carotene but the green of the chlorophyll overwhelms the yellow and orange tones. The highest food sources of vitamin A, in descending order, are liver, carrots, sweet potato, spinach, apricots, winter squash, cantaloupe, broccoli, crab and peaches. I consider a therapeutic dose, for those with compromised vision, to be 150,000 IUs daily. Women who could become pregnant should not take higher than this dose.

Anti-oxidants and vision

Another group of nutrients that have received much attention recently are the so-called anti-oxidants. This can be a confusing term because of course oxygen is critical to life, so how can anti-oxidants be helpful? It's about balance and moderation. Oxygen is critical to good health, and healthy eyes, but in moderation.

Most of the damage that creates aging is in fact done by oxygen. This process is called oxidation and is very similar to how oxygen rusts iron. We are exposed to free radical damage in many ways, including eating fried foods (fats are especially susceptible to free radical damage heated above 170 degrees), using spray can devices (whipped cream, hair spray), breath-

ing automobile exhaust, to name a few.

Nutrients which have been shown to be most protective against free radical damage, besides vitamin A, are vitamin C (take at least 1 gram daily, preferably in buffered, powdered form), vitamin E (400 IUs daily), and the trace minerals zinc (50 mg daily) and selenium (200 mcg daily). Specific nutrients for eye health (which should be included in a good eye "multi") are bilberry (200 mg), lutein (5-10 mg), the algal-based zeaxanthin and astaxanthin (2 mg each) and the amino acid/anti-oxidant taurine (up to 2 grams). Taurine helps prevent age-related macular degeneration and also helps the retina to eliminate waste, which reduces risk of glaucoma and cataracts.

Many health food stores and natural pharmacies have "anti-oxidant" formulations containing all these nutrients. My favorite natural oil for dry eyes is castor oil. A few drops into each eye can give good lubrication for about four hours. Any castor oil sold for medicine will work well. Not industrial castor oil.

Eyeball fitness

Now for some eye exercises. Much of the work we do involving our eyes requires us to focus approximately 14 inches away from our face. This is a much closer range than the eyes were designed to accommodate.

In order to see in focus, both eyes need to be directed at the object of our attention — the focal point. With a focal point only 14 inches away, the muscles that are called into play most vigorously are at the inner edges of the eyeball. Over the course of a lifetime these inner eyeball muscles are constantly tightening up, becoming chronically contracted, while the outer eyeball muscles are forced to stretch, and eventually become lax. This imbalance in muscle tension around the eyeball can cause headaches, nearsightedness (myopia) and reduced acuity.

The best remedy for this problem is to consciously relax the inner muscles and strengthen the outer

page 22 please

The best reacher grabber tools of 2023

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: Can you recommend some good reacher-grabber tools for seniors with back or hip problems who need help picking things up off the ground? I bought a cheap one a few months ago that doesn't work very well but would like to find one that

does. — *Bad Back Betty*

Dear Betty: A good "reacher-grabber" is a very practical and popular tool for anyone who struggles with injuries, arthritis or loss of mobility. It works like an extension of your arm allowing you to reach down and pick things up off the ground without bending or stooping over. It can also help with reaching

and grabbing things in high overhead places, as well as areas that are difficult to get to.

But with so many different types of reacher-grabbers on the market today, finding a good one that works well for you is not always easy. Depending on your needs,

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Free training, support for family caregivers

Senior Voice Staff

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

The Kenai Peninsula Family Caregiver Support Program office is located at 35477 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 205 (located in the 4D Professional Building). You can call them at 907-262-1280. Call with suggestions

and ideas for upcoming trainings or follow on Facebook, @KPFCS.

The Homer caregiver support group meets at the Homer Senior Center on the second and fourth Thursday of each month (Feb. 9 and 23), from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Contact Pam Hooker for information, 907-299-7198.

Statewide

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.

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

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



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The worst weather brings out our best

By **MARALEY McMICHAEL**
Senior Voice Correspondent

The afternoon of Dec. 12, 2022, the phone rang and it was Michael, my snowplow driver. “Lady (he always calls me ‘lady’), I’ve been thinking, and I just don’t know what to do with you.” He said he drove into my driveway a short way, dropped the blade and back bladed, but had no place to take the snow. We’d received 16 inches overnight, in this second of three snowstorms in about a week’s time.

Michael is a wonderful neighbor who has kept our driveway free from snow problems ever since my husband, Gary, broke his hip three years ago. If Michael didn’t know how to proceed with plowing my driveway, I sure didn’t. The temperature was hovering around zero, but I said maybe the weather would turn warm enough to have a “melt down”. That would take away some of the volume. Perhaps it might even rain.

I told Michael that I’d looked out the windows that morning and then opened both the front and the back doors to check, and realized that I could do nothing. I was just getting over COVID and I didn’t want to jeopardize my health by shoveling snow. So, I’d decided to instead focus on wrapping Christmas gifts to put into the boxes I hoped to mail to Colorado soon. My plan was to ignore the “elephant” in the room, for the time being and I told Michael to please not worry about me.

He said his neighbor across the street had a tractor, but the neighbor was busy using it on his driveway and was scheduled for shoulder surgery the next morning. I knew the neighbor he spoke of to be the Palmer Fire Chief. I said, “I have a perfectly good tractor sitting in my yard that my brother knows how to operate, but he’s busy with his own snow troubles in Anchorage”. Before his health problems, Gary used his tractor to keep our driveway clear. My job was to keep the deck clear. We worked well as a team, but now Gary is living

in the Pioneer Home. Michael and I hung up without coming to a solution.

About 7 p.m. that night, I heard unusual noise out in the driveway. When I looked out the window, I saw a piece of equipment moving fast and piling snow very close to my well casing. Since it had an excavator hanging off the back, I didn’t recognize it to be a tractor, in the dark. Immediately alarmed about possible damage to my well casing, I put on my boots and ran outside before even zipping my coat.

On my way out the door, I grabbed a flashlight to use to signal the driver. Last year when the snow piles at the end of my driveway and the subdivision road got too tall for his plow, Michael rented a backhoe/loader and used it to move snow. I’d forgotten about his comment that the Fire Chief had a tractor and thought perhaps Michael had rented the backhoe/loader again.

When the driver noticed me approaching, he stopped, looked in my direction, and even though he was totally bundled up against the cold, I could see it was not Michael. This guy introduced himself as Chad and then said he was the Palmer Fire Chief and that we met last winter. I interrupted him say, “Oh yes, I know who you are, now. But, it is dark and so late in the day for you to be here working.”

Chad told me that Michael said I needed help and because he had shoulder surgery scheduled for the next morning, this was this only time he could do it. I was speechless. Then I explained that I’d come out because if it wasn’t Michael working, that person wouldn’t know about my well casing. I have a 46 inch metal pole with a single reflector at the top stuck in the ground next to the casing, but for all I knew, the recent snow depth had covered the reflector. He motioned and said he saw it and also noticed my other lawn markers.

If Chad was determined to do this, I didn’t want to waste his time talking, so I



The McMichaels’ newly cleared driveway, Dec. 12, 2022.

Maraley McMichael photo

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Tai chi 'train the trainer' workshops in Anchorage

Senior Voice Staff

Tai chi can bring wellness to the body, mind and spirit with consistent practice but trying to find a teacher or starting a practice on your own can be challenging. A growing number of senior centers in Alaska are finding tai chi instructors as a result of an effort funded by the State of Alaska to hold "train the trainer" workshops. The goal is to bring tai chi to as many of Alaska's communities as possible by recruiting community members to become leaders in health as certified instructors with the Tai Chi for Health Institute.

In February and March of 2023, Linda Ebeling, a Master Trainer with the Tai Chi for Health Institute, will teach instructor training workshops at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center for Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention Part 2, Seated Tai Chi for Arthritis, and Tai Chi for Diabetes. These forms have



Seated tai chi is among the courses being offered in instructor trainings at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center in February and March.

Photo courtesy Sarah Meitl

blended modern medicine with traditional tai chi movements to enhance the safety of participants and yield the greatest health benefits possible. Chief amongst these health improvements is improved balance and a marked reduction of falls, which

led the National Council on Aging to endorse the Tai Chi for Arthritis form for falls prevention.

Future instructors and students do not need to have arthritis or diabetes to learn or perform the movements. These forms will provide health benefits to all participants, regardless of whether you have a chronic health condition or not. No prior experience with tai chi is necessary before deciding to begin training to become a certified tai chi instructor. Contact Dana Paperman at ssc@seward.net for more information about the upcoming trainings and becoming an instructor in your community.

Rambles

News from the Grapevine

Santa's Senior Center in North Pole is organizing "Farkle Fest" for Feb. 20. This will be its first tournament for the popular dice game, with prizes. Begins around 11 a.m., after morning exercise. A potluck will coincide, so bring your favorite farkle food. Call Jana for information and to RSVP, so she can set up the competition brackets, 907-488-4663. She says the hope is there will be enough interest to hold the tournament on a more regular basis, perhaps quarterly ... **Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI)** announced in a Jan. 9 press statement that it

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Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about 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 Feb. 8, hosted by Loussac Library.

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

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Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 13
has digitized and posted online video of **Celebration 1996**. Celebration is a dance-and-culture festival first held by SHI in 1982 that has grown into the world’s largest gathering of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people. With 46 dance groups, Celebration 1996 was the largest event since it began in 1982. The event also featured a significant lecture series with wide-ranging topics. The YouTube post is at <https://bit.ly/3WDCcSV>. SHI sought grants to digitize and share past Celebration tapes so the footage can be used as a resource for dance groups wanting to learn from past performances, language learners wanting to hear elders speaking, people wanting to learn more about their culture and to teach others about Southeast Alaska Native cultures. The rest of SHI’s Celebration footage, up through Celebration 2016, will be posted online. Celebration 2018 was the first Celebration posted on YouTube in its entirety in 2019 ... A sad farewell for **Sandra Medearis**, who passed away on Dec. 31. Her colorful life and inspiring accomplishments were noted in a story in the Jan. 5 issue of the **Nome Nugget**, for whom Sandra wrote for many years. Sandra was also a writer for Senior Voice. Her family plans to hold a celebration of life for Sandra this summer, with a potluck in the Nome countryside, the article says ... Wanting to keep up with what’s going on in the **state legislature**? The **Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority** maintains a **Joint Advocacy Action Network** and you can sign up for their **email alerts** at <https://bit.ly/3R6iv54>. Look for the link on the right side panel to go to the sign up page.

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

Weather

continued from page 12

thanked him, said I would let him get back to it, and returned to the house. He worked out there for at least an hour.
After he left, I bundled up and went back outside and spent some time dragging giant snow loads from around the back of my car, in front of the garage, and in front of the deck, messing up the nice neat driveway Chad just created. The next morn-

ing I finished unburying my car and made the trip to Brentwood to mail my packages. A trip that was only possible, thanks to the Palmer Fire Chief.
When I returned home about 3 p.m., there was Michael in my driveway cleaning up the snow mess I’d made.
I asked Michael how much I should pay Chad for that hour of work. “Nothing,” he said. Take it as a gift and pay it forward sometime. I didn’t think I could just let it go at that. I wanted to at least give him money for fuel. (The fuel

money was refused.)
Later, going about my chores, I found myself contemplating the concept of good neighbors. I imagined that hundreds, perhaps thousands of these same kinds of good neighborly deeds took place during the December 2022 back-to-back snowstorms. I certainly was blessed by my neighbors’ acts of kindness.
Maraley McMichael is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Palmer. Email her at maraleymcmichael@gmail.com.

Black History Month summit in Anchorage, Feb. 18

Senior Voice Staff

The annual Bettye Davis African American Summit will take place during Black History Month at the Bettye Davis East Anchorage High School on Saturday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The event continues the legacy of the late state senator Bettye Davis and brings together the Black community and other people of color in conversation

and action to make Alaska a better place for everyone. Activities include presentation of the Black Teachers of Excellence Awards; forums focusing on health, justice and economic equity; entertainment, vendors

and much more.
Admission is free for everyone.
For more information, visit www.thealaskablackcaucus.com or email TheAlaskaBlackCaucus@gmail.com

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Art of the North Galleries photo by Oscar Avellanada-Cruz

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Workplace

continued from page 3

about job centers where we’re trying to help older workers get jobs, or think about hospitals where we’re helping veterans get to their appointments. So it could be any community service at a [nonprofit] 501(c)(3) organization.

We pay them \$10.85 an hour and we train them from 20 to 25 hours a week to give volunteer work. But while they’re getting their volunteer work, they’re getting current skill sets and looking for employment, if that’s their goal. If that’s not their goal, then we help them with social activities so that they are not isolated by themselves. We always work with job centers to see if there’s a job available first before we put them in a minimum wage job. And there’s just a lot of work.

Weiss: Please discuss age discrimination against older Alaskans who are trying to get into or back into the workforce.

Gray: It depends on the industry. Most employers really value older workers because they have so many competencies, and they’re the last generation of rote learners so they know how to do math and English and networking already. I can see where people are aging out of fishery jobs or construction jobs. But if they’re good workers, they train them to be the managers or the mentors of those folks.

It’s hard to see somebody sitting there that’s smart and not giving back to society. And mostly we’re trying to reopen the doors so that we can get Alaska back to how it was before the pandemic. The people that kept Alaska open during the pandemic were mostly all the old people because they were fearless. I know age is hard for some fields like software and changing technologies, but Alaskans are so used to doing things depending on what they have that they don’t seem to be bothered

if somebody can help out.

Weiss: That’s an interesting perspective. Nationally, for example, retail sales are one of the hot spots of ageism. What’s the situation in Alaska?

Gray: The reason why is because those people are harsh, and they make [retail sales workers] stand on concrete and they won’t let them sit on a little bench or something. And they won’t let them go to the bathroom or take breaks. And if you’ve ever stood around, it’s really hard to not be able to take a break every hour. But given the right employers with a little bit of accommodation, [older workers] are excellent because they have good customer services, they know how to count change, they ask people if they need help, and they’re so polite! Usually once the employer hires an older worker, they tend to keep them until they die or retire because they’re so reliable and loyal. They usually aren’t playing on their phones, and they usually ask, “What else can I do to help?”

Weiss: A reason that’s often given for not wanting to hire older employees is that you can pay less to younger ones.

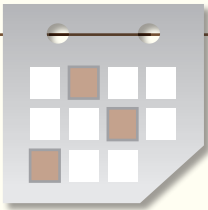
Gray: Well, it depends, because [older employees] already have health insurance, and they can work a flexible schedule because they don’t have to worry about their kids, they can work day hours, night hours, and they can work additional shifts. As a person grows older, their family responsibilities grow less. Employers actually do love older workers because of that.

To find out more about the MASST program in your area, call 907-269-2029. If you believe you have been a victim of age discrimination at work, contact the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights at 907-274-4692.

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.

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 2 Statewide** Marmot Day
- Feb. 3 North Pole** Valentine Market at Grange Gallery, 2800 Grange Rd., 5 to 8 p.m. Locally made art for purchase, refreshments provided. Free admission. 907-322-0623
- Feb. 4 Wasilla** Straight From the Heart Health Fair at Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free educational forum on heart health with presentations, activities, refreshments. For men and women of all ages. Wear red in support of Heart Disease Awareness. For information, call Deena, 907-861-6807
- Feb. 11 Homer** 2023 Homer Winter Carnival and Parade. Carnival takes place in downtown Homer. Parade starts at noon in the Homer High School parking lot, with various floats from local businesses, civic and non-profit organizations, associations, and individuals of all ages. This year’s theme is “Breaking out of Hibernation.” Presented by Homer Chamber of Commerce, 907-235-7740. www.homeralaska.org
- Feb. 15 Anchorage** Senior Prom dance at Anchorage Senior Activity Center, noon to 2 p.m. in the ballroom. A lively afternoon of music, dancing, refreshments, prom photos and more. Free for everyone. 907-770-2000
- Feb. 16 Statewide** Elizabeth Peratrovich Day
- Feb. 17-19, 24-25 Willow** 2023 Willow State Winter Carnival. Fireworks, sled dog races, homesteading competitions, talent contest, foot and ski races, cribbage tournament, food, much more. www.waco-ak.org (click on “WACO Events”)
- Feb. 18-19 Ketchikan** 31st Annual “Quilting in the Rain” quilt show by the Rainy Day Quilters Guild, Ted Ferry Civic Center. Includes raffle, Quilts of Valor presentation, more. Free. Call 907-225-6304 or visit the Rainy Day Quilters page on Facebook.
- Feb. 20 Nationwide** Presidents Day
- Feb. 18 Juneau** “Clink!” annual wine tasting fundraiser for the Juneau Arts and Humanities Council, 350 Whittier St., 4 to 6 p.m. Refreshments, live music and, new for this year, a dessert auction. General admission/standing-only tickets are \$30; reserved table/seats, \$40. <https://www.jahc.or/clink>
- Feb. 24-March 5 Anchorage** Anchorage Fur Rendezvous. Sled dog races, snow sculptures, fireworks display, amateur photo contest, fur auctions, Native Arts Market, Hold ‘Em poker tournament, Great Alaska Talent competition, Melodrama, Miners and Trappers Country Jam, Running of the Reindeer, outhouse races, snowshoe softball, much more. Full schedule of events and dates at www.Furrondy.net.



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The Flame of the Yukon

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL

Senior Voice Correspondent

After brief stints in Skagway and Whitehorse, one Kansas girl swirled her way into gold rush history when she stepped on stage at the Palace Grand in Dawson City in 1900. Kathleen Eloisa Rockwell, better known as “Klondike Kate,” delighted audiences of miners with her song-and-dance routines.

She wore an elaborate dress covered in red sequins and an enormous cape in one dance that made her famous. Kate would take the cape off and start leaping and twirling with a cane that had yards of red chiffon attached. Onlookers said she looked like fire dancing around.

At the end of her number, Kate dramatically dropped to the floor. The miners, who went wild for the redheaded beauty, named her “The Flame of the Yukon.”

Kate reportedly made up to \$750 a night for her performances (more than \$22,000 in 2022 dollars) and spent much of her fortune on fine clothes and jewelry. She boasted later in life that she wore “\$1,500 gowns from Paris and bracelets of the purest gold.”

Kate may have had a successful stage life for a couple of years, but her love life proved less fruitful. She fell for a man named Alexander Pantages, who owned Dawson’s Orpheum Theatre on Front Street. He convinced her to invest in a string of theaters in the Pacific Northwest and start their own theater company.

Kate wanted a wedding ring on her finger as part of the deal. But while she was on a trip, Pantages married a violinist and took all Kate’s money. She sued him for breach of promise in 1905, but later dropped the suit.

Although Kate, who later settled in Oregon, led neither an exciting nor a very lucrative life once she left Dawson, she did excel at self-promotion. She traveled on the lecture circuit around the Lower 48, expounding her legend and capitalizing on her life as “Queen of the Yukon,” “Belle of Dawson” and “Klondike Queen,” as she called herself.

In 1931, a Norwegian named Johnny Matson entered her life. Matson, who’d mined in the Klondike and had been smitten with Kate for 30 years, finally got around to telling her how he felt when he attended an Alaska-Yukon Sourdough reunion in Portland, Ore.

He wrote her about their meeting back at the turn of the century, and that began two years of correspondence – which finally led to marriage in 1933. Matson died in 1946.

Klondike Kate, left, is one of the most famous of the dance hall girls of Dawson during the Gold Rush. Seen here with an unidentified dancer, she often wore elaborate feather headdresses.

Historic Photo Archives



Kate actively promoted herself and the gold rush legends, of which she helped to create, well into her 60s. If she wasn’t dressing up for a holiday parade, reports say “she might be seen rolling her own cigarette with the deftness of a cowboy.”

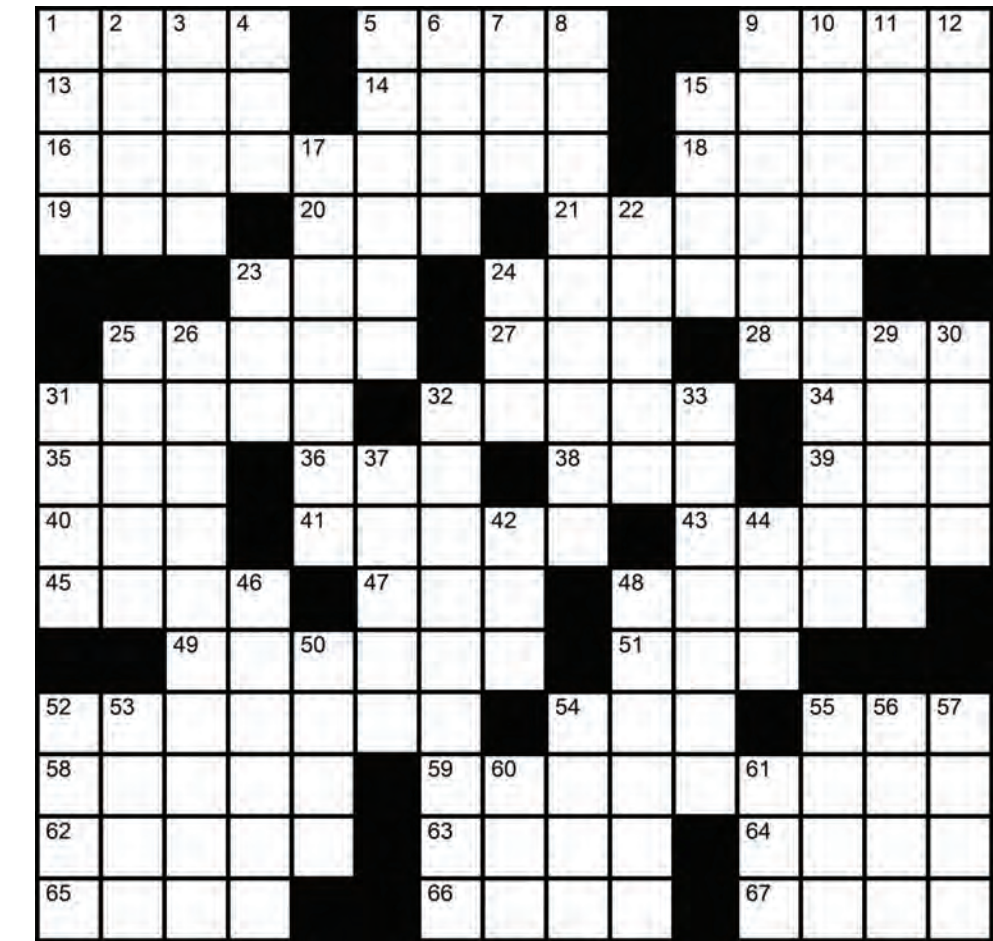
She later became a recluse and died on Feb. 21, 1957, at the age of 80.

This column features tidbits found while re-researching Alaska’s colorful past for Aunt Phil’s Trunk, a five-book Alaska history series written by Laurel Downing Bill and her late aunt, Phyllis Downing Carlson. The books are available at book-stores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com.

Book'em, Danno!

Across

- 1 Make tea
- 5 Limitless quantities
- 9 Mil. addresses
- 13 ___ Flite (bicycle brand)
- 14 It’s softer than gypsum
- 15 Pal of mirrors
- 16 Bibliophile
- 18 Simoleons
- 19 Double curve
- 20 Before, of yore
- 21 Rat Islands native
- 23 Friend of Frodo
- 24 Orbital high point
- 25 Durable wood
- 27 Alley org.
- 28 Asterope is one
- 31 Muzzle
- 32 Mustang
- 34 Order to a broker
- 35 Musician Yoko
- 36 Spanish bear
- 38 Mate to 36 Across
- 39 Bit of binary code
- 40 North Sea diver
- 41 Baby bird?
- 43 Underground network
- 45 Winter coating
- 47 Yup, to some
- 48 Civil rights leader
- 49 Petting zoo animal
- 51 Ghana group
- 52 Java’s big city
- 54 Flock sound
- 55 “___ show time!”
- 58 Rugged mountains feature
- 59 Children’s entertainment
- 62 Sends money electronically



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- 63 Countess’s husband
- 64 Sicilian resort
- 65 Teenager’s impudence
- 66 “Don’t move!”
- 67 Point in the right direction?
- 10 Accountment for a lady
- 11 Creole vegetable
- 12 Viewed
- 15 Smeltery refuse
- 17 Rough shelters
- 22 Bank offerings
- 23 Pittance
- 24 Visa statement abbr.
- 25 Lassitude
- 26 Racetrack figures
- 29 Female relatives
- 30 Deli loaves
- 31 Fly like an eagle
- 32 They hold tomes
- 33 Flavoring seeds
- 37 Shorttail weasel
- 42 Stephen of “Michael Collins”
- 44 Neighbor of Ida. and Wash.
- 46 Like 9 Down, only more so
- 48 Gates starter
- 50 Firm head (Abbr.)
- 52 Benchley epic
- 53 Cantatrice’s offering
- 54 When doubled, an island group
- 55 Macbeth’s burial place
- 56 Avoirdupois units
- 57 Card game for three
- 60 Sylvester, to Tweety
- 61 Quilting party

Crossword answers on page 22

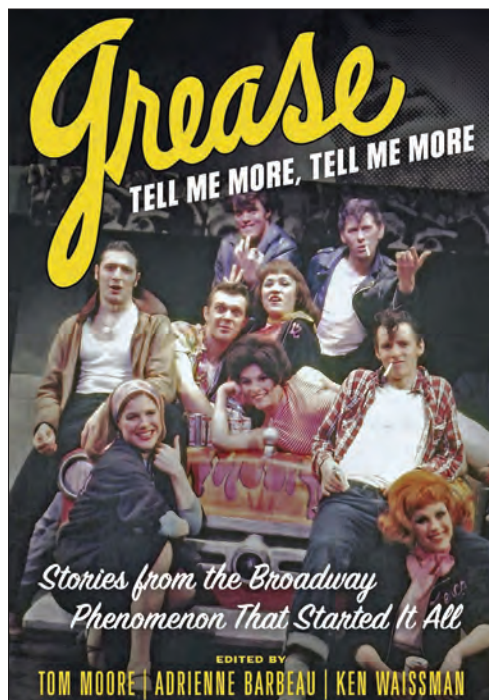


Adrienne Barbeau: From musicals to monsters

By **NICK THOMAS**

Tinseltown Talks

Before “Grease,” the hit 1978 movie, there was “Grease” the musical theater production first performed in Chicago in 1971 before moving to Broadway



Cover of “Grease, Tell Me More, Tell Me More, Stories from the Broadway Phenomenon That Started It All.”

Provided by book publisher

a year later for over 3,000 performances.

Adrienne Barbeau, who played Rizzo during the first five months of the show’s run, helped commemorate the 50th anniversary of the production as a co-editor of the 2022 book, “Grease, Tell Me More, Tell Me More – Stories from the Broadway Phenomenon That Started It All.” It features personal anecdotes from the Broadway cast and crew.

“It stemmed from a Zoom meeting that the original cast had when the pandemic first shut everything down,” recalled Barbeau from her home in Los Angeles. “The stories everybody told were just so delightful and touching and funny and most of them all new to me because I left the show early on.”

Barbeau and two others involved in the production began assembling the stories.

“We sent out a questionnaire to over 100 actors, musicians and crew members who had been involved in the show, asking them to write down their stories of working on the production,” said Barbeau. “We

put it all together in a terrific tribute to the show.”

Despite her strong connection to “Grease,” which opened on Valentine’s Day, 1972, to this day Barbeau still has not watched the popular 1978 movie version, which has many differences, including some of the music, from the original play.

“I happened to hear one of the songs from the movie a long time back, which was one of my songs,” she recalled. “It was lovely what they had done with it, but it just was not what we had done. So, I decided never to watch the film so I could keep the memory of our show and not cloud it with another version.”

Though her career began in musical theater, Barbeau left “Grease”

to co-star in the TV comedy “Maude” throughout the 70s. But in the early 80s, the actress starred in several horror/sci-fi films (“Swamp Thing,” “The Fog,” “Escape from New York,” “Creepshow”) forever cementing her movie status as a horror sex symbol (see www.abarbeau.com).

“I started out in musical theater and comedy, and the transition to more dramatic roles was never by design,” Barbeau explained. “It’s just that somebody offered me something I wanted to do or needed to do to pay bills. I ended up playing strong women who were not victims and they were often interesting and challenging roles.”

“People always say, oh you were a sex symbol,” she adds. “But I like to remind them my first love scene in film was with a swamp monster.”

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



A scene from the original New York production of “Grease,” Adrienne Barbeau in center.

Provided by book publisher



Adrienne Barbeau and the creature in “Swamp Thing.”

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An inspiring lesson from South Fork ranch

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

When I was in college – still a young and cal-low fellow – the TV show “Dallas” premiered, and I became a fan. A few seasons in, there was a scene that affected my career.

If you don’t remember the show, it featured a couple of brothers who were in the oil business in Texas. Bobby Ewing was the sincere, likeable younger brother. J. R. Ewing was the evil, manipulative older brother. The other characters included their regular nemesis, Cliff Barnes, a crusading lawyer who just happened to be Bobby’s brother-in-law.

Typically Cliff and the



Ewings, despite their family ties, were on the opposite side of things, but not always. In one episode, they were all in danger of being scammed, and needed a birth certificate to prove their claim. Unfortunately the scammers had swiped it from the county records department.

“No problem,” said Cliff

Barnes. “The state archives in Austin will have a duplicate.” With that information, he saved the day.

Watching this, as an undergrad still considering whether I should go to law school, I made a mental note: A lawyer is someone who knows how to get things done.

I liked that. After all, most of us have a bit of the gnostic impulse; we want to know what’s really going on, and how to deal with it. And while it wasn’t the only reason I went to law school (my discovery that liberal arts degrees don’t fetch much of a paycheck factored in), it certainly influenced my decision. Today, there is nothing I like more than knowing how to solve someone’s legal problem.

Fast forward about 40 years. The chief judge in Anchorage, and the head probate judge, ask for a meeting with all of the probate and estate planning lawyers. At the meeting, they present their problem: The court system set up forms for people to use for probate cases. But lay-people (that is, non-law-

yers) are having trouble understanding how to use the forms. As a result, they clog up the court system by filing the wrong forms. The judges ask us, “how do we solve this mess?”

The answer at the time was, if they aren’t sure, they can set an appointment with one of us (lawyers) and we can walk them through it or check over the forms before they get filed, to help them sort it out. Then they only have to pay for a little bit of the lawyer’s time, instead of having to come up with a large retainer to have the lawyer enter the case.

And that was a good enough solution. Until the pandemic.

We already had a shortage of lawyers in Alaska. Fewer and fewer applicants take the Bar exam each year, and the decline has been going on for decades. As a result we have an “aging Bar”, and when the pandemic hit, many of them decided to go ahead and retire. So today, the refrain I keep hearing, when I refer people out for probate cases, is “I can’t find a lawyer who is taking new

cases”. And probate isn’t even the most unpopular area of law practice to be in; this gets much worse in areas such as family law or criminal defense.

What do we do about this problem? I don’t know. There are several possible solutions, from setting up a law school in Alaska (we’re the only state that doesn’t have one); to allowing non-law school graduates to become lawyers, which several states allow; to establishing a “probate law self-help center” within the court system, similar to what they have for family law. Or maybe something else.

I’m not sure what the solution is. My point is that there is a problem. Because admitting that you have a problem is the first step.

And we’re not going to wake up and discover that this was all a dream.

Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning attorney. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation. For legal advice, consult an attorney who can take all the facts into account. If you can find one.

How much do you have to make to file taxes?

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

Dear Savvy Senior: What are the IRS income tax filing requirements for retirees this tax season? My income dropped way down when I retired in 2022, so I’m wondering if I need to even file a tax return this year. – *Recently Retired*

Dear Recently: Whether or not you are required to file a federal income tax return this year will depend on how much you earned last year, as well as the source of the income, your age and filing status.

Here’s a rundown of this tax season’s IRS tax filing requirement thresholds.

For most people, this is pretty straightforward. If your 2022 gross income – which includes all taxable income, not counting your Social Security benefits, unless you are married and filing separately – was below the threshold for your filing status and age, you may not have to file. But if it’s over, you will.

- **Single:** \$12,950 (\$14,700 if you’re 65 or older by Jan. 1, 2022).
- **Married filing jointly:** \$25,900 (\$27,300 if you or your spouse is 65 or older; or \$28,700 if you’re both over 65).

- **Married filing separately:** \$5 at any age.
- **Head of household:** \$19,400 (\$21,150 if 65 or older).
- **Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child:** \$25,900 (\$27,300 if 65 or older).

To get a detailed breakdown on federal filing requirements, along with information on taxable and nontaxable income, call the IRS at 800-829-3676 and ask them to mail you a free copy of the “1040 and 1040-SR Instructions for Tax Year 2022,” or you can see it online at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040gi.pdf.

Check here too


Be aware that there are other financial situations that can require you to file a tax return, even if your gross income falls below the IRS filing requirements. For example, if you earned more than \$400 from self-employment in 2022, owe any special taxes like an alternative minimum tax, or get premium tax credits because you, your spouse or a dependent is enrolled in a Health Insurance Marketplace plan, you’ll need to file.

page 21 please

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iPad Pencil, audiobooks, laptop chargers

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

Q. Is the Apple Pencil useful?

A. For me, it fits into the “nice-to-have” category. I have avoided writing about Apple Pencil before now because it was something of a curiosity. It only worked with pricey iPad models, and it seemed like a product whose customers already knew why they wanted one.

Today all four iPad model lines support Apple Pencil, including the least expensive model. Moreover, a recent system update added a new app called Freeform on every Apple device. Taken together, these changes make the Apple Pencil worth a deeper look.

Unfortunately, selecting the right iPad and Pencil is not a consumer-friendly process. There are two models of Apple Pencil alongside the four different iPad model lines. Figuring out what works with what can be confusing.

Usefulness is hard to generalize. There are several tasks where it feels indispensable. Handwriting text, obviously, and drawing. But it is also especially handy for retouching photographs and working with the new Freeform app.

Handling text is a bit of a mixed bag. Selecting and moving text blocks around

One aspect of the Apple Pencil is undeniable. Using it feels futuristic. It makes using an iPad feel more personal than a traditional computer or laptop.

seems easier to me with touch. But as a markup tool for PDFs, it can be very handy.

One aspect of the Apple Pencil is undeniable. Using it feels futuristic. It makes using an iPad feel more personal than a traditional computer or laptop.

Q. Is there a way to listen to audiobooks on a smartphone?

A. Yes. I have three suggestions for you to explore.

The first is the most expensive and easiest to use. Audible (audible.com) has a giant catalog of audio books. The books can be purchased in a Web browser, and they will be placed in a digital library. Install the Audible app on your smartphone and download any of the books in your library. They are yours to keep.

The second option is free, but it is only available to library card holders. If your local library subscribes to a service called OverDrive (overdrive.com), you can use an app called Libby to borrow audiobooks.

Libraries are wonderful places, and I encourage you to visit in person if you can,

and ask someone for help getting started.

The third option is a service I recently discovered called Chirp (chirpbooks.com). Chirp offers a catalog of books at discount prices. Like Audible, you purchase the books in a Web browser, then download the titles onto your smartphone. Chirp's store is easier to navigate than Audible, making them an excellent option for beginners.

Q. Are laptop power adapters interchangeable?

A. Sometimes. The power adapter included with your laptop (or phone) is always the best option for maximum safety and performance. However, I swap chargers all the time.

My laptop charger is plugged in behind a desk, making it difficult to reach.

I could buy another identical charger for travel, but that can be expensive. Third-party chargers from Anker are less expensive

Wander the Web

Here are my picks for worthwhile browsing this month:

World-Wide Radio Tuner

Do not be put off by the unusual address: Thousands of free radio stations around the world are only a click away.

radio.garden

Everything About Computing

The Crash Course Computer Science video series is accessible to a general audience. Watch it from the beginning or sample a title that interests you.

youtube.com/watch?v=O5nskjZ_GoI

Look! Up in the Sky

A live map of the world and all the airplanes in the sky. Drag the map to see any region. There are also apps available for Android and Apple.

flightradar24.com

and feature more options.

To make this work, there are two elements to consider: power (wattage) and cable connectors.

Connector compatibility is easy so let's start there. The cable and device ports either match or they don't. Every power adapter has a wattage rating. And every

device has a wattage requirement. Properly engineered devices are designed so that if the power levels do not match, either they do not work at all, or charging takes longer. That is all there is to it.

My laptop can consume

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Free medical flights with angel pilots

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

For 39 years, Angel Flight West has transported thousands of people to medical care – for free.

Flights are generally for passengers who can't afford airline tickets, or for whom travel by land or commercial airline could pose a physical hardship, passengers with compromised immune systems or who live in remote areas without access to commercial transportation.

Angel Flight West provides air transportation within and across 12 Western states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Who can travel

Flights are provided for patients traveling to and from medical treatment in various categories:

- Patients with any medical condition who are ambulatory, medically stable, and can fly in a non-pressurized aircraft are accepted unless that condition would make flying a health risk
- Transplant recipients
- Caring for a sick relative or attending a funeral
- Flights for children and adults going to various camps, including burn survivors, children with diabetes, families impacted by HIV or AIDS, children who are cancer patients or cancer survivors, and other medical situations.
- Domestic violence relocation
- Mental health treatment
- Assistance for military personnel



Transportation challenges create one of the most daunting barriers to healthcare—a barrier second only to the cost. As a volunteer-led, nonprofit organization, Angel Flight West's volunteer pilots provide free medical transportation to help passengers reach their health care. Mary has flown with Angel Flight West 50 times, some missions with volunteer pilots and some with Alaska Airlines.

Photos courtesy Angel Flight West

- Blood, organ and tissue donations
- Disaster response

Angel Flight West's network of 1,800 volunteers are private pilots who fly their own or rented airplanes and generously donate the costs of the flight.

For trips to and from Alaska and Hawaii, the company works closely with its commercial airline partners. Angel Flight West has a partnership with Alaska Airlines to provide transportation within Alaska and Hawaii, as well as flights for residents of Alaska who need medical

treatment in the Lower 48 and people in Hawaii seeking care on the mainland.

Never any cost

Angel Flight West passengers will never be charged for any service, according to the company's website. Flights are cost-free and scheduled to accommodate your medical appointment.

Best of all, you can travel as many times as you need.

On the ground, if necessary and available, Earth Angels will transport you to a nearby airfield, where a pilot will fly you to a

treatment facility, or to a conveniently located relay point where you'll be greeted by other pilots for the second or third leg of your trip.

Flights are typically in small, private planes that

allow easier collection of passengers in remote or rural areas. After your medical appointment, another Earth Angel and an Angel Flight West volunteer

next page please

Going the extra mile to fight cancer

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel
Correspondent

For the second year in a row, Alaska Airlines and GCI have teamed up to donate one million miles to the American Cancer Society and their program to help Alaskan cancer patients travel for their treatment.

Whether traveling from remote areas of the state or traveling out of state, every patient could use a little more support in their corner. The American Cancer Society can assist patients who need to travel within Alaska for medical treatment. In some limited cases, travel to the mainland may also be possible

for patients who cannot otherwise receive treatment for their condition in their location.

Three days or more in advance is required to request a reservation. Call the American Cancer Society at 800-227-2345 if you are interested in requesting a free flight or simply wish to donate miles to the program.



Angel Flight West/Alaska Airlines passenger Bernardo was able to fly Alaska Airlines to the Amputee Coalition Conference in Palm Springs, Calif. this year.



Flights

from page 20

pilot will make sure you’re safely picked up and brought home.

Criteria and restrictions

Angel Flights West is not an air ambulance. Passengers must be medically stable, able to walk, fly in a non-pressurized plane, and be able to sit up in a

seat with a seatbelt fastened around them. A medical release is needed from your physician before your trip. A minimum of one week’s notice for all Angel Flight West trips is required. Flights are generally 900 miles or fewer, but it can accommodate longer flights, especially for passengers in Alaska. If you have a scheduled medical appointment or are ready to travel for one of the approved travel reasons, request your flight now. Call 888-426-2643, or review the frequently asked questions at www.angelflightwest.org/about-us/#ab-faq. If you have flown with Angel Flight West in the past, call the office at 310-390-2958 to schedule your next flight.



Command Pilot Kaipo Gilman flies Edward “Jerry” to treatment at Pali Momi Medical Center. Kaipo is a pilot within Angel Flight West’s Hawaii wing. Courtesy Angel Flight West

Taxes

continued from page 18

You’ll also need to file if you’re receiving Social Security benefits, and one-half of your benefits plus your other gross income and any tax-exempt interest exceeds \$25,000, or \$32,000 if you’re married and filing jointly. To figure all this out, the IRS offers an online tax tool that asks a series of questions that will help you determine if you’re required to file, or if you should file because you’re due a refund. It takes less than 15 minutes to complete. You can access this tool at www.IRS.gov/Help/ITA – click on “Do I Need to File a Tax Return?” Or you can get assistance over the phone by calling the IRS helpline at 800-829-1040.

Check your state

Even if you’re not required to file a federal tax return this year, don’t assume that you’re also excused from filing state income taxes (if your state residency is somewhere other than Alaska – Ed.). The rules for your state might be very different. Check with your state tax agency before concluding that you’re entirely in the clear. For links to state tax agencies see www.Taxadmin.org/state-tax-agencies.

Tax preparation help

If you find that you do need to file a tax return this year, you can free file through the IRS at www.IRS.gov/FreeFile if your 2022 adjusted gross income was below \$73,000. Or, if you need some help, contact the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (or TCE) program. Sponsored

by the IRS, TCE provides free tax preparation and counseling to middle and low-income taxpayers, age 60 and older. Call 800-906-9887 or visit <https://IRS.treasury.gov/freetax-prep> to locate services near you. You can also get tax preparation assistance through the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide service. Call 1-800-478-2221 or call Alaska 2-1-1 information, or visit <http://www.aarp.org/taxaide> for more information. You don’t have to be an AARP member to use this service. Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of “The Savvy Senior” book.

Senior Voice is on Facebook!



Search for “Senior Voice Alaska” then click on over! You can also follow Senior Voice on Twitter: @seniorvoiceak



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

- Identify your long-term support needs
- Explore your options for meeting those needs
- Connect you with the resources you choose for yourself or your loved one
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907-343-7770 www.muni.org/adrc

Kenai Peninsula/Kodiak Island/Valdez/Cordova

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

Southeast Alaska

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

Mat-Su Borough

LINKS Aging & Disability Resource Center
777 N. Crusey St., A101, Wasilla, AK 99654
907-373-3632 / 1-855-355-3632 www.linksprc.org

Fairbanks North Star Borough

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

Bristol Bay Native Association

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



1-877-625-2372

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

Art

continued from page 6

modern take on classical art. Paintings worth a look include Andrew Wyeth’s “Christina’s World” (his best known work), “The Luncheon on the Grass,” by French painter Édouard Manet, (who bridged realism and impressionism), and Spanish painter Salvador Dalí’s “The Persistence of Memory”. For more edge, check out Jenny Saville, whose depictions of the human form transcend boundaries of both classical figuration and modern abstraction.

Captivating sculptural pieces include “The Thinker,” by Auguste Rodin; Harry Bertoia’s jewelry and furniture; Michelangelo’s “David”; or contemporary “The Bean” by internationally acclaimed Anish Kapoor. Ither distinctive works include “The Pieta,” by Michelangelo; “The Dying Gaul,” a world masterpiece revered by art

historians and scholars; “The Prioress’s Tale,” by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, a craftsman and painter; and M.C. Escher, a contemporary graphic artist who made mathematically inspired woodcuts, lithographs and mezzotints. Overall, art paired with aging adults is a sweet relationship to better handle mental and emotional

Arts and aging adults have always had a special relationship. From operas to ballets, seniors are some of the most avid fans.

situations with agility. So, check out both the performing and fine arts and create your own love story with heart. 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.

Tech

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140 watts. But I usually travel with a 3-port Anker Nano 2 charger that delivers 65 watts. The Nano 2 is much easier to carry, but it takes longer to fully recharge my laptop. That is a tradeoff I’m happy to make. Swapping chargers has limits. Do not expect a 5 watt phone charger to re-

charge a laptop. Nevertheless, you may find that a lower wattage power adapter is a convenient choice. Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at techtalk@bobdel.com.

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Crossword answers from page 16

B	R	E	W		S	E	A	S			A	P	O	S
A	E	R	O		T	A	L	C			S	M	O	K
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Vision

continued from page 11

eyeball muscles. How? One way is to periodically focus on objects that are in the distance. An easy exercise throughout the day, especially if you’re working at a computer, is to do “near-far jumps.” Focus on the end of a pencil held in front of your face, then “jump” your focus to a tree or mountain top you can see way out there. Linger on the distant object for three seconds then back to the pencil for a few seconds and back out the window. You

may actually feel your inner eyeball muscles loosening. Like any other muscle, it’s a good idea to warm up your eyes before using them. Consider quickly rubbing your palms together, building up some heat, then placing the palms gently over the eyes with the fingers pointing up toward the hairline and the thumbs over the temples, and hold them there until the heat penetrates in through the eyelids. Do this several times at the beginning of a morning at the computer. You can also press quite firmly all around the bony orbit to stimulate circulation to the

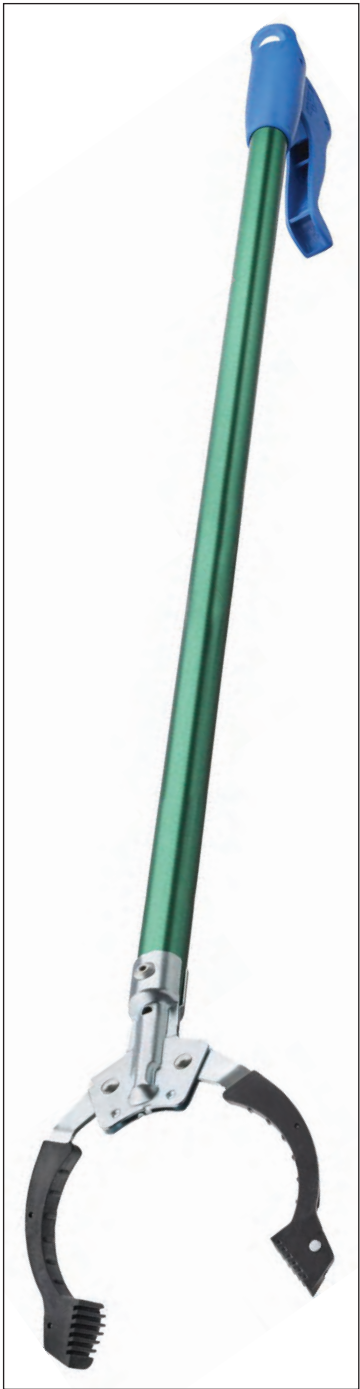
eyes and the muscles that move them. Try also resting your chin in your hands and using the middle fingers to firmly stroke along the eyebrows from inner to outer aspect several times in a row. Another eye strengthening exercise which just takes seconds is to close the eyes, then move them in a figure-eight pattern, first one way six to eight times, then the other way. Go slowly enough to explore the full range of movement. Emily Kane is a naturopathic doctor based in Juneau. Contact her online at <http://www.dremilykane.com>.

Grabber

continued from page 11

here are some top-rated products to consider. **All-purpose.** For retrieving small and medium-sized items, the “Ettore Grip’n Grab,” is a top option that can handle most chores. This 34-inch-long tool has a soft, comfortable trigger handgrip and a rubberized jaw that’s strong enough to lift objects up to 5 pounds and up to 4 inches wide, yet sensitive enough to pick up something as small as a dime. The jaw also rotates and locks at 90 degrees for vertical or horizontal use to help you reach things in awkward spaces.

Lightweight. If you want a reacher primarily for retrieving small lightweight items around the house, the “RMS Featherweight the Original Reacher” is a top pick. Available in 32 and 26-inch lengths, it’s made from ultra-lightweight aluminum and has a trigger-style handgrip with a serrated jaw that provides a secure grip when lifting objects. It also has a magnet built into the tip for picking up lightweight metal objects like a paperclip, and a small hook (or horn) that aids in retrieving things like clothes, shoes or keys. It even has a built-in clip on the arm so you can attach it to canes, walkers and wheelchairs. But, because of its super-lightweight



The Unger Nifty Nabber Pro has a built-in magnet for picking up small metal objects, an ergonomic squeeze-grip handle and can lift 8 pounds.

design, it doesn’t work well at retrieving heavier items like canned goods from shelves. **Foldable.** For easier

storage, the top selling folding grabber is the “Zayad Reacher Grabber Tool,” which is 32-inches long and has a slip-joint in the arm that allows it to easily fold in half. It also has a soft, ergonomic grip with a rubberized, rotating jaw that can lift objects up to three pounds and up to 4 inches wide. **Heavy-duty.** For heavier-lifting jobs or for outdoor use, the “Unger Nifty Nabber” is a top choice. Available in 36 and 48-inch lengths, this sturdy tool has a rubber-coated heavy-duty claw that grips small, large, and odd-shaped items with ease. It also has a built-in magnet for picking up small metal objects, an ergonomic squeeze-grip handle and can lift 8 pounds.

Where to buy

You can buy reacher-grabbers at many pharmacies, retail, medical equipment and home improvement stores. But, because it’s a specialty item, the selection is very limited. Your best bet is to buy one online at Amazon.com, which sells all of the top reacher-grabbers at prices ranging from around \$10 to \$20. Just type the product name in the search bar to find it. Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of “The Savvy Senior” book.

Send your news tips and event items to editor@seniorvoicealaska.com.



Music

continued from page 5

positive, neutral or negative. A Patient Health Questionnaire and a General Anxiety Disorder screening are also used to establish personalized music therapy treatments.

By determining the emotional state of the user, the app creates a customized and specifically sequenced playlist of songs using one of three strategies: Consoling, relaxing or uplifting. Consoling music reflects the energy and mood of the user, while relaxing music provides a positive, low energy. Uplifting music is also positive, but higher energy.

“The most important thing is to enable people to drive their emotion to be more positive by themselves with the app,” said Law.

Music as a form of praying

In the Johnny Mathis’ online fan clubs, many older adults report that listening to his music is like praying. For 72-year-old Susan Trezona, it is similar. When she was in grade school she took clarinet lessons and discovered how music can change mood, fear and anxiety.

“It takes your thoughts away from wherever you are and takes you somewhere else,” said Trezona. “We grew up in a house with show tunes playing

through the house all day, along with Frank Sinatra, Eydie Gorme and Dean Martin.”

Playing music, dancing and movement activities can aid in maintaining walking endurance, improving range of motion and strength in older adults. Also, playing an instrument as a kid can lead to a sharper mind in old age, according to a study at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. The study included 70 adults between the ages of 60 and 83 and researchers used a battery of tests to measure memory and other cognitive abilities. They found those who had played an instrument for a decade or longer scored significantly higher on the tests than those with no musical background.

Trezona, who lives in Eugene, Oregon, said as a child she attended opera regularly and so she learned how different genres can accomplish different things.

“I use music to do housework and bop along with it and sing. I usually listen to Amy Winehouse, Meghan Trainor and PINK. They keep me moving,” said Trezona, a nurse-midwife who has delivered more than 3,000 babies.

When she is having a difficult day or feeling anxiety, she finds listening to music and spending time in her greenhouse is like going to church. Trezona said music is magical in its ability to lift her spirits.

“Music makes you feel like you are with people and it gets you moving. I almost always have music on. The beat makes me feel happy,” she said.

Rejuvenating your journey with Joni Mitchell

Research shows that music activities, whether it is listening or making music, can influence older adults’ perceptions about the quality of their lives. Andy Nahas is the founder and executive director of MusicPower. The organization offers financial and analytical support to organizations and individuals using music as a tool for solving societal problems, boosting happiness levels and empowering young and older adults.

He said although everyone understands the importance of music, its application to quality of life issues is greatly underappreciated. Relatable popular music instruction for economically challenged youth, a choir for the homeless, an orchestra for refugees, and professional style concerts at nursing homes are examples of initiatives which are far too rare, according to Nahas.

The American Mu-

sic Therapy Association (AMTA) defines music therapy as the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship by a credentialed professional who has completed an approved music therapy program. Music therapy interventions can address a variety of healthcare and educational goals, such as promoting wellness, managing stress, promoting physical rehabilitation and more.

“The term ‘music therapy’ refers to the formal, scientific approach to the use of music for improving certain outcomes. I can’t really speak to that, but I can tell you that musical entertainment, if it’s engaging enough, is one of the most powerful ways to increase happiness levels in elders. This should come as no surprise, as this is true for non-elders as well. It’s unfortunate when elders simply don’t have as much access to professional entertainment compared to

the rest of us,” said Nahas.

Stanford University School of Medicine conducted a study with 30 depressed people over 80 years of age and found that participants in a weekly music therapy group were less anxious, less distressed, and had higher self-esteem. Involvement in participatory arts programs has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health, physical health and social functioning in older adults, regardless of their ability.

“There is a song called ‘Music is the Doctor,’ by the Doobie Brothers. The words include ‘music is the doctor. It makes you feel like you want to.’ That song is about changing how you want to feel and it is so important to know music can be a great tool for redefining things,” said Trezona.

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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