

IN THIS ISSUE: Local YouTube Channel for Seniors, "Taking Al Back Home," "It's a Wonderful Life," Daffodils, Buddy Holly Returns, Black Bart Doesn't.

# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume VIII, Number 5 • November/December 2021



Participants gather at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia for the 2021 Walk to End Alzheimer's.

## Local Alzheimer's Walk Exceeds \$25,000 Goal

More than 200 area residents helped exceed the fundraising goal of this year's Tulare & Kings Walk to End Alzheimer's, which returned to Mooney Grove Park in Visalia on October 2nd.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, participants in last year's event walked as individuals or in small groups in neighborhoods and trails throughout the area.

"It was so great to be back in person, and to see everyone in their purple Walk gear," said Sherrie Wallace, event chair. "I was in amazement, because our community went above and beyond in fundraising this year. Our goal was \$25,000, and as of today (October 9), we have raised \$33,253! I am so proud our community. Our community's passion and participation in Walk to End Alzheimer's fuels the care, support and research efforts of the Alzheimer's Association."

"It was well-attended, more so than we expected," echoed Amanda Valenzuela, development manager of the Alzheimer's Association's California Southland Chapter.

"I think that it's been a difficult couple of years so I didn't know what to expect," said Valenzuela, who noted the lingering pandemic as well as the effects on the local air quality from the mountain

fires. "I was pleasantly surprised by the participation. The attendance was much higher than the national average."

Internationally, the Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest event to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's care, support and research.

More than six million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease, the only disease among the top 10 with causes that cannot be cured, prevented or even slowed. One in three seniors are currently expected to die from Alzheimer's or another

*(continued on page 4)*

## Social Security Announces 5.9% Increase

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans will increase 5.9% in 2022, announced the Social Security Administration on October 13.

The 5.9% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to approximately eight million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2021.

The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as

## New Scams and Schemes to Avoid this Holiday Season

By Phil Esbenshade  
Executive Assistant District Attorney  
Kings County District Attorney

The holidays are here, and as sure as the chilly weather will soon be upon us, scammers will be resurfacing and cooking up creative ways to separate us from our money.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, devastating fires, and other world events over the past year, Kings County District Attorney Keith Fagundes and the Kings County D.A. staff have been pounding the pavement, both in person and electronically, to provide increased awareness to our community members about novel approaches scammers are taking to deceive and steal.

Phony COVID-19 home test kits, nonexistent gift cards for seniors, auto warranty extensions and other scams have been permeating telephone lines, cell phones and email inboxes this year. The arrival of the holidays will certainly compound the situation.

Awareness is the key to avoiding deceptive scams. Fraudsters prey on folks filled with holiday spirit through calls, texts, and emails. Here are just a few of the newest scams to look out for this year:

**Fake Charities:** Calls,



text messages, or emails asking for holiday donations for firefighters and military personnel have been increasing and are likely to be quite prevalent this holiday season.

The majority of legitimate solicitations for police or fire service organizations are usually made by professional fundraisers who would never request or demand personal identifying information such as date of birth, social security number or financial account information. If unsure, get a phone number from the charity, verify with your local fire or police agency, and call the charity back. If it's a scam, your call will most certainly go to a disconnected number or an answering machine.

Above all, don't provide the caller with your personal identifying information such as your date of birth or social security number, and consider supporting your law enforcement and fire at the local level. That way you know exactly

*(continued on page 14)*



Social Security benefits may be increasing, but you might not be this happy at the supermarket.

determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each

year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$147,000 from \$142,800.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries are normally notified by mail starting in early December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be able to view their COLA notice online through their personal My Social Security account. People may create or access their my Social Security account online at

*(continued on page 4)*



The Heart of Seniors Luncheon, which annually fills the ballroom of the Windham Hotel in Visalia, will not be held in 2022.

## 2022 Heart of Seniors Canceled

The annual Heart of Seniors "Spectacular Resource Event" Luncheon, hosted by the Senior Coalition, usually held in mid-February at the Wyndham Hotel in Visalia, will not be held in 2022.

The event, which includes a vital resource fair with vendors, a fashion show with the latest in fashion for the mature woman, a luncheon and a keynote speaker, was also canceled last year.

"Unfortunately, the decision has been made to postpone the event one more year," said committee member Staci Correa. "It was a hard decision to make but the last thing we would want to do is put anyone at risk."

"The past few months have been unpredictable in many ways," said committee member Kathleen Remillard. "Making the decision to cancel the event was not an easy one, but this new COVID variant is still

very active and we are uncertain how long it will be with us. In consideration of the health and safety of the participants, vendors and speakers, we have decided not to plan this event in 2022."

Remillard suggested that anyone needing a referral to a senior citizen-related vendor should visit the Senior Coalition website for a list of members and resources at <https://theseniorcoalition.com/visalia>

For more information about the Senior Coalition, call (559) 730-3015 or email [seniorcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:seniorcoalition@gmail.com). For online information, visit [www.theseniorcoalition.com](http://www.theseniorcoalition.com)

Despite the cancellation, Correa is very optimistic about the future of the event.

"This has been a very well attended event for years and I know our senior community will be excited to attend again when it's safe," she said.

## VETERANS CORNER

### Two Important Letters

When the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) decides on your claim, they will provide you with two important letters amongst all the paperwork they will send you. The first letter is called the award letter, and the second one is the rating letter. Both provide information that you will need to pay attention to.

The award letter is broken down into sections; the first section will tell you your benefit information. In this section, the VA will list each disability that you filed for and if it is approved, they inform you the rating percentage and the effective date of the disability (in most cases, it will be the date of your claim). If the disability that was claimed is not approved, they will notify you that it was denied.

The next area is what your combined rating with the VA is after the new award is established. Following that section, the VA will explain how they combine percentages to come up with your disability rating. Then the VA will inform you what your monthly entitlement is now and the effective payment date. Right after this is an area that quite a few beneficiaries miss; this is where the VA will let you know if they are paying you as a single veteran or a veteran with dependents. In most cases, if it is a new claim or if you have a rating from the VA below 30%, it will not list any dependents. You must have a disability rating greater than 30% for dependent benefits. If you have dependents but the VA is paying you for no dependents, we can assist in filing the correct form to add your dependents. The last section informs you what you can do if you disagree with the decision that was made in your case.

The rating letter is where the VA explains their rationale for the decision that was made on your claim. It is very important to look through this letter, especially if you are going to disagree with the decision. The VA rating letter begins with an introduction, which is where your military information and the specific claim information is provided. They then list the disabilities and ratings, after which the evidence listing is provided to you. The VA informs you what positive evidence was used and what negative evidence was used to decide the claim. This information will be important should you decide to disagree with a rating. Also in this area is where the VA will inform you what evidence is needed to support a higher rating. If you feel that it should be higher, you can take your letter to a doctor and see if the doctor agrees with the current findings of the VA or will support your claim for a higher rating.

Hopefully this will aid you in understanding how the VA decides your case. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact our office for assistance.

*Ken Cruickshank, the Veterans Services Officer for Tulare County, is a retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer. Contact him at the Veterans Services Office at 3348 W. Mineral King Ave., Visalia; by phone at (559) 713-2880; or by email at [KCruicks@tularehhsa.org](mailto:KCruicks@tularehhsa.org).*



Ken Cruickshank

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# The Good Life

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# Tulare Library Launches YouTube Channel for Seniors

By Larry Kast

Lights, camera, action! The Tulare Public Library has launched a YouTube channel designed to cover topics of interest to seniors, among other things.

"The YouTube channel is there to highlight the various virtual programs that Tulare Public Library provides," said Heidi Clark, library manager for the Tulare Public Library, adding that "Senior Spotlight" is one of several program options on the site. The programming on "Senior Spotlight" is specifically for seniors, their caregivers and all interested adults about a wide array of topics.

The idea for the program came from Rosemary Navarro, senior library assistant.



Upcoming programs will feature Foodlink, preparing a healthy no-bake dessert, and holiday projects.

"I was recently given the opportunity to join the Adult Programming Team," said Navarro, who hosts the online series. "In reviewing our targeted audiences, it was noticed that we were

lacking in reaching out specifically to the senior citizens in our community."

The first episode, added late this summer, covers the library's Genealogy Room and helps viewers understand what is available and how to access it. The second video was added in the past month and discusses the most common types of fraud and how to avoid becoming a victim. Plans call for new episodes to be added monthly, although Navarro said that may change depending on the circumstances of the Covid pandemic and how it evolves.

Future topics include a joint virtual program in November with Tulare County Foodlink, including a demonstration on how to create a healthy no-bake des-

sert. December's episode will be a demonstration for seniors, who may have dexterity issues, on how to create a holiday craft project. The supplies are promised to be common household items that most should have available. For those who can come to the library in person, supplies will be provided free of charge, though it is limited to the first 30 who come to the library to pick up the supplies.

At press time, there were 116 subscribers to the YouTube channel, surpassing the initial goal of reaching 100, which allows the channel to have its own unique website address.

"We were very happy to reach our initial goal of 100 subscribers," said Clark.

While the library's YouTube channel features more than just programming for seniors, Senior Spotlight's addition to the lineup helped launch an initiative to reach one of the library's most vulnerable audiences, older area residents who are vulnerable to Covid 19.

"With the ongoing pandemic and with senior citizens being a high-risk group, I had to start a virtual program," said Navarro.

For more information, log on to <https://www.youtube.com/c/TularePublicLibrary/playlists> then click on Senior Spotlight. To subscribe for free, click on the subscribe button.



The second program dramatizes the most common types of fraud and how to avoid becoming a victim.



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The top fundraising team at this year's event was Team Sousa, which raised \$4,400 to fight Alzheimer's.

## Alzheimer's Walk...

(continued from page 1)

dementia.

Additionally, more than 11 million family and friends provide unpaid care to people with Alzheimer's and other dementias in the U.S.

Donations for this year's Tulare-Kings Walk to End Alzheimer's can be made to:

The Alzheimer's Association, 1401 Commercial Way, Suite 210, Bakersfield, CA 93309. Donations received by December 31 will be credited to the 2021 Walk.

For more information, visit [alz.org/walk](http://alz.org/walk) or call (661) 437-8148.

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## Social Security Increase...

(continued from page 1)

[www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

Information about Medicare changes for 2022, when announced, will be available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, Social Security will not be able to compute their new benefit amount until after the Medicare premium amounts for 2022 are announced. Final 2022 benefit amounts will be communicated to beneficiaries in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center.

For more information, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/cola](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/cola).

### Cause for Celebration?

While retired and disabled Social Security recipients are looking forward to the largest adjustment since 1982, The Senior Citizens League (TSLC) has concerns about the amount.

"This would be the highest COLA that most beneficiaries living today have ever seen," said Mary Johnson, TSLC Social Security and Medicare policy analyst. "But a high COLA means exceptionally high inflation is impacting consumers."

TSLC reported that over the past 12 years, COLAs have averaged a meager 1.4%. The COLA in 2021 was just 1.3%, and raised average benefits by about \$20. The 2022 COLA will increase an average monthly retirement benefit of \$1,565 to roughly \$1,657, an increase of \$92.

While the high COLA is welcome, Social Security recipients are saying that years of low COLAs in the past made it next to impossible to cope with the rampant inflation of 2021, because COLAs haven't kept pace with some of the fastest growing costs of older households.

"Over the past 21 years, COLAs have raised Social Security benefits by 55% but housing costs rose nearly 118% and healthcare costs rose 145% over the same period," said Johnson, adding that these two categories are not adequately accounted for in the COLA.

"COLAs are intended to protect the buying power of Social

Security benefits but, according to consumer price data through July of 2021, Social Security benefits have lost nearly one-third of their buying power, 32%, since 2000, about the length of a typical retirement," she said. "Even worse, it appears that inflation is not done with us yet, and the buying power of Social Security benefits may continue to erode into 2022."

Johnson added that inflation is expected to continue well into next year, and compiled a list of the spending categories that are likely to be the biggest challenge for older households in 2022:

**Food:** Normal food costs usually rise in the 1 to 2% range annually, but the USDA estimates that, in 2022, food-at-home prices are expected to increase between 1.5 and 2.5%, and restaurant prices are expected to increase between 3.0 and 4.0%.

**Rental Housing:** The standard lease for senior rental housing often includes a clause for annual rent increases of about 5%, but a growing number of older and disabled renters fear losing their rental apartments with projected rental increases of 7% and higher.

**Owner Housing:** Mortgage rates are expected to rise in 2022 in reaction to higher new home prices, the costs of building and materials, and rising interest rates. Higher prices of homes will also mean higher local real estate taxes and higher homeowners insurance costs.

**Home Heating:** With rising demand and shrinking inventories, the cost of heating a home with oil and natural gas this winter is expected to climb this winter by about 21 to 25%, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

**Drug Prices:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services estimate that prescription drug plan premiums will increase almost 5% in 2022, and the Part D out-of-pocket threshold before reaching the catastrophic phase of coverage is growing by 7.6% from \$6,550 in 2021 to \$7,050 in 2022.

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# Bill Kirchenbauer Takes His Father Back Home

By Steve Pastis

"It's everything I like in a movie," said actor/comedian Bill Kirchenbauer about his new film, "Taking Al Back Home."

"It makes you laugh, it makes you cry and it makes you think," he said. "The only thing I'm leaving out is scaring you."

"Taking Al Back Home" is about the road trip Kirchenbauer took with the ashes of his late father, Al, a World War II hero, to be scattered near his hometown in Michigan. Along the way, Kirchenbauer met people who shared their stories about his father.

The film has been entered



Bill Kirchenbauer

in more than a dozen film festivals in the U.S. and around the world.

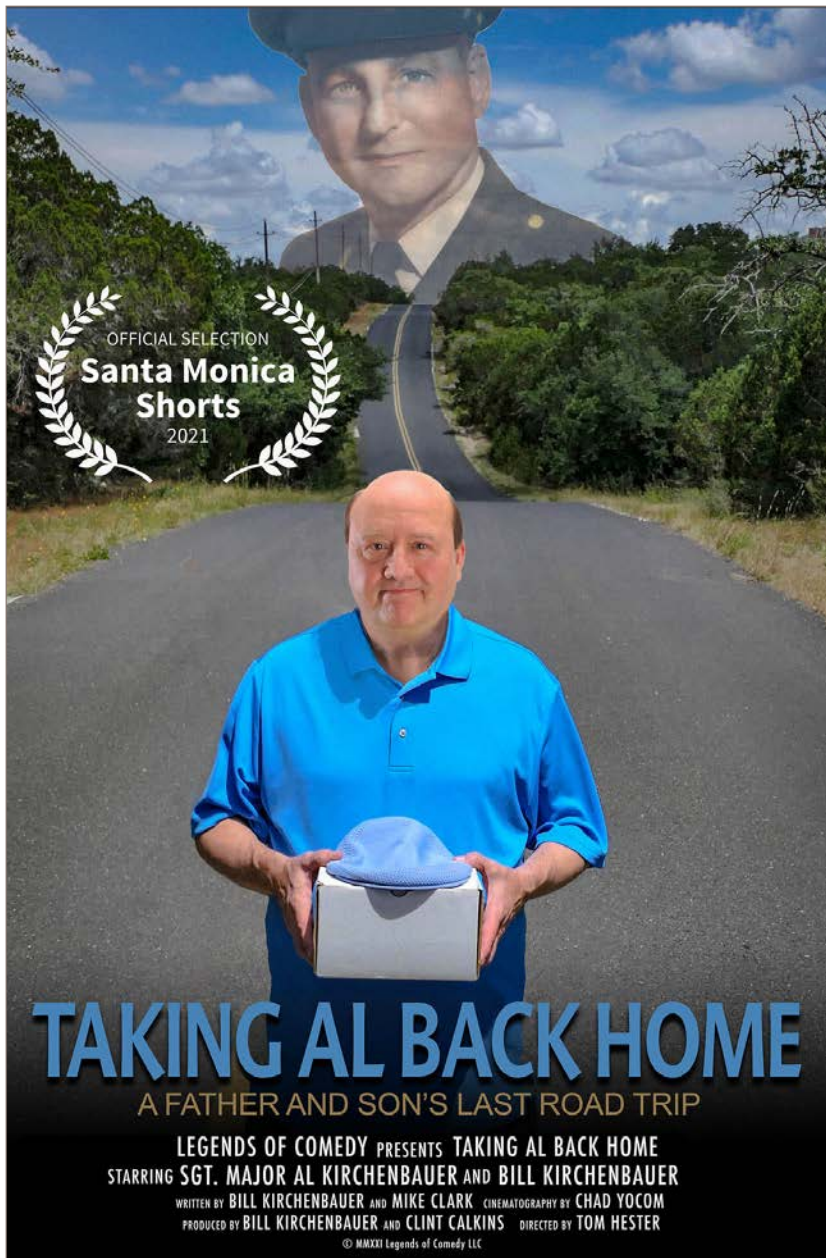
"Hopefully, by February, I'll be able to find a nice outlet for it," said Kirchenbauer, whom we interviewed by phone during his brief stay in Cambodia on his way to Thailand (where he recently moved to be where his son lives). "It would be nice if Amazon or Apple TV bought it."

"Movies aren't cheap, especially when you have a crew, and hotel rooms," he noted. "But I knew I was going to do it. Whatever it cost, it cost."

The film, which Kirchenbauer calls "a road documentary," showcases his drive from Texas to Michigan to follow his father's wishes and scatter his ashes. He learned a lot about his father along the way.

"He was a great father," he said. "He was a great human too. He had no flaws that I knew about. He was always encouraging."

Kirchenbauer said that when he told his parents that he wanted to become a broadcaster, they were supportive. That continued as Kirchenbauer became a stand-



Bill Kirchenbauer's film is currently being entered in film festivals around the world.

up comedian and later an actor, appearing in movies and on such television programs as "Growing Pains" and "Mork & Mindy," and later starring in "Just the Ten of Us."

"My father went to see a shoot of one of my shows," he recalled. "He was very proud of what I did."

Even so, the elder Kirchenbauer advised his son to "get something to fall back on."

"In retrospect, the old man was right," he said.

"My dad died in 1993 and was cremated at a mortuary," said Kirchenbauer, adding that his mother kept the ashes for 15 years. "When she died, she wanted to mix some of her ashes with his."

(continued on page 9)

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# Aquatics Facility Presentation to be Made at Joint Meeting

Visalia City Council Member Greg Collins plans to make a PowerPoint presentation about the proposed aquatics facility at the joint meeting of the Visalia City Council and the Visalia Unified School District School Board in late winter.

"The city council is curious as to whether the school district is one of the entities that will provide financial support," Collins said. "If there was some financial support, that would swing a couple of votes (on the Visalia City Council). Hopefully, the school board members will indicate that it would benefit the district."

He noted that city schools often need additional pool facilities for their activities.

Collins previously announced that California Water Service was interested in securing the naming rights of the complex and was willing to donate \$500,000 over 10 years, which would be used to reduce annual maintenance costs.

Collins plans to submit a grant application to the Visalia Rotary Community Foundation for 2022, but other current options are limited.

"It's difficult to solicit donations until I have a thumbs up (from the city council)," Collins said.

One of the possible locations in Visalia for the aquatic



Two possible locations for the proposed aquatics facility in Visalia - Recreation Park and the currently empty lot at the southwest corner of Burke and School.

complex is Recreation Park, according to Collins.

"Probably a better location, with ample parking, is on the southwest corner of Burke and School," he said. "It's fairly large and the city owns the property."

The aquatics facility proposal includes a large pool with 25 swimming lanes, as well as a pool with shallow water that could accommodate small children.

"Seniors could take advantage of the pool to stay in shape," said Collins.

"Aquatic zumba is very popular with seniors, and I know how popular water aerobics are," said Jeremy Rogers Visalia community services director.

"The PowerPoint is done," said Collins. "I just need to get the February or March date for

the meeting."

Those interested in making a donation, buying naming rights to a lane, or just curious

about what programs would be planned if the facility were constructed, are encouraged to call Greg Collins at (559) 734-8737.

## Tulare County Opens New Transit Operations Facility

The Tulare County Resource Management Agency (RMA) held a ceremony on September 23 to open the new Transit Operations & Maintenance Facility. Members of the public were able to tour the building and observe a demonstration detailing the steps to mount a bike on a bus bike rack. Tulare County's newest Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus was on display, one of the 20 environmentally friendly buses that are part of the Tulare County Area Transit fleet.

"Transit opens doors for people across the county. It connects us and it takes us places," said RMA Director Reed Schenke. "This new facility will help keep the Tulare County transit system operating smoothly, efficiently and sustainably well into the future"

"The county investment in the new state-of-the-art transit facility is a continued support of the critical transportation services senior citizens need," said Dan Fox, chair of the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council and representative of potential transit riders aged 60 and over. "Tulare County Area Transit (TCAT) is a trusted and dependable system that helps seniors realize essential day-to-day functions such as going to the grocery store or getting to a doctor's appointment. It gives our senior population a new sense of freedom."

"The consolidation and formation of a new transit joint



Tulare County Supervisors Pete Vander Pool and Amy Shuklian address the gathering.

power agency increases flexibility and will provide new options to county riders, many of whom are senior citizens," he added. "We strive to provide the best service to our residents with the help of trained professional drivers so that they don't have to miss some of their favorite activities, and to provide affordable quality transportation to longevity enrichment opportunities."

The new 26,000-square-foot facility includes administration spaces as well as a dispatch and operations center for TCAT vehicles. Behind the facility is a CNG fueling station.

The \$9.5 million facility was built solely by grant funding from the Public Transportation Modernization Improvement and Service Enhancements Account program, funding from California Office of Emergency Services, and other state and federal grants.

"The final project resulted in improved transit services for our residents and overall better connectivity for individuals," said Tulare County Supervisor Pete Vander Poel. "The completion of this project is progress towards the county's efforts to serve Tulare County residents by meeting their transportation needs efficiently and safely."

The new facility is located at 25430 Road 140 in Visalia.

For information on TCAT routes, fares and services visit [www.RideTCAT.org](http://www.RideTCAT.org)



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# The Senior Citizens League Campaigns for Stimulus Checks for Seniors

The Senior Citizens League, an advocacy group for retired people based in Virginia, reported that Social Security benefits have increased just 55% over the past 20 years. In response, the group's is collecting signatures to get Congress to issue a stimulus check to every American senior for \$1,400.

"The decision to initiate a campaign for a \$1,400 stimulus checks for seniors came about due to my estimates of the highest COLA (cost of living adjustment) in four decades, 6.2%," Mary Johnson, the organization's Social Security and Medicare policy analyst, told *The Good Life*.

"The Senior Citizens League works to strengthen and defend Social Security and Medicare benefits, and it was obvious to us that older and disabled beneficiaries were facing some of the largest price increases in decades while their benefits in 2021 had only increased by 1.3%," she added.

"Our surveys of Social Security recipients indicated roughly 40% say they have no retirement savings at all. This is a finding similar to an estimate that the U.S. Government Accountability Office made in 2016 and updated in 2019 or so, which said about 48% of older households don't have adequate savings for a retirement that can last up to 30 years."

As of September 12, The Senior Citizens League had collected more than 11,460 signatures on its petition for a \$1,400 stimulus check for seniors, according to Johnson.

"We have been overwhelmed by an outpouring of support for a \$1,400 stimulus check for Social Security recipients," she said. "These households feel that they have been left behind as far as some other emergency and stimulus programs go (e.g. child tax payments). They are grateful to have an opportunity to put this proposal forward."

"The comments that we have been getting indicate that a very high percentage are having trouble affording food and prescription drugs. The most recent batch from the past week describe some pretty dire situations. It was very distressing to me to read of a grandfather who had legal custody of two young children lose his housing."

It could be noted by opponents to the stimulus checks, however, that many seniors already benefit from other government programs.

"A significant portion of the people who rely solely on Social Security benefits also have incomes and resources low enough to qualify for low-income programs such as SNAP, rental subsidies, Medicare Sav-

ings Programs, heating and cooling assistance," Robinson said. "However, those programs are based on income. A COLA as high as 6.2% would raise incomes and if the Federal Poverty Level doesn't rise by a corresponding amount, then those individuals will likely see trims to their benefits. Some folks whose incomes are right on the borderline could lose that assistance altogether. According to my estimate, the CPI-U, which is used to adjust the Federal Poverty Level will not rise as much as the COLA, and thus cuts may be coming."

"In addition, middle income households who may have retirement savings would have tax repercussions when their incomes rise," she continued. "The income thresholds that subject Social Security benefits to taxation, have never been adjusted for income. Individuals with incomes of more than \$25,000 and couples with incomes of only \$32,000 are subject to tax."

However, stimulus payments are not treated as taxable income and would help lower-income Social Security recipients avoid low income program trims to their benefits, Johnson explained.

"The stimulus checks could help offset higher Medicare Part B premiums which the Medicare Trustees recently

forecast would rise about \$10 per month. from \$148.50 to \$158.50," she said. "Please note, this increase would still be greater than our estimated COLA increase, although our COLA estimate may change with tomorrow's next batch of CPI data."

Rick Delaney, board chairman of the organization, has sent letters to the group's members explaining why the organization is pushing for the checks.

"Soaring inflation continues to knock a hole in the household finances of retired and disabled Social Security recipients," he wrote. "In 2021, Social Security benefits increased by just 1.3% raising the average benefit by only about \$20 a month. \$20 a month in a year where inflation was the highest its been in over 12 years!"

"We've heard from many of our supporters telling examples about their skyrocketing expenses. People who have exhausted their retirement savings, who have started eating just one meal a day, cutting their pills in half, and many more examples of trying to make ends meet."

"We intend to ask Congress to help America's seniors and disabled with a special stimulus and we need your help!"

For more information or to share your opinions, visit <https://seniorsleague.org/>

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# Master Gardeners Offer Helpful Garden Tips for November

By Peyton Ellas  
UCCE Master Gardener

November is one of my favorite months in the California garden. I watch leaves descend, winds sway even large tree branches, and sheets of rain (hopefully!) wash off a year's dust. Birds and even some late butterflies, moths and bees work feverishly to gather enough stored energy for hibernation or migration.

Since we all know our water supply depends on abundant mountain snow, we rejoice when we see snow-capped peaks after a good storm and there is still optimism that the upcoming winter, when our part of California receives the majority of the year's precipitation, will be cold and wet.

### Planting

November is still a good month to plant trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers, wildflower seeds and cool-season annuals. Frost sensitive plants including citrus, avocado, native plants from Baja California or the Channel Islands, and many kinds of succulents from all over the world, should be protected through winter, or wait until spring to plant them.

This is an especially good month to plant those California and Mediterranean woody shrubs that don't thrive with too much summer water. This includes manzanita, ceanothus, lavender, coffeeberry and buckthorn, bush lupin, flannel bush and rosemary.

Time to plan spring bulbs like

daffodils, narcissus and tulips in a site where they will get a full day of sunshine at least through early summer. Purchase bulbs that are firm and without spots of mold. Plant the bulb three times deeper than its height. Usually the pointed end of the bulb is placed up when planting. Add a handful of high-phosphorus fertilizer mixed with soil to the base of the planting holes. Natural sources of phosphorus are animal manure, bones and bat guano. All spring bulbs should be planted by Thanksgiving.

If you grow dahlias, November is the month to dig and divide overcrowded tubers. Store them in a cool dry place until re-planting in February.

You can still plant winter vegetables in November, including greens, broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage, especially early in



Tulips do well when planted where they can get sunshine.



November is a good time to plant spring bulbs like daffodils.

the month when the soil is still warm. Close planting creates a mini climate that is more balanced and speeds up growth. Thin extra plants as they grow, if necessary. Use mulch like straw or old hay to keep the soil temperature even.

### Maintaining

After the leaves fall, begin pruning deciduous shrubs and trees, not only to shape them, but to prevent storm damage. A tree without gaps in the leaf canopy may have broken branches because of wind. Open space by removing a few branches all the way at the trunk with thinning cuts. You should never top landscape trees. Our Master Gardener website has more complete instructions and illustrations on pruning trees the right way.

Fall and winter blooming plants and vegetables can be fertilized. Do not fertilize California native plants, avocado, citrus, palms or other frost-sensitive plants.

If the month is on the dry side, remember to deep water your trees and large shrubs, even if they have lost their leaves. But your irrigation controller should be adjusted downward even if we don't get a lot of rain. Cooler nights and shorter days mean that most plants will not need

as much water. Too much water also contributes to soil loss from erosion.

You may want to stop dead heading your roses to encourage them to stop blooming and settle into dormancy. All plants require a dormant period to thrive into old age. Don't fertilize or try to keep them going too long. It is their season to wind down in preparation of a winter rest.

### Conserving

In the edible garden, add straw, old hay, alfalfa pellets and/or compost to fallow beds. If you take care of the soil, your plants will be stronger and better able to resist pest pressures next spring, making it possible to save time and money and reduce the need for synthetic chemicals. Keep after the weeds that use up nutrients.

Happy Holidays!

### Questions?

Call us at (559) 684-3325, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Visit us at [http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC\\_Master\\_Gardeners](http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners) to search articles, find links to UC gardening information or to send us your questions.

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# Kirchenbauer Takes AI Back Home...

(continued from page 5)

"When I planned to move to Thailand, I said to my wife, 'I've got to make good on this wish of my dad,'" he said. "And as long as I'm doing this, I thought I would do this documentary."

Kirchenbauer called a filmmaker and outlined things he wanted to do, which included "a lot of funny stuff."

"I even do a show in Grand Rapids and tell the audience what is in the box (his father's ashes)," he said. "They were taken aback."

Another stop in the film was the USS LST (Landing Ship Tank) 393 Veterans Museum in Muskegon, Michigan, a World War II museum.

The museum curator told Kirchenbauer a lot about what his father did in the war. The elder Kirchenbauer was part of the "Ghost Mountain Boys" expedition in New Guinea, which was occupied by Japanese forces on the north part of the island.

The expedition, named after how they looked like ghosts because of the fluorescent plants that grew on the mountains, was to land on the south side and surprise the Japanese by going over the Owen Stanley Range of mountains.

The expedition faced terrible conditions on the journey, including snakes, mosquitos and spiders that were memorable enough to be recalled by a museum curator 75 years later.

When the Ghost Mountain Boys finally confronted the Japanese, their platoon leader was shot and killed, making Kirchenbauer's father the new platoon leader. He was shot by the Japanese a few weeks later.

"I took a lot of his medals and his uniform," he said. "I called first and donated them to the museum."

He estimated that his father "had probably 80 medals," but admitted that as he was growing up, he didn't know a lot about his father's military career. When Kirchenbauer was 16, his father retired from the



Bill Kirchenbauer and the rest of the cast of "Just the Ten of Us"

military.

"I knew he had been in a war and had a back wound," he said. "That's about all I ever heard about it. He never liked to talk about it. He got a little mad at me actually."

Kirchenbauer always saw his father as a hero, but not just because of his service during World War II.

"He saved my life, allowing me to go on and do what I wanted to do," he said, explaining that his father adopted him from an orphanage in Austria, where not all the children survived, and brought him to America. "He is why I'm still here."

And making the documentary has made him feel closer to his late father.

"I feel like I understand him more," said Kirchenbauer. "When I was younger, I don't think I understood him as a man."

Experience," he said, explaining that previously companies that produced tribute shows "only did music."

"A light bulb went off in my head," he said. "If you can do music, why can't you do comedy?"

Kirchenbauer searched the U.S. to find impersonators of comedians such as George Burns, Roseanne Barr and George Carlin.

"I had probably 20 people," he said. "Slowly, one-by-one they died."

He eventually decided to focus on producing the tribute show for one comedian and the Ultimate Robin Williams Tribute Experience was born.

## Comedy Today

"I've had a great career," said Kirchenbauer. "I can make young people laugh. I can make old people laugh. But I don't have the passion anymore."

Audiences have changed, however, according to Kirchenbauer.

"The whole thing has become something I really got tired of," he said. "Frankly, some of the things I've seen, I just shake my head when I look at them on YouTube."

"Where are the jokes? You don't know how to use a microphone. You say 'like' every three seconds. The ratio of people who are funny is the same as it's always been - they're few and far between."

"Everybody thinks they are a comedian," Kirchenbauer continued. "My wife will say, 'What are these people laughing at?'"

"There are no Garry Shandlings or Bob Newharts," he lamented. "There's no George Carlin - I miss him."

What about Bill Kirchenbauer? Will he be coming back to play comedy clubs in the U.S. anytime soon?

"I'm too old," he said half-seriously. "People don't want to see a 68-year old guy."

For more information about "Taking AI Back Home," visit [www.billkirchenbauer.com](http://www.billkirchenbauer.com)

## Making a Documentary

"A documentary is hard to do," said Kirchenbauer. "It's harder than a real film. It's like a jigsaw puzzle dumped on the floor. You have no idea what it's supposed to look like."

"It's the first time I've been able to plan something in my head and see it come to fruition," he said.

And he appreciates the new perspective the documentary-making experience gave him.

"I communicate with my audience a lot better," he said, adding that he is content to share amusing stories. "I find there doesn't have to be a joke every ten seconds."

## Tributes to Other Comedians

Although living in Thailand, Kirchenbauer stays involved in the entertainment business.

"I produce a show called the Ultimate Robin Williams Tribute



Bill Kirchenbauer tries to make Robert Reed, star of "The Brady Bunch," laugh on the game show "Make Me Laugh!" (He did.)



Bill Kirchenbauer with Robin Williams on "Mork & Mindy"

**QUAIL CORNER**

**Form 602 & Why Seniors Become Frail**

*Q&A with Kimberly Jensen*



**What is a Form 602 and why is it important to have it completed before moving to assisted living?**

A Form 602 (better known as a Physicians Report) is a state-mandated report that needs to be filled out by the primary doctor. It asks questions about primary diagnosis, dementia diagnosis, allergies, and a plethora of other important items that caregivers in the assisted living facility need to know before they can create a care plan, or even accept the resident. It is basically the doctor saying, "This is my patient and here are my patient's needs." It contains a current list of medications and results of a TB test or a recent chest x-ray that determines if the lungs are free of TB.

It is quite extensive and will take a while for the doctor to fill out the form, so make sure you do it ahead of time. Once you get it completed, keep it with your power of attorney and will if you should ever need to use it. Unless you have a change in condition, the forms are good for six months to a year. If you need a blank copy of Form 602, you can download it from the web or contact me and I will email or mail a copy to you.

Currently, with fires in Three

Rivers, if seniors need to temporarily relocate to a skilled nursing facility, they would not be able to do so without a Form 602 completed by their doctor. Being prepared with a fully filled out 602 Form is a great way to get prepared even if you are not currently considering a move to an assisted living facility.

**The doctor said that my mother is frail from living at home alone. What does frail mean, and can it be reversed?**

Many seniors living in their own home become frail due to lack of exercise and proper nutrition. COVID has not helped this matter at all. With the swift closing of senior centers, churches, gyms etc., routines of exercise and walking came to a screeching stop. Seniors closed themselves off in their homes, where the extent of their exercise is a trip to the kitchen or living room, and then to the bedroom. There are not many steps to keep their bodies and bones strong.

Frailty develops over time, and seniors do not notice the incremental changes in their bodies. It includes the feeling of exhaustion, slow walking speed, low physical activity, weakness in grip strength and unintentional weight loss (10 pounds in a year). Your mother

may be experiencing frequent falls, decreased libido, mood disturbances, incontinence, lack of muscle strength and depression. If allowed to continue and with no intervention early on, it can lead to "failure to thrive" and ultimately death.

The good news is that the sooner you intervene, the better chance you have of reversing its course. Talk with her primary care doctor to establish a course of action. Exercise is the primary treatment and has had the most positive effect in reversal of frailty. Physical therapy may be needed at first, and your doctor can help to get that started. There are senior exercise videos that she can do in her home. The most well-known are sit-and-fit exercises, Tai Chi and senior yoga. These will help her to renew her strength, balance and endurance.

Nutrition is another key factor in reversing the effects of frailty. Speak with a dietitian or nutritionist to find a diet that provides the key nutrients she needs. As we get older, we need more nutrients in our body. Without the energy to cook and shop for healthy foods, seniors tend to eat something easy to prepare, but not filled with the nutrition they need.

Depression is evident in frail-

ty. Get your mother back to being social and enjoying others company. Social engagements will improve mental and physical health and give her a reason to look forward to a new day. As COVID restrictions are starting to lift and opportunities to socialize start to become available, encourage her to seek out senior-friendly events like church and walking around the mall with friends. The sooner you act, the better.

Frailty can be reversed, but effort must be made to make those changes as soon as possible. Sometimes it takes a family member to encourage the issue. Make a date with her to participate in exercise and good nutrition together. Once it starts to become a routine in your mother's life again, then incorporate her friends and/or neighbors to join her.

*Kimberly Jensen has been working with Quail Park as a Senior Resource Advocate for over ten years and has helped hundreds of families find solutions to their senior problems. If you have a question, you can send it to her at KimberlyJ@QPCypress.com or call (559) 737-7443.*

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# 'It's a Wonderful Life' Marks 75th Anniversary

The following is a post that appears on the Library of Congress website. It was written by Elizabeth Brown, a reference librarian/digital reference specialist in the library's Researcher and Reference Services Division. Her post originally coincided with a related exhibit, "From The Greatest Gift to 'It's a Wonderful Life,'" in the library's Thomas Jefferson Building.

Several years ago, I received a question from a remote researcher who wanted to know what was different between 1943 and 1944 editions of a slim novella. This sparked an interest in how a story that nobody wanted to publish became an award-winning film, and how that largely neglected film became a popular holiday tradition decades later.

The story that served as the basis for the 1946 holiday classic film "It's a Wonderful Life" first appeared under the title "The Greatest Gift: A Christmas Tale." In the story, a strange little man appears from nowhere to save a despairing family man, George Pratt, from a Christmas Eve suicide attempt, restoring Pratt's joy of living by helping him realize his value to those around him. Through the help of the strange man, Pratt's joy of life is revived.

The story's author, Philip Van Doren Stern, wrote in his notes (and in the *New York Herald Tribune* on December 15, 1946) that the idea for this story came to him "complete from start to finish" while he was shaving on the morning of February 12, 1938. He wrote an outline that day and put it away. The story stuck with him, and after a few months, he wrote what he called a "pretty terrible" first draft.

Stern returned to the story periodically, and after revising it several times, finally showed it to his literary agent in April 1943. The agent liked it, but told him that she thought a fantasy story would be hard to sell to magazines.



In the film, George Bailey has an emotional reunion with his family after realizing that he's had a pretty good life after all.



The cast of "It's a Wonderful Life," which marks its 75th anniversary this year.

She was right. It did not sell.

But Stern liked the little story, so during that holiday season, he had 200 copies privately printed as a 21-page pamphlet. He sent two copies to the Library of Congress with a copyright registration form. He signed most of the others and sent them to his friends as Christmas cards in 1943. Stern's Hollywood agent, one of the lucky recipients, asked Stern if she could "offer the story to the movies." Stern thought that was a crazy idea, but he agreed.

According to Stern's daughter, one day in March 1944, when she was in the third grade, the family telephone rang and she answered it. On the other end of the line was a Western Union operator asking to speak with her father. The daughter feared wartime bad news; her father took the call.

In response to the caller, Mr. Stern called out, "Hold me up, I can't believe it!" This wasn't bad news: the Western Union operator read a telegram from Stern's Hollywood agent telling him the story's movie rights had been sold for \$10,000. RKO Radio Pictures planned to turn the story into a movie for actor Cary Grant.

Now that Stern had a contract for film rights, the magazines *Reader's Scope* and *Good Housekeeping*, as well as book publisher David McKay, agreed to publish the story. *Reader's Scope* published a condensed version of the story. *Good Housekeeping* published a slightly longer and darker

version with the title "The Man Who Was Never Born" using the pseudonym Peter Storme. The text of the story as it appeared in the original pamphlet was reproduced exactly in the McKay book and in magazines and anthologies that published the story in the following decades.

Using Stern's story as a starting point, three teams of scriptwriters hired by RKO wrote three different film scripts, but none quite worked for the studio. In 1945, RKO sold the film rights to the story, along with the three scripts, for \$10,000 to Frank Capra's newly-formed film production company, Liberty Films. Capra hired husband-and-wife screenwriters Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich to create a completely new script, which used some bits from the existing scripts, but also created a back-story with extra characters, filled in details, and made some minor story changes. Capra sent a copy of the script to his longtime collaborator, actor Jimmy Stewart, who enthusiastically agreed to play the lead character.

After its 1946 release, most of the film's reviews were positive. *The New York Times*, however, found it "a little too sticky for our taste" (December 23, 1946). A 1947 FBI report, *Communist Infiltration into the Motion Picture Industry*, found the film "very entertaining," but the FBI wasn't fond of the "sympathies" of Capra or the actors and writers, particularly Hackett and Goodrich, who, according to the report, were "very close to communists." Several of the seven writers of the three earlier scripts were also known by the FBI as "prominent Hollywood radicals."

Regarding the plot, the report argued that the portrayal of Mr. Potter as a "scrooge-type" was an attempt to discred-

it bankers. Also, according to the report, (the main character) George Bailey's rallying for the rights of the common man was "communist in nature." Although the FBI report didn't give credit to the good done by the Bailey family's Building and Loan, a witness to the House Un-American Activities Committee was not troubled by the film, in part because the Baileys were shown to use money "as a benevolent force."

These unfavorable views aside, the film won a Golden Globe Award for best director and received five Academy Award nominations. The film also won a scientific-achievement award for innovations in simulating snow. Previously, movie snow was often made from bleached or painted cornflakes, which looked authentic. Unfortunately, cornflakes were so loud when actors walked on them that dialogue needed to be re-recorded.

For this film, the production crew used large sprayers and fans to blow a combination of fire-extinguisher foam, sugar, water and soap flakes to make "snow" fall and swirl in the sweltering heat of a California summer pretending to be a New England winter.

After its theatrical release, "It's a Wonderful Life" didn't make back the costs of its production and distribution. This is where the story turns to why a nice film that was only the 27th most popular among movie-goers in 1946-47 is so widely known and loved today.

In 1948, Frank Capra and his partners sold Liberty Films to Paramount Pictures. The film's ownership – including rights to the story and the film's negatives – changed several more times.

In 1974, then-owner Nation-  
(continued on page 16)

# CALENDAR

**November 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 29 - Aerobics**

City of Hanford Parks and Community Services hosts aerobics from 9-10 a.m. at Longfield Center, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford, three days a week. The monthly cost for those 55+ is \$16. For more information, call (559) 585-2525.

**November 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29 - Zumba**

City of Hanford Parks and Community Services hosts Zumba from 6-7 p.m. in Civic Park, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford, twice a week. The monthly cost for those 55+ is \$16. For more information, call (559) 585-2525.

**Saturday, November 6 - 6th Annual Backyard BBQ & Cornhole Event**

Hands in the Community is sponsoring this event, featuring food, fun and floats, from 1-5 p.m. Tickets are \$120 for a team of two and include entry, BBQ lunch, drinks and raffle prizes. For more information, visit [www.seniorcaretkc.org](http://www.seniorcaretkc.org) or call (559) 625-3822 ext. 100.

**Saturday, November 13 - Third Annual Community Cremation Scattering Day**

The Visalia Public Cemetery hosts this 9 a.m. event to assist families in transitioning from

personal possession of urns to a permanent placement of their loved ones at the cemetery. A brief service will be held prior to the scatterings. For more information, call (559) 734-6181.

**Thursday, November 18 - 'Santa's Workshop' - The 2021 Festival of Trees**

St. Anthony's Retreat and Santa Teresita Youth Conference Center in Three Rivers will host this fundraising event featuring wine tasting and both a live and silent auction. For tickets (\$30) or more info, visit [www.stanthonyretreat.org](http://www.stanthonyretreat.org) or call (559) 561-4595. (See ad below.)

**December 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 27, 29 - Aerobics**

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**December 2-4 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Annual Christmas Yard Sale**

Visalia Gleaning Seniors will host their seasonal sale from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Gleaner Yard, 28600 Road 156 (between Walnut & Caldwell) in Visalia. For more information, call (559) 733-5352.

**Thursday, December 2 - Christmas Charity Festival**

The Hanford Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring this fundraiser, featuring trees, raffles, music, food and Santa, at the Hanford Civic Auditorium. For tickets (\$50) or more information, call (559) 582-0483 or visit [www.hanfordchamber.org](http://www.hanfordchamber.org)

**Friday, December 3 - Annual Christmas Tree Auction**

The Visalia Convention Center will become a 1920s speakeasy for this year's Christmas Tree Auction sponsored by the Visalia Chamber of Commerce. For more info about this event, which features dancing, hors d'oeuvres, wine, beer and desserts from local restaurants and stores, and both a live and silent auction, visit [www.visaliachamber.org](http://www.visaliachamber.org) or call (559) 734-5876.

**Friday, December 3 - Wine & Chocolate Tasting**

Main Street Hanford will host this annual event, featuring live music by local bands and artists (including the Mighty Oak Chorus), wine and gourmet chocolate tasting at participating downtown businesses. For tickets or more information, visit [www.mainstreethanford.com](http://www.mainstreethanford.com) or call (559) 582-9457.

**Saturday, December 4 - 'John Mueller's Winter Dance Party'**

The 1950s will live again when Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper take the stage at the Visalia Fox Theatre. This is the official live and authentic re-creation of Holly, Valens and the Big Bopper's final tour and the only show endorsed by the Holly, Valens and Richardson estates. The concert performance will include hit songs of the 1950s such as "That'll Be the Day," "Peggy Sue," "Oh, Boy," "Rave On," "La Bamba" and "Chantilly Lace." Tickets for the 7 p.m. show are \$30-\$40. For tickets or more information, visit [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org) or call (559) 625-1369.

**Saturday, December 11 - Mighty Oak Chorus Christmas Concert & Dessert**

This event will be held at the Fountain Church, 1023 N. Chinowth, Visalia, beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults, free for children (12 and under). For more information, call (559) 901-4615 or email [luthercafe@yahoo.com](mailto:luthercafe@yahoo.com).

**Friday, December 31 - New Year's Celebration**

The Hanford Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring this event, featuring dancing to the music of Run for Cover, party favors and a photo booth, at the Hanford Civic Auditorium. For tickets (\$40 or \$60 VIP) or more information, call (559) 582-0483 or visit [www.hanfordchamber.org](http://www.hanfordchamber.org)

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**BUDDY HOLLY**

**4TH DEC**

**BIG BOPPER**  
Linwood Sasser

**RITCHIE VALENS**  
Ray Anthony

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For tickets please visit us online at [stanthonyretreat.org](http://stanthonyretreat.org)

For more information, please call 559-561-4595 or email [Julia@stanthonyretreat.org](mailto:Julia@stanthonyretreat.org)

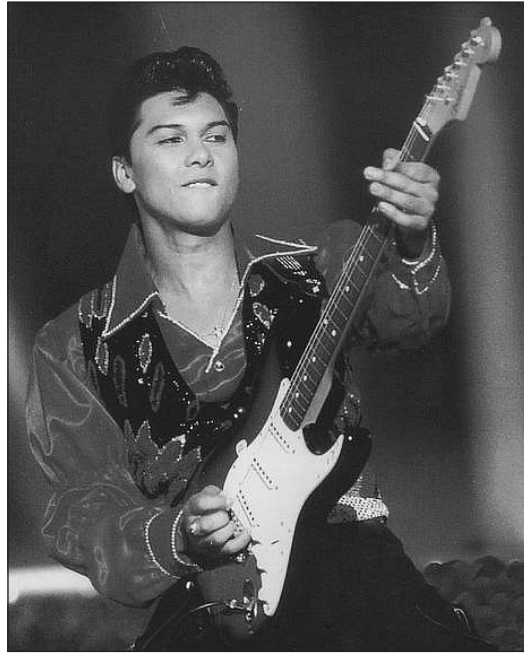
Free Family Fun Night will be held on  
Wednesday, November 17 from 5:00PM-7:00PM.

# 'Winter Dance Party' Brings Holly, Valens, Big Bopper to Visalia

The 1950s will live again when Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper take the stage at the Visalia Fox Theatre on December 4.

John Mueller's "Winter Dance Party" is the official live and authentic re-creation of Holly, Valens and the Big Bopper's final tour and the only show endorsed by the Holly, Valens and Richardson estates. The concert performance will include over two hours of high voltage entertainment featuring such hit songs of the 1950s as "That'll Be the Day," "Peggy Sue," "Oh, Boy," "Rave On," "La Bamba" and "Chantilly Lace."

Mueller, the critically acclaimed former star of the U.S. touring version of the London/Broadway hit musical "Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story," performs as Holly and Linwood Sasser fills the legendary footsteps of the Big Bopper. Ray Anthony, a star of the "Legends of Rock and Roll" show at the Imperial Palace in Las Vegas, performs as Valens. The four-piece band includes Grammy



John Muller as Buddy Holly (left), Ray Anthony as Ritchie Valens (middle) and Linwood Sasser (right) as the Big Bopper will be featured in "Winter Dance Party" at the Visalia Fox Theatre.

Award-winning Mike Acosta on saxophone.

The Winter Dance Party show has performed in front of over two million people on national TV for the Jerry Lewis Telethon, and has toured extensively throughout the United States and Canada at theaters, performing arts centers, ballrooms, corporate events, casi-

nos and even the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame along with John Mellencamp, Marshall Crenshaw and others.

Other highlights have included receiving the keys to the city of Green Bay from the mayor, playing in the legendary Surf Ballroom on the same day Buddy, Ritchie, and the Big Bopper did 40 years prior, and

performing on stage with Maria Elena Holly (Buddy's widow), Niki Sullivan (an original member of the Crickets, Holly's original band) and Tommy Allsup (original Winter Dance Party guitarist and Nashville producer).

For tickets or more information, visit [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org).



ImagineU Museum

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ImagineU has a Grandparent Membership like none other, and we're giving away memberships for FREE!

ImagineU is Visalia's premier destination for preteens and believes every child has an imagination and can learn through play. ImagineU encourages imagination but allows the child to "complete the picture" with open-ended, hands-on activities.

A Grandparent Membership allows two adults and an unlimited number of grandchildren admission to ImagineU for a full year and includes 10% off the gift shop, party packages, museum rental and membership renewals.

The Good Life is giving away memberships valued at \$175 to lucky winners, and the entry method is free and simple. Just log onto our website at [www.TheGoodLifeSV.com](http://www.TheGoodLifeSV.com) and click

on the homepage banner ad that says "Win a Grandparent Membership" in the upper right corner. Then complete the form and verification code at the bottom and click submit.

You'll be sent an email to confirm your subscription. Click on the link in the email and you're done. Your entry will be included in the drawing from all entries on Tuesday, December 21.

Winners will be notified by email or phone number provided. And you will begin to receive free weekly emails linking not only to our stories but news and information of interest to south valley residents over age 50. Your entry is secure, and you'll only receive news and information, never spam.

Questions? Email us at [info@TheGoodLifeSV.com](mailto:info@TheGoodLifeSV.com) for answers. ImagineU is located at 210 N. Tipton St., Visalia.

The Deadline for January/February 2022 issue is Wednesday, December 15, 2021

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# West Nile Virus Results in First South Valley Casualty

The Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency announced that seven human cases of West Nile Virus have been detected and reported in Tulare County.

Kings County reported five cases, with one becoming the first West Nile Virus-related death of a Kings County resident in 2021.

"Though we are late in the season for mosquitos, this is a stark reminder of how important it is to eliminate the sources where mosquitos can propagate," said Kings County Department of Public Health Assistant Director Heather Silva.

Public health officials urge residents to take precautions against mosquito bites, as mosquito samples testing positive for West Nile Virus have been detected in multiple locations. In addition, samples indicate that St. Louis Encephalitis Virus (SLEV) may also be present, posing a risk to the public.

"Due to this increased activity and these reported cases, we strongly encourage residents to use safeguards to reduce their risk of contracting both West Nile Virus and SLEV through mosquito bites," said Tulare County Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Haught.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the West Nile Virus is transmit-

ted to humans by mosquitoes, and there is no vaccine or medication to treat the virus.

Most people infected with West Nile will have no symptoms; however, about one in five people will develop a fever with other symptoms from two to 14 days after being infected.

Severe cases of West Nile Virus can affect the central nervous system, resulting in meningitis and/or encephalitis, and can result in death or long-term disability.

SLEV is in the same virus family as West Nile Virus. Both viruses are transmitted to humans when bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people infected with SLEV will have few to no symptoms. The most common symptoms are mild, flu-like symptoms, including fever and headache, from 5 to 15 days after being infected.

Like West Nile Virus, severe cases of SLEV can also affect the central nervous system, resulting in meningitis and/or encephalitis, and can result in death or long-term disability.

Residents are urged to increase their awareness of potential breeding grounds around their properties. Be on the lookout for homes that are unoccupied, since they may have swimming pools or backyard ponds that are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. It is recommended



The West Nile Virus is transmitted to humans by mosquitoes.

that residents take the following precautions to avoid being bitten, thereby reducing their risk for exposure to both West Nile Virus and SLEV:

- Use EPA-registered insect repellent such as DEET. Always follow label instructions carefully.

- Dress in long sleeves and pants during dawn and dusk or in areas where mosquitoes are active.

- Drain standing water that may produce mosquitoes.

- Repair or replace door and window screens that have tears or holes.

Contact your local mosquito abatement district if you see areas of standing water that may be a breeding area for mosquitoes. Tulare County has three mosquito abatement districts providing

abatement services to residents:

**Delta Vector Control (Mosquito Abatement District)** - Covering the northern portion of Tulare County. Call the Visalia Office at (559) 732-8606 or visit online at: <http://www.deltavcd.com>

**Tulare Mosquito Abatement District**

- Covering the western portion of Tulare County. Contact the Tulare Office at (559) 686-6628 or visit online at: <https://www.tularemosquito.com>

**Delano Mosquito Abatement District** - Covering the southern portion of Tulare County. Contact the Delano Office at (661) 725-3114 or visit online at: <https://delanomosquito.com>

Horses are also particularly susceptible to infection with West Nile Virus, but there is a vaccine for horses to prevent these diseases, and horse owners should have their horses vaccinated annually and keep vaccinations up to date as a preventive measure.

For more information, visit the California West Nile website at <http://westnile.ca.gov>

## New Scams and Schemes...

(continued from page 1)

where your money is going.

**Gift Card Scams:** The most frequently seen new scam out there involves a call, email or text message requesting that you purchase certain gift cards for donation to some purported cause. This scam is increasingly popular (and quite effective) as gift cards are so prevalent and easy to buy.

The caller cites a charitable cause (fire relief, for example) or tells you that you owe money to the government or a public utility, and asks you to purchase specific gift cards (Walmart, Applebee's, BestBuy, etc.), and then provide the gift card number and PIN through a text or email. These types of requests are a guaranteed scam, especially if the caller stresses the urgency of the situation.

The bottom line here is that no government agency, public utility, or legitimate charity will ever insist that you pay them with a gift card. Anyone who demands to be paid with a gift card is a most likely a scammer.

**"Public" Wi-Fi:** If traveling this holiday season, be skeptical of "free" Wi-Fi. Most hotels, airports, truck stops and restaurants do offer legitimate free Wi-Fi to their guests, but scammers also broadcast Wi-Fi signals near popular points of interests and hotel lobbies.

Never download and install an application (also known as an "app") as a prerequisite to using

a public Wi-Fi service. If you do occasionally use legitimate public Wi-Fi, it's safest to not conduct online banking transactions, make purchases, or use any application where you enter your password on that Wi-Fi. Even though the company offering the Wi-Fi may be legitimate, you as the user, have no control regarding the security that they use.

**Package Delivery Text Updates:** Another novel scam which appears to be increasing are text "updates" from scammers attempting to get personal information. This scam typically begins with a text message saying, "Your package has been delayed in transit" or "Your package is scheduled for delivery. Click here to set your delivery preferences." These text messages use official business names such as FedEx and UPS.

Avoid tapping on any link provided in the text messages. Look carefully at the link you are asked to tap: if it does not match the delivery carrier's website address, or contains numbers or symbols, delete the text. You can also press and hold on the link in a text message to see exactly where tapping the link will take you.

If in doubt, go online to a laptop or desktop computer and double-check your delivery status and tracking.

The Kings County District Attorney's Office wishes you a safe and happy holiday season.

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# Mysterious 'Black Bart' Pays Visalia A Visit

Charles E. Boles liked stage-coaches. In fact, he liked them so much that for at least eight years he was in the stage-coach business earning some \$50,000. Not bad considering that today the amount would be worth more than \$1.3 million.

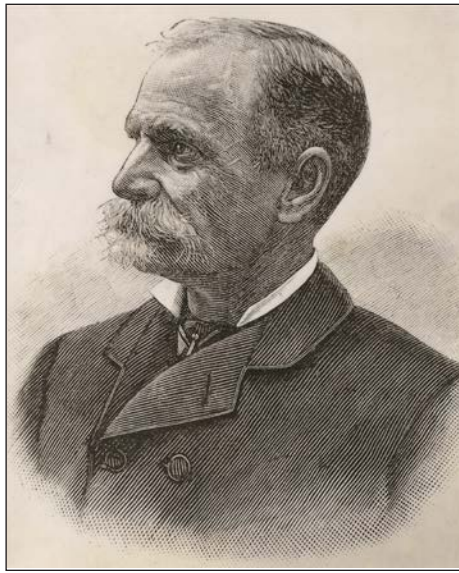
Now this accomplishment seems laudable until it's realized that he didn't earn the money using smart business practices. Instead he acquired his cash by robbing coaches, and lots of them – crimes that earned him the name "Black Bart."

For several years, Boles worked in the mines of Idaho and Montana, but by 1874 he shifted his attention to California. Successful searching for valuable gold in the mother lode country of the Golden State proved unproductive, so he explored other options for making a living. His motivation for stage robbing seemed to have been driven only by his desire for getting money without legally working for it.

Between 1875 and 1883, he robbed 28 stages, nearly all in the mother lode country of California, and all carrying Wells, Fargo strongboxes. His approach was different from most stagecoach robbers. He dressed in a long linen duster that hung to his ankles, and had a flour sack with cutout eye-holes over his head. His shoes were covered with boot socks, which left no shoeprints.

He laid in-wait at a curve in the road or the beginning of a steep hill. As the coach slowed down, he presented himself with his double-barreled shotgun and then ordered the driver to "throw down the box, please." He was always polite and never fired his shotgun or hurt anyone. Later it was determined that his gun was rarely, if ever, loaded.

One of his most unusual actions at robbery scenes was that occasionally he would leave a poem at the scene. His first poetic offering was in 1877 when



This undated drawing of Black Bart was circulated after his arrest.

he wrote:

*I've labored long and hard  
for bread,  
For honor and for riches,  
But on my corns too long  
you've tread,  
You fine haired Sons of B\_ \_*

-----  
He signed it "Black Bart, the Po 8."


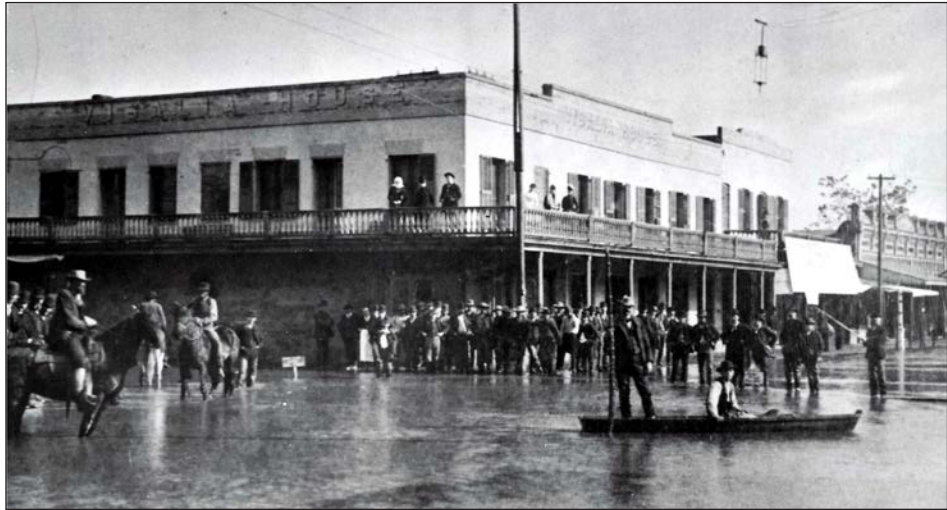
While on his robbery spree, he lived a double life. To the general public and Wells, Fargo & Co., he was a despised and clever highwayman, but to those who knew him where he lived in San Francisco, he was a rich miner who would leave periodically to check on his mining interests.

In 1883, Black Bart committed his last stage robbery at Funk Hill, near Copperopolis in Calaveras County. It was here that in his rush to leave the scene, he dropped some personal effects including a handkerchief marked with a distinct laundry mark. It was traced back to Boles and he was arrested in San Francisco.

Black Bart was convicted for his string of robberies and was sentenced to six years in San Quentin. Of that, he served only four years and was released on January 23, 1888.

When he quietly left state prison, he just disappeared. However, on March 1, 1888, the *Tulare County Times* newspaper reported, "Black Bart,

Dusting Off History  
with Terry Ommen

The Visalia House as shown here during the flood of 1890 was located on the northeast corner of Church and Main streets. This hotel was the last known sighting of Black Bart.

the poetic stage robber, who was recently discharged from San Quentin, registered at the Visalia House last Thursday as M. Moore of San Francisco and staid [sic] there until Monday last. On going away, he left his valise with the proprietor of the house saying he might call for it sometime or ask to have it forwarded to him, or he might

never call or send for it. No one knows whither he went, but the report of his presence attracted many persons to the hotel."

To this day, the whereabouts of this famous robber is a mystery. Most historical accounts say that Visalia was the last known sighting of the man that caused Wells, Fargo & Co. so much grief.

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# Aspirin Regimen No Longer Recommended for Everyone

On October 12, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force posted a draft recommendation statement on aspirin use to prevent heart disease and stroke, also known as cardiovascular disease (CVD).

People ages 40 to 59 who are at higher risk for CVD and do not have a history of CVD should decide with their clinician whether to start taking aspirin.

Heart disease and stroke are leading causes of mortality in the United States, accounting for about one in three deaths. While daily aspirin use has been shown to lower the chance of having a first heart attack or stroke, it can also cause harm. The most serious potential harm is bleeding in the stomach, intestines and brain. The chance of bleeding increases with age and can be life-threatening.

Based on new evidence, it is now recommended that once people turn 60 years old, they should not consider starting to take aspirin because the risk of bleeding cancels out the benefits of preventing heart disease. The latest information also shows a closer balance of benefits and harms than previously understood for people in their 50s, and that starting aspirin use as young as 40 years old may have some benefit.

"Daily aspirin use may help prevent heart attacks and strokes in some people, but it can also cause potentially serious harms, such as internal bleeding," said Task Force member John Wong, M.D. "It's important that people who are 40 to 59 years old and don't have a history of heart disease have a conversation with their clinician to decide together if starting to take aspirin is right

for them."

This recommendation only applies to people who are at higher risk for CVD, have no history of CVD, and are not already taking daily aspirin. When deciding whether patients should start taking aspirin to prevent a first heart attack or stroke, clinicians should consider age, heart disease risk, and bleeding risk.



It is also important to consider a patient's values and preferences. If someone is already taking aspirin and has any questions, they should talk to their clinician about their individual circumstances.

"The latest evidence is clear: starting a daily aspirin regimen in people who are 60 or older to prevent a first heart attack or stroke is not recommended," said Task Force member Chien-Wen Tseng, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.E.E. "However, this Task Force recommendation is not for people already taking aspirin for a previous heart attack or stroke; they should continue to do so unless told otherwise by their clinician."

The Task Force's draft recommendation statement, draft evidence review, and draft modeling report have been posted for public comment on the Task Force website at [www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org](http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org).

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of people nationwide by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services and preventive medications.



This poster featuring James Stewart and Donna Reed didn't help sell many tickets when "It's a Wonderful Life" opened in 1946. It was considered a flop, failing to earn back its production costs.

## 'It's a Wonderful Life'...

(continued from page 11)

al Telefilm Associates failed to renew the film's copyright, placing the film in the public domain. This was excellent news for TV stations and home-video companies: with no royalty payments required, television stations aired the film extensively, while home video companies made copies widely available for rental and sale.

"It's a Wonderful Life" reached entirely new audienc-

es during its copyright-free period, but earned nothing for its owners.

In 1993, Republic Pictures took over National Telefilm Associates and, through court action, restored the copyright based on a Supreme Court ruling (Stewart v. Abend, 1990) involving another Jimmy Stewart film, "Rear Window," from 1954. In 1994, with copyright restored, Republic signed a long-term agreement with NBC to air "It's a Wonderful Life" a few times every year. It still plays on NBC stations once or twice each year.

In 1998, Paramount regained ownership of the film and its home-entertainment business, and continues to honor the agreement with NBC. Others may also license the film for broadcast.

Thanks in large part to its temporary lack of copyright protection, "It's a Wonderful Life" became a popular and commercial success decades after its original theatrical release. Over the years, but especially since 1974, the film has also inspired radio programs, stage plays, musicals, songs and episodes of popular television shows.

What a wonderful life it's been for a work that started off as an unpublished short story.