August 2017 NEWSLETTER - BRIGHT SPOTS

SUNDOG
MEDIA

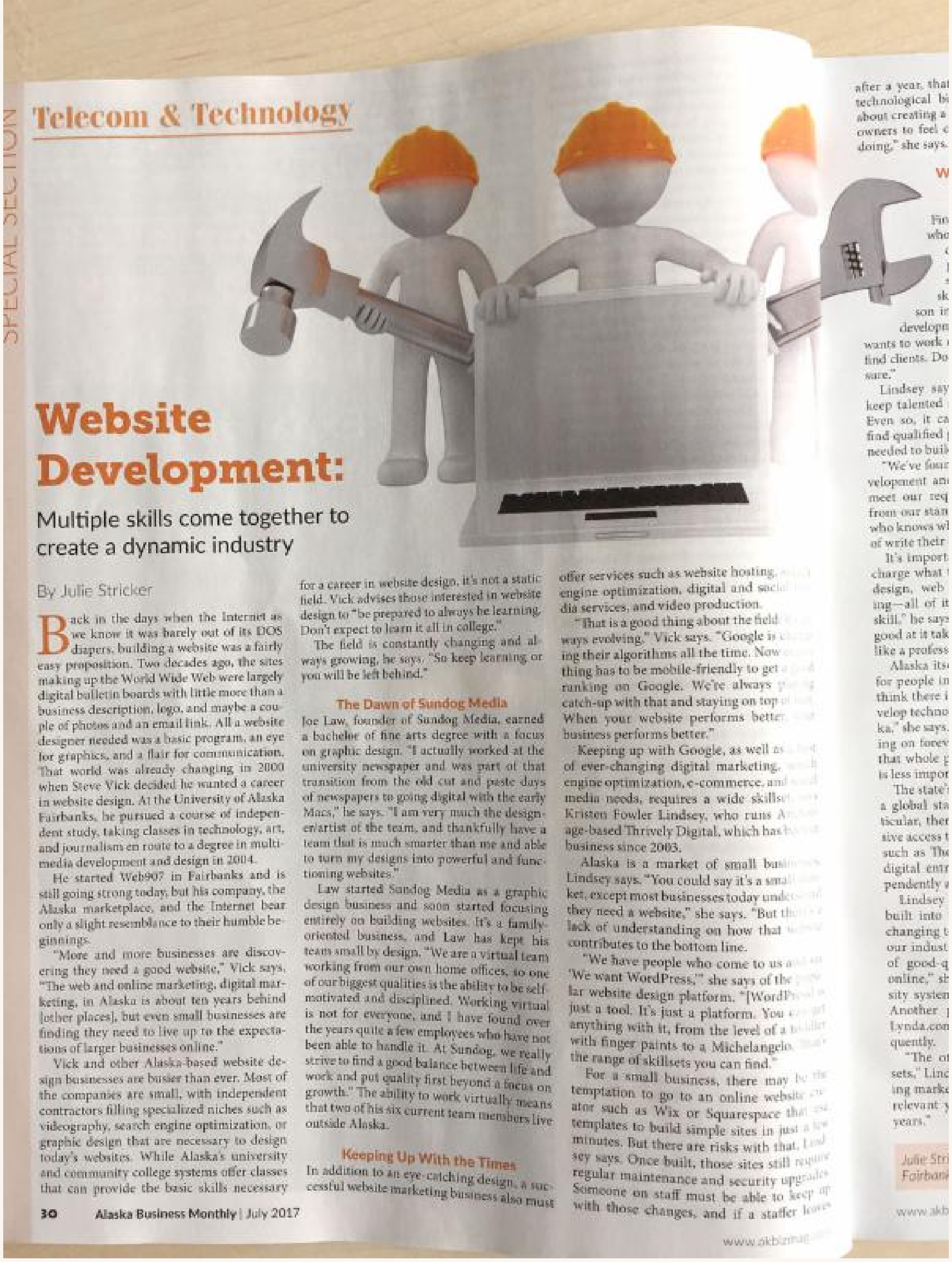
A Wet Summer, But A Good One

This has been one of the wetter and cooler summers I remember, but I am still enjoying the long days and amazing beauty Alaska offers. It is tempting to start thinking about the fall and colder weather, but I intend to milk as much summer out of August and September I can and hope you do as well! One great thing about the colder summer is that we have had some solid work days and been blessed to tackle some great projects for awesome customers.

Cheers,

Joe Law

Alaska Business Monthly Interviews Sundog Media Owner, Joe Law



SPECIAL SECTION

Telecom & Technology

Website Development:

Multiple skills come together to create a dynamic industry

By Julie Stricker

Back in the days when the Internet as we know it was barely out of its DOS diapers, building a website was a fairly easy proposition. Two decades ago, the sites making up the World Wide Web were largely digital bulletin boards with little more than a business description, logo, and maybe a couple of photos and an email link. All a website designer needed was a basic program, an eye for graphics, and a flair for communication. That world was already changing in 2000 when Steve Vick decided he wanted a career in website design. At the University of Alaska Fairbanks, he pursued a course of independent study, taking classes in technology, art, and journalism en route to a degree in multimedia development and design in 2004.

He started Web907 in Fairbanks and is still going strong today, but his company, the Alaska marketplace, and the Internet bear only a slight resemblance to their humble beginnings.

"More and more businesses are discovering they need a good website," Vick says. "The web and online marketing, digital marketing, in Alaska is about ten years behind [other places], but even small businesses are finding they need to live up to the expectations of larger businesses online."

Vick and other Alaska-based website design businesses are busier than ever. Most of the companies are small, with independent contractors filling specialized niches such as videography, search engine optimization, or graphic design that are necessary to design today's websites. While Alaska's university and community college systems offer classes that can provide the basic skills necessary for a career in website design, it's not a static field. Vick advises those interested in website design to "be prepared to always be learning. Don't expect to learn it all in college."

The field is constantly changing and always growing, he says. "So keep learning or you will be left behind."

The Dawn of Sundog Media

Joe Law, founder of Sundog Media, earned a bachelor of fine arts degree with a focus on graphic design. "I actually worked at the university newspaper and was part of that transition from the old cut and paste days of newspapers to going digital with the early Macs," he says. "I am very much the designer/artist of the team, and thankfully have a team that is much smarter than me and able to turn my designs into powerful and functioning websites."

Law started Sundog Media as a graphic design business and soon started focusing entirely on building websites. It's a family-oriented business, and Law has kept his team small by design. "We are a virtual team working from our own home offices, so one of our biggest qualities is the ability to be self-motivated and disciplined. Working virtual is not for everyone, and I have found over the years quite a few employees who have not been able to handle it. At Sundog, we really strive to find a good balance between life and work and put quality first beyond a focus on growth." The ability to work virtually means that two of his six current team members live outside Alaska.

Keeping Up With the Times

In addition to an eye-catching design, a successful website marketing business also must offer services such as website hosting, [illegible] engine optimization, digital and social [illegible] dia services, and video production.

"That is a good thing about the field [illegible] ways evolving," Vick says. "Google is [illegible] ing their algorithms all the time. Now [illegible] thing has to be mobile-friendly to get [illegible] ranking on Google. We're always [illegible] catch-up with that and staying on top [illegible] When your website performs better [illegible] business performs better."

Keeping up with Google, as well as [illegible] of ever-changing digital marketing, [illegible] engine optimization, e-commerce, and [illegible] media needs, requires a wide skillset, [illegible] Kristen Fowler Lindsey, who runs An[illegible] age-based Thrively Digital, which has [illegible] business since 2003.

Alaska is a market of small busi[illegible] Lindsey says. "You could say it's a smal[illegible] ket, except most businesses today unde[illegible] they need a website," she says. "But th[illegible] lack of understanding on how that [illegible] contributes to the bottom line.

"We have people who come to us a[illegible] 'We want WordPress,'" she says of the [illegible] lar website design platform. "[WordPr[illegible] just a tool. It's just a platform. You [illegible] anything with it, from the level of a [illegible] with finger paints to a Michelangelo. [illegible] the range of skillsets you can find."

For a small business, there may be the temptation to go to an online website cre[illegible] ator such as Wix or Squarespace th[illegible] templates to build simple sites in just a few minutes. But there are risks with that, Lind[illegible] sey says. Once built, those sites still require regular maintenance and security upgrades. Someone on staff must be able to keep up with those changes, and if a staffer leaves

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Thank you, Julie Stricker, for the good words and fun interview in your article, *Website Development: Multiple skills come together to create a dynamic industry*! Alaska Business Monthly published Julie's article in their July 2017 issue.

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Current Projects

COMMUNITY
COVENANT CHURCH

We are happy to serve Community Covenant Church!

Sundog Media is glad to be serving Community Covenant Church, as they serve the Eagle River Community, the State of Alaska, and reach out to various places around the world. The Sundog Media team will be providing hosting and content support through our annual service plan for their website.

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ARCTIC
REFRIGERATION
AIR CONDITIONING

We're building a snappy new website for Arctic Refrigeration in Anchorage!

ARAC provides Commercial, Industrial Refrigeration and Institutional Refrigeration service and installations in Alaska. They also provide service and repairs on just about any kind of refrigeration equipment you can think of, and they've been locally owned and operated since 1990!

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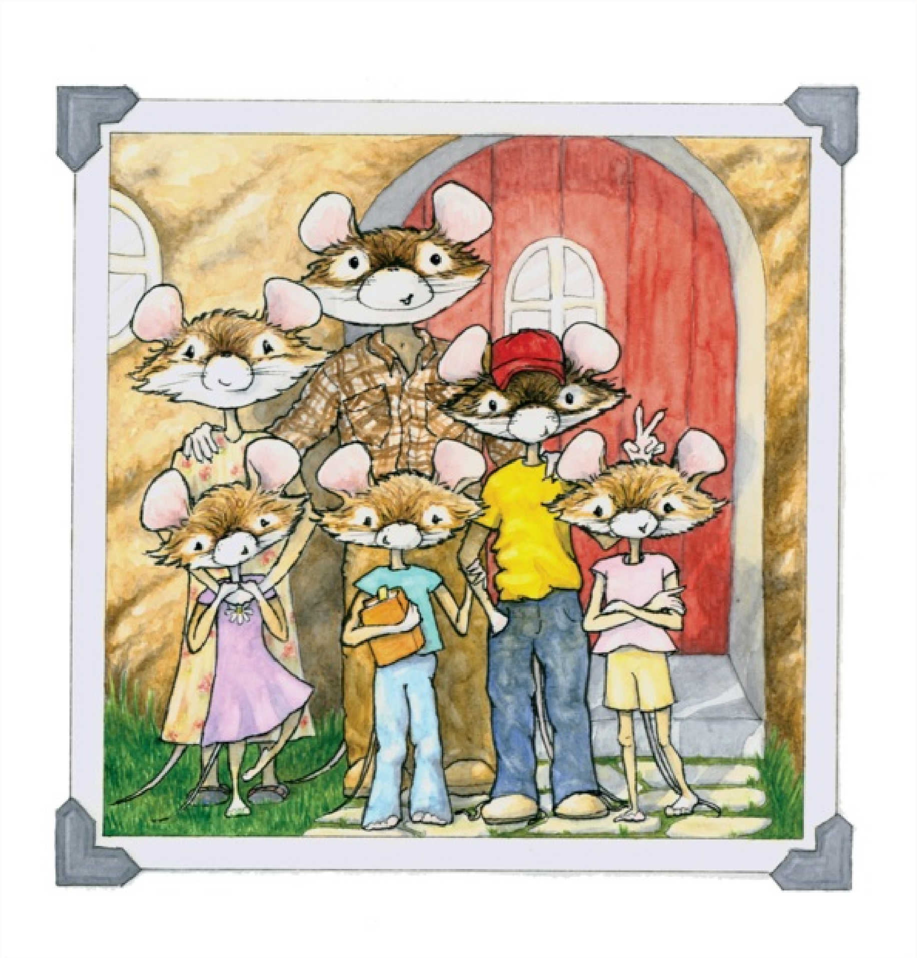
GIRDWOOD HEALTH CLINIC, INC.

We are having fun working with the folks at Girdwood Health Clinic!

Be on the lookout for their mobile friendly and beautiful website.

Girdwood Health Clinic is a non-profit health clinic, providing expanded and affordable health care to the residents and visitors of the Turnagain Arm area, without regard to ability to pay.

LEARN MORE



Introducing our new clients - the Little Mouse Family!

The Little Mouse Family is as excited as we are to get going on their new website home! Little Mouse Finds a Friend, written by our own Jeni Leidenfrost and illustrated by the talented Jessica Linn Evans is scheduled to be available at the end of August. They will also have this book available in formats accessible for the visually impaired, including a full Descriptive Image Audio book, a Read-along Audio book, and braille!

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ALASKA
GROWTH CAPITAL

We're teaming up with Alaska Growth Capital to upgrade their website.

AGC is a lender and a resource of expertise serving folks in Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

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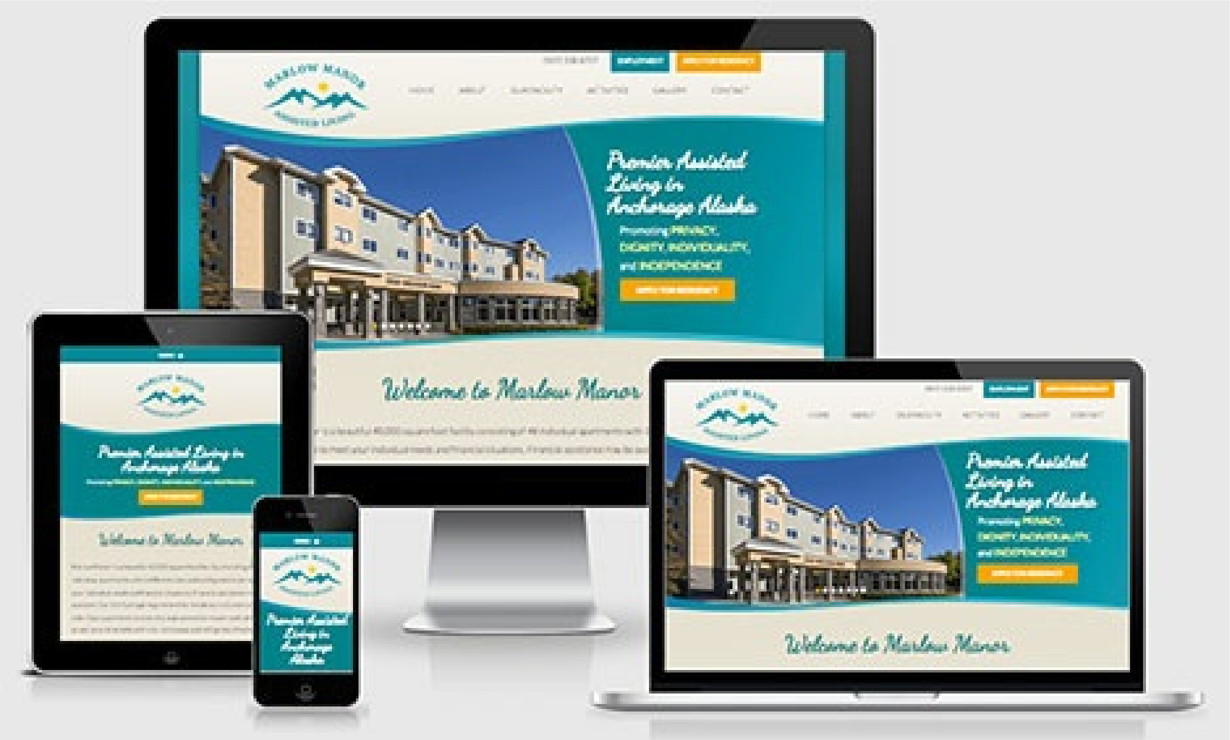
Recent Launches


Premier Assisted Living in Anchorage Alaska
Promoting PRIVACY, DIGNITY, INDIVIDUALITY, and INDEPENDENCE
Welcome to Marlow Manor

Marlow Manor

A huge congratulations to the folks at Marlow Manor Assisted Living Facility on the launch of their fresh new website!

Marlow Manor serves seniors age 62+ in Anchorage by providing assisted living in a beautiful 40,000 square foot facility with 24 hour staff, three different living area layouts, and a restaurant style dining experience. Their primary goal is to promote privacy, dignity, individuality, and independence for it's residents.
Owned and operated by a group of long time Alaskan senior citizens, Marlow Manor provides personalized health care services for all aspects of life.

"Marlow Manor Assisted Living provides seniors the safety and security of a homelike environment where privacy, dignity, individuality, and independence are encouraged and promoted."

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Kudos

"For over 20 years Sundog Media has provided web development and graphics design for a number of business enterprises with which I have been involved. Their latest effort involved development of a new interactive website for Marlow Manor Assisted Living. This effort involved coordination with a number of members or our team, coordination of numerous photos and resulted in a great new website. I have always found that the staff of Sundog to respond in a timely and professional manor with creative ideas."

- **Ken Gain**

A Psalm For You

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

Psalm 36:5

Connect With Us