The Twenty-fifth Alaska Legislature is in full swing and a number of issues of interest for seniors and people with disabilities are on the docket. How do you keep on top of what's happening? Here is a sampling:

◊ **Gavel To Gavel Alaska** provides coverage of the Alaska Legislature, the Administration and the Alaska Supreme Court, available through the internet at www.ktoo.org/gavel/ and on public television.

◊ For those with access to the internet, many options exist, including:
  ◊ The Alaska Legislature homepage [www.legis.state.ak.us/home](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/home) includes a wide range of information including contact information for your elected officials; a search tool for bills; the Public Opinion Messages System (POMS) to electronically send input; committee schedules; and more.
  ◊ The Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education website [www.hss.state.ak.us/gcdse](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/gcdse)
  ◊ The Alaska Commission on Aging website [www.hss.state.ak.us/acoa/](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/acoa/) includes a legislative “Watch List”; an advocacy Toolkit for Senior Advocates; and information from their Legislative Advocacy and State Plan committees, including a link to the Alaska Aging Advocacy Network, a group formed to provide input on issues of importance to seniors.
  ◊ The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, aka “The Trust,” is dedicated to assisting those who experience mental illness; mental retardation or similar disabilities; chronic alcoholism with psychosis; or Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia. The Trust website [www.mhtrust.org](http://www.mhtrust.org) includes an Advocacy page with contact information for officials; current alerts, votes, bills, summaries and status information about key bills; and even State Legislature Basics (how to write or call your representative and tips).

Lastly, **call your area’s Legislative Information Office** for information:
- Juneau, (907) 465-4648;
- Ketchikan, (907) 225-9675;
- Sitka, (907) 747-6276;
- Petersburg, (907) 772-3741;
- Wrangell, (907) 874-3013.

With Governor Palin calling for millions of dollars in cuts in the upcoming budget, we are gearing up for a session focusing on these **Independent Living Advocacy Efforts**:  

⇒ The Alaska Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) like SAIL are advocating to the legislature to approve additional funds to meet their service and geographical areas’ unmet needs. (continued on pg 7)
Deaf Community News:
Dates to Remember & Information to Know

Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened & Older Alaskans with Hearing Loss Support Group Dates - Please join us!
Interpreters, ASL Students, family & friends welcome too!

- Silent Lunch ~ 1st Saturday of every month 1-2PM: Downtown Bullwinkles; March 3, April 7, and May 5 at 318 Willooughby—Remember: No Voice! It will cost a penny to talk with voice. Brown bag or order from the menu.
- Deaf Coffee ~ 3rd Friday of the every month 7PM: Grandma’s Kitchen at Mendenhall Mall: Come eat and chat with us.
- Deaf Social Lab Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday: Donna’s Restaurant at the Airport Mall, from 5:30 to 6:30PM.
- No Closed-captioned scheduled for Gross Alaska Theaters: Please encourage Gross-Alaska to keep closed-captioned movies going every month!

Interpreter Referral Line (IRL) News:

Interpreter Support Group: March 10, 10AM at Heritage Coffee near Mendenhall Mall.

Please contact Pam Mueller-Guy to discuss future workshops, assessments and/or any feedback or problems with interpreting. Also, if you want to go to National RID Region 5 in San Francisco, CA, we can discuss fundraising ideas. Next registration deadline is 4/30/07—see all the conference info here: http://www.rid.org/The2007ConferenceInformation092006.pdf

Interested in an Interpreter Workshop? SAIL is looking to host training if more than 6 people sign up! Deadline: March 15, 2007

I plan to set up an interpreter workshop called Effective Interpreting series: Simultaneous Interpreting from English in Spring 2007 - $25 will secure your spot in the training (refundable if cancelled) and allow us to get the materials. I will contact RID or other sources for CEU approval. The deadline for this workshop is no later than March 15th, 2007, so I need those spots filled before then to ensure we go forward.

RID Performance Test Dates & Application Deadlines: Located at Deaf and HH in the ARC Anchorage, AK; Site: 136

About TTYS:

Keep your TTY in case of emergency, a TTY is still needed to make 911 calls (Right now no 911 calls can be made via videophones or any other communications devices due to their use of dynamic IP address, which do not allow call origins to be identified.) Also use TTY as a stand-by in case of power outage (TTYS have batteries in them and can continue for a few hours). There are reasons to keep your reliable TTY handy! It’s still the only reliable method to receive calls from others. Don’t throw it away! Never throw a TTY away—at the very least, donate it to SAIL’s Loan Closet!

Don’t Hang Up on Me! I’m not a Telemarketer! Alaska Relay is trying to decrease the frequency of hang ups by people who are unfamiliar with relay, by increasing awareness with the general public. Whenever you experience hang-ups during relay calls, please let either SAIL or AK Relay know. If you tell SAIL or AK Relay who is hanging up on you, we can help educate them. Tell Relay online: http://www.akrelay.com/hangup.aspx

For businesses: please see page 8 (back page) for more info.

About Videophones:

Sorenson or D-link Videophone applications available through the Internet at http://www.csdvrs.com/ or www.sorensonvrs.com Doug Cliff can come down to help set up for Sorenson Videophone—he needs more customers first, so please sign up! For more information or questions, please contact Pam (see above), Southeast’s Telecommunications Alaska Relay Advisory Board member for Communication Services for the Deaf for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Community.
**Hello from the Juneau ORCA office!**

Things have been very busy and VERY fun around here! The last couple of months have seen ORCA consumers going skiing, rock climbing, to the movies for a GREAT holiday film (Happy Feet) and to Perseverance Theater to see “Raven Odyssey.” Going to the theater was a highlight for everyone involved, and to add a special touch to the experience, we all decided to “dress for the theater”!

With the new additions to the ORCA Juneau Staff, Cheryl and Eric, a new team is emerging. Cheryl is spearheading the renamed Ski-for-All (formerly Ski-a-thon) and is making it a bigger community-wide event. The fantastic event is shaping up! Make sure to mark your calendars for March 24-25th, and get your fancy dinner clothes ready for the Gala Awards Banquet at Centennial Hall (see page 1).

The ski program is in full swing and the consumers are out shredding the mountain and honing their skiing and snowboarding skills. Smiles and rosy cheeks surround us each weekend, and we all have big smiles on our faces as we make our way down the mountain.

Over the next month or so look for ORCA activities with AWARE, Juneau Mountain Rescue, Temasco Helicopters, and Yoga classes! In April we start thinking of putting the skis away and getting our hiking shoes laced up, and the kayak paddles out! We have our kayak pool session already scheduled for the middle of April!

From all of us at Juneau ORCA, have fun, get out and enjoy all that Southeast Alaska has to offer!

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**A New View**

SAIL Sitka has moved! Our office is now located at 514 Lake Street, Suite C - below the Sitka Dental Clinic. We are in the process of making our new office accessible to all of our consumers, but as always, are more than willing to visit our consumer’s homes if this is more convenient. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Willow at 747-6859. Thank you for your patience during this time!

**American Sign Language Classes for Beginners**

SAIL and Kelli McLenahan of The University of Alaska Southeast have teamed up to offer a free American Sign Language (ASL) class! This class is designed for service providers and community members interested in learning ASL basics. All materials are provided. The class meets every Thursday, from 4:30-5:30pm, at the new SAIL office (514 Lake St, Ste C). It is never too late to join in! If you have any questions, feel free to call Willow at SAIL at 747-6859.

**ORCA in Sitka**

Sitka’s ORCA group has enjoyed a fun-filled year, with many plans in store for the summer! So far, we have cooked meals, gone on hikes, played games and much more. We have plans to fly to Juneau to play on the mountain with some skis. Talk of a possible road trip to Palmer, for the State Fair, has made it onto our calendar planning boards for the end of the summer! In between a ski trip and a road trip, we are going to do some camping, and hopefully just take advantage of the good weather we will have this summer. Either way, ORCA is going to get out there and do things like we did last year, but more so! Join in the fun with biking, hiking, swimming, and more! Call Keturah at 747-6859 with any questions.
Office hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 9am - 5pm. Appointments recommended.

Upcoming Ketchikan Events

On Thursday, March 8th, a planning meeting for upcoming summer trips will be held at the SAIL office from 3 - 5 pm. If you’re unable to attend the meeting, but have some ideas to share, please call Kate at 907-225-4735, or 907-617-0473. Come and share some ideas with us so we can plan an amazing summer calendar!

Keep an eye on monthly calendars for special announcements and new programs in ORCA.

OUTREACH: Kate and Kevin will be traveling to Prince of Wales Island on March 5-7th, and will be at the Klawock and Hydaburg Senior Centers on March 5th. Kevin will be attending the Health Fairs in Klawock, Wrangell, and Metlakatla during the month of April. Please call the Ketchikan office (225-4735) if you would like to meet with us there.

It’s a spaceship. It’s a giant light bulb. No, IT’S THE SUN!

To see the sun in January is quite the unusual event in Ketchikan, so Adventure Club members decided to take full advantage of a sunny day and try out the Walking Tour of Ketchikan. Armed with maps and a lot of energy, Adventure Club set off to Eagle Park for their first stop of the tour, ending the walking tour of Ketchikan on historic Creek Street. This sunny day in Ketchikan did not go wasted by Adventure Club members who were all smiles and laughs throughout the activity—see our best eagle impressions to the right.

Ketchikan Welcomes Kate!

Hi! I’m Kate, the new ORCA Coordinator for the Ketchikan office. I’ve been here almost two months now, and I love it! Having grown up in a town of 1200 in Pennsylvania, Ketchikan is the perfect size for me. I’ve met a lot of friendly people in Ketchikan and look forward to getting even more involved in the community.

I recently graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a degree in Therapeutic Recreation. Having traveled to Oregon to complete my internship, I thought, “Why stop here? Keep going!” And thus, I eventually signed on with SAIL in Ketchikan! As ORCA coordinator, I’m excited about sharing my passions with SAIL consumers. I enjoy everything outdoors: hiking, camping, scuba diving, learning about wildlife, spending time on the water, and pretty much anything else that will get me into the fresh air. Another passion of mine is music: I’ve begun playing with the Irish band, Patty’s Leather Breeches, and occasionally visit bluegrass night with my fiddle.

In a town like Ketchikan, with its great recreation and cultural opportunities, there’s never going to be a dull moment. So, make sure to stop in the office, say hello and see what’s going on in ORCA world!

Musings from Ketchikan by Kevin Gadsey

Upon leaving the Juneau office in December, the SAIL team threw me a goodbye party complete with a cake decorated with pictures of several of my favorite superheroes. It was a great send-off to my new home in Ketchikan. Slowly, I feel like I am catching my stride here in Ketchikan, learning the ways problems are solved here in southern Southeast. I have discovered that many places in Ketchikan are not up to ADA accessibility code, and have already worked with a few businesses to improve the situation. In mid-February, I called the county clerk and helped relocate a nearby borough committee meeting to a more accessible location. But this progress just scratches the surface of the advocacy needs here in Ketchikan. If anyone in Southeast wants to tackle ADA accessibility, please give the Ketchikan office a call!
Project Playground Update!

We Build in less than 3 months!

On February 15, 2007, the steering committee met with a planner from Leathers to work through final details during their organization day! After a year and a half of planning for this playground, it is exciting to see the momentum really picking up! We are now just 2½ months away from building the greatest playground in Juneau. We have successfully raised over 87% of the funds needed for this project, leaving us only $58,388 left to raise. We welcome any and all donations from businesses, organizations and individuals and thank those who have so generously given to this project! Our biggest effort at the moment is rounding up thousands of volunteers to help build the playground on May 15-19 and May 22-26. This will be an exciting and rewarding two weeks! There will be tasks for everyone from ages 10 and up. Staff from Leathers Associates will be directing volunteers through the build. We need your help to succeed! To join our efforts, contact Catherine Pusich at 780-4525, dpusich@gci.net or visit our website at juneauplayground.com and fill out the online volunteer form. You won’t want to miss out on this community effort to make Juneau a healthier, happier place for our children.

Welcome Jeff Irwin to the Juneau Office!

Hello SAIL! My name is Jeff Irwin and I have just been hired on in the Juneau office as an Independent Living Specialist. I have been living in the Juneau area for just over twelve years now and think I can finally call Southeast Alaska home. The area, the people, and the recreational opportunities keep my spirit alive and my soul free. I look forward to working with the SAIL crew to better serve the Southeast communities and assisting individuals with improving the quality of their lives.

Thank you Kara!

SAIL Benefits Specialist Kara Lunde returned to Ketchikan on February 5th, to support the Coordinated Transportation Plan before the Ketchikan Gateway Borough Assembly. The federal government requires any community applying for transportation funds to have a Coordinated Transportation Plan. The plan, a project of the Revilla Transportation Coalition, which Lunde spearheaded, was passed unanimously. It will allow the Borough and agencies that provide transportation, like SAIL and Southeast Senior Services, to pool their resources for more effective transportation for all residents of Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Enhanced community transportation options always benefit seniors and residents with disabilities. Thank you, Kara, for your leadership and hard work on this important project in Ketchikan!

SAVE THE DATE:
Only Fools Run At Midnight
11:59pm, June 30th, 2007
Sitka, Ketchikan & Juneau!

Southeast Alaska Health Fairs this Spring:
- Sitka, March 3
- Haines, March 24
- Gustavus, March 31
- Juneau, April 6-7
- Wrangell, April 7
- Yakutat, April 14
- Klawock, April 17

Metlakatla will likely hold its health fair in mid-April, Angoon will hold its health fair sometime in May; and Hoonah’s health fair will most likely be the last week of May or the first week of June.

Stay tuned to your community for more information!
Helpful Hints for Visits to Your Eye Care Professional

The following is a checklist provided by the National Society to Prevent Blindness that can help you make the most of your next eye care visit. (Reprinted from *Prism*, the newsletter of Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted.)

When you make an appointment:

- Be prepared to describe any vision problems you are having.
- Will the eye exam temporarily affect your vision? Ask if you will be able to drive yourself home.
- Ask how much the exam will cost. Do any of your health insurance plans cover a portion of that? How is payment handled?

Before you go in for your examination make a list of the following:

- Signs or symptoms of eye problems you have noticed (flashes of light, difficulty seeing at night, temporary double vision, loss of vision)
- Eye injuries or surgeries you have had (appointment date, place of treatment, etc.)
- Prescription and over-the-counter drugs you are taking
- Questions you have about vision
- Your general conditions (allergies, chronic health problems, operations, etc.)
- Family history of eye problems (glaucoma, cataracts)

Take along the following:

- Your glasses and/or contact lenses
- Prescription and over-the-counter drugs you are taking
- Medical or health insurance card

During the examination: Ask questions about anything that seems unclear to you, such as the names and purposes of tests you may undergo. Ask when it’s best to call with questions and when to return for your next exam.

If the eye care professional finds a potential or existing vision problem, ask:

- What is the problem called?
- How did you get it?
- How can others get it?
- What can be done about it?
- What are the recommended treatments?
- Are there any alternatives?
- How could you get a second opinion?

If your eye care professional recommends surgery, ask:

- What are the benefits and risks of the surgery?
- Who will perform it and where?
- Will I need a local or general anesthetic?
- What will your vision probably be like afterwards?
- Is it likely that you will need glasses and medication?
- What will recuperation be like?
- Will you need a personal care attendant or other Nurse’s Aid?
- What precautions will you need to follow, and for how long?
- Would any of your health insurance plans cover the cost of surgery?
- How could you get a second opinion?

*For more information about SAIL’s Low Vision Programs, call your local office!*
FREE Living Well Alaska Class:
A six week workshop for people with chronic health conditions
Arthritis… Heart Conditions… Diabetes… Vision Loss… Cancer… Emphysema… HIV/AIDS… Asthma… Stroke… Chronic Pain

DATES: March 22—April 26
TIME: 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
LOCATION: NUGGET MALL

Chronic conditions can make living a healthy life challenging. At a Living Well Alaska workshop, you learn to meet these challenges by:
• Managing symptoms
• Setting goals & solving problems
• Dealing with depression & emotions
• Using relaxation techniques
• Working with your health care team
• Eating well and being active

Class size is limited.
To register or for questions, call: Bob Chatfield at 796-8622

Free Income Tax Assistance

Assistance from AARP for income tax filing is available in Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka at no cost to seniors and low-to-moderate income taxpayers beginning February 1, 2007.

In Juneau, help is available on Sundays from 12pm - 5pm at the Valley Library, no appointment necessary.
In Ketchikan, help is available upstairs at the Tongass Federal Credit Union on Tongass Ave on Saturdays from 11am-2pm and also at the Ketchikan Recreation Center from 6pm-8pm on Thursdays. Neither location is requiring appointments.
In Sitka, help is available at the UAS Learning Center on Wednesdays from 5pm-9pm (call for an appointment 747-4273), at the United Methodist Church from 8am-12pm on Saturdays (appointment needed, 747-4723) and at the Swan Lake Senior Center on Wednesdays from 12-4pm (appointment needed, 747-8617).

AARP Tax-Aides provide direct assistance to taxpayers to assist them with filing their federal income taxes, and they provide free electronic filing.

If you need an interpreter for this tax assistance, call SAIL’s Interpreter Referral Line coordinator, Pam Mueller-Guy: 907 523-5285 TTY, 907 586-4920 Voice/TTY, Fax 907 586-4980, Monday - Friday from 9AM - 5PM.

Legislature, continued from page 1)
⇒ Although a $1.2 million increment is needed, at the bare minimum, a permanent restoration of the $100,000 decrease in the FY08 Governor’s budget is requested.
◊ CILs have increased the number of disabled and senior Alaskans served by 112% (to 3200) in the last 3 years while receiving relatively flat State funding.
◊ In FY05, State funding comprised only 9% of the total funding operating Alaska’s CILs.
⇒ The SILC and CILs are also asking for approval of $94,000 in additional support for interpreter referral services for Alaskans who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing.
◊ The program has been flat-funded for over 17 years; In SE, there has been a 155% increase in the last two years, with 464 IRL requests filled in FY06.

In addition, the SILC and CILs support the following:
◊ Protection and expansion of Medicaid services that support Alaskans with disabilities and seniors to live at home and in the community of their choice. “Our Homes-Not Nursing Homes.” See the results of a study on Alaska’s Medicaid Program: http://www.aksenate.org/
◊ The establishment of a Housing Trust Fund as proposed by The Trust and other groups which provides affordable and accessible housing options to Alaskans with disabilities and seniors.
◊ Community transportation to be recognized as a formal program by the State with a stable source of funding to support transit operations.
◊ A $110,000 increment to the Alaska Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired for Rural Outreach and Community-Based Adaptive Skill Training.

(Ski-for-All continued from pg 1)
Speaking of pledge packets...do you have yours yet? You can get your pledge packet or more pledge sheets by calling ORCA at 586-0104, stopping by the office, or downloading from our website: www.sailinc.org.

Everyone can collect pledges and try for prizes – your parents, your sister, your friend at school. And everyone can help us celebrate during SKI-for-ALL weekend March 24th & 25th! For the Eaglecrest event, we will have two days of demonstrations of adaptive ski equipment, movies, prizes, music, and lots of other fun stuff! Paralympic skier Joe Tompkins will be our special guest for the weekend, and will be giving a talk just for SKI-for-ALL at the big banquet Sunday night, March 25th. This is a big exciting event, so be sure to reserve your seat before March 10th!
Join the ORCA gang as we celebrate that recreation is for everyone! And thank you for your support.
Welcome to the world Hayden Juan Carlos!

Our Development Director, Sierra Kaden, became a mother at 8:23am on December 24th! Her beautiful little boy is named Hayden Juan Carlos Jimenez. Sierra, her partner Carlos, and little “Hay-baby” are all healthy, happy, and totally in love! Congrats, Sierra & Carlos!

About TTY’s for businesses: Don’t Hang Up! It’s not a Telemarketer! If you pick up the phone and hear “dead air” (no one talks immediately), don't hang up right away. It may be a relay service calling. Relay services allow Deaf people using TTYs to call non-TTY telephones, with an operator acting as intermediary. There may be a pause before the call starts after you pick it up (just like sales calls). A silent call or series of electronic beeps may be a TTY call. Please call SAIL to learn more about how to use Relay or a TTY! 907-586-4920 V/TTY. Schedule a staff training today!

SAIL Board of Directors

- Clark Gruening, President
- Bob Purvis, Vice President
- Terrence Van Ettinger, Secretary
- Elena Rath, Treasurer
- Beth Chapman
- Ann Park
- Don Brandon
- Suzanne Williams

Public Participation is encouraged at the monthly board meetings! For more information, call:

Ketchikan 907-225-4735 V/TTY
888-452-7245
ketchikan@sailinc.org

Sitka 907-747-6859 V/TTY
888-500-7245
sitka@sailinc.org

Juneau 907-586-4920 V/TTY
800-478-7245
info@sailinc.org