

Distinguished Citizen of the Year Award



Congratulations to Jack and Carol Wilbur! They were honored by the Midnight Sun Council of the Boy Scouts of America as their **Distinguished Citizens of the Year** on Wednesday, December 6 at the Westmark. Their children, Aaron and Sara, gave a speech at the ceremony as well.



Leadership Fairbanks saw 26 graduates in 2023. Our very own Cutter Degerlund was among that group of graduates.

Under this program, facilitated by the Fairbanks Chamber, burgeoning leaders are empowered through expanding their skills, exposure to challenging ideas, mentorship from community leaders, lively discussion and personal reflection.

President's Corner

Community Involvement

Design Alaska was announced at the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce as a member since 1973. Fifty-year Member! Chamber was celebrating the volunteer of the year who gives their energy to the Red Cross, Kinross Gold for their support of education, and Genes Chrysler for being a great community partner in business and giving. It made me think of all the things we do as community involvement with our time, energy, and money.

I was also reminded of our community involvement by the individual-directed giving that Jack recently sent out. This is straight up financial support. Organizations really appreciate donations that help them with their missions, and it is a clear indication that the community is supporting their programs.

It is an important part of culture to be active in community and support organizations and activities that make our community stronger. Chamber is just an example of our involvement as a business. We give through financial contributions and our time on many boards and committees throughout the community, statewide, nationally, and internationally.

Our individual employees are also deeply involved in community organizations through our professional connections and with personal causes we care about. It is this desire to contribute and help our community be healthy that is embedded in what we believe.

So, thank you for all your community involvement, and I encourage you to continue giving and supporting organizations wherever you are to make your home a healthy and wonderful place to live.

Chris Miller, PE
President, Design Alaska



Veterans Day Crock Pot Cook Off



On Friday, November 10 Design Alaska employees gathered at noon to taste homemade crock pot dishes brought in by several employees. As part of lunch, employees vote on their favorite dish. This year's winner of the cook off was Jim Godfrey. This is Jim's second win.

Pictures of employees and/or family members were displayed in both buildings.

A special thanks goes out to all our veterans who served our country. Thanks also to the volunteers who brought a dish in: Jim Godfrey, Blake Burley, Dantasia Baum, and Kym Pihlaja.



LEFT: Jim Godfrey with the Winner's Ladle and bragging rights for a year!!

FIRST AID / CPR TRAINING



Josh Cohen from Arctic Fire and Safety was here in October to train our employees on First Aid/CPR/AED.

For those who had expired certifications, or individuals who hadn't taken the class before, learned CPR, how to use the defibrillator and basic first aid skills. Learning how to use an epi pen was added to this year's training.

While we hope we never have to use these skills in "real life," we are prepared to step in if needed.



Sabrina and Tessa show what they learned and "bandaged up" Taylor and Jennifer. They passed with flying colors!



TREE DECORATING FROM THE INSIDE.... TO THE OUTSIDE!



Tehya and Kayla added final touches of blue and silver to the tree in the Main Building Lobby, while the Annex shines beautifully adorned in red and gold!



Fullford Electric recently installed new lights on the exterior tree. Fun Fact: The tree boasts 2,000 lights spanning across 1,000 feet of wire, with each bulb meticulously hand-installed by Jim Godfrey!



Family Holiday Party 2023



Our annual family holiday party was held on Friday, December 22.

Employees and guests gathered in the lobby area to listen to Emma Meservy play her piano and sing holiday songs.

Midnight Sun Catering provided a wonderful lunch.

One of the highlights of the party was watching the kids 16 and under open their presents.

Employees and guests over 16 took part in the gift exchange. This year's most popular gifts were a shop vac and a set of walkie-talkies.



Congratulations to the Jones Family!



Welcome Baby Amur-Eden Danger

What a fun time being a parent it has been so far!

Amur-Eden is growing leaps and bounds leveling up and learning new things every day. She certainly is living up to her middle name (Danger) and wants to go straight to walking and skydiving already! Always on the move just like Mom.

Look forward to seeing her grow and develop her own unique character.

~ Marina Jones



Employee Question of the Month

What is one cultural tradition or celebration that you find fascinating and would like to experience firsthand?

Eliza Cink	I've always wanted to see Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, as well as Kupala Night, an ancient Slavic festival that included jumping over a bonfire and sending flower wreaths down a river.
Eric Gabrielson	Oktoberfest in Munich!
Blake Burley	I'd like to attend a winter Olympics! Ski jumping, speed skating, and bobsleigh are on the list.
Pat Brandon	Italians often take riposos which are multi-hour lunch breaks to go home and cook with their friends and families. They often squeeze in a nap too. I dabble in this cultural tradition from time to time.
Chris Miller	The bowhead whale hunt in the arctic communities. I would love to understand how the ancient traditions are binding the community together in this modern world.
Kym Pihlaja	The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.



How to Spot a Wellness Scam

By Marina Jones



New Year's is sneaking up to us quickly and with that comes social media ads to hook you on purchasing the newest diet supplement to reach your yearly resolution goals and "a new you". Dickey health claims and wellness programs have been around for centuries, from the snake oil of the 1800s to the "master cleanse" of the early aughts.

Even as someone in the health and wellness field, I have tried supplements that claimed to curb a raging sweet tooth (though I suspected, correctly, that they wouldn't work). So I won't judge if you've tried a spoonful of sea moss in hopes of speeding your metabolism. (That doesn't work, either.)

People don't necessarily fall for false wellness claims because they're gullible, but are looking to fill gaps in a health care system that can leave us feeling dismissed and unheard. Below are a few strategies for assessing wellness claims.

Steer clear of buzzwords.

Social media has allowed harmful advice to proliferate. Claims can be hard to weed through, but certain words are immediate red flags:

Miracle, breakthrough, and secret. These inflated terms should be greeted with skepticism, along with any language that this is hidden information that 'they' don't want you to know. If there was a 'natural' cure for cancer, why would reputable sources want to keep that information hidden?

Biohack. The idea that we can hack ourselves like machines or computers is a myth. The true nature of health goes well beyond the physical and involves everything from your mental health, your social life, to your economic well-being.

Detox. The wellness industry, tends to view the liver and kidneys as filters clogged with "toxins" that need to be cleaned, but in reality, the body is designed to detoxify itself.

Natural. Not only is this term vague, but natural remedies can have side effects that rival or even exceed those of standard medical care. Wellness culture talks a lot about 'Big Pharma,' which has its own problems, but 'Big Supplement' is even more problematic because it's largely unregulated.

You should also avoid claims that imply one food (or even nutrient) can drastically improve your well-being. One thing should not be considered to make or break your health and overall eating patterns.

S.I.F.T. through information.

Consider using the S.I.F.T. Method for assessing online information developed by University of Washington researcher Michael Caulfield. The acronym stands for Stop, Investigate the source, Find better coverage, and Trace the claims.

Before making any changes to your diet or lifestyle, pause for a moment, then investigate the source by asking: "How does the person sharing the content stand to benefit? What are their credentials? What's their agenda?"

Fact-check the claim by finding reputable sources like the CDC, the FDA, the NIH and other agencies and organizations that focus on public health. Try and trace the claims back to a primary source like a study. (A quick Google search reveals, for example, that "adrenal fatigue," a popular malady in alternative medicine, is not an actual diagnosis.)

In some cases, there are no facts to be checked. The phrase "science hasn't caught up," for instance, usually means there's little to no research.

Address concerns with a doctor.

Many people seek wellness information online because they've had bad experiences with doctors or may not have access to quality medical care.

People that are able to go to a doctor they trust should ask about wellness claims. If you would be willing to spend countless hours going down an internet rabbit hole about it, running it by your doctor first might be a good first step to a truly new you.

Resource: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/05/well/live/health-wellness-scam.html>

January 2024 ~ Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 Office Closed	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 Table Massages	11	12	13
14	15 Birthday Cake	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 Table Massages	25 Manager's Meeting	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January Birthdays

Eliza Cink January 21
Emily Winfield January 29



Design Alaska Anniversaries

Florian Kienle 24th Anniversary January 10, 2001
Jennifer Centers 5th Anniversary January 28, 2019

Design Alaska's annual pie day was held on Wednesday, November 22. Employees enjoy getting together and catching up with fellow employees and special guests. Marina had no problem finding volunteers to hold baby Amur. A special thank you to Larae Degerlund for providing the homemade pies and whipped cream.

