



IN THIS ISSUE: Seniors Impacted in Ukraine, Over Sixty Book of Lists, "Calendar Girls," Ground Observer Corps, Floribunda

# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume IX, Number 5 • January/February 2023



The Heart of Seniors Expo will be held for the first time since 2019.

## Heart of Seniors Returns to Visalia Wyndham Hotel

The Heart of Seniors Expo & Fashion Show, hosted by the Senior Coalition, will be held on Thursday, February 16, at the Visalia Wyndham Hotel, 9000 W. Airport Dr., Visalia.

The event will include a vital resource fair with vendors, a fashion show - featuring senior models escorted by American Ambulance team members - and a luncheon.

The resource fair opens at 9:30 a.m., with the program beginning at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are available for \$10 per person, which includes lunch. Early registration is recommended as seating is limited and the event is again expected to sell out.

This is the first Heart of Seniors event since 2019 due to the pandemic. The response to its return has been "tremendous," according to Kathleen Remillard, event chair



Keynote speaker Terry Ommen and chair and president of the Senior Coalition.

"We have more sponsors than we have ever had," said Remillard. "We have a higher number of vendors signed up at this point in the process than we have had in the past as well. We have already sold several dozen lunch tickets too."

The event has been missed by regular attendees as well as  
*(continued on page 10)*

## HandsOn Seeks Volunteers 55 and Older

New Year's resolutions offer an opportunity for people to consider the positive changes they can make in their lives. Some of you will join a gym, others will learn to play an instrument, while others may finally write the book they have been talking about for years.

For some seniors, the new year is a time to consider ways to get more involved in the community, and put their talents and years of experience to good use by helping others.

If you fall into the last category, you should be aware that HandsOn Central California (HOCC) wants you.

HOCC is the sponsoring agency for AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP, the senior volunteer program in seven counties, includ-



A volunteer prepares food boxes. ing Kings and Tulare Counties.

RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) is a national  
*(continued on page 6)*

## Romance Scammers Prey Online on Lonely Seniors

By Steve Pastis

Kathy Waters, executive director and co-founder of Advocating Against Romance Scammers, advises people not to befriend someone online unless you know them.

"Unfortunately, there are too many scammers looking for people who are vulnerable, lonely, widowed, divorced, maybe who have lost children - anything that puts them in a spot," Waters said. "Sometimes it can be a new loss or it can be over years. (Scammers) do a lot of research."

Waters said that seniors are especially vulnerable to these scams.

Scammers will set up fake accounts and join online groups,



Scammers target those who are vulnerable, adding heartache and financial loss to their other problems.

such as people who have lost loved ones, or religious groups for people looking for spiritual healing, according to Waters.

"I would not keep my profile public," she said. "Always keep your profile private."

Scammers will use anything  
*(continued on page 16)*



Plans have been submitted to Visalia Site Plan Review to develop a senior care facility on this site on Tulare Avenue.

## New Site Selected for Proposed Care Facility

Plans to transform the Goodwill store at 2240 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia into a senior daily care facility have been changed.

Instead of remodeling the existing Goodwill store across the street from the Visalia Mall, planners are now looking to build a new facility at the east end of the Visalia Business Park at the northeast corner of Ben Maddox Way and Tulare Avenue in Visalia.

The reasons for the change in location were not specified. City officials simply said that

things simply didn't work out between the developers and the property owner.

The proposed 24,975-sq. ft. senior care "PACE" facility would provide a multitude of social services and auxiliary medical services to seniors in the greater Visalia area. The project is estimated to cost \$5 million.

**The PACE Program**

PACE, the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, individually coordinates the care of each participant enrolled in  
*(continued on page 3)*

# Current Influenza Season Differs from Recent Years

The 2022 flu season is different from recent flu seasons, according to Tulare County Health Officer, Dr. Karen Haught.

"During the 2020 and 2021 flu seasons, most people were using masks while in indoor spaces, which served to protect themselves and those around them from being exposed to respiratory viruses and from spreading the viruses," she explained. "Masking protects against all the respiratory virus so though it was initiated due to the COVID pandemic, it also protected against influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

"This year, influenza illness started to rise in October/November, which is earlier than usual. Most often, influenza illness starts to rise in late December and January. In addition to being earlier the rise of illness this season was more rapid than most years."

The exact number of flu-related deaths is not known because influenza is not a condition reportable to the county public health department, except for pediatric deaths under 18. Because influenza is not a required reportable disease, Tulare County Public Health is unable to track flu-related hospitalizations. However, local hospitals often provide flu-re-

lated hospitalization data based on the patients being admitted and treated for influenza.

"For flu-related deaths, we have the number of death certificates that indicate influenza was a cause of death, however, this may be an undercount," said Dr. Haught. "Flu cases are generally reported by flu season (October through September). For the 2021-2022 season, there were eight influenza deaths in Tulare County residents. The season prior (2020-2021), there were only three influenza deaths. But the season prior to that (2019-2020), there were 22 influenza deaths."

Hospitals in Tulare County are working at maximum capacities, according to Dr. Haught. The emergency rooms are very crowded with long wait times, and there are long wait times for those being admitted to get an available inpatient bed.

"The numbers of patients with influenza who are hospitalized are like the number of patients who are hospitalized with COVID," she said. "Sometimes people may have infections with both viruses. There are also adults hospitalized with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). RSV is a virus that predominantly affects young infants, but this year it has

*(continued on page 16)*

## VETERANS CORNER

### The PACT Act (Part 2)

This is the second column covering the PACT Act. To recap, the full name of the law is the Sergeant First Class (SFC) Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

Here we will address the conditions that are related to a veteran who served in either the Gulf War or post-9/11.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has added the following cancers to the presumptive list for burn pit and other toxic exposures: brain cancer, gastrointestinal cancer of any type, glioblastoma, head cancer of any type, kidney cancer, lymphatic cancer of any type, lymphoma of any type, melanoma, neck cancer of any type, pancreatic cancer, reproductive cancer of any type, and respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type.

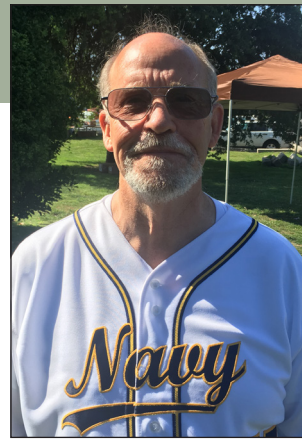
In addition to the above cancers, the VA has added the following illnesses as presumptive: asthma that was diagnosed after service, chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic rhinitis, chronic sinusitis, constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, emphysema, granulomatous disease, interstitial lung disease (ILD), pleuritis, pulmonary fibrosis, and arcosidosis.

You are eligible for any of the above if you served on or after August 2, 1990, in any of the following locations: Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), or the airspace above any of these locations.

You are eligible for any of the above if you served on or after September 11, 2001, in any of the following locations: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Uzbekistan, Yemen or the airspace above any of these locations.

The VA has also expanded health care services for post-9/11 veterans that is dependent on your service history and some other factors. If you would like further information regarding the health care, feel free to contact the office for more information. If you would like assistance in filing a disability claim for any of the above conditions, please call to schedule an appointment with our office.

*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@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:kcruicks@tularecounty.ca.gov)*



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The deadline for the  
March/April issue  
is  
Wednesday,  
February 15, 2023

# New Location for Proposed Senior Facility...

(continued from page 1)

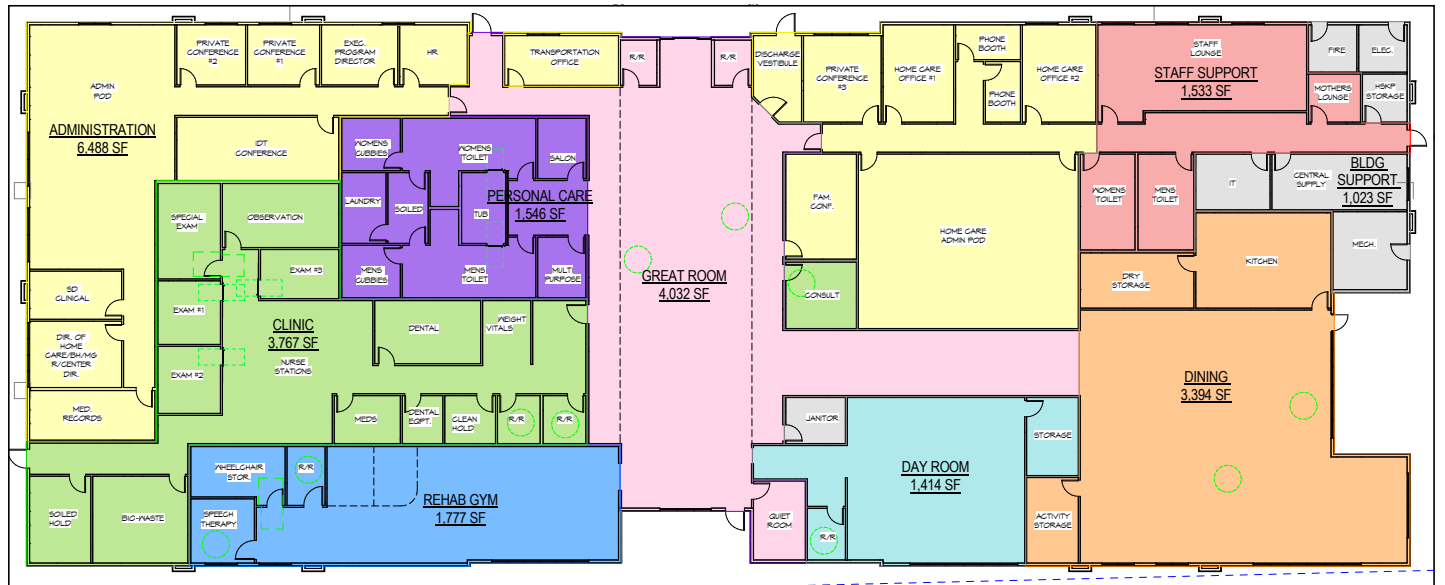
the program based on his or her needs as directed by an interdisciplinary team of health care professionals. The goal of the program is to improve the quality of life for seniors and to help them live independently in their home and community as their health and age advance.

PACE is a national program sponsored by the federal government, through Medicare, to enable individuals who are at risk of moving into a nursing home to continue to live safely in their homes and communities.

Members must be 55 years or older, be eligible for nursing home-level care based on the State of California criteria, be eligible for Medicaid or Medicare (or be willing to use private insurance or pay privately), and be able to live safely in the community with PACE services.

### Services Provided

The PACE model of care is built around an interdisciplinary team (IDT) which includes a primary care physician, nurse, social worker, physical therapist, occupational therapist, recreational therapist, dietician, center director, transportation coordinator, personal care worker and home care co-



The proposed 24,975-square-foot senior care facility (above) replaces plans to remodel the existing 17,269-square-foot Goodwill store at 2240 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia.

ordinator.

Each participant is comprehensively assessed upon entry into the program, then twice a year thereafter, by the IDT. Based on the team's assessments, the senior's needs and problems are identified and integrated into an individual care plan.

In addition to off-site services available 24/7, 365 days a year, facilities operate Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. as a daily care center. PACE services are delivered to participant's homes in the community, and at the PACE facility, in order to help the senior live independently in his/her home and community.

### Benefits Offered

On-site medical benefits include: physician care, nursing, dentistry, rehab (therapy/exercise). On-site care benefits include: rehabilitation therapies, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and memory care. Personal care includes hair care and nail care.

Social services will include connections to community resources, benefits support, counseling and psychological services, and guidance and support for participants and caregivers.

A 4,032-square-foot Great Room will allow for engagement programs where seniors can socialize with others, listen

to music, participate in group exercise activities and enjoy cultural events and games. The 3,394-square-foot Dining/Day Room will host meals and nutritional counseling, and include a serving kitchen.

The project is expected to employ more than 100 full and part-time employees.

The project is currently going through the city's site plan review process, but no problems are expected.

"We went through the process with the Mooney location," said Josh Dan, associate planner with the City of Visalia. "It's the same process, so they should be able to go through it pretty smoothly."

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# Can Being Scammed Have Long-Term Effects on Men's Health?

"Grandpa, do you know who this is? Please don't tell anyone, but I'm in trouble and need money right away." So begins one of the most common scams targeting older adults. For older men in particular, getting tricked by a con artist impersonating their grandchild over the phone – or any other financial scheme – could have lasting effects on their health.

Researchers at Rush Medical College in Chicago found that older men who reported being the victims of financial fraud saw their blood pressure rise – and remain elevated for years after the incident.

The implications could be significant, as more than five million older adults in the United States are victims of financial schemes, says Melissa Lamar, Ph.D., a clinical neuropsychologist in the Rush Alzheimer's Disease Center who led the study, which was published in the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

## Fraud and Blood Pressure

"Being the victim of fraud can be traumatic, and we need to respect all that the trauma can do to a person beyond the tangible financial losses," says Lamar, who is also a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Rush Medical College. This includes the possibility that older men may develop chron-

ically elevated blood pressure, which is a risk factor for stroke, heart disease and other health problems.

Interestingly, researchers did not find the same association between fraud and elevated blood pressure in older women. Lamar believes that older men who are victims of financial fraud may develop higher blood pressure either directly or indirectly from negative emotions like stress, anger and anxiety caused by the incident.

"It's possible that, compared with women, older men may not feel as comfortable talking about their emotions and may feel embarrassed about having been victimized," she says. "Over time, not expressing these emotions could affect men's high blood pressure."

Earlier studies have shown elder fraud and exploitation are linked to increased hospitalizations, admission to nursing homes and lower survival rates, Lamar says. Older victims of financial fraud have also reported having higher blood pressure and other medical problems in some research.

Lamar's research team, which also included researchers from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, was the first to find that older men who were victims of fraud

had elevated blood pressure as measured by an automated blood pressure machine. For up to 11 years, researchers tracked participants' blood pressure over time, rather than relying on older adults to report if they had high blood pressure.

The study was conducted in more than 1,200 primarily non-Latino whites approximately 80 years of age with high levels of education, suggesting they had a high socioeconomic status.

None of the study participants had dementia. In the future, Lamar hopes to expand her team's research to understand the health effects of fraud in a more racially, ethnically and economically diverse population.

## Avoid Getting Swindled

Worried about getting conned and what it might do to your bank account and your health over time?

The National Council on Aging offers a variety of resources on how to avoid scams like phony lotteries, fake computer tech support, government impersonation scams, dubious investment strategies and other schemes. Lamar also offers this advice:

Learn about the top five financial scams affecting older adults so you can spot the warning signs, like investments

that offer "guaranteed returns" or "phishing" emails and texts that ask you for your credit card information.

Be wary of COVID-19-related scams, such as companies offering free COVID-19 tests or vaccines in exchange for your personal data.

If you have an older adult in your life, be sure to educate them about the latest phone and internet schemes.

If you have been the victim of fraud, you may be embarrassed that you fell for a scam, but you're not alone. Take control of the situation by following these steps:

- Report the incident to your local police and your bank or credit card if money was stolen from your account. The National Council on Aging also recommends contacting Adult Protective Services for your state.

Tulare and Kings County residents can report fraud to the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging at (559) 624-8000.

- Tell your doctor, who may decide to monitor your blood pressure or other aspects of your health more closely, especially if you are an older man.

- Talk to someone about how you feel. "It doesn't necessarily have to be a therapist or psychologist – it can just be a friend or family member," Lamar says.



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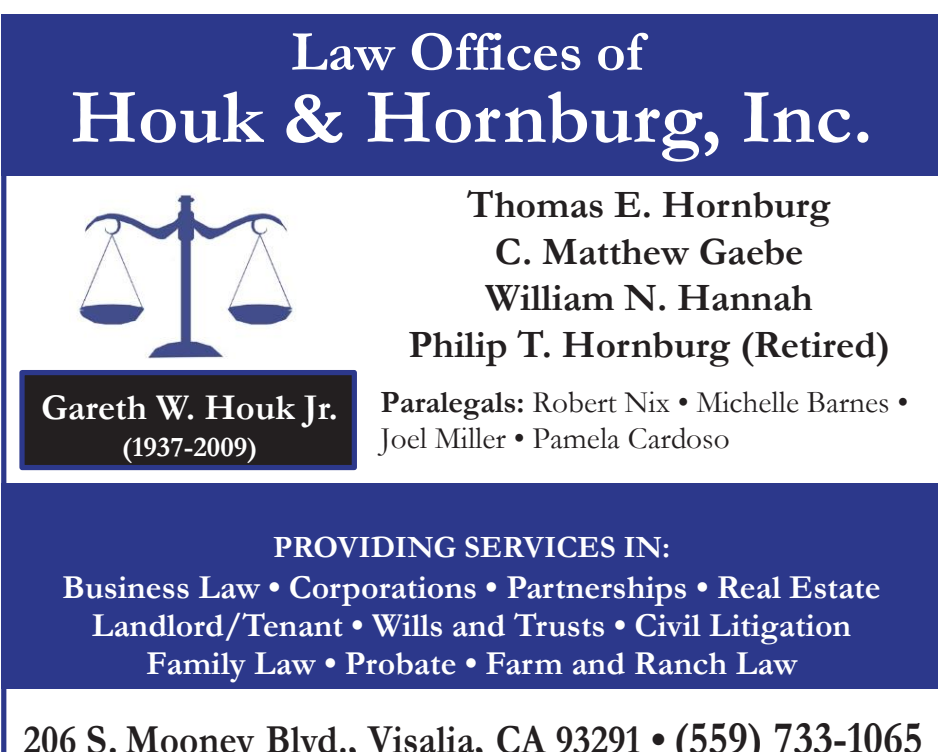
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# Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging Provides Support for Seniors

*(This is the first in a series of articles about supportive services for local seniors that will appear in The Good Life.)*

The Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging (K/T AAA), Adult Services Division provides services that support the local older adult population. Every year, at least 1,000 older adults seek information related to needs that are considered "supportive services."

These services are designed to support independence and health for the most vulnerable community members. The various services offered by K/T AAA include an assessment of the older adult's needs, informing them and their families of resources, and linking seniors and/or their families to other needed services.

Among the services K/T AAA offers to seniors in Tulare and Kings Counties are:

### Information and Assistance

Information and Assistance provides all available services and resources for the older adult population, assists seniors in filling out basic forms, and overall provides exactly what the title "information and assistance" implies.

This service is provided through two K/T AAA providers: Community Services Employment Training (CSET), (800)

321-2462, and the Kings County Commission on Aging (KCCOA), (559) 852-2828.

### Public Information, Community Education and Outreach

This service provides information and education to the public at community health fairs, senior centers and other events that are held for the older adult population.

The information may be tailored to address specific community needs or concerns, such as seniors' rights, benefits and entitlements.

Information is also provided through social media and other avenues to warn seniors about current scams, and inform them about ways the public can get involved to help make the lives of seniors better through donations or volunteer work.

This service is provided via two K/T AAA providers: CSET and KCCOA.



### Visiting and Telephone Reassurance

Visiting and Telephone Reassurance provides comfort and support to the most vulnerable and isolated seniors. Visiting allows the employee to spend time with the senior, just talking and building a relationship. It is also provides an opportunity to assess the senior and make sure they are clean, eating, and in good overall mental and physical health.

With telephone reassurance, the most vulnerable and isolated seniors are called daily to check in on them. With the county so spread out and having limited resources, it is not easy to visit each senior as often as those at K/T AAA would like, so telephone reassurance provides an extra daily touch and check-in.

This service is provided via two K/T AAA providers: CSET and KCCOA.

### Transportation

Although this service cur-

rently has limited resources, it provides bus passes for seniors to get to senior centers for meals and other activities. Local community health partners provide seniors with transportation to their appointments.

Transportation is one of the areas where K/T AAA is seeking to identify additional funding and resources, especially for seniors living in the most rural areas.

### Legal Assistance

Legal Assistance is provided via two K/T AAA providers: CSET and KCCOA, and then subcontracted to Central California Legal Services (CCLS).

CCLS provides legal assistance, such as preparing important documents for older clients, to make sure their wishes are known and followed, such as Financial and Medical Powers of Attorney and Advance Health Care Directives.

They also help seniors who are victims of unfair business and debt collection practices, including high-pressure energy efficiency or other home improvement contracts. CCLS can be reached at (800) 675-8001.

For more information on any of these services, contact Bonnie Quiroz, Client Advocate for Adult Services by phone at (559) 972-0323 or (559) 713-2877, or by email at BQuiroz@tularecounty.ca.gov.



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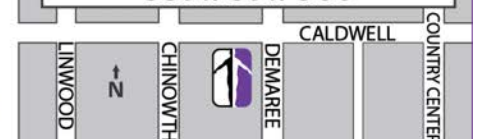
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# HandsOn Seeks Senior Volunteers...

(continued from page 1)

service program, designed to recruit skilled, experienced, active adults ages 55 and older for volunteer activities to meet the needs of their communities.

An estimated 500,000 people 55 years old or older are serving nationally in more than 8,000 locally sponsored projects to support their community as Senior Corps RSVP members.

HandsOn Central California RSVP members help build low income housing, feed those in need, help families in need with clothing and household goods, provide meals to isolated seniors, provide senior companionship, support veterans services, provide support to local city government, act as ambassadors to the Central Valley and much more.

Volunteer opportunities are as varied as the interests of the senior volunteers.

Senior volunteers have knitted clothing and blankets for children, served with the California Highway Patrol, worked with children as tutoring mentors, and taught others about disaster preparation, explained Elba Scherer, HOCC RSVP coordinator.

"It's extremely beneficial for seniors to volunteer," said Scherer. "It gives them a purpose to get them out the door.



Volunteers prepare food boxes (above left and center) and sort clothes and blankets for for distribution (at right).

It breaks down barriers and isolation."

Scherer appreciates what volunteers 55 and older bring to HOCC.

"They have the time, they have the talent, and they have the experience and skills," she said. "They come from a generation that tended to be more service-minded. They tend to be reliable volunteers and more invested volunteers."

There are three programs for senior volunteers under the AmeriCorps umbrella, which HOCC helps staff and coordinate. In addition to RSVP, AmeriCorps oversees Senior Companions, which coordinates visits for otherwise isolated se-

niors, and Foster Grandparents, who tutor and mentor kids.

HOCC partners with organizations on various projects, including the Red Cross, Tulare County Habitat for Humanity and the Make-a-Wish Foundation. A program with the Fresno VA Medical Center Caring Corps had volunteers call isolated and lonely veterans, as well as make uplifting greeting cards for them.

"The caring cards are very popular with seniors who wish to be creative," said Scherer. "They are also very popular with senior ladies who can utilize their extra supplies, and the cards remind people that, 'Someone is thinking of me. I'm

not alone."

The amount of time a senior volunteer gives is "up to them," she said. "It really depends on the job."

Some food bank volunteers work for four hours a week, while "others put in 40 hours a week," said Scherer, who added that there are also home-based opportunities for volunteers.

"These are good for seniors who have health issues or are immunocompromised but still want to give back," she said.

For more information about HandsOn, including volunteering opportunities, visit [www.handsoncentralcal.org](http://www.handsoncentralcal.org), call (559) 237-3101 or email [info@handsoncentralcal.org](mailto:info@handsoncentralcal.org).



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# Seniors in Ukraine Most Impacted by Russian Invasion

Older people in Ukraine have been disproportionately impacted by death and injury during Russia’s invasion and are unable to access housing on an equal basis with others after being displaced, Amnesty International said in a new report.

The report, *I Used to Have a Home: Older People’s Experience of War, Displacement, and Access to Housing in Ukraine*, documents how older people often remain in or are unable to flee conflict-affected areas, exposing them to harm and dangerous living conditions in severely damaged housing.

Those who do flee often cannot afford to cover rental costs, while thousands have had to stay in overstretched state institutions, which do not have enough staff to provide the necessary level of care.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which has had a devastating impact on civilians of all ages, threatens the physical security of older people and has forced millions from their homes. Ultimately, the most expedient way to protect the rights of older civilians in Ukraine is for Russia to end its unlawful war.

“Russia’s devastating invasion is having a disproportionate impact on older people in Ukraine, with many staying



behind in areas where they regularly come in harm’s way from relentless ground and air attacks.” said Laura Mills, researcher on older people and people with disabilities at Amnesty International.

“Older people are often either staying in unsafe homes or, when they are able to flee, end up in shelters that do not have adequate resources to meet their needs, particularly if they have disabilities. From there, they risk being placed in state institutions. As the harsh grip of winter takes hold, the international community must urgently take action to bolster support for this group.”

The Ukrainian government has made significant efforts to evacuate people from conflict-affected areas, including by announcing the mandatory evacuation of around 200,000

people from the Donetsk region in July.

The cost and logistics of ensuring housing for older people displaced by the war, however, should not be Ukraine’s alone. Amnesty International is calling on other countries to facilitate the evacuation of older people – with special attention paid to older people with disabilities – to accessible accommodation abroad where possible.

### Disproportionate Risks

In Ukraine, people over 60 years old comprise nearly one-fourth of the population. Older people are disproportionately vulnerable to attacks. According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which collects data on civilian casualties in Ukraine, people over 60 made up 34% of civilians killed from February

to September 2022 for cases in which an age was recorded.

Older people, who more frequently have health conditions, are also at a greater risk in occupied areas, where Russian forces have severely restricted the access of humanitarian aid, in flagrant violation of international law.

Many displaced older people have struggled to find suitable accommodation. Pushed out of the private market by increased rental prices and pensions that are well below subsistence levels, many older people are at heightened risk of losing access to housing altogether.

Amnesty International found that shelters were often physically inaccessible to older people with disabilities and did not have enough staff to support them.

As a result, older people with disabilities often had no choice but to live in a state institution. Between February and July 2022 alone, at least 4,000 older people were placed in state institutions after losing their homes during the conflict, according to statements released by Ukraine’s Ministry of Social Policy.

(A link to the full report is at the end of this article at [www.TheGoodLife.com](http://www.TheGoodLife.com).)



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If you think you are dealing with a urological illness, talk to your doctor or call us at (559) 624-4026.



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VISIT: [KaweahHealth.org/Urology](http://KaweahHealth.org/Urology)

# CALENDAR

**January 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31 - 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.

**January 4-27 - The Art of Arts Visalia**

Arts Visalia staff and volunteers come together to create this exhibition featuring their own artwork. Arts Visalia, 214 E. Oak Ave., Visalia, is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from noon to 5:30 p.m. Virtual gallery tours are at [www.artsvisalia.org/virtual-tours](http://www.artsvisalia.org/virtual-tours). For more information, visit [www.artsvisalia.org](http://www.artsvisalia.org) or call (559) 739-0905.

**January 4, 11, 18, 25 - Bingo**

The Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, will host bingo starting at 1 p.m. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. For more information, call (559) 685-2330.

**January 4, 11, 18, 25 - Hanford Senior Creative Writing**

This weekly event is held at the Veterans Memorial Building in Hanford from 10-11 a.m. For more information, call (559) 212-1628.

**January 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 25, 27, 30 - 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 info, call (559) 585-2525.

**Thursday, January 5 - "What Do You Mean My Tree Isn't Accurate? - Using Online Sources to Survey Your Tree for Accuracy"**

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. presentation by Robert Givens. Refreshments will follow. The free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more info, call (559) 685-4518.

**January 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29 - Bingo**

Hanford Senior Citizens Inc. will host this event at the Senior/Veterans Building, 401 N. Irwin St., Hanford, at 6 p.m. on Fridays, and 1 p.m. on Sundays. Doors open three hours before bingo. For more information, call (559) 585-2531.

**January 6, 13, 20, 27 - Friday Night Dances**

The Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, will host this weekly event from 6-9 p.m. \$10 entry fee. For more information, call (559) 685-2330.

**January 6-7 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale**

Visalia Gleaning Seniors will host this sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Gleaner Yard, 28600 Road 156 in Visalia. For more info, call (559) 733-5352.

**January 8, 15, 22, 29 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays**

This weekly event is held at the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building, 609 W. Center St., Visalia, Doors open at 12:45 p.m. For more information, call (559) 618-3221.

**Tuesday, January 17 - Caregiver Dementia Support Groups**

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 624-3511.

**January 27-29 - "Sylvia"**

The Visalia Players will present a play by A.R. Gurney about a dog, the couple who adopts her and the comedy that results, at the Ice House Theatre, 410 E. Race Ave., Visalia. For tickets or more information, visit [www.visaliaplayers.org](http://www.visaliaplayers.org) or call (559) 734-3900.

**Wednesday, January 18 - Kaweah Health Blood Drive**

The Kaweah Health Exeter Clinic, 1014 San Juan Ave., Exeter, will host this opportunity to donate

blood from noon to 3 p.m. To make a reservation, visit <https://signup.com/go/VYoXaYK>. For more information, call (559) 624-2382.

**Friday, January 20 - Downtown Historical Walk**

This tour of Downtown Visalia with local historian Terry Ommen, who has researched Visalia's history for over 30 years, will begin at Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, The tour, which runs from 9:30-11 a.m., costs is \$8. For reservations or more info, call (559) 713-4481.

**Friday, January 20 - Caregiver Dementia Support Groups**

The Remington, 2727 N. 11th St., Hanford, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 624-3511.

**February 1, 8, 15, 22 - Bingo**

The Tulare Senior Community Center, 201 N. F St., Tulare, will host bingo starting at 1 p.m. Doors open at 12:30 p.m. For more info, call (559) 685-2330.

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# CALENDAR

**February 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, 27 - Aerobics**

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**February 1-24 - Mayuko Ono Gray Exhibition**

Combining Western traditional drawing and Japanese calligraphy influence, Mayuko Ono Gray creates beautiful graphite drawings. Arts Visalia, 214 E. Oak Ave., Visalia, is open Wednesdays through Saturdays from noon to 5:30 p.m. Virtual gallery tours are available at [www.artsvisalia.org/virtual-tours](http://www.artsvisalia.org/virtual-tours). For more information, visit [www.artsvisalia.org](http://www.artsvisalia.org) or call (559) 739-0905.

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**February 3-4 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale**

Visalia Gleaning Seniors will host this sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Gleaner Yard, 28600 Road 156 in Visalia. For more info, call (559) 733-5352.

**February 5, 12, 19, 26 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays**

This weekly event is held at the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building, 609 W. Center St., Visalia. Doors open at 12:45 p.m. For more info, call (559) 618-3221.

**Friday, February 10 - Three Dog Night**

Three Dog Night will perform in a 7:30 p.m. concert at the Visalia Fox Theatre. From 1969 through 1974, no other group had more top 10 hits, including "Mama Told Me (Not to Come)," "Joy to the World," "Black and White," "Shambala" and "One." Ticket prices range from \$39 to \$124. For more info, call (559) 625-1369 or visit [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org).

**Monday, February 13 - Galentines Day Brunch**

This event, which celebrates friendship among gal pals, will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, 9:30-11 a.m. The cost is \$17. For reservations or more info, call (559) 713-4481.

**Tuesday, February 14 - Sweetheart Luncheon**

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. The cost is \$6 for Visalia seniors, \$7.50 for others. For reservations or more info, call (559) 713-4481.

**Thursday, February 16 - Heart of Seniors**

This event, which features a lunch, fashion show, informational booths and keynote speaker Terry Ommen, will be held at the Visalia Wyndham Ho-

tel from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. (See article on page 1.)

**Friday, February 17 - Caregiver Dementia Support Groups**

The Remington, 2727 N. 11th St., Hanford, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 624-3511.

**Saturday, February 18 - Stayin' Alive Cardiac 5K Run/Walk**

February is Heart Health Month and Kaweah Health will host this event at Riverway Sports Park, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd. in Visalia. Registration begins at 7 a.m. and the run/walk starts at 8 a.m. The event features a health expo, music and food. To sign up or for more information, visit [www.kawahhealth.org/5k](http://www.kawahhealth.org/5k) or call (559) 624-2416.

**Tuesday, February 21 - Caregiver Dementia Support Groups**

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 624-3511.

**March 3-4 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale**

Visalia Gleaning Seniors will host this sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Gleaner Yard in Visalia. For more info, call (559) 733-5352.



## Join Us for this Exciting Event!

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One of the choreographed dance scenes in "Calendar Girls."

## 'Calendar Girls' Described as 'Coming-of-Golden-Age' Film

The love of dance and glitter bonds an unlikely group of 60-plus women in southwest Florida - The Calendar Girls.

But under the veil of fake lashes and unicorn horns, lurks the deeper truths of what aging women face within society. Sisterhood, love and loss all come into play in this uplifting film about trying to age on your own terms and refusal to become invisible.

"Calendar Girls" is a coming-of-golden-age film, following senior volunteer dancers in Southwest Florida, who are determined to prove that age is just a number.

The Calendar Girls give it all they've got. And they have a lot to give - impressive makeup,

handmade costumes, elaborate dance routines and, most notably, their unparalleled enthusiasm and sparkling personalities.

Through revealing conversations and choreographed dance scenes, the film captures the challenges of being a woman over 60 and the delicate balance of family, home and dance. With laughter and tears, relationships and identities change as new dreams are discovered.

Directors Maria Loohufvud and Love Martinsen crafted a life-affirming, feel-good documentary that shakes up the outdated image of what it means to be an "old lady."

For more information, visit <https://calendargirlsfilm.com>.

## 'Show Must Go On!' Offers New Way to Look at the Years Ahead

"Show Must Go On!" is a documentary about four women who choose a life filled with friendship, laughter and purpose. They have a new way of looking at the years ahead and show that it is never too late to reinvent yourself.

Performing in front of sold-out audiences as the comedy musical act "Hot Stuff," these ladies bring joy to others and one another. Against the backdrop of preparing for their final show, they reflect on their journey of discovering their independence and hidden talents.

The show takes place at The Cedars, a retirement community in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. There we meet Jane, Karen, Mary and Pat, four friends who have had many roles in life (housewife, mother, teacher, musician, adventurer) and discovered that each has made them the resilient woman they are today. Experiencing difficult transitions and loss, they have each found a new beginning for themselves.

On the stage, Karen, the accompanist and reluctant comedian has found her voice. Mary, who has always been a committed wife, mother, grandmother and teacher, finds even more purpose in bringing joy to those in her community. Jane, whose late husband always believed in her raw talent, discovered the



The women in "Show Must Go On?" perform onstage.

courage to continue her adventures through performing. Pat, who spent her life teaching her students and children to be independent embraces a new found independence of her own.

Against the backdrop of preparing for their final show together, they reflect on their journeys of discovering their hidden talents, giving viewers a new way of looking at the years ahead and the value they hold.

For more information, visit [www.ShowMustGoOnFilm.com](http://www.ShowMustGoOnFilm.com).



The Calendar Girls' "Beauty Dance"

## Heart of Seniors...

(continued from page 1)

vendors, she added.

"Our vendors missed the opportunity to be able to talk to our seniors one-on-one," she said. "Nothing beats seeing a smile on someone's face when you have been able to help them with an issue or share something new.

The program, which will include a showcase of the latest in fashion for the mature woman, will feature keynote speaker Terry Ommen.

Ommen has written



Fashion models will again be escorted by American Ambulance team members.

hundreds of local history columns and articles for newspapers including the *Visalia Times-Delta*, *Fresno Bee* and *Valley Voice*, and is currently a regular contributor to *The Good Life*. (See page 15.)

In addition, he has authored four books and for several years wrote and published a blog called "Historic Happenings," which can be read at [www.visaliahistory.blogspot.com](http://www.visaliahistory.blogspot.com).

To purchase tickets for the luncheon or for more information, call (559) 300-9101 or (559) 805-6710, or visit <http://heartofseniors.com>.

## CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH A NEW HOME!

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*Make new friends*

*Pursue my passions*

*Simplify my life*

*Eat more ice cream*



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**Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia**

# Pack and Paskoff Release Over Sixty: Book of Lists

By Steve Pastis

Barbara Paskoff and Carol Pack recently released their fourth collaboration, *Over Sixty: Shades of Gray: Book of Lists*.

Their new book "just came about because of our impatience," according to Pack.

"I feel as I'm getting older that I get more impatient," she said. "Just cut to the bottom line. I don't want to wade through the author's philosophical reasons. I just want the facts."

Paskoff feels the same way, complaining about long-winded people.

"You would think that at my

age, I'd be more patient, but there's too much minutia," she said.

Both Pack and Paskoff make lists to stay organized.

"I have lists all over the place," said Pack. "If I don't make lists, I don't remember to do it."

Paskoff also makes lists, including "what I have to do and what I should do. Sometimes, I forget where I put the lists."

*Book of Lists* includes humor, but less than in their previous books.

"We tried to just get down to the lists," said Pack. "But there were places for a few asides in the lists."

The result is a book that provides valuable information, but in a light-hearted way.

For example, in a section called "Remember Etiquette?," the authors lament how much things have changed since Emily Post's book on etiquette by showing the difference between then and now:

*Then: Dressing up to go on a plane.*

*Now: Wearing what's comfortable, as long as your crack isn't making a public appearance.*

*Then: Soothe a male ego no matter what.*



Authors Carol Pack and Barbara Paskoff show off their latest collaboration.

more than a pamphlet, but it was meant to be something light," she said. "You could send it like a greeting card to someone."

Paskoff put aside all other projects to work on *Book of Lists*.

"I had fun with this and I didn't want to lose concentration," she explained. "I learned a lot and I was excited about writing everyday."

"I was excited also, but I was also working on a novel," said Pack.

So, what's next for the authors?

"I have to go on a diet," said Paskoff.

Actually, her current plan is to write her memoirs.

"It's basically for me - just to review my life," she said. "What I was, how I adjusted and where I'll be in the future."

"We all have had ups and downs. I want to reflect on what I've learned - and if I've learned."

"I totally avoid all that and just write fiction, rather than figuring out what to say about the people in my life," said Pack, who is currently working on an international thriller. "It seems so much easier."

"I just read Carol's book," said Paskoff. "It's so good, I read it twice."

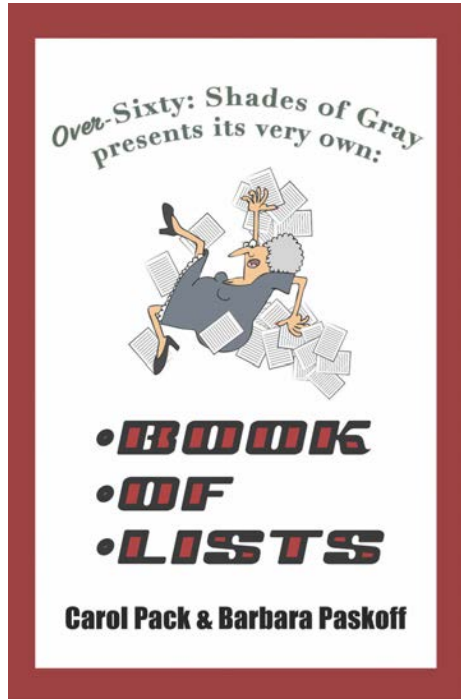
*Now: I don't think so.*

*Then: No white after Labor Day.*

*Now: What if you're the bride?*

*Over Sixty: Shades of Gray: Book of Lists* is the fourth book under their "Over Sixty" banner. In addition to *Over Sixty: Shades of Gray*, they worked together on *Over Sixty: Shades of Gray: Mind Games & Soporifics* and *Coronavirus Diary*, which Pack described as "a very short book."

"Our *Coronavirus Diary* was



Book of Lists is available on Amazon.



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- The Ortegas

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QUAIL CORNER

# Holiday Depression and The MIND Diet

Q&A with Kimberly Jensen

**Questions: I always get depressed before, during and after the holidays. My husband passed away and my children live out of the area. Is it normal to feel this way even after the New Year?**

Holiday traditions and memories are very deep in our hearts. Memories of times gone by can bring up both the good and bad times that we have experienced. It is especially difficult if you are spending a lot of time in the home where those memories occurred. The home that was once filled with music, decorations, festive foods, family, joy and laughter, can be stark in comparison now.

Depression and anxiety are very common during this time of year. It is very normal to feel a reminder of the loss of what once was. To remedy falling into the same empty feeling every year, break the cycle. There are things that you can do that will help with that feeling of loss.

It is very easy to focus on our sadness during the holidays. Next year, I suggest you find a worthy cause to focus on. If you are a quilter or can sew, make blankets for the children who are in the hospital during the holidays. If you bake, make cookies and treats, and wrap them up on paper plates and deliver them to those who are also alone during this time of the year. Offer to read books to children's groups at daycares or the library. Donate your services to the SPCA, Cancer Center or Food Bank. There are so many needs in our community. The busier you keep yourself, doing things for others during the holidays, the less time you will focus on what you don't have.

When you do good for others, positive endorphins kick on in your brain and you feel better. You are not alone; many are going through very similar circumstances. It is how you

fill that loss that will help you through the holidays and give you a new meaning for participating in them. Giving of your time and efforts can happen throughout the year!

**What Is the MIND Diet? My mother has some dementia decline, and I heard the MIND Diet would be good for her.**

The MIND diet targets the mental health of the constantly aging brain. The MIND diet stands for Mediterranean-Dash Intervention for Neurodegenerative delay. It is a fusion of the Mediterranean and the Dash diet. With dementia being the sixth leading cause of death, many people are searching for ways to prevent cognitive decline. There are nutrient supplements that claim to keep the mind clearer, but I have yet to have find one that has been FDA-approved.

When I researched the MIND diet, I found that Dr. Martha Clare Morris and her colleagues at Rush University Medical Center and the Harvard Chan School of Public Health, published two papers introducing the diet.

Cardiologists have been promoting the Mediterranean diet and DASH diet for the preservation of heart and cognitive function. Dr. Morris and her colleagues compared the DASH diet and Mediterranean diet to the MIND diet. Results of the studies proved that the MIND diet had greater effects of keeping the brain healthier.

All three diets focus on plant-based foods and limiting high saturated foods and animal proteins. The difference with the MIND diet is that it recommends specific "healthy brain" food that you include in your diet. It warns of five unhealthy foods that you must limit, or not eat at all. This diet was shown to directly prevent the onset of dementia or slow



its progression.

The intake of healthy items in the MIND Diet guidelines include:

- 3+ servings a day of whole grains,
- 1+ servings a day of vegetables (other than green leafy),
- 6+ servings a week of green leafy vegetables,
- 5+ servings a week of nuts,
- 4+ meals a week of beans,
- 2+ servings a week of berries,
- 2+ meals a week of poultry,
- 1+ meals a week of fish.

Use olive oil if a fat source is needed to cook food or use in salad dressings.

The unhealthy items are higher in saturated and trans-fat. They should be limited as follows:

- Less than 5 servings a week of pastries and sweets,
- Less than 4 servings a week of red meat (including beef, pork, lamb, and products made from these meats),
- Less than one serving a week of cheese and fried foods,
- Less than 1 tablespoon a day of butter/stick margarine.

What makes the MIND diet unique, is that it contains foods rich in certain vitamins, carotenoids and flavonoids. These are believed to protect the brain by reducing stress and in-

flammation. The research found a 53% lower rate from Alzheimer's disease for those with the highest MIND scores. Even those participants with a moderate MIND score showed a 35% lower rate compared with those with the lowest MIND scores. This supported their conclusion that the MIND diet was effective in the preservation of cognitive function.

The research of the MIND diet was focused primarily on brain health, but it may also benefit heart health, diabetes and certain cancers because it includes parts of the Mediterranean and DASH diets, which have been proven to lower the risk of these diseases.

Although the diet plan specifies daily and weekly amounts of foods that you can include or limit, it does not restrict the diet to eating only these foods.

Always make sure to include exercise to increase the oxygen to your brain and eat portions of food that are reasonable. Also speak to your doctor before starting any new diet to get his/her feedback.

I recommend that you investigate MIND-healthy recipes online. Research studies show that this diet does have the ability of slowing cognitive decline, or possibly preventing it altogether.

*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@QP-Cypress.com or call (559) 737-7443.*

**The deadline for the March/April issue is Wednesday, February 15, 2023**

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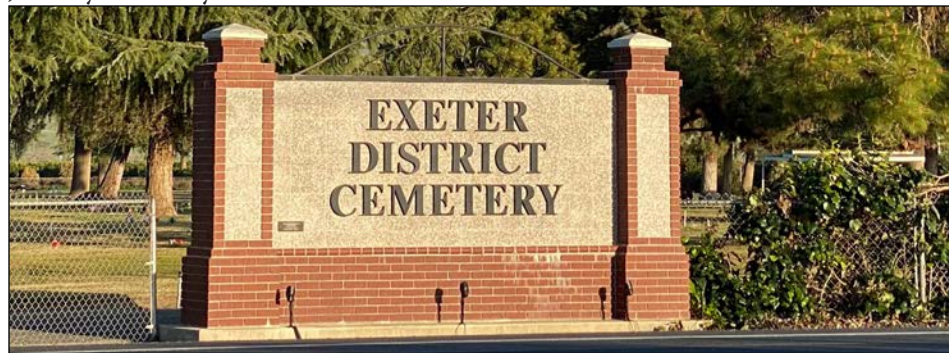
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The Exeter Public Cemetery District will have to seek different funding sources following two failed parcel tax ballot measures.

### Exeter Cemetery District Considers Options After Second Ballot Defeat

Measure U was the Exeter Public Cemetery District's parcel tax measure and plea for help to the community that appeared on the local ballot in both June and November.

It was placed on the ballot because for many years the district's revenues have not kept pace with its expenses, even after staffing and other expenses were severely cut.

Unfortunately for the district, Measure U failed in both elections. So what now?

The board of directors is currently considering alternative sources of revenue. The district's main source of revenue is from the sale of burial plots at its three cemeteries.

The projects that must be completed in order to have plots available for sale include getting water to the Deep Creek location and completing the infrastructure to open up the last section of land at the

Exeter cemetery.

After the expenses of the elections, connecting water at Deep Creek, and improvements at Exeter, the district will be back in the same financial position it was in prior to 2020. Without additional revenues, the district will continue to operate at a deficit and is projected to run out of money in approximately seven years.

At that point, the district will have to apply to the courts to be allowed to use money in its endowment trust fund to temporarily sustain the cemeteries. If the courts do not allow the use of the endowment fund, the district may be taken over by another surrounding district (assuming another district would be willing and financially able to do so). If another surrounding district does not take over, the district will have to look to donations, inherited funds, and continued plot sales.

## Local Kidney Patient Advocate Maria Grijalva to be Honored

Kidney patient advocate Maria Elena Grijalva has been fighting for people who are at the greatest risk of kidney disease ever since she received a kidney transplant 36 years ago.

The Tulare resident's efforts will be honored by the National Kidney Foundation (NKF) at the 2023 Spring Clinical Meetings in Austin, TX. She will receive the Celeste Castillo Lee Patient Engagement Award, which was established to honor the longtime advocate for patient-centered care and empowerment.

"I first met Maria at the 2020 Congressional Briefing and was impressed by her dedication to raise awareness of kidney disease in her community, particularly in individuals of Native American and Hispanic backgrounds," said NKF President Sylvia Rosas, MD, MSCE. "She gives so much to others with kidney disease."

More than three decades ago, Maria knew nothing about kidney disease, but then her kidneys failed, and she needed a transplant. Her brother, John Arriola, successfully donated one of his kidneys. Today, they work together to help others.

Maria devotes her efforts to educating Native American people and farmworkers in the agricultural communities in Cal-



Kidney patient advocate Maria Elena Grijalva with her brother and kidney donor, John Arriola.

ifornia and raising awareness among high-risk populations about kidney health and kidney disease.

"It is an incredible gift to receive a transplant and it has given me the power to educate others about prevention, understanding their kidney disease, and to advocate for themselves with their healthcare team," said Maria.

The National Kidney Foundation (NKF) is the largest organization dedicated to the awareness, prevention, and treatment of kidney disease in the U.S. For more information about NKF, visit [www.kidney.org](http://www.kidney.org).

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# Helpful Garden Tips for January and February

Happy New Year!

Hopefully, January is a month of continuing snow, rain, fog and misty mornings. Although plant growth slows down in the cold soils of winter, some growth continues, often only underground. Our winter and early-spring blooming shrubs, bulbs and perennials love all this frosty damp weather. And whatever moisture is not used can be stored deep in the soil for later use.

### Planting

Although we can plant year-round, we usually delay most planting until the (relatively) warmer days of mid to late February. The exception is bare root planting. Here are some tips:

- Bare root fruit trees are now available. Check their pollination requirements; not all fruit trees are self-fertile, and some will require a cross pollinator.
- Bare root roses - Hybrid teas, floribundas, climbers, miniatures and shrubs are available.
- Bare root berries and grapes - Plant grape vines, cane boysenberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.

You can also plant beets, carrots, leek, lettuce, onion, parsley, radish, seed potatoes, onions, peas, radish, spinach, artichokes and asparagus directly in the garden this month.

### Maintaining

We have less to do in Jan-

uary, but there are a couple of chores that are perfect to do this month. One of them is spraying roses, deciduous flowering trees and deciduous fruit trees with winter horticultural oil to smother overwintering insects like spider mites, scales, mealy bugs and peach twig borers. Spray the branches, crotches, trunk and the ground beneath the tree's drip line. Hold off spraying if rain is forecast, or if the temperature is below 45 degrees.

Never spray oil on walnut trees. If you didn't spray your peach or nectarine tree for peach leaf curl in November or December, spray now with a copper-based or a synthetic fungicide. You don't have to apply horticultural oil if you are lucky enough not to have these specific pests.

The other main chore of January is pruning deciduous trees, shrubs and roses. Remove all broken, diseased or crossing branches first. Two basic cutting techniques are used in general pruning: thinning and heading. Thinning cuts remove entire branches, resulting in a more natural look. Thinning cuts are also used to allow more air circulation and light into the interior of the tree.

Heading cuts shorten branches and should only be used on small branches. Use heading cuts judiciously to shorten over-long branches. You can take off about a quarter of the previous season's growth on these newer smaller branches if you want to keep the tree smaller. Make sure to cut back to an outward facing bud to direct new growth away from the interior of the tree. You want to end up with a tree that looks balanced and well-structured.

Apply pre-emergent herbicide for warm season weeds. Read and follow the package directions carefully. If you don't choose to use chemical weed control, lightly till your young seedling weeds frequently.



Floribunda

Monitor or turn off your irrigation controller if you haven't already. You will want to deep water if we have an extended dry period, but don't waste water - and all the resources it takes for the water to get to the sprinkler or drip emitter - if we don't need it.

### Conserving

Instead of sending leaves off your property, shred them and use them as mulch. A "new" trend is something called "regenerative landscaping," which is what many of us have been doing for years: choosing methods that improve soil, plant and planet health for the generations to come.

In all types and sizes of gardens, we can use "least toxic first" pest control methods, tolerate a little wildness in parts of the garden, grow some plants just for the birds, pollinators, lizards, toads or even small mammals, and tolerate some damage in order to keep the chain of life healthy.

This year, I will continue to garden with a spirit of partnership with the plants, helping them as needed, but also allowing them to develop relationships with the rest of the garden's life.

### Questions?

The Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardeners will be available to answer your

questions:

Jan. 18, 8-10 a.m. - Public Rose Pruning Day with the Master Gardeners at the Tulare County Courthouse, Visalia;

Jan. 14 - Rose Pruning Workshop, Woodlake Botanical Garden - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and

Jan. 21 - Rose Pruning Workshop, Ralph Moore Garden, Visalia - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### Call Us

Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11:30 a.m.;

Kings County: (559) 852-2736, Thursday only, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Visit our website for past articles, UC gardening information, or email us with your questions: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC\\_Master\\_Gardeners/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/)

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Grapes

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# Ground Observer Corps - Looking Skyward for America

Dusting Off History  
with Terry Ommen



World War II brought out love of country in so many ways in America. Thousands of young men and women joined the armed forces and, on the home front, many civilians made countless patriotic contributions like buying war bonds and collecting valuable commodities like scrap iron. Intense patriotism was everywhere including Tulare County.

Many of Tulare County's home front efforts are well known, but there was one that is frequently overlooked – the work of the Ground Observer Corps (G.O.C.).

After the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 by the forces of the Japanese military, one of their generals was heard declaring that cities on the American mainland would someday be bombed. Those words, and other warnings like them, were taken to heart by U.S. civil defense leaders, and the U.S. Army Air Forces Aircraft Warning Service was created, and from it the Ground Observer Corps was born.

The United States knew that with long Pacific and Atlantic coastlines, the country was vulnerable to attack. The expansive coastlines could be patrolled by fighter aircraft, but to do so would be expensive and take away the valuable weapon from the "fighting front." So the Ground Observer Corps became a big part of protecting the country.

During the war, some 14,000 observation posts were created, staffed by about 1.5 million volunteer spotters. Their job was to watch and listen for enemy aircraft 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When an observer, oftentimes using binoculars, spotted suspicious aircraft, he or she would note features of the plane, any unique engine noise and its direction of travel, and would immediately report the information using a telephone assigned to the post. The observers never knew who they were calling.

Once the call was made, another volunteer receiving the call at the "filter center" took the information and forwarded it to a specialist who would assess the information, and determine whether the plane was enemy or friendly.

Tulare County had observation posts, even though the county was inland and not on

the coast. It was understood that the county observation posts were established as a precaution in case enemy aircraft slipped past coastal observers. The fear was that should enemy aircraft slip into California interior, enemy aircraft could fly down the San Joaquin Valley unimpeded and bomb important military facilities in Los Angeles.

Mrs. Ruby Fife, living in rural Visalia was one of the observers, probably at the McKellar farm location, and wrote in her journal, "Each community had a volunteer group that manned the towers day and night. I volunteered four hours once a week, taking my four-year-old son with me. We watched the sky and if a plane came in view, we got as much information as possible and rushed to the telephone and reported the direction of flight and the make of the plane if we could identify. We had pictures of the different makes of planes posted near the telephone. In our training session, we learned to identify the trainer planes from Sequoia Field as they were not to be reported." She added, "There was no trouble getting volunteers to keep watch day and night, regardless of weather."

Bob McKellar, owner of Historic Seven Sycamores Ranch in Ivanhoe, was proud of his family's role in the observer program. A wooden tower was built on his property in 1941 and stayed in operation for two years. He remembers in it was a "crank phone" that was used for reporting. The tower stood for a time after the



A World War II Ground Observer Corps poster

war, but McKellar replaced the original tower and built an exact replica of it near the same location. He liked the old tower because of what it represented. For him, it serves as a memorial. Today, to commemorate its importance, he has a plaque mounted.

Today, almost all of the thousands of observation posts have disappeared throughout the country. It is very possible that the McKellar's rebuilt replica tower is the only example remaining in Tulare County, and maybe even in the country.

Just how many observation posts existed in Tulare County during the war is not known, but I would guess there were several. Annie R. Mitchell, well-known Tulare County historian, shared with me that she volunteered for a time as an observer in an observation tower at Recreation Park in Visalia.

**Terry Ommen will be the keynote speaker at this year's Heart of Seniors event.**

*(See article on page 1.)*



Photo on the left is the replica observation tower at the Historic Seven Sycamores Ranch as it stands today. [Photo courtesy Bob McKellar] On the right is the original tower used during World War II. In the tower, left to right, are Bob McKellar, his mother Vernice, Mattie Bly, and Noreen McKellar. [Photo courtesy Ruby Fife]

# Romance Scammers...

(continued from page 1)

in your profile that they can build a story on - your kids, grandkids, marriage, divorce, lost loved one, etc. - and work their way into your life, she explained.

"They will hunt you down," she added.

Fortunately, scammers are usually not patient people.

"They don't have time to mess around," she said. "If they feel people aren't worth their time, they'll just move on."

Unfortunately, scammers reach out to a lot of people online.

"They try to friend as many people as they can because a percentage will fall for it," said Waters. "They shoot out friend requests by the hundreds of thousands."

Scammers will even build fake websites.

"They'll do anything to make their victims believe they are who they say they are," said Waters.

## Military Scams

Scammers often target those who serve in the military, stealing their photos and identity.

One such victim was Colonel Bryan Denny (Ret.), whose identity and photos were used online to scam unsuspecting women, including someone close to Waters.

"My mom's friend was a victim," said Waters. "She was not dumb or uneducated."

The woman showed Waters a photo supposedly of a man



Colonel Bryan Denny (Ret.) and Kathy Waters, co-founders of Advocating Against Romance Scammers in Washington, DC, to educate government officials about the problem of romance scams.

she met online. He called himself Ross Newton, but the photo was of Col. Denny.

Waters approached Denny and they started working to spread awareness about the dangers of online romance scams. They formed Advocating Against Romance Scammers (AARS), and through the organization have educated internet users, congressional departments and other government agencies such as the

Federal Trade Commission, the Pentagon and the Federal Bureau of Investigation about the dangers and consequences of romance fraud.

Waters and Denny published reports on online safety that led to meetings with those involved with policy, technology and security at Facebook.

Even after all their efforts, Denny is still a victim of scammers.

"He retired about six years ago but he's contacted nearly every day from victims," said Waters. "His wife is contacted also."

One Czech woman told Denny's wife that her husband

said he wanted a divorce because she (his wife) was spending all his money.

"They write her very angry emails," said Waters.

Waters also warned about "celebrity scams," where somebody will pretend to be a celebrity approaching a fan on their website. The scammer will then build a relationship with the fan, eventually trying to convince the loyal fan that their money is locked up or they can't access their money because they are out of the country.

Despite the recent problems in the cryptocurrency market, scammers still use crypto a lot, according to Waters, "because you can't trace where it came from."

## Pig Butchering

The AARS website warns against a scam called "pig butchering," where a victim is befriended online and "fattened up" with words and promises. After gaining the victim's trust, the scammer is asked to make an investment, such as in cryptocurrency from a fake company.

The result is that the scammer "slaughters" the victim's emotions and bank account.

"We all want that happy ending," she said. "We all want to believe. Unfortunately, the internet isn't safe anymore and that's too bad," she said. "You cannot trust the person behind the screen."

Waters advises people looking for a relationship to find in-person dating groups instead.

For more information about Advocating Against Romance Scammers, visit <https://advocatingforu.com>.

## New Year, New Fitness Routines for Older Adults

Gyms tend to be full the first week of January as people set out on their fitness-related New Year's resolutions. By the end of the month, however, the crowds have usually thinned.

For older adults, the new year is as good a time as any to make progress on health and fitness - but how do you keep it going for the long-term?

Here are a few steps you can take to help ensure that your New Year's resolutions stick:

### Consult a Doctor

Before embarking on any new fitness regimen, check with your doctor to get a sense of what your body can and can't handle. Attempting activities that aren't right for you can lead to frustration or even injuries that will only cause you to stop.

### Start Small

Many people start the year with a goal of completing a marathon. But before running 26 miles, they have to be able to run one. Think of your goals the same way: you can't improve all at once, it's a long process. So set smaller, incremental goals and gradually work your

way up. By accomplishing smaller goals, it will keep you motivated to continue.

### Make Fitness a Habit

Starting a new fitness routine can be a mental challenge as much as a physical one. You need to be intentional about making it a regular part of your week. That might mean setting alerts on your phone to remind you to work out, or establishing consistent days and times during the week when you take part.

### Use the Buddy System

A great way to help achieve your goals is to start a fitness program with a friend or loved one. Not only does it help build accountability, but it has the added benefit of doing your workout in a more fun, social way. Who doesn't want to go for a brisk walk with a good friend?

*This article was provided by Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia, which offers fitness programming. For more information, visit [prestigecare.com/Visalia](https://prestigecare.com/Visalia) or call (559) 735-0828.*

## Current Influenza Season...

(continued from page 2)

been affecting older adults."

Dr. Haught advises seniors to get flu vaccines.

"Vaccines are a first line of protection," she said. "It is important for seniors to be vaccinated against COVID with the primary series and a bivalent booster. The bivalent booster is important to protect against the variants circulating currently."

"The flu vaccine is also very important, and seniors should receive a high dose vaccine. There are quadrivalent inactivated high dose vaccines, adjuvanted vaccine and a recombinant vaccine for seniors over 65. If a high dose vaccine is not available, then a standard vaccine can be received. It is not too late to get a flu vaccine. Pneumococcal vaccine is also very important for seniors. The pneumococcal vaccine will help protect from bacterial complications of influenza."

She also advises using a well-fitting face mask when in indoor spaces, and staying home

if you are ill and avoiding being around people who report being ill. If you are scheduled to have a meeting with someone who is ill, make alternate arrangements.

"If you have symptoms of flu, which include fever, headache, sore throat, cough, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, or nausea or vomiting, contact your health care provider for guidance," said Dr. Haught. "Anyone with these symptoms should be tested for both COVID and influenza."

"There are effective treatments available for both COVID and for influenza, but they are different medications," she added. "If you cannot be tested at your health care provider's office, you can test with a home test for COVID. These are available at pharmacies and covered by insurance."

If you have a positive test for COVID, you can seek treatment through free telehealth visits at Sesame Care. Call 833-686-5051 or schedule online at <https://sesamecare.com/covidca>.