



Alaska Owned and Operated since 1974

## GUARDIAN

Alaska's only locally owned security company. Monitoring your safety 24/7

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### Update Policy:

Changes must be made in writing. A telephone followup to verify your identify with your passcode must occur *before* changes take effect.

Plan accordingly for contact list updates, or your personal contact information.

Changes can be made via mail, email, the website, or at the main office in Anchorage.

Expect a phone call verification of these changes.

It's our policy to protect your account at all times.

Update online at <https://www.guardiansecuritysystems.com/support/update-emergency-contact-list/>

## Valentine's Day Revisited

Depending on the historian consulted, the story behind Valentine's Day varies. The most commonly accepted version is that the day honors a priest named Valentine from the year 280, who was imprisoned for illegally conducting marriages. The emperor didn't allow male citizens to marry, thinking if they were unattached, they would more willingly go to battle. But smitten couples sneaked to Valentine's home under cover of darkness to be married anyway. For this, Valentine was jailed and sentenced to die. While there, the jailer's young daughter would visit every day, which the priest appreciated. On the day of his execution, February 14, he wrote a note to the jailer's daughter, thanking her for her friendship, and signed it "Your Valentine." And that was the first valentine.

Here are a few facts about the modern Valentine's Day, which has come to signify friendship as well as love and romance. In the United States alone, 2 billion dollars



will be spent on flowers, the most popular gift given, and almost another 2 billion on candy. Over 4 billion will be spend on jewelry. A whopping 198 million roses are grown specifically for Valentine's Day. In fact, the average spending per person is \$130. That's a lot of candy hearts!

# S.A.D. Times

Some say February is the hardest month, especially if the weather isn't cooperating. Limited amounts of snow have hampered normal winter activities like skiing and snowshoeing. This time of year, Alaskans may be feeling less energetic, may experience moodiness, or not enjoy normal activities.

These are all symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder, which is said to affect at least 1 in 5 Alaskans. Most children are unaffected, and more women are affected than men, but the condition is quite real. Greater darkness is thought to increase production of melatonin in the body, which is theorized to work somewhat like a tranquilizer, slowing down one's thinking, energy, and activity level.

How do you know if it's a good day for a blanket and a book, or it's time to call your doctor? According to the Mayo Clinic, these are important signals: if you notice you're unusually grumpy or tired, have difficulty getting along with people, sleep too much for your activity level, feel heavy, gain weight, or eat too many carbs, it may be time to visit your doctor. The key is how long a person has been feeling down. A day or two that is more blue than usual can be attributed to poor sleep, a recent illness, chronic pain. More than two weeks of feelings out of sorts, however, and something more serious may be going on. Good self-care involves having a check-up.

As they say, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Even though daylight is returning, there's still a lot of dark and cold around the state, and you may be feeling it.

Ready to fight winter blues on your own? The following are useful tips for managing moods and well-being while waiting for warmer days:

1. Get outside. Every day, during daylight hours, for 5-20 minutes of brisk walking. Outdoor exercise boosts mood and reduces stress. It may not need to be said, but plan for cold and dark with a warm hat, gloves, coat, and flashlight or headlamp!
2. Reduce or eliminate consumption of alcohol and caffeine. Both cause fluctuations that make steady moods more difficult.
3. Eat, sleep, and exercise regularly. Having a routine ensures that these important activities happen even when you do particularly feel like exercising.
4. Plan a vacation to somewhere warm. Even if it's two years away, start planning. Having the trip to look forward to can be a tremendous mood-booster.
5. Utilize light therapy, an inexpensive and surprisingly effective tool. SAD lights can be found at most major retailers. Follow the manufacturer's or your doctor's instructions for use.
6. Socialize: join a gym, book club, or other opportunity for socializing.

***Nationally, 3% of the population is affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder each winter. In Alaska, the figure is estimated to be closer to 20%.***

Anchorage  
274-5275

Mat-Su Valley  
376-4700

Kenai Peninsula  
283-5652

Fairbanks  
459-5275

Statewide  
1-800-478-1898

For more information:

<http://www.webmd.com/depression/understanding-seasonal-affective-disorder-treatment>

# Red Velvet Cake

## A Valentine Tradition!

2 ½ cups flour  
 ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 1 cup butter, softened  
 2 cups granulated sugar  
 4 eggs  
 1 cup sour cream  
 ½ cup milk  
 1 ounce red food color  
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract



Preheat oven to 350°F. For Cake, grease and flour 2 (9-inch) round cake pans. Sift flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt. Set aside.

Beat butter and granulated sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed 5 minutes or until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs, 1 at a time. Mix in sour cream, milk, food color and vanilla. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until just blended. Do not overbeat. Pour batter into prepared pans.

Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes. Remove from pans; cool completely on wire rack.

For Frosting, beat 8 oz softened cream cheese, 1/2 stick softened butter, 2 teaspoons vanilla in large bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar until smooth. Fill and frost cooled cake.

## Security Inspections Offered



The Matanuska-Susitna Valley covers more than 25,000 square miles, which is roughly the same size as West Virginia. The borough has just under 60,000 people and around 27,000 household units (homes, duplexes, or apartments), or just over one household unit per square mile.

Any way you look at it, that's a lot of area for local law enforcement and first responders to cover, especially during an emergency, when time is of the essence.

The less time it takes to initiate a call and get help on the way, the better the chances for a positive outcome.

That's why Guardian Security recommends that each household has a security system installed. A security system with real-time monitoring means that when there is an emergency and you require assistance, someone is on the situation, ready to make the call whether you're able to or not.

There are many layers of security and a system for every budget. Homeowners know an alarm system adds value to the home. Many landlords are agreeable to a system installation as well.

In the Valley, residents are being contacted by Guardian's customer service reps. We are offering complimentary security inspections. (On a safety note, caller ID does not show "Guardian" as the caller, but that's just because our reps are calling from the Wasilla office.) Our Guardian security consultants are fully bonded and highly skilled at determining the best level of security for your home or business. Make an appointment to verify that your home is protected!

## Don't Leave Home Without...

You finally booked that vacation in the sun! You've hired a house-sitter, your emergency contact list is up to date, and you've notified the newspaper not to leave telltale papers piling up on the front porch. You're all set, right? Well, maybe. If you're going to a foreign country, even one frequented by American tourists, such as Mexico, you might be surprised at what's available to you. Better to take it with you if you really want it! Here's a list of often-forgotten items:

—All documents should be kept on your person while traveling, of course, and then put in a safe once you check into your hotel. This includes tickets, passports and money, but also bring insurance cards and emergency phone numbers.

—Medications. All prescriptions should be kept on your person and in their original containers while traveling. Also consider packing antacids, pain medication, cough drops and other items for unforeseen illness.

—Toiletries. Bring along all hairstyling and dental products, as well as soaps and shampoos if you have sensitivity to certain ingredients. For that matter, cotton swabs and cotton balls come in handy, but are difficult to find in some sundries stores.

—Sunscreen, lip balm, and lotions. Selecting a product that you aren't allergic to *before* you travel is better than searching through a dusty corner market for sunburn cream.

—Sunburn cream. Just in case.

—Snacks! Got a favorite? Bring some with you! And, most important, remember to relax and have fun!



### Around Alaska

**2016 Fur Rendezvous**, Anchorage. February 26-March 6. Events abound from the running of the reindeer to world champion sled dog races, a carnival, and of course, a fur auction! Check out these family friendly activities and more at [www.furrondy.net](http://www.furrondy.net)

**Science for Alaska Lecture Series**, Fairbanks, Tuesdays through February 7-8 pm. Westmark Gold Room. Diverse topics ranging from walruses to alternative energy. All lectures are free and open to the public. Contact Lea Gardine for more information (907) 474-7664.

**Ice Fishing Derby**, Soldotna, February 1-29. Adults and children can turn in their catch to Trustworthy Hardware for a chance to win prizes. Derby runs all month! [www.soldotnahardware.com](http://www.soldotnahardware.com) for more.

**For the Love of Dogs Exhibit**, Wasilla, February 12-March 25. The museum invites submissions of photos and memorabilia and will feature a close-up look at Alaska's Canine Search and Rescue Teams. Contact the museum for more information, (907) 373-9071.