

Alaskan Seniors

Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

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The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them, through programs and services funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.



Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

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New staff members at the Alaska Commission on Aging include Associate Coordinators Linda Gohl (left) and Jeff Kemp (middle) and Social Services Program Coordinator Bob Taylor (right).

New Faces at the Alaska Commission on Aging

The staff that supports the work of the Alaska Commission on Aging has gone through some changes recently. In this issue of *Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger*, we introduce you to the new program people that have joined the office since January.

Bob Taylor Ph.D., Social Services Program Coordinator

Bob moved to Juneau in October 2001 with his wife, Marilyn, who became Dean of Education at the University of Alaska Southeast. For the previous 25 years Bob worked in public administration as a manager in Colorado, while raising a family of three.

Bob earned his doctorate in English from the University of Denver in 1978. At that time he began working for Summit County Government in the Colorado Rockies as Director of Human Services. In that role he served as Director of Social Services and supervisor of several other programs including community nursing, drug and alcohol programs, youth and family, and senior citizens.

As Human Services Director, Bob worked over several years with the local private non-profit to develop a full-fledged seniors program. The program included housing

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New Faces at ACoA (continued)

construction, recreation and socialization, in-home assistance and health care, and congregate meals. By the late 1980s the program had completed the county's first multipurpose seniors center.

In the mid-1980s Bob pursued a master's in public administration in a program for working executives at the University of Denver. After completing that degree he was promoted to Assistant County Manager. He was promoted to County Manager in 1990, overseeing Summit County Government's 500 employees, 35 departments, and a \$65 million budget. Summit County was at the time one of the fastest growing resort communities in the nation. Before Bob resigned the position to relocate to Juneau, he had worked closely with Summit County seniors over a two-year period to develop a new state-of-the-art, 10,000 square-foot seniors center, which now houses an adult daycare program. A contiguous assisted living complex is also planned.

Bob was hired in December 2001 to replace NTS Associate Coordinator, Stacy Goade. Shortly after, he replaced Gretchen Barnes as Program Coordinator when she left to take another position within the state. Bob is enthusiastic about his new position with the Alaska Commission on Aging, which he says will allow him to dedicate 100% of his time to one program area, aging, which he's enjoyed working in over the years. Bob considers customer service to seniors a high priority for the Commission staff.

Linda Gohl, Associate Coordinator, Nutrition, Transportation and Support Services

Linda Gohl, a native of California, has lived in Alaska since 1975. She worked as a bookkeeper for 15 years in California and Alaska. She began working for the State of Alaska in 1977 as a Legislative Aide to Representative Red Swanson, and worked for Senator George Hohman the following year. During those two sessions Linda quickly gained an understanding of the issues important to Alaskans.

Linda fished for salmon commercially out of Sitka in the late '70s, where she met her husband, Steve. Steve is a journeyman electrician who has worked on many construction projects all over Alaska.

In 1985, Linda became a public housing manager for the Alaska State Housing Authority, managing 75 low-income family apartments in Juneau. She has since worked as an accountant, administrative manager and procurement specialist for the Department of Administration and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Her role in all these positions was to provide administrative support to the various agency managers and program staff. While with DCED, Linda developed model grant agreements, monitored grants for compliance with grant terms and conditions, and generated grant payments for several programs.

Linda replaces Stacy Goade, who left the Commission to accept another position within State government. Linda looks forward to learning the Alaska Commission on Aging NTS program and providing excellent support services to the NTS grantees.

Jeff Kemp, Associate Coordinator, Senior Community Services Employment Program

Jeff Kemp worked for the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) for almost seven years before coming to the Commission on February 1. He started as the clerk for DMA and eventually moved up the ranks to become the division's Information Officer. In this position Jeff was responsible for a variety of tasks, including serving as the Director's liaison with both recipient and provider related issues. Knowing that Medicaid is a complex program, Jeff helped to further expand the division's level of customer service by offering "hands-on" help to those needing answers or solutions to Medicaid issues. Part of Jeff's responsibility at the Division of Medical Assistance was to successfully explain the programs in layman's terms to those who were not familiar with the services offered. To do

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Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Aging (concluded)

Alaska Commission on Aging Director, Dr. Lyn Freeman, presented Complementary and Alternative Medicine Research and the Aging Population at the Alaska Health Summit 2001 in Anchorage December 3-5, 2001. This abstract of Dr. Freeman's presentation is continued from January's issue of Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger.

Herbal Supplements

Perhaps the most popular alternative treatment today is the use of herbal supplements. The following are some herbs that have been used with success. **Please do not use these herbs based on this list!** Remember that there can be side effects from using herbs, especially when combined with other substances. Consult your doctor or herbalist before using these supplements, or at the very least, read all labels carefully and thoroughly.

Billberry Fruit (can be toxic!): Improves night vision, treats nonspecific diarrhea, reduces inflammation of mucous membranes, treats circulatory problems.

Cranberry (American cranberry, not highbush or lowbush cranberry): Prevents urinary tract infections, may reduce some forms of tumors.

Echinacea: Anti-viral, fights yeast infections, stimulates immune system.

Feverfew Leaf: Treats migraine headaches, menstrual irregularities.

Ginko Biloba: Delays symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease and related dementias, treats vertigo and dizziness, altitude sickness.

Goldenseal: Treats cold and flu symptoms if taken at appropriate time.

Kava: Short term treatment of anxiety disorders. Many potential side effects.

Milk Thistle: Treats a variety of liver damaging conditions, may help prevent kidney damage.

St. John's Wort: Treats mild depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, premenstrual syndrome.

Saw Palmetto: Treats symptoms of prostate cancer.

Education is the First Step

This abstract has only touched upon the highlights of complementary and alternative medicines. Some of these will be featured in more detail in future issues of *Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger*. The best way to preserve and improve our health as we age is to become better informed. Whether we prefer traditional Western medicine or alternative treatments, or a combination of both, it is imperative that we educate ourselves on the subject in order to become affective partners in caring for our health. Below are a few of the many Websites that may aid you in learning more about alternative medicines and treatments:

- Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database: www.naturaldatabase.com
- National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: altmed.od.nih.gov/nccam
- Department of Health and Human Services Health Finder: www.healthfinder.gov

Resolutions Recognize 30th Anniversary of Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs

The United States Senate has passed Senate Resolution 200 recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs. An identical resolution is gaining support in the United States House of Representatives. Supporters of the House resolution hope to gain passage prior to March 22nd, which is the actual anniversary of the Nutrition Program.

