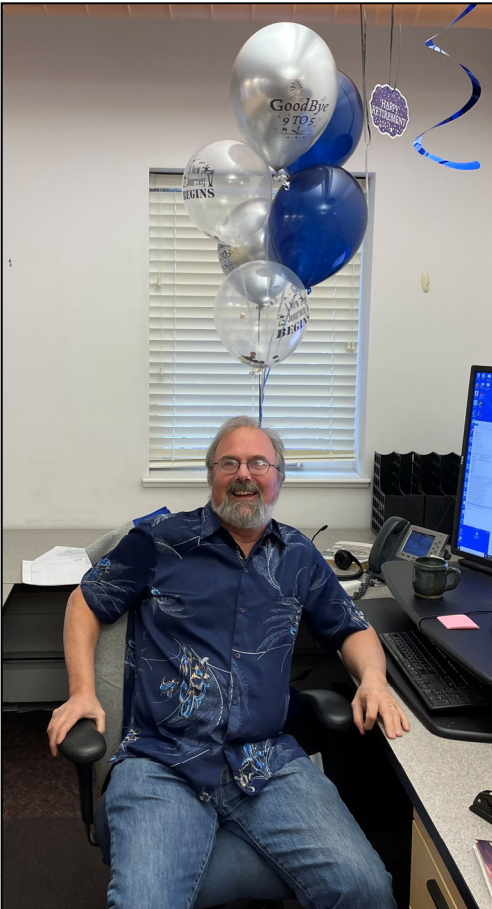


### Robin Rader Retires



After 30 years of work at Design Alaska, Robin Rader has made the decision to retire. When asked why he applied for a job at Design Alaska he said, "I saw the ad in the paper and figured if I didn't start to do real engineering soon (10 years out of school), I never would. I had always thought Design Alaska was the best design firm from my experience maintaining their designs."

Robin is looking forward to traveling with his wife Maggi. Their first stop after retirement is Hawaii for six weeks. He plans on getting in more skiing, helping out around his church, and putting some miles on his camper van this summer.

Robin plans on keeping residence in Fairbanks as this is where his three daughters and their families live.

Thank you for all of your work Robin, we will miss seeing you around the office!

More pictures of Robin's retirement party are on page three.



## Blake's Corner

### Air Quality Monitors

For those of you who saw the mysterious white box across from the Large Conference Room and wondered just what information this mysterious technology was collecting, keep reading, this article is for you.

The mechanical department was loaned three air quality measurement devices by our manufacturer's representatives at Mechanical Sales (Thanks, Elena) and tested them out in our Annex building and then shifted them over to the Main Building. The results should be taken with a grain of salt when comparing buildings since the data was not collected simultaneously. Specifically, humidity levels have been in a gradual state of decline since the beginning of October (no surprise there) and measured similar values when the sensors changed buildings on or about the 28th of October. Additionally, not all sensors can record the same information.



Something of interest was that the Annex Breakroom maximum VOC readings occurred around 1am most nights. Mechanical ventilation shuts off around 6:30pm, and the building's occupancy load usually drops to zero, but all night long a family of microbes work to decompose our leftover lunches in the trash can and any remaining fumes from the printer are released into the still air. A similar phenomenon occurred in the structural department. CO2 concentrations in that department generally registered their highest readings around 3pm, but at midnight on November 8th when CO2 was on the decline, their VOCs increased to 927 parts per billion (ppb). They were really printing that day or forgot to put the leftover pizza in the fridge!



What are our lessons learned? Looks like we are doing about as good as could be expected for our environment and the equipment we have. Carbon Dioxide levels in our Survey Department peaked more than the other departments surveyed (no pun intended). No surprise, they don't have direct mechanical ventilation but rely on passive air transfer from the annex second floor and opening windows to let in the fresh air isn't a great option during winter. Marketing and Structural were better but could use a little improvement. We will have to do a little testing and calculating on our end to see if the minimum outside air on the main building air handling unit can be adjusted a little higher.

So, is our air safe?

Short answer, yes. Our Air is safe, even at the highest concentrations measured. Long answer, the EPA only regulates emissions of VOCs to prevent the formation of ozone, so there is no established "safe limit" because it all depends upon the type of VOC. Furthermore, there are toxic to humans VOCs that the EPA does not regulate because they do not contribute to the formation of ozone. There are also plenty of nontoxic VOCs. Similarly, OSHA does not regulate "VOC" levels, but rather particular contaminants i.e. benzene, hydrogen sulfide, etc. These limits are pretty high. For example, if ALL of the VOCs measured were benzyne (which has one of the lowest exposure limits), we would be 10X below the OSHA 8 hour time weighted average permissible exposure limit. Most of the other OSHA regulated VOCs would require concentrations 20 to 100 times greater than what we measured to be considered harmful in an 8 hour period.

In the meantime, where do you go to breathe the best air in the company you ask? That's right, stop by the mechanical department any time for a breath of fresh air!

-Blake Burley, PE  
Mechanical Engineer



## Robin's Retirement Party Continued





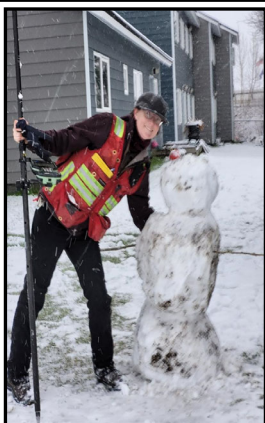
If you could have an unlimited supply of one thing for the rest of your life, what would you pick?

Cutter Degerlund	Um... money... obviously.
Mary Sue Dates	Peace and joy.
Emily Winfield	Lattes. That would make me a happy camper.
Adam Shilling	Tacos.
Chris Miller	I am not joking. Peace, empathy, and civility for different opinions.
Pat Brandon	Time!
Cat Petersen	Good health. Ideally in a sharable form, so I could spread it around too.
Jack Wilbur	Snow!
Marina Jones	Dr. Bronner's Liquid Soap...Legitimately 18-in-1 uses and more!
Lyle Axelarris	Air.
Marilyn Fye	Health, of course. With that all things are possible. (Then just go to sleep and not wake up when it is time to leave this body – NOT live forever!)
Eliza Cink	Time.
Don Hopkins	How about knowledge. Would be pretty cool to have all of Google/Wikipedia/Library of Congress ... in your head for immediate retrieval.
Blake Burley	Honestly pretty content as is, BUT, if I had to choose one temporal thing, it would be steak. Ya, definitely steak.

## Do You Want to Build a Snowman?

By Cat Petersen

John and I were setting some monuments at an apartment complex during the first heavy snowfall this season. As we were getting out of the truck and setting up our equipment, I noticed two small children nearby diligently building a snowman. The base snowball was practically as tall as they were, and they were just finishing up the second snowball, nearly as large as the first. When they finished building the second snowball, they discovered that both of them together couldn't lift it onto the base. When they noticed that I looked their way, their sounds of struggle grew more exaggerated: "Ugh. Ugh! It's too big! We need help! We can't do this alone!" And of course, as it is our purpose to serve the community, I couldn't ignore such a desperate plea for help. I lifted one side and the other two together got the other, and we all worked together to pack it in place atop the base. And that is why I built a snowman at work.





# Wellness and the Holidays

Found on: <https://hr.mcmaster.ca/employee-well-being-wellness-and-the-holidays/>



For many, the holiday season can be a time of joy, relaxation, and time spent with others. It can also be a time where many personal and professional commitments can leave you feeling overwhelmed. It can also be a time where you may be feeling lonely or isolated. The Healthy Workplace committee is pleased to provide resources on maintaining and prioritizing your well-being during the holiday season.

Here are some tips for reducing holiday stress:

- Create an overarching, realistic budget. An annual budget with a section dedicated to the holidays will push you to save in small increments over time limiting end-of-the-year fiscal worries. Haven't done a budget this year? It's okay! Create a holiday-specific budget now, by outlining expenses and what you can spend during this time. Take into account travel, dining out, and other seasonal staples that extend beyond gift giving. For more information on budgeting.
- Be open to good memory making. In most cases, families plan holiday gatherings with good intentions, and the genuine hope of connecting with loved ones. So, even if these have a history of being stressful, make a concentrated effort to approach each one optimistically, yet realistically, and as a new, fresh opportunity to bond in any way you can. Be open, and consciously seek out special moments or shared laughter. Often the small, unexpected times become the happiest memories.
- Identifying specific stressors and making a plan. Prior to an event, ask yourself what exactly is causing your anxiety? Uncomfortable in social settings? Won't know anyone or what to say to those you do? Figuring out exactly what the most worrisome things for you are helps break down what may seem like an overwhelming challenge into smaller, more manageable pieces. Plan when you'll go, how long you'll stay, and who you'll make an effort to talk to. Wear something you feel good in, and that's comfortable to alleviate some of the possible uneasiness.



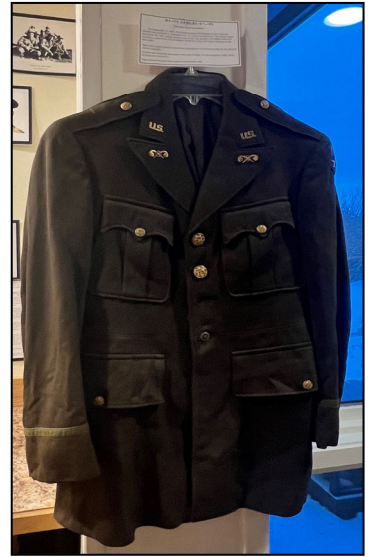
## United Way Wrap Up

The 2022 United Way Campaign has come to an end. A BIG thank you to everyone who donated to this year's campaign.

This year we had 21 donors, whose combined pledges came to \$26,070. Including the 100% match by Design Alaska, our donation to the United Way is \$52,140. Last year, Design Alaska's total contribution was \$38,560.



## Veteran's Day Lunch



Design Alaska celebrates Veterans Day every year in honor of those who are currently serving or who have previously served. After celebrating Veteran's Day virtually for the last two years, employees were able to gather in the large conference room and have fun sharing stories while enjoying their meals.

The space across from the Large Conference Room and the wall next the Annex Conference Room were decorated with pictures of staff and family members who have served in the military.



## Waste Not This Thanksgiving

By Elizabeth Johnston



It's not surprising that household garbage — including food waste — increases by as much as 25 percent during the holiday season between Thanksgiving and New Year's.

- **Reusable dishes** are more hassle but paper-ware is not recyclable.
- Only 6.3% of **food waste** gets composted in the US. Preplan your Thanksgiving week menu with recipes that will use up leftover ingredients in mind. If one recipe calls for a half container of broth, find another recipe that will use the rest and add it to your menu.
- **Reusable produce and grocery bags** are now allowed back in most stores. Many of us got out of the habit during COVID but it's time to get back in the swing.
- **Buy in bulk** and reduce packaging waste.



# November 2022 ~ Upcoming Events

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

## November Birthdays

## December Upcoming Events

Molly McGuire	November 03		Table Massage	December 7
Taylor Tharp	November 05		Turtle Club Holiday Dinner	December 9
Robin Rader	November 12		Table Massage	December 21
Marcus Curley	November 13		Design Alaska Holiday Party	December 23
Bill Kinne	November 17		Office Closed	December 26
Ryan Morse	November 20		<h2>Design Alaska Anniversaries</h2>	
Lyle Axelarris	November 24		Elizabeth Johnston 15th Anniversary	November 1, 2007
Kym Pihlaja	November 25		Sabrina Davis 5th Anniversary	November 6, 2017
Amie Miller	November 28		Leif Olson 4th Anniversary	November 5, 2018
Blake Burley	November 28		Ashley Bowser 1st Anniversary	November 1, 2021
			Jay Baxter 1st Anniversary	November 23, 2021
			Tess Anderson 1st Anniversary	November 29, 2021