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The Ed Washington Experience Debut Performance at Studio C

Featuring a special acoustic set from Ashley Young

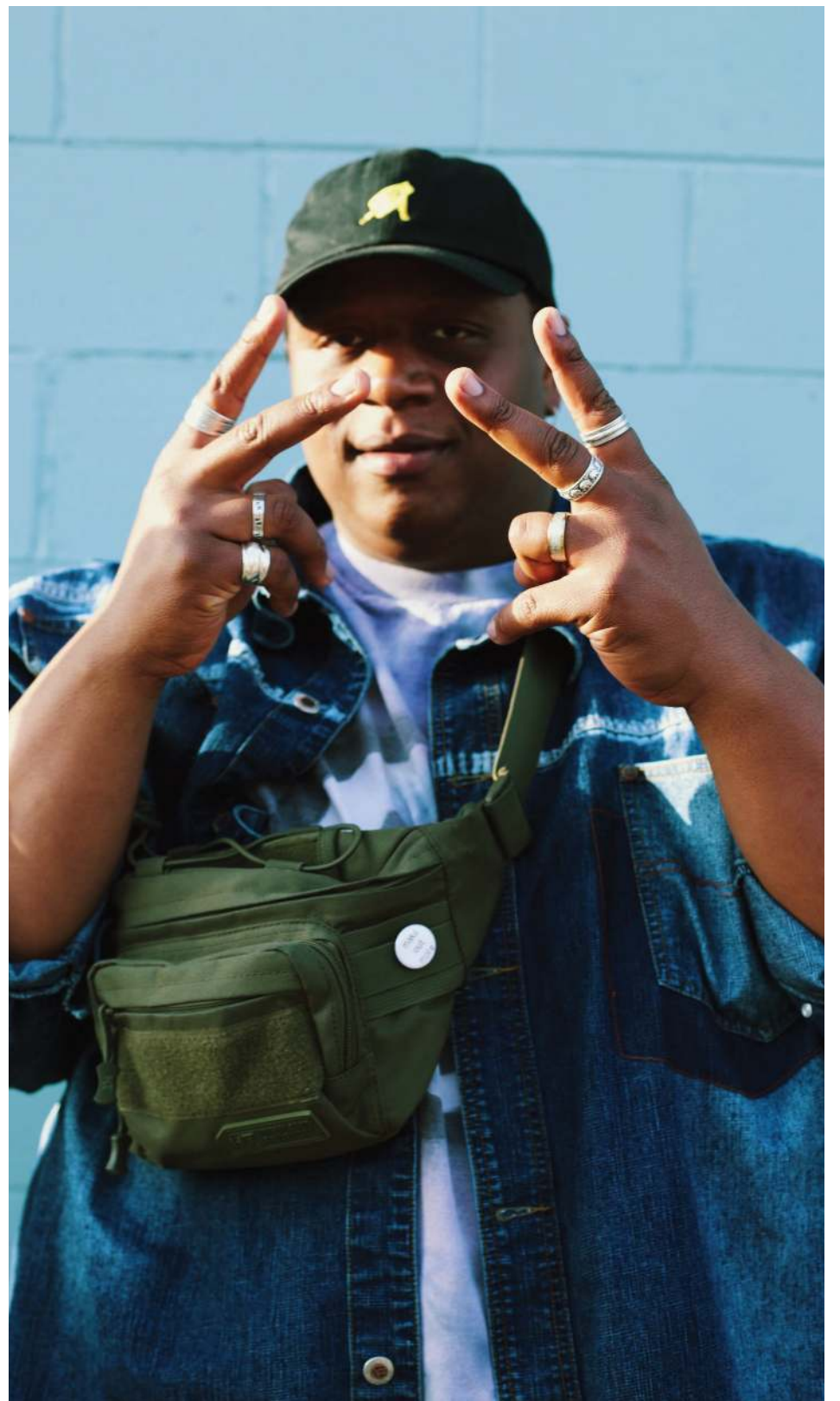
BY BECKY KENDALL

Performing together for the first time, Studio C is proud to present 'The Ed Washington Experience. Fronted by Ed Washington on vocals and keys, Levi Betz on guitar, Oliver Petraitis on bass, and Kengo Nagaoka on drums, The Ed Washington Experience features Washington's music in an exciting, fresh, new way.

Washington, an Anchorage-raised artist, and producer, graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Music from UAA. During his years in the Anchorage music community, he has played with several ensembles, won three Alaska Hip Hop & R&B Awards, and has been involved with many different community organizations. These experiences earned him a legislative citation for his accomplishments and contributions to the local art community.

Washington will share the spotlight with singer-songwriter Ashley Young, who recently returned to Alaska after 13 years. While living Outside, Young performed with the band Juice in Idaho. Their debut album, "Skating Calls," garnered the band the opportunity to open for Durand Jones & the Indications, Crumb and Polyrhythmics. In 2020, Ashley taught herself guitar and brought her soulful, warm vocal tone into her first solo effort. Her solo project is an honest and soul-stirring reflection on moving, loss, and self-love. This will be Ashley's first solo set and first gig back in her home state.

The performance takes place May 20th from 7-10pm at Studio C (705 W 59th Avenue, Unit C). Tickets are \$10 and are available online at [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or at the door.



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Humanitarian flights will bring 600 Ukrainians to Alaska

BY RASMUSON FOUNDATION

Rasmuson Foundation’s board has approved emergency assistance to help 600 Ukrainians fleeing the war resettle in Alaska.

New Chance Inc., a nonprofit affiliated with New Chance Christian Church, is chartering three flights from Poland to Anchorage, each carrying 200 Ukrainians. Rasmuson Foundation is contributing \$150,000 toward the \$750,000 total cost. Alaska businesses and individuals have contributed generously, including \$150,000 from Weidner Apartment Homes to match the Foundation award.

The first flight is this week, and the others will arrive later this month. Most of those coming have strong family ties to Alaska. About 150 are children.

New Chance, with Ukrainian clergy and membership, already has been helping Ukrainians displaced by the war with food, clothing and employment in Alaska. About 50 have made it here so far. The work has expanded to help Ukrainians living in camps in Poland and still in Ukraine. In March, Rasmuson Foundation provided a \$25,000 grant to help with local efforts.

“Our board is unanimous in the desire to help,” said Diane Kaplan, Rasmuson Foundation president and CEO. “Those escaping the horrors in their homeland will be our neighbors in Alaska. We are glad to do what we can to support those who have lost so much get to a safe and welcoming place.”

Businesses already have expressed interest in the skill-sets they will bring. New Chance, family members and other volunteers all are providing help in housing, feeding and employing the new arrivals. Those interested in donating or volunteering can do so through New Chance Inc. at UkraineReliefProgram.com.

“We are humbled Rasmuson Foundation came alongside our effort to better the lives of these arriving Ukrainians and grateful to the entire Alaskan community for their incredible support,” said New Chance program director Zori Opanasevych.

One of the donors came to the United States 47 years ago with the help of an anonymous contribution. Today he is one of Anchorage’s most successful businessmen and told New Chance this is “a life I would have not been afforded otherwise.”

The support will help “give the same opportunity to future Alaskans,” said Opanasevych, who previously worked for Catholic Social Services providing refugee assistance.

“We are so grateful that New Chance organized humanitarian flights to help those who have lost their homes and family members as a result of the war,” said Robin Dempsey, CEO of Catholic Social Services. “We fully support this effort.”



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Senate signs off on reckless \$3.6 billion dividend plan

On Tuesday, Sen. Mike Shower, pretending to know that oil prices will stay in the \$120-a-barrel range, tried to defend a reckless budget that calls for \$3.6 billion in dividends, about \$5,600 per person.

“I will tell you, as I mentioned before, just from Morgan Stanley today, or the article was just sent to me, that they’re predicting \$120 a barrel of oil. [Alaska North Slope] crude today was at \$116 a barrel, and we’re predicting it to be that for some time... based on world events not getting better. While that’s bad for the world, it’s good for prices here for oil,” Sen. Shower said Tuesday.

Sen. Shower should have checked on the current price of Alaska North Slope crude before speaking with conviction about predictions.

Alaska oil wasn’t selling for \$116 Tuesday. That was last week. The price dropped to \$110 Monday and fell \$3 more on Tuesday. The change is a key indicator that senators are foolish to build a swollen budget based on rosy assumptions about oil prices. If they’re wrong, that state will suffer the conse-

quences of taking hundreds of millions of dollars from savings.

Sen. Shower acts as if the current environment is stable when it’s not. Instead, it’s volatile, and caution is required, not the recklessness he and other so-called conservatives favor.

As one of the chief architects of the \$3.6 billion dividend approved as part of the Senate budget Tuesday, Sen. Shower has no idea what will happen to oil prices in the next hour, let alone the next year.

The right-wing Republicans in the Senate, assisted by Senate Democrats Scott Kawasaki, Bill Wielchowski, and Donny Olson, are betting on high oil prices to pay inflated dividends, provide state services and build projects in the next fiscal year. Unfortunately, it’s a bad gamble for Alaska.

Sitka Sen. Bert Stedman said the finance committee wanted to use \$85 per barrel as the break-even budget point, not wanting to depend on oil staying at more than \$100 per barrel, but the Senate decided to bank on higher prices.

The committee proposed using any money from higher oil prices to forward fund education and save money from price spikes over \$100 by putting it in the Permanent Fund.

The Senate rejected forward funding for education, with the right-wing Republicans and three Democrats pushing the \$3.6 billion dividend of nearly \$5,600 per person. The dividend would use the entire annual payout of the Permanent Fund,

with \$300 million more.

Sen. Natasha von Imhof said that about \$1 billion of the budget is unfunded, contrary to the Constitution. Therefore, the budget is not balanced or sustainable.

“No one can predict the price of oil or the market for the next 12 months. And to create a budget that depends on \$100 oil per barrel, in my opinion, is reckless,” she said.

It will be up to the conference committee on the budget, with members from the House and Senate, to create a sensible budget plan, one that does not depend on oil price guesses and the war in Ukraine.

One of the symptoms of our financial disconnect is that the early news coverage of the Senate action mentioned \$5,600 per person, but not the total cost to the state. The \$3.6 billion is within a half-billion or so of the entire general fund budget.

The biggest single beneficiary of the plan to give everyone \$5,600 —remember that will not be the final number — would be the federal government, which will collect hundreds of millions in federal income taxes.

Saving an extra \$2 billion or \$3 billion — a much better option than massive dividends — would provide improved services and opportunities for Alaskans of all income levels for generations to come. But this is an election year, and the Senate, at least, can’t see past November.



BY DERMOT COLE

ConocoPhillips set new record for North Slope horizontal oil drilling; production on slope holding steady

BY TIM BRADNER

North Slope production held steady in April compared with March and April of 2021, according to production data released May 1 by Alaska’s Department of Revenue.

The Alpine field, one of three larger fields on the slope, has been restored to average production after being cut 8,000 barrels per day in January and February as operator ConocoPhillips dealt with an unusual underground gas release.

In another development, ConocoPhillips completed its first long horizontal production well to a new project in the Alpine Field located approximately 34 miles west of Kuparuk. The well was drilled to 35,526 feet, a new record for an Alaska horizontal well.

That distance means the drill rig in the Alpine field has drilled horizontally, or laterally, from the location of the rig to the underground Fiord West deposit.

Meanwhile, overall North Slope production averaged 489,565 barrels per day in April, almost dead even with 483,400 barrels per day in March and 489,303 barrels per day in April 2021, according to the revenue department data.

In year-over-year comparisons, the Prudhoe Bay field, the largest North Slope field that is operated by Hilcorp Energy, averaged 314,831 barrels per day in April 2022 compared with 483,440 barrels per day in April 2021.

Kuparuk River, operated by ConocoPhillips, averaged 104,270 barrels per day in April compared with 113,152 barrels per day in 2021. The Alpine field, also operated by ConocoPhillips, averaged 49,901 b/d in April compared with 48,710 barrels per day in April 2021.

The small Lisburne field operated by Hilcorp averaged 20,563 barrels per day in April compared with 22,350 barrels per day in April 2021. This includes output from the Lisburne reservoir underlying part of the eastern

Prudhoe Bay field and production from several smaller nearby reservoirs such as Endicott, Point McIntyre, and Niakuk.

Natural gas condensates from the ExxonMobil-operated Point Thomson field 60 miles east of Prudhoe Bay are transported by pipeline and “commingled” with Lisburne field production and included in the data for that field.

While North Slope production is holding steady, it also continued on a gradual, long-term decline. For example, in April 2019, the last year before the pandemic affected industry worldwide, the North Slope averaged 506,475 b/d.

Prudhoe Bay showed an increase from 2019 to 2022, from 297,045 barrels per day in April 2019 to 314,831 in April 2022; the two other larger slope fields showed declines.

Kuparuk River dropped from 122,843 barrels per day in April 2019 to 104,270 barrels per day in April 2022. Likewise, the Alpine field dropped from 66,151 barrels per day in April 2019 to 49,901 barrels per day in April 2022.

However, the effects of new production will gradually be felt in the next few months. ConocoPhillips’ new

GMT 2 project in the National Petroleum Reserve will increase output through late spring and summer, for example.

In a related development, ConocoPhillips cut Alpine field production at its CD1 drill site as the company dealt with gas release from an undetected below-ground low-pressure gas pocket at approximately the 4,000-foot level where gas had migrated to the surface through gravel on the CD1 production pad.

The company cemented off a section of a water injection well on the pad to stop gas from entering the wellbore. However, the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, a state agency that regulates well safety, reported that minute quantities of gas were still being detected inside well houses on the CD1 production pad. No gas was being detected outside the well houses, though.

ConocoPhillips relocated workers from the pad as a precaution when the gas was detected. In a statement, the company said that no injuries or damage resulted from the release.

Small gas pockets are not unusual on the North Slope and can be a drilling hazard if they are high-pressure. In other developments, ConocoPhillips has completed the first extended-reach horizontal production well drilled to Fiord West, an undeveloped accumulation in the Alpine field.

“The Fiord West Well drilled to the planned total depth on April 11. The total measured depth of the well is 35,526 feet, making it the longest North American land-based well (a record previously held by a CD5 well). We are currently running completions in the well,” ConocoPhillips spokesperson Rebecca Boys said in a May 3 statement.

For the project, ConocoPhillips used a specialty-built heavy drill rig, Rig 26, operated by Doyon Drilling Co.

According to sources familiar with the project, technical difficulties in drilling the well were encountered that resulted in a delay in completion. Drilling on the well started in the second quarter of 2021.

Additional horizontal wells are in the works, but ConocoPhillips told state officials in filings that it will do pilot test wells to assess subsurface conditions before commencing planning for the added wells.

The first well will also be used as an injector rather than for production as had been initially planned, state officials were told. This means that a startup of Fiord West might await the additional drilling. ConocoPhillips has estimated that Fiord West will produce 20,000 b/d when fully online.

The company has had good luck in drilling long horizontal wells elsewhere on the slope, particularly at the CD5 drill site adjacent to the Alpine field, but localized geological conditions can create problems in drilling these complex wells, according to sources.

For example, Eni Oil and Gas has encountered technical difficulties in drilling and completing its North Nikaitchuq exploration well. The well was a long horizontal well drilled to test potential offshore producing reservoirs in federal Outer Continental Shelf waters north of the State of Alaska submerged lands along the coast.



State Capitol building in Juneau.

House passes VPSO reform bill but not before ugly comments about taxing villages

BY MATT BUXTON
THE MIDNIGHT SUN

The House on Thursday passed Senate Bill 81 by Sen. Donny Olson, legislation that implements several reform measures aimed at improving the state’s Village Public Safety Officer program. It passed with near-unanimous support but not before a particularly ugly debate about forcing villages in unorganized parts of the state that have no tax base to pay for their public safety.

The legislation brings mandatory background checks for applicants to the rural public safety program, establishes a clearer process for VPSOs to start carrying firearms and sets up new avenues for tribal organizations to provide assistance to officers whether it’s financial, housing or transportation (services many tribal organizations are already providing in some sort). It’s the product of a working group aimed at improving the program, which has faced significant budgetary issues that have made recruitment and retention difficult.

For those supportive of the program, solving these issues is a matter of fairness and equity in Alaska particularly as state resources have continued to pour into policing in Mat-Su while a significant fraction of communities have no policing of any sort.

“There is undoubtedly a need to address the crisis in public safety infrastructure and service across rural Alaska. Reporting from 2019 indicated that 1 in 3 Alaska communities do not have any form of local law enforcement,” said Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky, D-Bethel, referencing work done by the Anchorage Daily News/ProPublica about public safety disparities in Alaska. “Quite frankly this compounds the challenges and contributes to the disproportionality of interpersonal violence we see occurring across the state.”

While the underlying legislation had broad support, it didn’t stop several Republicans from complaining that rural Alaska is somehow getting preferential treatment with the program. Rep. George Rauscher, R-Sutton, introduced a measure that would force the tribal organizations and villages to directly fund the VPSO program. It was a particularly rich point coming from the a legislator from the Mat-Su, whose refusal to take on policing powers (and therefore the responsibility to fund them) has seen a vast amount of the state trooper resources focused there.

VPSO, contined on page A16



COURTESY OF CONOCOPHILLIPS ALASKA

The Colville River Unit (commonly referred to as Alpine) is located in the Colville River Delta on Alaska’s western North Slope, 34 miles west of the Kuparuk River Field (Kuparuk) and eight miles north of the Inupiat village of Nuiqsut.

Real Worries

I'm a straight guy, married to a straight woman for 15 years. Several years back, I opened up to my wife about my fantasies of her sleeping with other men. I was nervous about bringing it up. Her views on sex had always been traditional, and she had always expressed a very strict idea of monogamy and commitment. So, I was extremely relieved when her reaction was intrigue rather than disgust. She was curious about it and



SAVAGE LOVE BY DAN SAVAGE

wondered if I really wanted it to happen or if it was just something I wanted to keep in our rotation of dirty talk. Fast-forward to this week, and my wife tells me she is interested in exploring this. (Note to other guys who want this from their wives: be respectful, don't pressure, and give her time to think about it. Your patience might be rewarded!) Here is the problem: We both have careers that could be complicated or damaged by the stigma around "cheating." I know about all the apps out there, but we live a large city, and there is a non-zero chance that we might run into someone on the apps we are connected to professionally or socially. Are any of the apps out there geared toward folks who want to go about this carefully? Is it possible to minimize the risk of professional or social embarrassment here, or is this just something we must accept to pursue this lifestyle?

—*Hooking Up, Seeking Help*

There are lots of dating apps for people and/or couples looking for casual sex and/or kinky sex (Feeld, 3Somer, #Open, et al), and lots of people—single and partnered—looking for casual and/or kinky sex on regular dating apps (Tinder, OKCupid, Christian Mingle, et al.). But hookup/threesome/swinger apps, while perceived as sleazier, are a safer bet for a couple like you and your wife.

While there's no way to eliminate your risk of being recognized on an app, HUSH, anyone who spots you on Feeld looking for extracurricular dick was on Feeld looking for and/or offering up a little extracurricular dick of their own. The threat of mutually assured destruction—if they gossip about you, you'll gossip about them—is usually enough to restrain bad actors, as is the threat of the obvious follow-up question. ("Wait, why are you on Feeld?") And most people on hookup apps aren't bad actors, HUSH, but fundamentally decent people like you and your wife, i.e., singles and couples looking for a little fun, not for an opportunity to hurt anyone. A friend or a relative or a coworker who spots your wife in a bar with a strange man—or in the lobby of a hotel or on her way into your apartment—is likelier to cause you headaches than one of your fellow perverts online.

To minimize your risk of being spotted and outed on the apps, HUSH, don't post face pics and only share them after you've established—to the best of your ability—the person you're talking to isn't a bot, a pic collector, or an extortionist. Again, there's no way to fully eliminate the risk, but at a certain point you have to trust your gut and take a risk. You also have the option of creating a profile in a city you visit regularly but don't live in, HUSH. After you've found and vetted a few good candidates, get yourself some airline tickets and a hotel room and have those drinks in a bar that a colleague, a fan, or your father-in-law is unlikely to walk into.

There's a story making the rounds on Reddit about people getting those metallic "bejeweled butt plugs" all the way into their asses and needing pretty intense intervention to get them out, ranging from partners pulling them out with their fingers (the unfun kind of double penetration) to actual surgery in a hospital (only fun for a very select few). The blame, apparently, is the fact that the base of these toys is rarely wider than the widest party of the head, which is pretty damning, and that lubed metal is slipperier than lubed silicone. So here are the operative questions: Are metallic bejeweled butt plugs safe or not so much? Are silicone bejeweled butt plugs any safer? Are there any safe bejeweled butt plug options out there? The world isn't going to stop being obsessed with sparkly butt toys any time soon, so we're going to need to find a way to do it safely.

—*Insertion Toy Extraction Messy Situation*

I've seen those jeweled butt plugs in shops and in photos online—they're usually made from stainless steel and have glass "gems" mounted at the end of an alarmingly narrow base—but I've never actually seen one in person. Or in a person, at least not in person. But knowing what I do about butts (and how they relax after some play), and knowing what I do about plugs (a flared base is your first line of defense against a trip to the ER), I would've worried too much about losing one to use one. As for safe bejeweled butt plug options, ITEMS, you're going to want a flared base and a jewel that's at least the size of Cullinan I Diamond, the fist-sized rock on the Queen of England's royal scepter, which come to think of it...

As you've surely heard, the conservative Supreme Court majority plans to overturn Roe v. Wade. While my wife and I were lamenting the state of this fucking country, she mentioned that nobody ever hears men talking about the abortions that kept their lives on track—even though that's obviously a very common thing that happens. How many guys shat their pants after a condom failed during sex with a woman they weren't that into? How many prominent men knocked up their mistresses or assistants or babysitters? How many Republican boys have pressed a wad of their parents' money into a girl's hand because having a baby would ruin his future? These men need to speak up. I'm not expecting actual Republicans to do so, but perhaps there are

men out there who are willing to speak up and admit what we all know: Men benefit from abortion while bearing none of the shame associated with it. It's time we heard from them. I'm sorry I don't have a catchy name for this or a cute sign-off. I'm so tired and the world is falling apart.

—*Men Should Speak Up About Abortion*

Now for some real worries.

We are weeks away from American women being stripped of a fundamental constitutional and human right. And we face the prospect of an out-of-control and illegitimate Supreme Court stripping us of a host of other rights: the right to contraception, the right to same-sex marriage, the right to interracial marriage, even the right to have sex for pleasure—you know, the sex most people have most of the time. (In Lawrence v. Texas (2003), the Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws that criminalized not just consensual gay sex, but consensual sex between men and women that wasn't open to conception as well.)

While it should be enough to hear from women who've benefited from safe and legal abortion—and it should be enough to know that women die from unsafe and illegal abortions, and enough to know that banning abortions doesn't stop women from getting abortions—I happen to agree that cis men who support abortion rights and have benefited from them need to speak the fuck up about reproductive freedom.

"There are millions of men whose lives would have been worse without abortion," the writer Jill Filipovic wrote on Twitter last week. "Men who wouldn't have found their big loves, wouldn't have their kids, wouldn't have been as successful, wouldn't have taken big risks" if they had become fathers before they were ready. To those men, to all men, Filipovic says, "This if your fight, too. Get in it."

And gay men? The exact same arguments being used right now to strip women of the right to decide when and whether they want to bear a child—abortion isn't within the "history and traditions" of the United States, abortion isn't a right enumerated in the Constitution, abortion is a moral question—can and will be used to strip us of the right to have sex and the right to marry. Republican assholes are passing laws in red states right fucking now that force women to give birth to their rapists' babies against their will. Don't for a second think these same assholes won't pass laws forcibly ending your gay marriage or throwing your gay ass in jail for getting your gay ass fucked. This is our fight, too, faggots.

Is there a website where we can legally find out how to buy the abortion pills you've mentioned on the podcast?

—*Make It Stop*

Everything you need to know about abortion pills—how they work and where to get them—can be found at www.plancpills.org. And anyone using those pills at home needs to read Dr. Jen Gunter's essay "Your Medical Team Cannot Tell If You Had a Self-Administered Abortion" at www.vajenda.substack.com. And everyone should read Jill Filipovic's advice on what we can do right now to fight back ("Get To Work, Get Informed, Get Brave") at www.jill.substack.com. And if you can afford to donate to the National Network of Abortion Funds, now would be a great time to do so. They're at www.abortionfunds.org. And finally: don't vote Republican, don't fuck Republicans.

questions@savagelove.net

You Have More Help Than You Might Imagine

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

"Choose the least important day in your life," wrote Aries author Thornton Wilder. "It will be important enough." I recommend that you make those your words to live by in the next two weeks. Why? Because I suspect there will be no tremendously exciting experiences coming your way. The daily rhythm is likely to be routine and modest. You may even be tempted to feel a bit bored. And yet, if you dare to move your attention just below the surface of life, you will tune into subtle glories that are percolating. You will become aware of quietly wondrous developments unfolding just out of sight and behind the scenes. Be alert for them. They will provide fertile clues about the sweet victories that will be available in the months ahead.



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

FREE WILL ASTROLOGY BY ROB BREZSNY

when everything, absolutely everything, is ready, we shall never begin." Here's what educator Supriya Mehra says: "There's never a perfect moment to start, and the more we see the beauty in 'starting small,' the more we empower ourselves to get started at all." I hope that in providing you with these observations, Taurus, I have convinced you to dive in now. Here's one more

quote, from businesswoman Betsy Rowbottom: "There's never a perfect moment to take a big risk."

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Poet Ranata Suzuki writes, "There comes a point where you no longer care if there's a light at the end of the tunnel or not. You're just sick of the tunnel." That's good advice for you right now, Gemini. The trick that's most likely to get you out of the tunnel is to acknowledge that you are sick of the damn tunnel. Announce to the universe that you have gleaned the essential teachings the ride through the tunnel has provided you. You no longer need its character-building benefits because you have harvested them all. Please say this a thousand times sometime soon: "I am ready for the wide-open spaces."

CANCERIAN (June 21-July 22)

In the coming weeks, your imagination will receive visions of the next chapter of your life story. These images and stories might confuse you if you think they are illuminating the present moment. So please keep in mind that they are prophecies of what's ahead. They are premonitions and preparations for the interesting work you will be given during the second half of 2022. If you regard them as guiding clues from your eternal soul, they will nourish the inner transformations necessary for you to welcome your destiny when it arrives. Now study this inspirational quote from poet Rainer Maria Rilke: "The future glides into us, so as to remake itself within us, long before it occurs."

LEO (July 23-August 22)

"Remember that you will never reach a higher standard than you yourself set," wrote author Ellen G. White. That's true! And that's why it's so crucial that you formulate the highest standards you can imagine—maybe even higher than you can imagine.

Now is a favorable phase for you to reach higher and think bigger. I invite you to visualize the best version of the dream you are working on—the most excellent, beautiful, and inspiring form it could take. And then push on further to envision even more spectacular results. Dare to be greedy and outrageous.

VIRGO (August 23-September 22)

Before Virgo-born Leslie Jones achieved fame as a comedian and actor, she worked day jobs at United Parcel Service and Roscoe's House of Chicken and Waffles. Her shot at major appreciation didn't arrive until the TV show Saturday Night Life hired her to be a regular cast member in 2014, when she was 47 years old. Here's how she describes the years before that: "Everybody was telling me to get a real job. Everybody was asking me, What are you doing? You're ruining your life. You're embarrassing your family." Luckily, Jones didn't heed the bad advice. "You can't listen to that," she says now. "You have to listen to yourself." Now I'm suggesting that you embrace the Leslie Jones approach, Virgo.

LIBRA (September 23-October 22)

"A person must dream a long time in order to act with grandeur, and dreaming is nursed in darkness." Author Jean Genet wrote that, and now I'm offering you his words as the seed of your horoscope. If you've been attuned to cosmic rhythms, you have been doing what Genet described and will continue to do it for at least another ten days. If you have not yet begun such work, please do so now. Your success during the rest of 2022 will thrive to the degree that you spend time dreaming big in the darkness now.

Astrology, contined on page A19

A Local Legend

Hood Wings is reimagining their new space

RESTAURANT REVIEW
BY JIN CHONG

For over a decade, Hood Wings has endured as one of the last holdouts in the decrepit landmark formerly known as Northway Mall. As crazy as it may sound, this shopping center was *the* place to be back in the 90s. I'll always cherish the times I got to run through Discovery Zone's colorful, labyrinthine playgrounds. For overworked parents and their sugar-filled Tasmanian devils masquerading as kids, the Northway Mall was a sanctuary. Unfortunately, those halcyon days are long gone, with the building left in shambles and all but completely abandoned. But the ghosts of tenants' past still linger on the walls of the mall's derelict halls.

I had every intention of driving over to this ancient ruin to try some wings—only to discover that Hood Wings has recently moved further north and joined forces with Lil Babes: a nascent bar tucked into the corner of a Mountain View strip mall. This redirect initially started off on a low note as our group was greeted with a locked door, believing we'd have to try again some other time.

But a few seconds later, a man, later identified as Isreal (sic) Colvin, owner of Hood Wings, arrived to announce that they were doing takeout and deliveries only due to remodeling. Fine with us—we whipped out our phones and started poring over their menu to call in and take our food home.

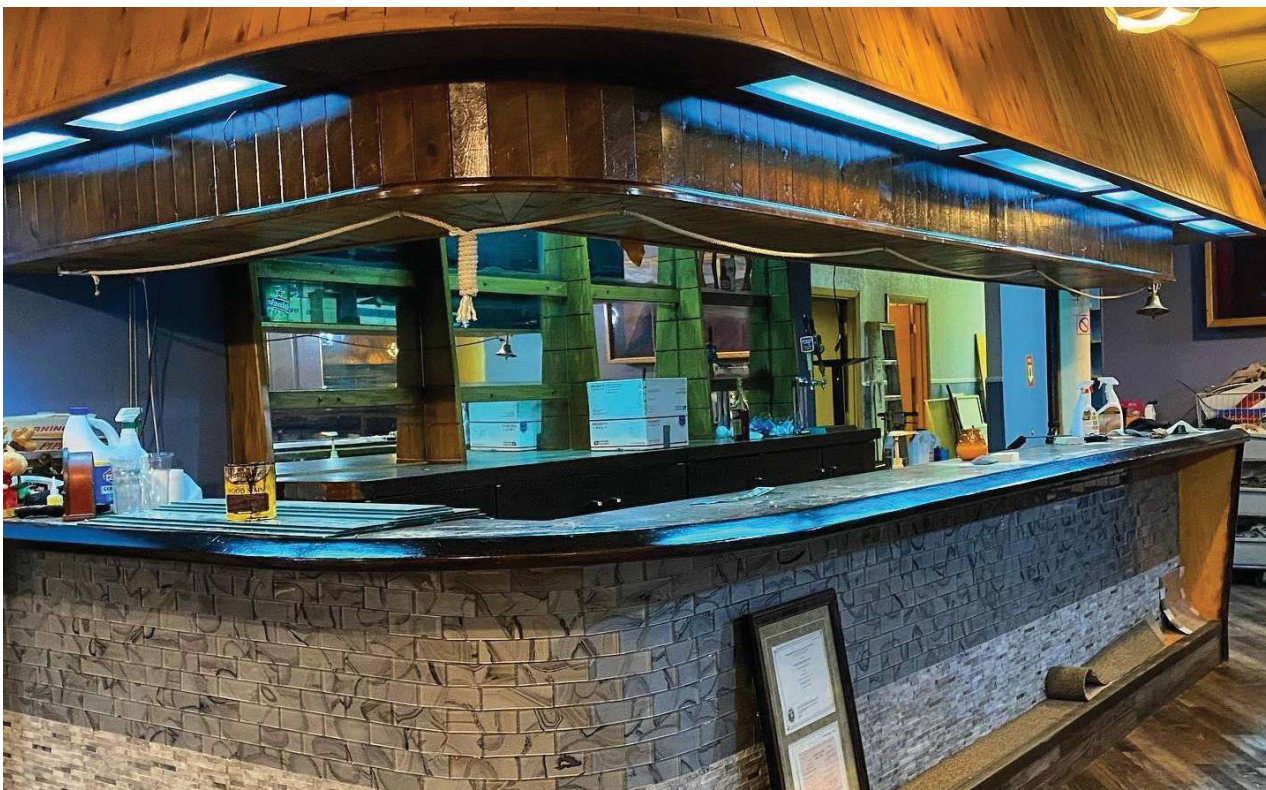
Surprisingly, Mr. Colvin returned minutes later to inform us they were willing to make an exception and let us dine in. We were then ushered into a stylish, swanky lounge setting with brand-new floors and a sleek, lighted bar—not at all the kind of place I was envisioning.

For the rest of our stay, we reveled in what felt like Southern hospitality at its finest. We chatted with the bar's owner, who was palpably radiating excitement over his vision to host jazz shows and Latin dancing nights. Hood Wings will be taking full command over the kitchen. In fact, it turns out my friend and local musician Sara had already been to Lil Babes to attend one of their jazz events—a showcase of an elite group of young musicians led by famed maestro Robert Arms. Coincidentally, they just so happen to be primed for a couple shows at Lil Babes the weekend following this article's publication.

But enough of all that jazz—let's talk food.

I ordered the cornmeal-breaded catfish combo, a side of mac and cheese, and amusingly enough, a “barnyard pimp.” Sadly, there is nothing provocative here; this pimped-out combo includes four wings, two ribs, crinkle fries, and buttered corn. The rest of our party settled for a plate of wings, and we sat waiting for about thirty minutes for the food to arrive as the passionate grooves of bachata music filled the air. Without hesitation, my friends got up and started dancing, though you could probably surmise my own response, or lack thereof.

With over 20 wing types to choose from, it was painfully difficult to narrow down my decision. I ended up going with a classic in their lemon pepper to try what I assumed



to be more of a neutral flavor profile. Except “neutral” utterly fails to describe the extreme potency these wings carried. Not only were they fried to crisp perfection, but the mouth-puckering, acidic bite of the seasoning resonated all throughout my tastebuds and left a lasting impression. This was almost like salt and vinegar chips in chicken wing form, with an ample amount of meat between the drumettes and flats alike.

I'll admit, I've never been much of a chicken wing kind of person but would happily start eating more if they were all this heavenly. Not once did any of our group feel compelled to use the obligatory ranch, which would've otherwise helped mask subpar food. The side of fries and corn too, were on point—the former for their crunchy edges and fluffy interior and the latter for merging the natural sweetness of corn with the silky-smooth embrace of butter.

Next up were the catfish and ribs. These moist, flaky filets were evenly coated with a solid cornmeal batter, and I appreciated how generous the portion was for a relatively modest sum. The ribs weren't exactly fall-off-the-bone tender, but that quality isn't necessarily ideal, depending on who you ask. Regardless, these ribs had a satisfying, meaty chew with the slightly gamey pungency of pork in each bite. The sauce wavered a little towards the sweeter side for my taste but felt appropriate in contrast to the rich, fatty meat.

It remains to be seen whether this fledgling partnership will bear fruit and elicit the attention these businesses rightfully deserve. However, what stands true is that this alliance is brimming with potential. At the very least, diners can expect some of the best chicken wings and Southern cuisine this city has to offer. This secluded gem may have nestled into a new home, but the heartwarming, soulful quality of their food and sincerity towards their craft shouldn't be restricted to just one hood; their greatness deserves to be appreciated by all.





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Get direct links to the event details at AKconcerts.com
Or read below if you just want to know the time & place.

Thursday, May 12th

The Alaskan Hotel & Bar (Juneau) – Front to Franklin Open Mic Night 9p-1a
The Crystal Saloon (Juneau) – Front to Franklin Open Mic Night 9p-1a
Cyrano’s Theatre – The Mommy Dance 7p-9p
Flattop Pizza & Pool – Jukebox Karaoke Roadshow 8p-11p
Humpys – Lil’ Trouble back at Humpy’s 8:30p-1a
Juneau Arts & Culture Center – Free Rush Hour Concert w/ US Marine Jazz Band 5:30p-6:30p
Juneau Arts & Culture Center – Jazz Jam Band 6:30p-8:30p
Klondike Mike’s & the Main Street Grill (Palmer) – Open Mic Night 8p-12a
Koot’s – The Star of Alaska Karaoke Tournament 6p-10p
Koot’s – Comedian Jay Hollingsworth (Big Irish Jay) 8p-10p
The Marlin (Fairbanks) – Karaoke with Kellie B.! 10p-2a
Seward Middle School – Seward Community Band 6p-8p
State Office Building (Juneau) - FREE Lunch Concert w/ US Marine Jazz Band 12p-1p
Tailgater’s Sport’s Bar & Grill (Wasilla) - The AKoustic Project 7p-10p
Van’s Dive Bar – Blue Grass is back w/ Todd Grebe 9p-12a



Friday, May 13th

2712 Drafthouse (Fairbanks) – DJ Manny’s Summer Kickoff Party 10p-3a
Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – Anchorage Classical Ballet Academy: Spring Recital 7p-9p
Alaskan Hotel & Bar (Juneau) – Taking Care of Bluegrass 8:30p-12a
American Legion Post 15 (Palmer) – Friday Night Feast w/ 100 Proof Karaoke 5:30p-9p
American Legion Spenard Post 28 – Acoustic Steak Night with Hwy9 9p-12a
The Backdoor Lounge (Kenai) – Hot Mess 9p-12a
Broken Blender – Sweet Cheek’s Friday the 13th: A Slashers Paradise 8p-9:30p
Centennial Hall Convention Center (Juneau) – Jane Bunnett and Maqueque 7:30p-9p
Christ Community Church – Pipeline Vocal Project: United for Ukraine 7p-9
Creekbend Café (Hope) – Hopening Weekend w/ Blackwater Railroad Company 7p-11p
The Crystal Saloon (Juneau) – Dessert First: Prom for Adults 8p-11p
Cyrano’s Theatre – The Mommy Dance 7p-9p
Everett’s (Wasilla) – Comedy Show w/ Jay Hollingsworth 7p-9p
Fairview Inn (Talkeetna) – Braided River 7p-1a
Floaters (Big Lake) – Open Mic Night 7p-12a
The Gaslight Bar – Jukebox Karaoke Roadshow 8p-11p
w/ Jane Bunnett & Maqueque 12p-1p
Homer Council on the Arts – Bed of Roses 6p-9p
Hunger Hut Bar (Nikiski) – Hot Mess 7p-9p



Koot’s – Local Roots w/ Rival Dads, Antigen, & The House Opinion 9p-1a
Koot’s – Velvet La La 10p-3a
Mug-Shot Saloon (Wasilla) – Glacier Hoppers 10p-2:30p
O’Malley’s on the Green – Danger Money Live 6:30p-9:30p
Organic Oasis – John Damberg Jazz Piano Fridays 5:30p-7:30p
Palmer Alehouse (Palmer) – Denali Cooks LIVE 7p-10p
PubHouse – Witty Youngman 7p-10p
Serrano’s Mexican Grill – DJ The Guestlist 8p-11p
Van’s Dive Bar – Zen Trembles 9p-1a
VFW Post 9785 Members & Auxiliary (Eagle River) – DJ Trichey 7:30p-11:30p
Williwaw Social – Rose’s Pawn Shop w/ Detour & Pepper Kit 7p-10p
Williwaw Social – Friday the 13th: A Gothic EDM Dance Party 10:30p-2a



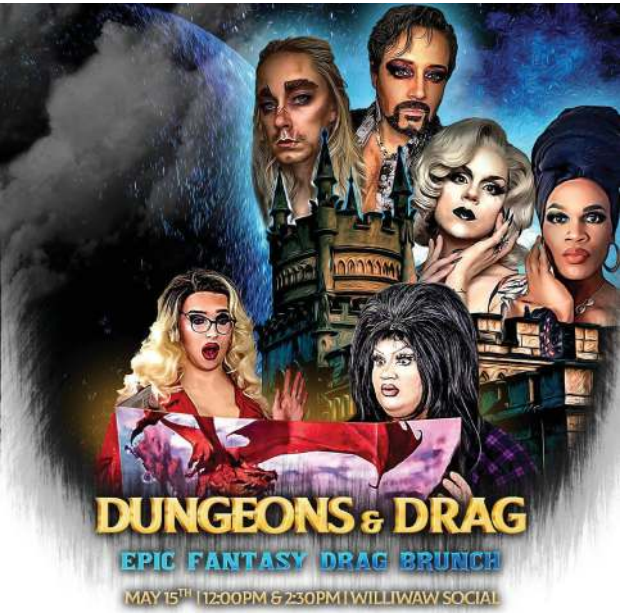
Saturday, May 14th

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – The Piano Guys 2p-4p & 7:30p-9:30p
Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – Anchorage Civic Orchestra: Spring Concert 7:30p-9p
Anchorage Moose Lodge – Velvet La La Live 8p-12a
Broken Blender – Sassy Saturdays Live Cabaret 8p-9:30p
Broken Blender – Tony Gebhard live 8p-12p
The Carousel Lounge – Danger Money Band 10p-2a
Creekbend Café (Hope) – Hopening Weekend w/ Blackwater Railroad Company 7p-11p
Cuddy Family Midtown Park – 33rd Anchorage Folk Festival w/ Rose’s Pawn Shop 12p-10p
Cyrano’s Theatre – The Mommy Dance 7p-9p
Egan Center – Wade Hayes ft Joe Stoddard 7:30p-10p
Cuddy Family Midtown Park – 33rd Anchorage Folk Festival w/ Rose’s Pawn Shop 12p-10p

Cyrano’s Theatre – The Mommy Dance 7p-9p
Egan Center – Wade Hayes ft Joe Stoddard 7:30p-10p
Fairview Inn (Talkeetna) – Braided River 7p-1a
The Gaslight Bar – Jukebox Karaoke Roadshow 8p-11p
Koot’s – Rachel Monae’s House of Dreams 8p-2:30a
Koot’s – The Ken Peltier Band 10p-3a
Family Concert w/ the US Marine Jazz Band 10:30a-12p
Midnight Son SDA (Kenai) – Year End Violin Recital 1p-2:30p
Mug-Shot Saloon (Wasilla) – Glacier Hoppers 10p-2:30p
The Nave – All Ages Revival w/ ADK Events 9p-1a
Palmer Alehouse (Palmer) – The Stack LIVE 7p-10p
RedDot Studios (Online) - Alaska Redd Artist Showcase (Virtual Concert) 5p-6p
Schwabenhof (Wasilla) - Ukulele Russ Live 7p-11p
Wendy Williamson Auditorium – “Janitor Bob’s Fantastical Excursion” 5:15p-7:30p
Williwaw Social – Reggae Dance Party with H3 8p-11p
Williwaw Social – Beach Party w/ DJ GRE 10:30p-2a

Sunday, May 15th

Alaska Center for the Performing Arts – David Sedaris 7:30p-9p
The Carousel Lounge – AK Rockstar Karaoke Sunday 8p-2a
Cyrano’s Theatre – The Mommy Dance 3p-5p
Hering Auditorium (Fairbanks) – Wade Hayes ft Joe Stoddard 7:30p-10p
Humpys - Open Mic Jam 8p-11p
Koot’s – Comedy Open Mic 8:30p-10p
The Marlin (Fairbanks) – Sunday Night Karaoke! 6p-12a
Van’s Dive Bar – Open Mic! Overlorded by Wash Your Hands 8p-12a



Monday, May 16th

Anaya Latin Dance – Beginner Salsa 6p-8p
Juneau Jazz & Classics (Juneau) – Spring Music Festival
Koot’s – The Monday Mic at Koots 9p-12a
Van’s Dive Bar – Comedy Open Mic 8:30p-9:30p
Van’s Dive Bar – Mull Over Mondays w/ Ellie Kenealy 9:30p-12a

Tuesday, May 17th

American Legion Spenard Post 28 – Taco Tuesday Open Mic w/ Gary Stedman! 6:30p-9:30p
The Carousel Lounge – AK Rockstar Karaoke 8p-2a
Klondike Mike’s & the Main Street Grill (Palmer) – Open Mic 7p-10p
Koot’s – The Eternal Cowboys 10p-12a
Organic Oasis – Turnagain Blue 5:30p-7:30p
Trophy Lounge – Jukebox Karaoke Roadshow 9p-1a
Van’s Dive Bar – Open Jam with Spenard Husband 9p-12a

Wednesday May 18th

907 Alehouse – Tyrone Palmer & Friends 7p-10p
The Carousel Lounge – AK Rockstar Karaoke 8p-11p
Eddie’s Sports Bar – The Star of Alaska Karaoke Tournament 9p-12a
Koot’s – Comedy Open Mic 8:30p-10p
Koot’s – KASH Country Night at Koot’s 8p-12:30a
Koot’s –Koots Karaoke 10p-2a
The Marlin (Fairbanks) – Open Mic at The Marlin! 8p-2a
Pioneer Bar – The Eternal Cowboys 10p-12a
PubHouse – Witty Youngman 7p-10p
Schwabenhof (Wasilla) - Open Mic 7p-12a
Van’s Dive Bar – The Wax Poetic w/ Nikki Now! 7p-9p
Van’s Dive Bar – Karaoke w/ The Milkman and/or The Dairy Queen! 9p-12a

PRESSING EVENTS

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Thu 5/12

Featured



Comedian Jay Hollingsworth (Big Irish Jay)
@ 8pm / \$20
Koot's, 2435 Spenard Rd, Anchorage



Fri 5/13

Featured



United for Ukraine - Benefit Concert
@ 7pm / \$5
Pipeline Vocal Project & Amplify Alaska are partnering to raise funds for United Way Worldwide's United for Ukraine fund. Christ Community Church Alaska, 2222 West 100th Avenue, Anchorage. pipelinevocalproject@gmail.com, 907-575-3614



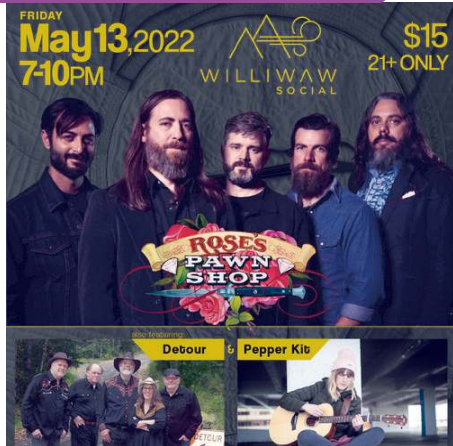
The Claw

@ 7pm / \$20
MAY 13 - 29 THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS AT 7:00 PM SUNDAYS AT 3:00 PM Anchorage Community Theatre, 1133 East 70th Avenue, Anchorage. matt@actalaska.org, 907-344-4713

The Mommy Dance

@ 7pm / \$30
Ah Motherhood! With the birth of a new baby, one new mother discovers all the ways her life has changed. Cyrano's Theatre Company, 3800 Debarr Road, Anchorage. alexis@cyranos.org

Featured



Anchorage Folk Festival 33rd Annual Festival Fundraiser
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Williwaw, 609 F Street, Anchorage



Friday the 13th: A Slasher's Paradise

@ 8pm / \$20
Come see why we have been voted Best Burlesque Show 3 years in a row! Sweet Cheeks Cabaret at The Cheeky Room, 535 West 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. sweetcheekscabaret@gmail.com

Sat 5/14

Raised Bed Gardening

@ 1:30am
May 14th - May 13th
Dr. Lidia Selkregg Chalet, 1600 Lidia Selkregg Lane, Anchorage. 907-343-4355

World Migratory Bird Day and Early Morning Birding at the Alaska Zoo

@ 12pm / \$10
Register online to go birding with experienced zoo staff at 6am, then join the public event from Noon to 4pm at the Alaska Zoo including keeper talks, bird handouts and touch items. Alaska Zoo, 4731 O'Malley Road, Anchorage. education@alaskazoo.org, 907-346-2133

The Piano Guys

@ 2pm
Atwood Concert Hall, 621 W. 6th Ave., Anchorage

Archery

@ 6:30pm
Kincaid Archery Range, W Raspberry Road, Anchorage. 907-343-4355

Featured



The Mommy Dance

@ 7pm / \$30
Ah Motherhood! With the birth of a new baby, one new mother discovers all the ways her life has changed. Cyrano's Theatre Company, 3800 Debarr Road, Anchorage. alexis@cyranos.org



The Claw

@ 7pm / \$20
MAY 13 - 29 THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS AT 7:00 PM SUNDAYS AT 3:00 PM Anchorage Community Theatre, 1133 East 70th Avenue, Anchorage. matt@actalaska.org, 907-344-4713

Anchorage Civic Orchestra - Season Finale

@ 7:30pm / \$23.50
Anchorage Civic Orchestra - Season Finale Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, 621 West 6th Avenue Suite ACPA, Anchorage. info@anchoragecivicorchestra.org

Wade Hayes

@ 7:30pm
William A. Egan Civic & Convention Center, 555 W 5th Ave, Anchorage

The Piano Guys: Alaska Center for the Performing Arts

@ 7:30pm
Alaska Center for the Performing Arts, 621 West 6th Avenue Suite ACPA, Anchorage

Sassy Saturdays Cabaret

@ 8pm / \$20
Come see why we have been voted Best Burlesque Show 3 years in a row! Sweet Cheeks Cabaret at The Cheeky Room, 535 West 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. sweetcheekscabaret@gmail.com

Comedian Jay Hollingsworth (Big Irish Jay)

@ 9:30pm / \$20
Koot's, 2435 Spenard Rd, Anchorage

Sun 5/15

The Mommy Dance

@ 3pm / \$30
Ah Motherhood! With the birth of a new baby, one new mother discovers all the ways her life has changed. Cyrano's Theatre Company, 3800 Debarr Road, Anchorage. alexis@cyranos.org

David Sedaris

@ 7:30pm
Atwood Concert Hall, 621 W 6th Ave, Anchorage

Thu 5/19

5th Annual Taps & Apps

@ 5:30pm / \$50-\$80
The Lakefront Anchorage, 4800 Spenard Rd, Anchorage

The Claw

@ 7pm / \$20
MAY 13 - 29 THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS AT 7:00 PM SUNDAYS AT 3:00 PM Anchorage Community Theatre, 1133 East 70th Avenue, Anchorage. matt@actalaska.org, 907-344-4713

Fri 5/20

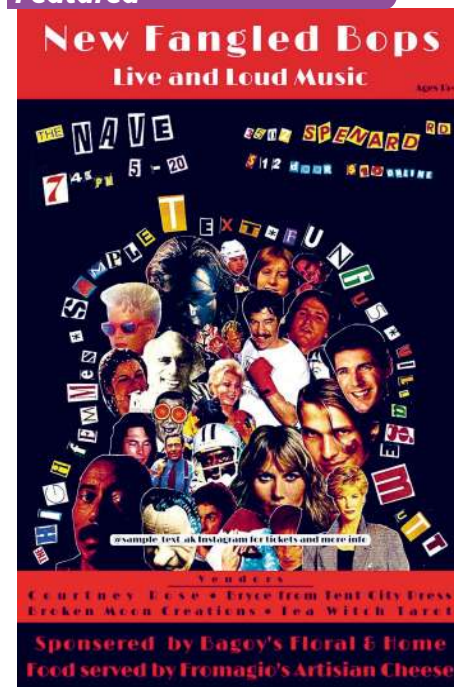
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The Mommy Dance

@ 7pm / \$30
Ah Motherhood! With the birth of a new baby, one new mother discovers all the ways her life has changed. Cyrano's Theatre Company, 3800 Debarr Road, Anchorage. alexis@cyranos.org

Featured



(Live Music) New Fangled Bops

@ 7:45pm / \$8-\$12
Loud, aggressive, and also sad. Ages 15+ indie/punk/rock event. Bands playing: Village mutt, Fungus, The High Femmes, [SAMPLE TEXT]. Show up ready to bop hard. Tickets 8-\$12. 7:45pm May 20th. The Nave, 3502 Spenard Road, Anchorage. hrcaldwell25@gmail.com



Sat 5/21

Featured

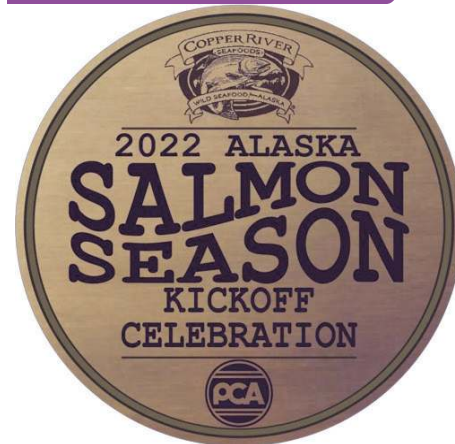


Mayday Parade

@ 7pm
Williwaw Social, 609 F St, Anchorage



Featured



2022 Copper River Salmon Season Kickoff Celebration

@ 1:30pm / \$75
Petroleum Club of Anchorage, 3301 C St. #120, Anchorage



The Claw

@ 7pm / \$20
MAY 13 - 29 THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS AT 7:00 PM SUNDAYS AT 3:00 PM Anchorage Community Theatre, 1133 East 70th Avenue, Anchorage. matt@actalaska.org, 907-344-4713

Comedian Lisa Alvarado

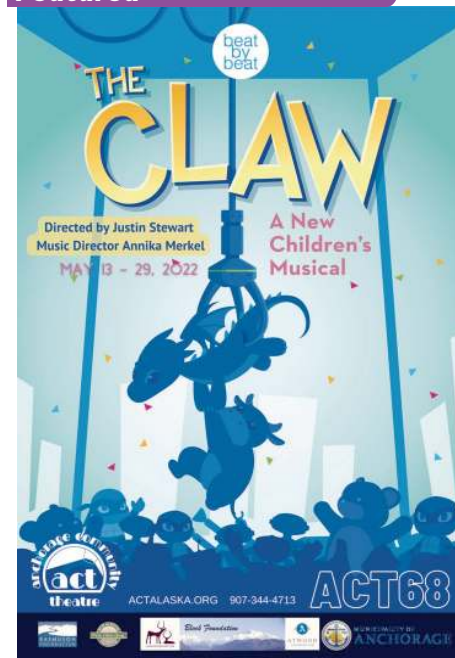
@ 7pm / \$20
Koot's, 2435 Spenard Rd, Anchorage

Sassy Saturdays Cabaret

@ 8pm / \$20
Come see why we have been voted Best Burlesque Show 3 years in a row! Sweet Cheeks Cabaret at The Cheeky Room, 535 West 3rd Avenue, Anchorage. sweetcheekscabaret@gmail.com

Sun 5/22

Featured



The Claw

@ 3pm / \$20
MAY 13 - 29 THURSDAYS, FRIDAYS, AND SATURDAYS AT 7:00 PM SUNDAYS AT 3:00 PM Anchorage Community Theatre, 1133 East 70th Avenue, Anchorage. matt@actalaska.org, 907-344-4713



The Mommy Dance

@ 3pm / \$30
Ah Motherhood! With the birth of a new baby, one new mother discovers all the ways her life has changed. Cyrano's Theatre Company, 3800 Debarr Road, Anchorage. alexis@cyranos.org

Mon 5/23

The Muckers

@ 9pm
Chilkoot Charlie's, 2435 Spenard Rd, Anchorage

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Sabor Artico

Indra Arriaga’s new film explores being Latino in Alaska

BY O’HARA SHIPE
COVER PHOTO BY JOVELL RENNIE

Walking into Indra Arriaga’s eastside home is like being transported to a different world. Sunlight streams through the home’s naked windows, highlighting an ornately painted alebrija sitting on the living room coffee table. Three paintings of a pregnant mother and son wearing Lucha libre masks that hang above Arriaga’s couch. Near the kitchen, two massive papier-mâché Día de Los Muertos statues playfully stare at each other from across the room.

“Aren’t they great? asks Arriaga. “Macuca Cuca created them and tried to get the museum to keep them on display, but they declined. So, now they live with me.”

Everywhere you look, there are artistic celebrations of Arriaga’s Mexican heritage, leaving little doubt about her love of Latino culture. However, Arriaga isn’t just a purveyor of Latino art; she is also an accomplished artist. In fact, her paintings and photography have been shown internationally in Germany, Oman, Bulgaria, France, and Armenia. Additionally, she has exhibited in Portland, OR, San Francisco, CA, Camarillo, CA, New York, NY, San Antonio, TX, Miami, FL, and various Alaskan cities.

Although she has already reached international success, Arriaga’s most recent project, Sabor Artico, is taking things to a hyper-local vantage point.

“I think of at the end of the day, it’s about a shared history, a shared experience, and a shared origin. So, [Sabor Artico] came together in that way,” explains Arriaga of her mini-documentary film.

Translated as “Arctic Flavor,” the film explores the Latino experience in Alaska through the exploration of food. “I come from a family that has been living with food since, like, forever. After the Mexican Revolution, we didn’t have anything other than our ability to cook. So, we’ve been running restaurants and butcher shops. My brother is actually a bread maker,” explains Arriaga. “Food is one of these things that is both universal, but also really personal at the same time. I can’t think of anybody who is not proud of their food.”

Arriaga received a \$25,000 grant from Latino Public Broadcasting – making Sabor Artico the only Alaskan project to ever be funded by the organization. Additional funding was secured through the Atwood Foundation, the Rasmusson Foundation, and independent donors.

“\$40,000 sounds like a lot of money, but it’s not a lot when you start working on something of this scale. Ultimately, I ended up breaking even, but that’s still awesome. You know, I feel good about it because I was able to pay the editors, the camera crew, the sound guys, and of course, the musicians who created music for the film,” says Arriaga.



Still image from Sabor Artico courtesy of Arriaga.

Over 40 individuals from Mexico, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Puerto Rico were interviewed for the project, but only 12 of Arriaga’s subjects made the final cut.

“In some cases, or in a couple of cases, people were afraid to speak on camera. We come from a population that is always being watched, and in a community that is really small, one wrong thing can really hurt you,” explains Arriaga. “Maybe wrong isn’t the right word, though. What they were saying wasn’t wrong; it’s just being vulnerable in a place you don’t feel safe that can be problematic. So, even though I talked to a lot of people, when it came time for the camera to be turned on, some didn’t feel safe enough to tell their story.”

For the careful viewer, Sabor Artico subtly says a lot about the current state of Latinos in Alaska. Sadly, discrimination and mistrust continue to exist both within the Latino community and in Alaska as a whole.

“Food is one of these things that is both universal, but also really personal at the same time. I can’t think of anybody who is not proud of their food.”

“This documentary, to me, feels like it’s a good step towards opening up a larger conversation. Latino culture here is really diverse, but because everybody comes from very different traditions, it’s hard to connect with each other. So, I feel like the more visible we become, the better relationships will get,” says Arriaga.

While Sabor Artico might not solve what is a much larger social issue, Arriaga hopes that by screening the film at the Bear Tooth Theatre with a talkback panel, the film will have a lasting impact.

“I want you to be able to see yourself and to be able to know that you’re part of a bigger community. When I came to Alaska, we were at a point where a lot of things needed to happen. But there really wasn’t a platform to do it. So, you kind of had to do it yourself. Now I feel that there’s a whole generation growing up, where a lot of people that are my age or older, like [artist and UAA professor] Mariano Gonzales, have built a platform for them to see the possibilities of the things that they can accomplish,” says Arriaga.



Still image from Sabor Artico courtesy of Arriaga.

Sabor Artico premieres at Bear Tooth Theatre (1239 W 27th Ave) on Saturday, May 21, 2022 at 1pm.

Other films to be screened include: “La Bruja” – Video of a Son Jarocho en Náhuatl: 6 Minutes and “El Corrido de Mariano Gonzales” – A short profile on Mariano Gonzales, a local artist at UAA: 15 Minutes.

Stay after the films for a Panel Discussion and Q & A.



HEY MI!



Zen Trembles opened for Big Head Todd and the Monsters on Saturday, May 7, 2022 at Williwaw Social.



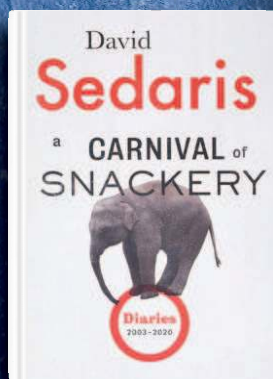
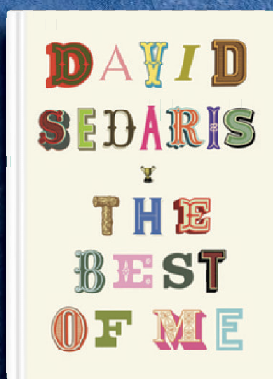
Photos by Chad Kotter and Shipe Shots



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The Songs of Robins Stretch Across Time and Space

CITY WILDS
BY BILL SHERWONIT

Given the annual confluence of Mom's birthday, Mother's Day, and the much-anticipated return of robins and other migratory songbirds to Alaska, my thoughts are inevitably drawn to springtime celebrations of one kind or another when May rolls back around.

With that in mind, I'd like to share an essay that I first wrote in the early 2000s, not long after my mother had come north from Virginia to live with me in Anchorage. Mom spent the last 15 years of her long and well-lived life in Alaska and gave me the immeasurable gift of her company in those final days and years. I share this essay in loving memory of Victoria (Torie) Marie Sherwonit — born May 9, 1922 and died Oct. 28, 2017 — a century after entering this world.

The afterglow of late-evening sunset filters through the upstairs windows of my home on Anchorage's Hillside. A crimson band of sky hangs over Mount Susitna to the northwest, as if ready to enfold The Sleeping Lady in soft red robes for the night. I spent much of this late spring day in the yard, raking my unruly lawn, cleaning up debris from winter storms, and working in my strawberry patch. Now, freshly showered and relaxed, I sit in dwindling light and listen to one of the world's great singers.

Perched in a nearby spruce, a male robin serenades me with a sweetly familiar melody. His warbled song touches some deeply buried memory from a time and place far, far away. I didn't pay much heed to birds while growing up in Connecticut during the 1950s and '60s, but a few species got my attention, none more so than the robin.

I still vividly picture robins running across Dad's well-manicured lawn, then suddenly stopping, dropping their heads to the ground, and lifting up a worm or caterpillar. I remember their rusty redbreasts, dark gray backs, and sharp yellow bills much more than their songs from those long-ago days. But the voices of robins must have been among the most recognizable wild sounds to echo through my Trumbull neighborhood in spring and summer, along with the chirps of crickets, the croaking of bullfrogs, and the shouts of friends playing softball in the open lot beside my family's yard.

I don't remember robins inhabiting the places I lived en route to my eventual northern home in Alaska. Yet the map in my field guide to North American birds clearly shows we shared those landscapes. So it must be that my attention was focused on other things during my 20s and 30s.

First, there was college and grad school, followed by a short-lived career in geology, then a shift to journalism. Not to mention, sports, romantic relationships, and my first tentative steps along the long and winding path of personal and spiritual growth.

Though I've always loved nature, it was only after I settled in Anchorage in 1982 that I began to pay attention to "the natural world" as I once did.

Like most people, I'd built images of Alaska that included polar bears, wolves, Eskimos, great mountains, and glaciers. But robins? They didn't seem to fit somehow. They seemed too, I don't know, too eastern, maybe. Or maybe too commonplace. I'd imagined them to be creatures of milder, tamer environs. But then again, I never imagined myself becoming a resident of America's "last frontier" until I came here.

In a curious way, robins deepened the link between



my original and adopted homelands. While providing a natural connection between Connecticut and Alaska, they also stirred sharp memories of my boyhood as some other familiar critters have done. For instance, chickadees, rainbow trout, frogs, dragonflies, and robins increased my desire to better understand my boyhood bond with nature and, at the same time, learn more about the wild community of my new home.

If seeing a robin in Anchorage seemed strange, imagine how I felt upon spotting a robin deep in the Arctic wilderness, miles and miles from any well-kept lawns, gardens, or trees. Traveling alone through the Brooks Range, without anyone to verify the sighting, I thought I might be hallucinating. Until I saw another. And another. Since then, I have learned that robins seasonally occupy nearly all of Alaska, from the Panhandle's old-growth forests to the North Slope's tundra plains.

In Anchorage, robins are among the first migratory songbirds to arrive each spring. Come April, I anticipate their fluid, high-pitched song, along with the trill of the varied thrush and loud whistled notes of the tiny ruby-crowned kinglet.

Once they arrived and settled into their spring and early summer routines, robins seem to sing or screech all day and deep into the night. Often their songs are what I hear first in the morning and last before sleep. At the end of a long, dark winter — or long, busy spring day — few, if any, sounds are more delightful.

Perhaps I've gained a greater appreciation of robins because of another connection. After eight decades of East Coast living, my mother came north to Alaska in 2002 to spend her last years with me. Now in her 80s and suffering from advanced degenerative osteoarthritis,

Mom can't get outdoors like she used to. Something as simple as sitting on the front deck can be a project. And, like many older folks, she's lost the ability to hear high-frequency sounds.

Even when I open the windows and sliding glass doors, Mom usually can't hear our backyard birds' chirps, buzzes, warbles, and whistles. For someone who welcomed songbirds to her house for many years, that's a hard, frustrating truth. Yet, the robin's song is loud enough, and apparently deep enough, that it sometimes registers. On a recent outing along Anchorage's Coastal Trail I asked if she could hear the bird's whistled notes. "I think so," she replied. Then, listening intently, she turned her head toward me when the bird whistled again. "Is that it, over there?" she asked, pointing.

"Yep, you've got it."

We both smiled at that.

Then, earlier today, a robin started singing right outside the sitting room window. Before I could say anything, Mom turned in her chair. "That's the robin, isn't it?"

Mom's in bed now, and her door is closed. But the robin continues to sing, a little softer now, while the sky darkens. He'll still be singing when I head to bed, sending forth a calm, assuring sort of lullaby with its own touch of wild magic that stretches across the continent, across the years.

Anchorage nature writer Bill Sherwonit is a widely published essayist and the author of more than a dozen books, including "Living with Wildness: An Alaskan Odyssey" and "Animal Stories: Encounters with Alaska's Wildlife." Readers wishing to send comments or questions directly to Bill may do so at akgriz@hotmail.com.



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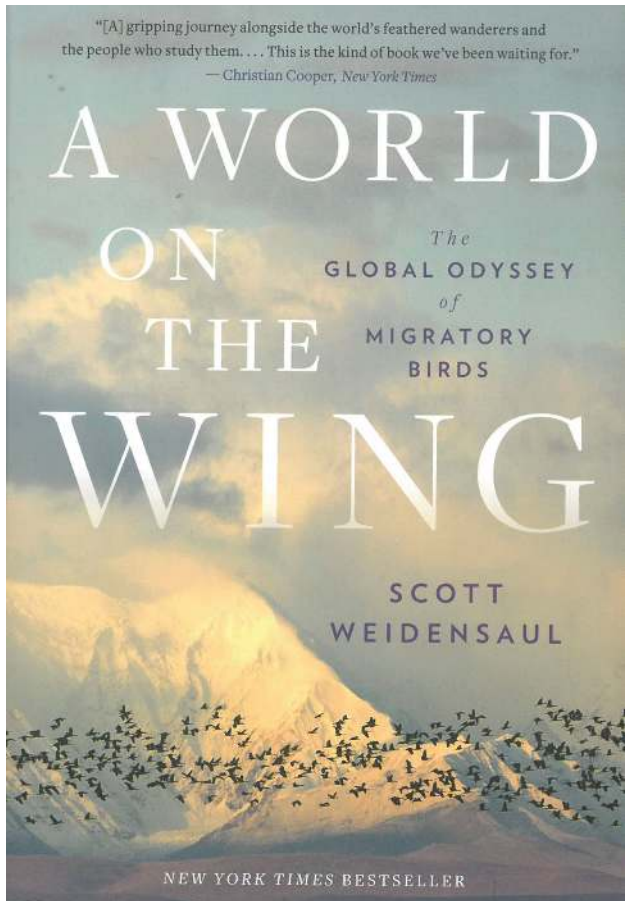


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A World on the Wing

What we can learn from birds

ART SLEUTH
BY JEAN BUNDY

I must confess that I am not a bird person, and I don't suspect that will change anytime soon. But while shopping at Costco the other day, I found 'A World on the Wing, the Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds' by Scott Weidensaul tucked under some cookbooks. As birds are the bell weather of Climate Change, I thought it would be a good idea to take a gander.

Weidensaul is a Pulitzer Prize finalist who has traveled the world bird-watching and attaching tiny 'geolocators' to specific species. He painstakingly explains the sizes and characteristics of hundreds of birds, along with their flight patterns. The uncomfortable climates and living accommodations he has endured provide an intriguing story, apart from the hours of binocular-esque patience he possesses.

In his book, he details dodging gunners and trappers in the Mediterranean, where a guerrilla war to stop the illegal slaughter of millions of songbirds goes on largely unchecked. On his visits to China, he witnessed how rampant coastal development and a hunger for wild birds are causing a conservation catastrophe. In Cypress, killing songbirds to make a dish called 'Ambelopoulia' is a tough habit to break, as it maintains cultural heritage, and the entire process is a source of income for the country. In Pangti, India, netting Amur falcons was also a mainstay until conservation groups persuaded villagers to accept financial compensation and experiment with tourism.

Of course, there are always downsides to conservation efforts that are hinged on financial compensation. Oftentimes, compensation leads to corruption and invites foreigners looking to line their pockets at the expense of the natural habitat. Other times, compensation isn't enough to spark meaningful change.

As a villager in Weidensaul's book confessed, "I do wish I could eat one! They taste 'very' good (pg. 328)."

In Argentina, conservationists have taken a different approach to saving birds. When it was discovered that the pesticide 'Monocrotophos' was killing Swainson's hawks, locals wearing pro-hawk buttons persuaded farmers to use something less invasive.

However, to think that bird poaching is a Third World problem is a mistake.

Thousands of birds are killed in France's Ardennes each year. Moreover, according to Weidensaul, "President François Mitterrand, dying of cancer in 1996, ate two

ortolans as part of his last meal, refusing all else thereafter until he died eight days later (pg. 281)." For perspective, the practice of feasting on ortolans remains strictly illegal in France despite increasing in popularity.

Despite seeing the horrors of poaching, Weidensaul has maintained a glimmer of optimism. His optimism is partly due to cases where former head hunters turned one of the grimmest stories of migratory crisis into an unprecedented conservation success.

In addition to human intervention, songbirds have also faced an uphill battle for survival amid Climate Change.

Weidensaul writes, "the loss of many kinds of tropical habitats besides lowland rain forest — mangrove swamps, cloud forests, savannahs, grassy wetlands, and especially high-elevation oak-pine forests where a majority of neotropical migrants wintered — was affecting birds (pg. 100). Sparse rain and limited food create a calorie deficit that delays the start of a bird's migration...It raises the already substantial odds of dying on the journey, and even if the bird arrives on the breeding grounds to find ideal conditions, those shortages may sabotage breeding success (pg. 157)."

Even though they are burdened by hardship, songbirds have proved that nature can be amazingly resilient to what man and nature throw at her.

"Some species have shown an unexpected flexibility in the face of changes that are occurring at a faster pace

than birds have ever experienced in the geologic past (pg. 192)...To the scientists' surprise, those supposed deepwoods specialists were moving into the polar opposite habitat (pg. 104)," Weidensaul writes.

Science's understanding of bird migration has exploded in the past two decades. With the establishment of bird websites, amateur bird watchers have become integral. In 2002, Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society launched 'eBird', a database for all avian enthusiasts.

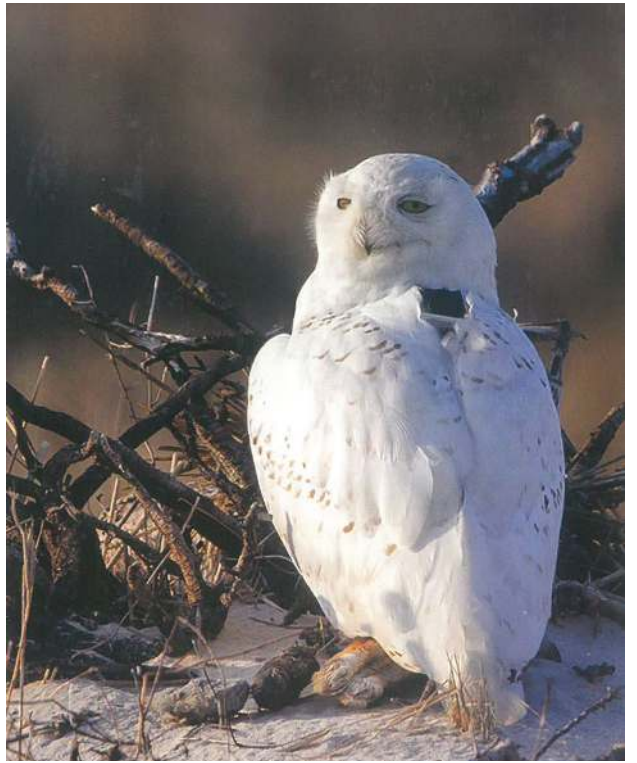
"We're pooling the daily observation of millions of birders to reveal hitherto unknown migration routes and stopover sites; we're harnessing machine learning to teach computers to listen to the skies, identifying and tabulating the millions of travelers overhead by their nighttime calls (pg. 128)," explains Weidensaul.

Although scientists are getting closer to understanding how birds have been able to adapt so quickly, Weidensaul admits that much is still shrouded in mystery.

"The world is changing around us, in ways that we barely understand and show little ability to control, and birds, especially migratory birds — are our best and most compelling window into those changes (pg. 21)."

Jean Bundy, MFA, Ph.D. is a writer/painter living in Anchorage. She is a VP at AICA-Int. and serves on Governance for Pictor Gallery, NYC.

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Super Crossword

HOLLYWOOD
GIRL GROUP

- ACROSS
- 1 Shrine images

6 Kept from falling, as pants

13 Abashed

20 Showed on TV again

21 Not varying at all

22 In a weepy way

23 Start of a riddle

25 Language spoken in Dhaka

26 Is in a chair

27 College, to a Brit

28 Long to undo

30 Augur's sign

31 Riddle, part 2

39 Home for mil. jets

40 Roman love god

41 Singer James or Jones

42 Bad guys

46 Explosive compounds

48 Hercule creator

53 From time immemorial

54 Riddle, part 3

56 Talk big

57 Mr. Capote, to friends

58 Partner of neither

59 Liquid asset

60 Riddle, part 4

66 Reciprocal

69 Army chaplain

70 The Great Lakes' —

71 Libreville's country

72 Everglades mammal

75 Riddle, part 5

80 Big name in PCs

81 Letter two before tau

83 "— Kapital"

84 Roof part

85 Riddle, part 6

91 Become rigid

93 Key in again

94 Thin and watery

95 Back fish fins

96 "QED" center

98 Formerly, old-style

99 Mendes of "2 Fast 2 Furious"

100 End of the riddle

109 Kazan of Hollywood

110 Singer Ritter

111 Feel fluid, perhaps

112 French pals

114 Excessive bureaucracy

117 Riddle's answer

123 Offspring-producing animal

124 Part of ROTC

125 Rule from the throne

126 Cheech and Chong personas

127 Electrical current units

128 Archipelago parts

DOWN

1 Eye opener?

2 Shocking EMT treatment

3 Give a speech

4 Expire

5 Lead-in to Cone or Cat

6 Rubs elbows

7 Flying

8 Mattel doll

9 Expire

10 "The Simpsons" shout

11 Old stage star Hagen

12 Martinez of baseball

13 Ideally

14 Realize

15 Sci-fi's Solo

16 Class jargon

17 Where the Marlins play

18 Burstyn or Barkin of film

19 Running out of steam

24 Blew with short blasts

29 World Heritage Site gp.

32 Manicurist's target

33 Brave in the face of adversity

34 Give off

35 "The lady — protest ..."

36 Canadian tribe

37 — -TASS (news agency)

38 Very wise

42 Seizes

43 Site of the Taj Mahal

44 Scorch

45 Frat shindig

47 Rajah's wife

49 Mountain climbers, e.g.

50 Alexis or Peter, e.g.

51 Big name in oil and gas

52 Court great

54 Novelist Sarah — Jewett

55 Basic musical chords

57 Bullfighter

61 D.C. baseballer

62 Ike's inits.

63 USSR's Cold War foe

64 Alluringly shy

65 "Moo" maker

67 76ers' org.

68 Rocket scientist Wernher — Braun

71 Neutral color

72 Bryn —, Pennsylvania

73 Feel fluid, perhaps

74 Not cluttered

75 Bagel center

76 "— Fideles"

77 Father, to a tot

78 Knievel of motorcycle stunts

79 Cravings

82 Hurry it up

86 Tech detail

87 Wife of Zeus

88 — Scott case

89 Civil wrong

90 "Quiet!"

91 Dumpy dwellings

92 — Sea (Asian lake)

95 Thirsts for

97 Rearranges

100 Basil and bay leaf

101 Heads-up

102 YouTube clip

103 All gone, as food

104 Add-on

105 Purple color

106 Decorative flower holders

107 Cybermissive

108 Scorch

113 1040 IDs: Abbr.

115 Fruity quaff

116 According to

118 Fence (in)

119 Psychic "gift"

120 Added charge

121 Bruin great Bobby

122 Alleged psychic Geller
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- LEGALS
- 5031 Eagle Street, LLC doing business as Eagle Street Plant, located at 5031 Eagle Street, Unit C, Anchorage, Alaska 99503 is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of controlling interest in a Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility (3 AAC 306. 400 (a)(1)), license #26609. The transfer involves a change in ownership percentage from Christopher N. Hayes 15%, Daniel H. Clift 24% and Robert E. Clift 61% to John Youse 70% and Tyler Russell 30%.
- Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco>. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. At jana@jdwccounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.
Anchorage Press
Publish Dates 5/05/22, 5/12/22, 5/19/22
- Baker Industries, LLC, doing business as Piece of Mind Alaskan Cannabis, located at 221 E. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, is applying under 3 AAC 306.045 for transfer of a Retail Marijuana Store (3 AAC 306.300), license #10975 to 9 ¾ Enterprises, Inc. DBA Piece of Mind Alaskan Cannabis. Interested persons may object to the application by submitting a written statement of reasons for the objection to their local government, the applicant, and the Alcohol &
- May 12 - May 18, 2022
- PRESS A15

Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) not later than 30 days after the director has determined the application to be complete and has given written notice to the local government. Once an application is determined to be complete, the objection deadline and a copy of the application will be posted on AMCO's website at <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco>. Objections should be sent to AMCO at marijuana.licensing@alaska.gov or to 550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1600, Anchorage, AK 99501 and Attorney Jana Weltzin, Esq. At jana@jdwccounsel.com or JDW, LLC, 901 Photo Avenue, Second Floor, Anchorage, AK 99503.
 Anchorage Press
 Publish Dates 5/05/22, 5/12/22, 5/19/22

R & K Enterprises, LLC dba Kim's Cuisine located at 12400 Old Glenn Highway Suite 3, Eagle River, Alaska 99577 is applying for transfer of a Restaurant/Eating Place AS 04.11.100 liquor license to Blueberry Kim, LLC dba Kim's Cuisine located at 12400 Old Glenn Highway Suite 3, Eagle River Alaska 99577. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov
 Anchorage Press
 Publish Dates 4/28/22, 5/05/22, 5/12/22

The Wedge Corp, dba The Rock Wood Fired Pizza & Spirits located at 3401 Penland Parkway, Anchorage, AK 99508 is applying for transfer of a Beverage Dispensary AS 04.11.090 liquor license to No Premises. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, The Law Offices of Ernouf & Coffey, P.C. At P.O. Box 212314, Anchorage, Alaska 99521 and to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov.
 Anchorage Press
 Publish Dates 5/05/22, 5/12/22, 5/19/22

Alaskan Boys, Inc. dba Avenue Bar located at 338 W. 4th Ave Anchorage, AK 99501 is applying for a transfer of a Beverage Dispensary AS 04.11.090 liquor license to Alaskan Boys, Inc. This is a controlling interest transfer. The change in ownership involved the ownership interest transfer from Robert Shafer 50% interest, to Logan Rammell 100% interest. Interested persons should submit written comment to their local governing body, the applicant, and to the Alcohol Beverage Control Board at 550 West 7th Ave. Suite 1600 Anchorage, AK 99501 or alcohol.licensing@alaska.gov
 Anchorage Press
 Publish Dates 5/12/22, 5/19/22, 5/26/22

Rauscher complained that because it would cost the borough to set up its own policing, it should also cost villages to have VPSOs.

"The state's paying for this one and I don't understand that," he said.

It revealed a great deal of ignorance about the VPSO program and rural Alaska. Several other Republicans piled on with some complaining that their communities have stationed Alaska State Troopers but that they don't also get village public safety officers. Others, like Rep. Laddie Shaw complained that the villages and tribal organizations have "never ponied up to support to the level that they should be."

Backers of the VPSO program—Republicans, Democrats and Independents—all noted the program is a critical service in rural Alaska when troopers may be days away from responding. They also said that Rauscher's consternation over the apparent lack of buy-in overlooked the considerable resources and efforts that tribal organizations put into hiring and supporting village public safety officers. Several also noted that the Alaska Constitution specifically says the Alaska Legislature serves as the assembly for the unorganized areas of the state—which covers many villages—and is responsible for ensuring their public safety. They also noted that their unorganized status also made taxing them an unrealistic expectation.

"I just want to remind the body that we serve as the borough assembly for the unorganized areas of the state and that includes most of rural Alaska," said Rep. Neal Foster, D-Nome. "One of the basic tenets of government is we shall provide for public safety and if we serve as the borough assembly for rural Alaska, it is our duty to provide that public safety. ... Almost all villages do not have a trooper stationed in their village. There are no roads that go to these villages, and you can get into a situation where you might have bad weather and it might be days before a trooper can get out to a village."

Perhaps, though, the grimmest argument came from Nikiski Republican Rep. Ben Carpenter who argued the VPSO program is a failure as evidenced by the continued high rates of crime and sexual violence in some communities. He argued the best way to combat sexual violence against Alaska Native women would be to tax villages.

"Whatever we are doing is not working. I can't help but think that if we want to have better outcomes in our villages, we have to take personal responsibility. How do we enable personal responsibility in our villages? The same way we would enable personal responsibility anywhere else," he said. "You have to fight for it, you have to pay for it you have to have a dog in the fight."

Yep.
 Even Carpenter seemed to know how bad it sounded as he cut himself off, but it's important to note that this attitude isn't all that far off from the arguments that the best thing for rural Alaska is resource development as has been echoed by many Republicans. The amendment was ultimately pulled by Rauscher, who noted he had only intended to make a stink about the \$107,300 the bill is projected to incur (for the background checks and psyche evaluations for firearms in the event that any VPSOs ever start carrying firearms) and not the roughly \$13 million that funds the program.

"I hope everyone understands I'm not trying to kill the program," he said, noting that he was just hoping to start a conversation.

Ugly attitudes aside, the legislation passed with broad support on a 34-2 vote.

Oh, and it was Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day.

Over in the Senate, SB 81's sponsor Sen. Donny Olson, D-Golovin, spoke about the need for the state to support Alaska Native communities.

"We try very hard to take care of our own, but we need support from our fellow Alaskans," he said.

"We need funding to support communities so that they can be trained and be prepared to make sure the searches are safe as they look for our loved ones. We also need public safety to prioritize our calls to help when we have someone who's missing. We need to build stronger support systems for the generations that follow us."

Super Crossword

Answers

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Alaska's big river breaks up at Eagle

BY NED ROZELL

EAGLE, ALASKA — While most of the town was sleeping, the ice slipped out.

Breakup happened on the Yukon River here at its first settlement in the United States at around 2 a.m. on Saturday, May 7, 2022. That's when meltwater rushing from side creeks into the colossal groove of the Yukon lifted a winter-hardened sheet in front of the town.

The shell of ice fractured. A torrent of the cold, brown river water shoved the shards downstream.

Some of that ice — including a football-field size spread with a snowmachine trail still imprinted on top — settled on gravel downstream of town at the mouth of Mission Creek. Most of the jigsaw pieces continued downstream, shrinking every second while exposed to relatively warm water and above-freezing air.

This year featured a gentle breakup here, with no ice-jam flooding at the town of Eagle, nor 12 miles downriver, where Andy Bassich reported all was well at his homesite. More pulses of ice were to come — like the bank-to-bank icebergs set to arrive from Dawson City a few days later — but the first stage of breakup was somewhat benign.

The Eagle townspeople were relieved as they drove their cars and trucks to Front Street to stare at a mesmerizing conveyor belt of moving ice.

"This is what we were praying for," said Sharon Hamilton, who has lived in this town of about 110 people for many years.

In 2009, she said, her and husband Steve's Chevy Prism then idling on Front Street would have been under a mountain of ice. That year, the worst flood in Eagle's recorded history pushed 6-foot thick chunks into the town's waterfront buildings, shoving some off their foundations, tethered to land by their power wires.

John Borg, who had driven his Toyota Corolla down to Front Street with his wife Betty, was also glad to see the river moving freely.

"At least it's not sitting here backing up," he said.

Borg, who came to Eagle in the 1960s, was referring to the happy outcome that pieces from the giant fractured sheets had not stacked in a tight bend about 6 miles downstream.

When all those chunks restrict the flow of the river, water rises fast behind the barrier. Ice-jam floods occur somewhere on the Yukon's 2,000 winding miles every spring. At the time of this writing, ice had jammed 6 miles downriver of the town of Circle, about 160 miles from Eagle.

In Eagle, as all that ice born of Alaska's and the Yukon Territory's cold winter air floated past, Borg overheard someone lament the fact that he had slept through the initial ice movement — the peak drama of that year's breakup.

"After all these years of watching, I've never seen the (first) movement of the ice," he said. "There's always next year."

Since the late 1970s, the University of Alaska Fairbanks' Geophysical Institute has provided this column free in cooperation with the UAF research community. Ned Rozell is a science writer for the Geophysical Institute.



PHOTO BY NED ROZELL

John Borg of Eagle, Alaska, looks out to a sheet of ice on the Yukon River on May 6, 2022, a few hours before it broke up.



PHOTO BY NED ROZELL

Buildings dating to early in the history of Eagle, Alaska, established 1901, sit on the south bank of the Yukon River.



PHOTO BY NED ROZELL

Yukon River ice flows down from the Canada portion of the river about 24 hours after the river broke up in front of Eagle, Alaska, the first U.S. town on the Yukon.



PHOTO FROM EAGLE TRADING POST COLLECTION

In this photo taken in May, 2009, townspeople of Eagle, Alaska, look at the destruction caused by an ice-jam flood of the Yukon River.

CANNAGUIDE

YOUR MAP TO ANCHORAGE'S DANK SIDE



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Study: Cannabis Consumers Report Improvements in Insomnia

By NORML

The use of cannabis products is associated with perceived improvements in insomnia in patients suffering from either anxiety or depression, according to data published in the journal BMC Psychiatry.

A team of Canadian researchers assessed the effectiveness of cannabis in managing insomnia in a cohort of 677 subjects. Study participants suffered from either anxiety, depression, or from both conditions simultaneously. Subjects self-administered cannabis products at home and reported symptom changes in real time on a mobile software application. Investigators analyzed reports from over 8,400 cannabis-use sessions recorded over a three-year period.

Consistent with prior reports, subjects from all three groups reported significant benefits from cannabis. Participants perceived CBD-dominant products to be less effective than others.

"This naturalistic investigation of cannabis use for insomnia suggests that individuals with depression, anxiety, and comorbid depression and anxiety perceive benefits from using cannabis for sleep," authors concluded. "In addition, compared to other cannabis strains, CBD-dominant products may be less helpful for sleep, specifically in individuals with depression. The current study highlights the need for placebo-controlled trials investigating the efficacy and safety of cannabinoids for sleep in individuals with mood and anxiety disorders."

Full text of the study, "An investigation of cannabis use for insomnia in depression and anxiety in a naturalistic sample," appears in BMC Psychiatry.

Keeping the faith

ASK OSKAR
BY OSKAR SAVILLE

How do you practice faith when things seem to be falling apart? I have been trying to find a roommate, and nothing has been working out. I can't afford my place alone, and I am unable to work full-time while I am going through graduate school. I am also afraid of what will happen when I graduate in June.
— Lacking Faith

Dear Lacking Faith,

I have been at the place where you are standing a million times. In fact, I experience a fear of “what will happen to me and my life?” almost every day. But that experience actually gives me faith, which I will explain in a moment.

First, we need to calm your nervous system. When fear comes up, our system goes into fight, flight, or freeze mode. That shuts down the part of our brain that we actually need to help us move forward into new solutions. When I am in this place, I first begin to rub my arm gently as if I were soothing someone I love. My body does not care whether I am scratching my arm, or if someone else is doing it. All it feels is something soothing, and that signals the brain to release the hormone oxytocin, which then stimulates the release of dopamine and serotonin, our happy hormones.

As my body begins to calm down, I am more able to check in on my breathing. Just that slight shift of focus from “my world is crumbling” to “it feels better when I am breathing” already helps me have more faith. When I am in fear, I 100-percent believe that I will die because of whatever is happening, even if it's nothing life-threatening. Rubbing my arm and breathing is an act of courage against the powerful thoughts that are flooding my mind. I now have evidence that doing something different is helpful.

I used to be afraid about opening up, but when I began to openly share my life story with others, the feedback always seemed to be the same: “Wow, you have such faith!” I couldn't understand what they were talking about. *Faith? I don't have faith. I had to do those things!* Then, one day, someone said it differently: “Your superpower is faith!” Something about calling it a superpower made me stop and think.

As a child, I wished for superpowers like the characters in the cartoons I watched. I wanted to be invisible, to be able to stop bad things from happening, and to never be upset. But unfortunately, the childhood I was going through felt like too much, so I feared what would happen to me, just as you are fearing now. Sometimes, I achieved these superpowers, but at a price: my freedom of living. For instance not stepping up for a job as an MTV VJ because I was too afraid of exposure.

Luckily, a greater force inside me wanted more in my life than my fear did. This force pushed me out into the world and brought me face-to-face with who I truly wanted to be. At 19, I moved to New York City with \$50 in my pocket. I had to face many challenges to make a new life in a new city. First, I had to find a job and a place to live right away. I was an extremely shy person, but I had to push beyond that if I was going to succeed. I found a job quickly, but getting an apartment proved much more difficult. A friend let me stay for two weeks, but after that, I found myself homeless for four days. The fear of being on the streets pushed me to call a friend that lived in New York and who I had met six months prior. After a few minutes of light conversation, my friend suddenly said, “You don't have anywhere to live, do you?” I had no idea how he knew. It took everything inside me to tell him the truth, “No, I don't.” He immediately invited me to stay with him at his family's home.

As kind as this person was, I knew I needed to keep searching for a place. New York City is not a simple place to find an apartment. It's partly who you know, how much you have, and being at the right place at the right time. (Hopefully, just as a super old tenant dies.) There were days I wanted to quit, but I carried on, knowing somehow things would work out.

A couple of weeks later, I was in a car accident, where my car ended up looking like an accordion. I was physically fine but mentally and emotionally shook. Still, I continued moving forward. I was working two waitressing jobs, but I knew I needed to make another bold step. I wanted to work in fashion, and if there was anything my accident taught me, it was that life can end in an instant. I hadn't finished college, and I was afraid I would be turned down when I applied for fashion jobs. I went for it anyway. During one interview, I could see in the interviewer's eyes that she was hiring me because she could see I had something more than a degree. I had courage and faith.

I used to think faith was some religious idea that meant trusting blindly in another's dogma. For me, faith is a verb. Talking about something is not faith—faith is taking actions that go against everything my fear brain wants me to do. Everything I did on that journey to New York City was an act of faith. It wasn't easy, but what I gained from it is something no one can ever take from me: the faith to do it all again.

That strength gave me the courage to face more challenges in my life, each one making me stronger, wiser, more loving, more compassionate, and more giving. Faith has taught me that the journey is what makes life joyful.

I am so excited for this moment in your life. This is the moment you have been waiting for, the moment when you will find out the true beauty of who you are. I know if you listen to your inner guidance, it will take you on a journey of discovery that will fill your heart, mind, and soul like you never even imagined. And that, my dear, is something no bank, no flood, no hard times, no person, or anything else can take away from you. That is why one must practice faith!



OTHER NEWS

by Chuck Lebbe



Astrology, from page A6

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)

“Cursed are those who feel floods but who can only express a few drops.” So says an internet proverb. Luckily, this principle won't apply to you in the coming weeks. I expect you will be inundated with cascades of deep feelings, but you will also be able to articulate those feelings. So you won't be cursed at all. In fact, I suspect you will be blessed. The cascades may indeed become rowdy at times. But I expect you will flourish amidst the lush tumult.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22-December 21)

“It takes a great deal of experience to become natural,” wrote Sagittarian author Willa Cather. I'm happy to report that in recent months, you Sagittarians have been becoming more and more natural. You have sought experiences that enhance your authenticity and spontaneity. Keep up

the good work! The coming weeks should bring influences and adventures that will dramatically deepen your capacity to be untamed, soulful, and intensely yourself.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 19)

“I intend to live forever,” proclaims 66-year-old comedian Steven Wright, who then adds, “So far, so good.” I offer you his cheerful outlook in the hope that it might inspire you to dream and scheme about your own longevity. Now is a great time to fantasize about what you would love to accomplish if you are provided with 90 or more years of life to create yourself. In other words, I'm asking you to expand your imagination about your long-term goals. Have fun envisioning skills you'd like to develop and qualities you hope to ripen if you are given all the time you would like to have. (PS: Thinking like this could magically enhance your life expectancy.)

AQUARIUS (January 20- February 18)

“Stop insisting on clearing your head,” advised author Charles Bukowski. “Clear your f---ing heart instead.”

That will be a superb meditation for you to experiment with in the coming weeks. Please understand that I hope you will also clear your head. That's a worthy goal. But your prime aim should be to clear your heart. What would that mean? Purge all apologies and shame from your longings. Cleanse your tenderness of energy that's inclined to withhold or resist. Free your receptivity to be innocent and curious.

PISCES (February 19-March 20)

“The winner will be the one who knows how to pick the right fights,” wrote author Jane Ciabattari. Heed her advice, please, Pisces. You will soon be offered chances to deal with several interesting struggles that are worthy of your beautiful intelligence. At least one will technically be a “conflict,” but even that will also be a fruitful opportunity. If you hope to derive the greatest potential benefit, you must be selective about which ones you choose to engage. I recommend you give your focus to no more than two.

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