

IN THIS ISSUE: "Thelma," Tipton Lindsey, Thrive Pavilion, March Gardening Tips and "Our (Almost Completely True) Love Story"



# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume X, Number 6 • March/April 2024



Landlines may be phased out soon.

## Landline Phone Service May Be Discontinued

In February, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) held three in-person public forums to get customer input about AT&T's pending application to discontinue landline phone service.

The forums were held in Clovis, Ukiah and Indio.

Online forums are scheduled at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m on Tuesday March 19. The webcasts can be seen at [www.admcinmonitor.com/ca/cpuc](http://www.admcinmonitor.com/ca/cpuc) and accessed using the "LOGIN" link and the passcode 6032788#.

AT&T is a "Carrier of Last Resort" (COLR) and required to provide "Plain Old Telephone Service," also known as POTS or landline phone service, upon request to all residential and business customers. POTS has a set of minimum service standards and regulations that do not extend to new technologies that provide similar service, such as wireline Voice Over IP.

While it is not unusual for one company to replace another as a COLR, AT&T is requesting permission to abandon its COLR obligation without finding a replacement.

If approved by the CPUC, more than 580,000 AT&T customers would be left with fewer options in terms of choice, quality and affordability. Alternative services, such as VoIP and wireless, have no obligation to serve customers or to provide equivalent services to AT&T landline customers, including no obligation to provide reliable access to 9-1-1 or LifeLine program discounts.

Locations in Kings County that would be affected include:

(continued on page 8)

## Visalia Senior Games to be Held through Spring

"We will be spreading out the Visalia Senior Games events throughout spring to allow both our partners and our department the freedom to assess what events are happening in the community and eliminate double booking of events and other tournaments or competitions," said Holly Ellis, recreation supervisor for the City of Visalia Parks & Recreation Department.

"With this new model, the weekend that works best for each sport will be when the event will be hosted," she added.

The 2024 Visalia Senior Games schedule includes:

- Archery on Sunday, March 17;
- Disc Golf on Saturday, March 23;
- Track and Field events on Sunday, March 24;
- Swimming on Sunday, April 7;
- Pickleball on the weekend of May 4-5;
- Table Tennis on Saturday,



Senior Games track and field events will be held on Saturday, April 6.

May 18; and

- Cornhole on Saturday, May 25.

A detailed schedule with registration information is at [www.liveandplayvisalia.com](http://www.liveandplayvisalia.com). (Click on "Recreation Special Events" on the left tab and select the Visalia Senior Games link at the top of the page.)

Registration for the competitions can also be done in person Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the

Anthony Community Center, 345 N. Jacob St., Visalia.

If someone wants to participate in the Senior Games but not as an athlete, they can call (559) 713-4365 and their name will be placed on a volunteer list.

Businesses, organizations or individuals who would like to help sponsor the games should call (559) 713-4365 or email [recreation@visalia.city](mailto:recreation@visalia.city) for more information.

## AgeTech Introduces New Products for Seniors

This year at CES 2024 - the annual Consumer Electronics Show held in Las Vegas - the AgeTech Collaborative from AARP showcased Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in healthcare and personalized care.

The AgeTech Collaborative from AARP presented cutting-edge technology products, services and experiences across industries, including AI and robotics. Innovations on display provide tools and technology to bring meaningful change and help solve the challenges of aging.

"Investing in AgeTech isn't just smart - it's crucial," said AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins. "As global economies evolve with aging demographics, technology becomes our ally in overcoming challenges."

According to the AARP 2024 Tech Trends survey, 69% of adults 50 and older made at least one technology purchase in the last year.



The 2024 Consumer Electronics Show was held in Las Vegas.

"AARP is harnessing its knowledge to propel AgeTech forward, fostering collaborations across diverse sectors," Jenkins added. "By driving innovation, we're shaping the future of AgeTech and advancing the collective effort to redefine aging through technology."

### New Products for Seniors

More than 130 startups introduced their new products,

including:

**Artifacts** is a patent-pending mobile and web-based platform that lets you preserve memories, share stories and build legacy, one object at a time. It's easy to use, and fully exportable to insurance and estate plans.

**De Oro Devices** makes NexStride, a mobility aid to (continued on page 4)



Loeva Kirby, a resident of Sierra Hills in Porterville, proudly shows off her ensemble at the fashion show at the Heart of Seniors.

## Heart of Seniors Again Fills Visalia Wyndham Ballroom

The Heart of Seniors expo, luncheon and fashion show was held at the Visalia Wyndham Hotel on February 15, and once again tickets and vendor spaces were sold out in advance.

The program, which included a showcase of the latest in fashion for the mature woman, featured keynote speaker Cynthia B. Johnson, professor of communication and division chair of language and communication studies at COS.

Her interactive presentation, "Strengthening the Mind," focused on the cognitive approach

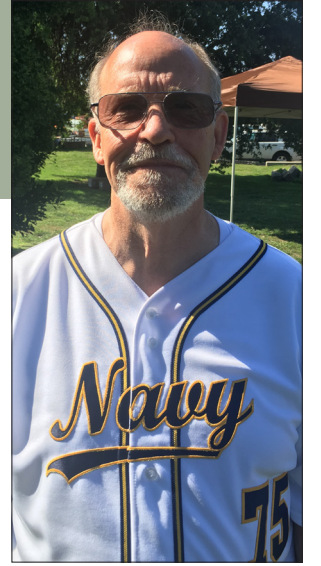
of how to facilitate more internal power.

"Valentine's Day just would not be the same without the Heart of Seniors event," said Staci Correia, treasurer of the event. "It has become a tradition for all of us.

"The fact that we can bring all of these community services together under one roof and share how they can help our local seniors is just amazing, and to hear first hand from our seniors how much they enjoy coming every year is worth all the time and effort."

### VETERANS CORNER

## NSC Pension Benefit



Ken Cruickshank

The Non-Service-Connected Disability Pension (NSC) is the Veterans Administration (VA) benefits program for wartime veterans with limited income. The amount payable depends on other income sources the veteran and their family members currently receive. The amount of household income to calculate eligibility may be reduced by some unreimbursed medical expenses.

The current amount for a single veteran is \$1,379 per month. This can change depending on family size and disability status, The Veterans Administration (VA) takes most household income into consideration when determining the amount of benefit that can be provided.

For example, if the VA assesses household income, consider the following scenario: If a veteran is receiving \$800 monthly from Social Security, then the most that can be paid from the VA is \$579 dollars, bringing income to the baseline level of \$1,379 per month. There are exceptions to what the VA counts as household income; however, due to its complexity, this is a topic better addressed on an individual basis. Please contact our office (559) 713-2880 if you have a question about countable income.

To qualify for the NSC Pension benefit, the veteran must have been discharged from service under other than dishonorable conditions, must have served on active duty for at least 90 days, of which at least one day occurred during a wartime period - but the veteran need not have served in a war zone.

It is different for veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980. In that case, the requirement is generally to have served for at least 24 months or for the full period for which they were called to active duty.

A veteran under this clause might be a Reservist or National Guard member activated to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan. (The various dates of wartime periods are available in our office; you may contact us for the specifics.) The veteran must also be permanently and totally disabled or over the age of 65.

Where a veteran is eligible to receive benefits for both service-connected disabilities and the NSC Pension program, the VA is only authorized to pay the veteran one benefit. The VA will pay the veteran whichever benefit is highest.

As always, feel free to contact our office at (559) 713-2880 if you have questions about the NSC Pension benefit or any other benefits. We can assist you in determining your eligibility and submitting your application.

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 [kcruciks@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:kcruciks@tularecounty.ca.gov).

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# How to Avoid Being Tricked by a Familiar Voice

You may have heard about older adults being tricked into sending money to someone they think is a grandchild or other relative in trouble and thought to yourself, "How could anyone fall for that?"

But the truth is, today's advanced technology makes it easier than ever for scammers to trick their unsuspecting and well-meaning victims.

To protect yourself, it pays to understand how fraudsters work, what red flags to look for, and how to trust your instincts so you don't end up on the losing end of one of these vicious scams.

### How Grandparent Scams Work

Scammers prey on kind-hearted victims by convincing people their grandchild or other relative has had an accident or is in some kind of legal or financial trouble. The scammers then plead for money to get them out of the "jam."

For years, criminals have been able to gather facts and personal information from people's social media accounts to contact their older relatives. Once the criminals contact older relatives via text, email or phone, the criminals can sound very convincingly like a relative in dire trouble.

#### The AI Twist

Because of advances in artificial intelligence (AI), criminals



can now make their pleas for cash sound even more convincing when calling on the phone. According to the Federal Trade Commission, these scammers use AI voice cloning software to mimic your relative's voice by pulling the audio from their social media videos.

Unfortunately, scammers often couple this tactic with a "spoofed" phone number that shows up on your caller ID with your relative's name, so it looks like it's really them calling you.

#### How to Spot Red Flags

Fortunately, there are ways to prevent criminals from stealing from you. The United States Postal Inspection Service rec-

ommends a few simple steps to avoid being taken by this extremely vicious scam.

Watch out for these red flags:

**Late-night calls** - Scammers often call victims in the middle of the night, hoping to catch you when you're not fully awake and less likely to think clearly. If that happens to you, tell them you'll call them right back. You can then take the time to fully wake up, gather your wits and contact your grandchild or relative via the method you usually use to talk to them. Do not return the call you just received.

**Urgent pleas for money** - Be suspicious of any phone calls,

including requests for money, even if it sounds like someone you know. Scammers use fear to get you worried about your loved one, so you won't take the time to think things through. If someone asks for money right away, hang up. Contact your loved one the way you usually contact them, and/or check with other trusted family members first.

**Requests for odd methods of payment** - If you're asked to send money using methods like a mobile payment app, mailing cash, wiring money, sending gift cards or money orders, or other unusual payment methods, hang up. Once money is sent using these methods, there's no way to get it back. If you are asked to meet somewhere so you can give them cash in person, hang up and report the incident to law enforcement.

If you've been affected by crime that involves the United States Postal Service, contact the United States Postal Inspection Service at 877-876-2455 or report it online at [www.USPIS.gov/report](http://www.USPIS.gov/report).

If you think you've been targeted by a grandparent scam, report it to the Federal Trade Commission at 888-225-5322, or visit [www.ConsumerComplaints.FCC.gov](http://www.ConsumerComplaints.FCC.gov).

Learn more about elder fraud at [www.USPIS.gov](http://www.USPIS.gov).

## Life is Full of Challenges for Older Adults

**Valley Caregiver Resource Center has the tools to take care of your loved ones and help you take better care of yourself.**

Help for families caring for loved ones impaired by chronic ailments such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury or stroke. Caring for older adults can be difficult, especially if you're doing it alone.

Valley Caregiver Resource Center offers:

- Education Classes
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Grant funding provided by private donations and the Kings Tulare County Area Agency on Aging.



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# AgeTech at CES...

(continued from page 1)

keep people walking safely, retaining independence and confidence. NexStride uses research-backed sensory cues in a small portable device that attaches to any cane, walker or walking pole to prevent falls and improve mobility.



Intuition Robotics' ElliQ helps seniors stay independent.

**Intuition Robotics** empowers older adults to live happier, healthier and more independent lives. Its product ElliQ is a care companion robot to enable independence, promote healthy living and enhance social connectedness.

**Lotus'** wearable ring controls objects at home by pointing. Unlike Alexa - no apps, no rewiring, no internet needed.

**LUCID Therapeutics** develops digital therapeutics for mental health and wellness using AI-driven music therapy. Their new product Resonance Rx uses personalized music to

reduce anxiety and agitation for aging populations.

**MindMics** develops next generation health monitoring software using sound-based tech through earbuds. By repurposing existing microphones, the platform accurately monitors health.

**Prisidio** offers a digital vault to capture and securely share your most important information with the key people in your life. The company's mission is to provide people with peace of mind knowing that they're prepared for whatever life brings their way - both the expected (like a move) and the unexpected (like a hurricane or illness).



Proto Hologram is the world's first holographic communications program.

**Proto Hologram** offers the first-ever holographic and spatial computing platform, infused with cutting-edge AI capabilities to revolutionize interactive content.

**RAZ Mobility** develops and sells assistive technology, including the RAZ Memory Cell Phone, a mobile device designed for seniors with cognitive decline.

**Sana Health Inc.** offers anxiety relief on demand with its audio visual neuromodulation wearable.

**Tembo Health** makes health-care effortless for patients with complex chronic conditions, providing passive remote patient monitoring, care management and coordination, and 24/7 virtual emergency care.

**Tuned** improves people's hearing quality by combining advanced AI and a smart hearing aid to create an easy-to-use and affordable hearing care solution for an automated and personalized hearing care experience.

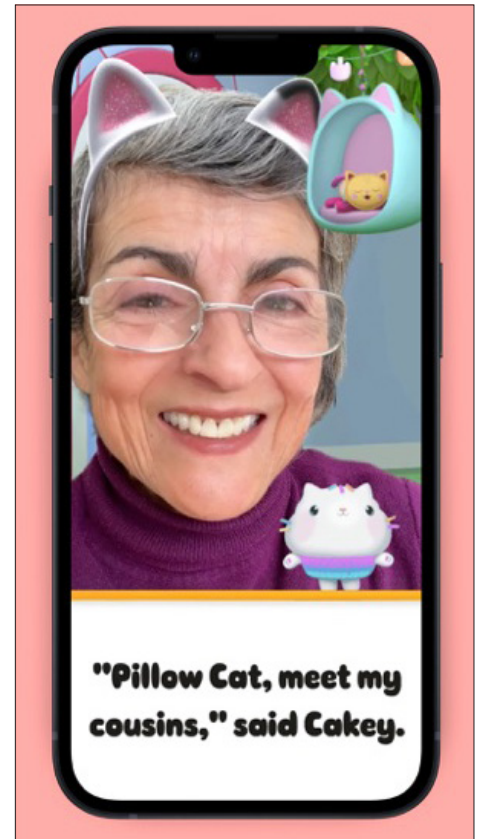
**Voiceitt** has built speech recognition technology for non-standard speech, enabling people with speech disabilities to communicate and be understood by voice, and to access and interact with mainstream voice AI technologies.

**Wesper** delivers a powerful sleep management platform built to address sleep conditions from testing through ongoing care.

**WheelPad L3C** respectfully and supportively provides transitional housing for veterans, those who have experienced a spinal cord injury, those with debilitating illnesses such as ALS or MS, those who want to age in place, and others newly needing accessible living accommodations in a socially conscious and environmentally friendly way.

**Xander** is a company of audio experts creating products that help people with hearing loss better understand sounds and speech. They leverage the sense of sight to augment sound and bring people together.

**XRHealth** virtual clinics empower patients to receive care anytime and anywhere, provided by their licensed therapists using XR technology. For providers, XRHealth integrates immersive VR/AR technology with advanced data analytics on one platform, providing a comprehensive care solution for your patients.



Zoog enables grandparents to live up their story readings.

**Zoog** improves family communication through visual communications that allow grandparents to connect with their children and grandchildren in meaningful and engaging ways. Zoog uses cutting-edge technology and advanced animation to bring a storyteller's creations to life with just a click of a button, making the experience approachable, entertaining, educational and accessible to all.

**Freestyle+** works to bring mental fitness to the world through active mindfulness approaches based in improvisation and musicality.

Additionally, 10 AgeTech Collaborative startups were featured in the Samsung Health House. A description of the house and the startup solutions featured in it are online at: <http://rb.gy/tzdt55>.

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# Breakthrough in Treating Alzheimer's Using Targeted Drug Delivery

A potential advancement in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease was announced earlier this year by researchers at the West Virginia University Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute (RNI). A first in-human study, featured in the latest issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, demonstrates that focused ultrasound in combination with anti-amyloid-beta monoclonal antibody treatment can accelerate the clearance of amyloid-beta plaques in the brains of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Anti-amyloid-beta monoclonal antibody therapies, such as aducanumab, lecanemab and donanemab, can reduce amyloid-beta plaques and slow the progression of Alzheimer's. Until now, these promising antibody therapies had limitations in reaching the brain due to the blood-brain barrier (BBB), a protective barrier between blood vessels and the brain that blocks harmful substances from getting into the brain, but also limits the access of therapeutics. More than 98% of drugs do not readily cross the BBB, thus requiring systemic treatments with higher doses and more frequent therapies.

RNI scientists used a focused ultrasound (FUS) system developed by Insightec to safely and temporarily open the BBB to allow the anti-amyloid-beta



Alzheimer's patient undergoes focused ultrasound treatment with the WVU RNI team. (Photo courtesy of WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute)

ta antibodies increased access to targeted areas of the brain. The FUS MRI-guided treatment helmet holds more than 1,000 ultrasound transducers, which were directed to specific brain regions with high amyloid-beta plaques.

In this first-in-human proof-of-concept study, three patients (two male and one female, ages 59-77) with mild Alzheimer's disease received six standard monthly infusions of the aducanumab antibody, immediately followed by FUS-mediated BBB opening in regions with high amyloid-beta plaques. The re-

sults demonstrated the safety of this approach and increased reduction of amyloid-beta plaques measured by PET scans.

"After six months of antibody treatment, we observed an average of 32% more reduction in amyloid-beta plaques (53% centiloid) in brain areas with blood-brain barrier opening compared to areas with no such opening," said Ali Rezai, M.D., lead author of the study and executive chair of the RNI. "Focused ultrasound is a non-invasive outpatient procedure for BBB opening with great promise for improving drug delivery

to the brain.

"The next phase of the clinical trial will begin this year to explore how to further accelerate amyloid-beta removal in a shorter time with focused ultrasound in combination with lecanemab antibody," according to Dr. Rezai.

"This is an exciting time in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease," said Marc Haut, Ph.D., director of the RNI Memory Health Clinic. "We are hopeful that the work we are doing may lead to improvements in outcome for many other patients and their families coping with Alzheimer's."

The West Virginia University Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute is a comprehensive multidisciplinary patient care, education and research institute providing neurological and mental healthcare for 275,000 patients annually. The 250 physicians and scientists of the RNI improve lives by pioneering advances in neuroscience, brain health and therapeutics. The RNI team uses the latest technologies with academic, government and industry partners to make tangible progress to combat public health challenges ranging from addiction to Alzheimer's disease.

For more information about the WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute, visit [www.WVU-Medicine.org/RNI](http://www.WVU-Medicine.org/RNI).

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**Kaweah Health Urology has joined with Keck Medicine of USC.**

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affecting the urinary tract and reproductive organs. If you've ever suffered from one of these illnesses, you know they can be serious and require immediate attention. You'll also be glad to know that Kaweah Health has formed an alliance with Keck Medicine of USC.

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

# Credit for Caring Act Reintroduced into U.S. Senate

On January 31, U.S. Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.), Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, and Michael Bennet (D-Colo.), as well as U.S. Reps. Linda Sánchez (D-Calif.) and Mike Carey (R-Ohio), reintroduced the Credit for Caring Act.

The Credit for Caring Act is also cosponsored by U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.).

The bill would provide up to a \$5,000 federal tax credit for eligible and working family caregivers.

Capito and her colleagues announced the introduction of the legislation during a press conference. West Virginian and former caregiver Jay Montgomery "Monty" Brown also participated in the event.

"As someone who helped care for both of my parents as they battled Alzheimer's at the end of their lives, I understand the emotional and physical toll it can take on individuals and families," Senator Capito said.

"The Credit for Caring Act is a great tool to help to ease the financial burden caregivers face.

"I am proud to join with my colleagues today in reintroducing this bill," she continued. "By passing this bill, we can help caregivers focus more on their loved ones and less on how much it will cost them."

"Family caregivers play a critical role in the lives of their loved ones, often at a significant financial cost to themselves," said Senator Bennet. "They have to balance jobs and family responsibilities, and still make ends meet at the end of the



month. Congress should make things a little easier for them. Our bipartisan bill will help ease the financial burden that many caregivers face in Colorado and across the country, and I'm grateful for the support of my colleagues in both chambers of Congress."

"I'm grateful for this legislation that people can get on board with - not as partisan, but simply about goodness and taking care of people who need assistance, by people who love them and who will give their all for them - no matter how much it costs," said Brown, a former family caregiver to his wife, mother, mother-in-law and partner.

"Family caregivers are the backbone of our country's long-term care system, but they are overwhelmed, exhausted and financially strained," said Nancy LeaMond, executive vice president and chief advocacy & engagement officer of AARP. "Our caregivers desperately need support.

"That is why AARP is proud to work closely with Senators Bennet, Capito, Warren, Collins, Hassan and Murkowski and Representatives Carey and Sanchez for the introduction of the Credit for Caring Act," she added. "We urge Congress to pass this legislation in 2024 to help provide relief and put money back in the pockets of caregivers."

More than 48 million Americans are caregivers, including 250,000 in West Virginia. Caregivers provide approximately \$600 billion in unpaid care each year so that their parents, spouses, and other loved ones can continue to live independently.

The Credit for Caring Act would help cover the over \$7,200 that many families spend yearly on out-of-pocket caring costs, such as home care aides, adult day care, respite care, transportation and other supports.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Create up to a \$5,000 non-refundable tax credit adjusted to inflation for family caregivers; and
- Apply to incurred family caregiving expenses greater than \$2,000.



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# CSET Offers Free Tax Preparation Services in Tulare County

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) is currently providing free tax preparation services to residents of Tulare County. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program prepares federal and state tax returns at no cost to households with less than \$60,000 in annual income.

Each year, CSET helps thousands of residents in Tulare County file their income tax returns for free. Additionally, tax preparers can help residents claim federal/state earned income tax credits that may reduce the amount of tax owed or increase their tax refund.

### Earned Income Tax Credits

Tax credits can help lower the amount of tax you owe, and California offers an earned income tax credit (CalEITC) that could lead to a refund, even if you don't owe any tax.

For CalEITC, your income can be up to \$30,950, and the tax credit could be up to \$3,529. For Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC) and Foster Youth Tax Credit (FYTC), the income limit is \$30,931, and you could get up to \$1,117. Families earning less than \$63,398 might also qualify for the federal EITC, potentially providing up to \$12,076 in tax credits from CalEITC, YCTC and federal EITC.

To claim these credits, file a state tax return, and make sure



to file a federal return with the IRS for the federal EITC. The amount you get back depends on your income and family size. If your household earns less than \$30,000, you could be eligible for CalEITC up to \$3,529 for the 2023 tax year.

Immigrant workers with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and current/former foster youth may also qualify. The Young Child Tax Credit offers up to \$1,117 if you have a child under 6, and the Foster Youth Tax Credit gives the same if you were in California foster care at age 13 or older.

An online calculator helps estimate your refund. For a full list of state tax credits and

to learn more, visit [www.ftb.ca.gov/caleitc](http://www.ftb.ca.gov/caleitc).

### VITA Services and Locations

Tax documents can be dropped off at one of CSET's VITA locations (*a list of locations follows*). Taxes will be prepared on a first-come, first-served basis; no appointments are available. Tax preparers will connect with customers when their taxes are completed.

Customers will be informed about the filing process and contacted over the phone to review, schedule a pickup, and receive authorization to e-file. In-person tax preparation will vary, depending on volunteer availability.

Customers may download the required documents check-

list and intake forms at [www.cset.org/vita](http://www.cset.org/vita), or customers can retrieve a packet from a VITA location:

**Visalia:** CSET Main Office (312 NW 3rd Ave.) - in-person services on March 9 and 23, and April 6; or at Employment Connection (4025 W. Noble Ave., Suite B) - in-person and drop-off services Tuesdays through Fridays.

**Tulare:** Tulare Family Resource Center (304 E. Tulare Ave.) - drop-off services on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and in-person services on March 9 and 23, and April 6.

**Porterville:** Employment Connection (1063 W. Henderson Ave.) - drop-off services on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and in-person services on March 9 and 23, and April 6.

**Cutler:** Cutler Senior Center (12691 Ave. 408) - drop-off services on Tuesdays and Thursdays; and in-person services on March 9 and 23, and April 6.

**Earlimart:** Earlimart Family Resource Center (176 N. Front St.) - drop-off services on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Due to high call volumes, CSET will only answer questions about individual tax issues in person at tax sites. For more information on site locations and required documents, visit [www.cset.org/vita](http://www.cset.org/vita) or call (559) 741-4640.

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# Tulare County Museum Holds Grand Opening for Latest Addition



The new museum addition features restored ag equipment.



The equipment was meticulously restored by local schools.

The Tulare County Museum has announced the grand opening of its latest addition, a state-of-the-art building dedicated to showcasing agricultural equipment meticulously restored by local schools.

The restored equipment will be displayed along with additional agricultural equipment from the museum's collection to illuminate the processes of farming.

The Tulare County Museum is a county-based museum dedicated to preserving and celebrating the rich history that has shaped the community.

The museum held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb-

ruary 22 with community leaders, local government officials, and representatives of the Tulare County Museum and Tulare County Historical Society.

After a program, visitors were given tours of the new building.

The Tulare County Museum committee expressed its gratitude to the local schools, businesses and volunteers who helped make this project a reality.

The Tulare County Museum is located at 27000 S. Mooney Blvd. in Visalia. For more information, visit [tularecountymuseum.org](http://tularecountymuseum.org).

## Landline Phones...

(continued from page 1)

Armona, Avenal, Grangeville, Hanford, Hardwick, Home Garden, Kettleman City, Lemoore Station, Lemoore and Stratford.

Affected locations in Tulare County include: Allensworth, Camp Nelson, Cutler, Delft Colony, Dinuba, Earlimart, East Orosi, East Porterville, East Tulare Villa, El Monte Mobile Village, Farmersville, Goshen, Hypericum, Ivanhoe, Jovista, Linnell Camp, London, Matheny, Monson, Orosi, Patterson Tract, Pierpoint, Pixley, Poplar-Cotton

Center, Porterville, Richgrove, Rodriguez Camp, Sequoia Crest, Seville, Springville, Strathmore, Sultana, Terra Bella, Teviston, Three Rivers, Tipton and Traver.

Public comments may also be submitted at [public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov).

The Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) opposes AT&T's application and is a formal party to this proceeding.

For more information, visit <https://rb.gy/tzuq0b>.


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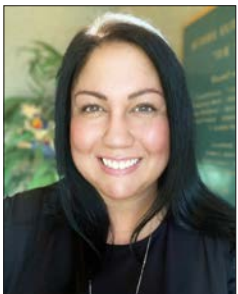
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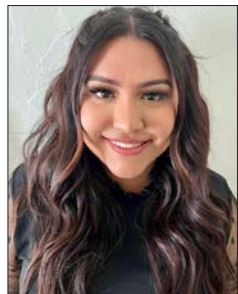
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Thrive Pavilion members from all over North America gather to offer their greetings.



A Thrive Pavilion member shows how her movements are mirrored by those of her avatar.

## Thrive Pavilion Brings Seniors Together in the Metaverse

By Steve Pastis

Thrive Pavilion, the first-of-its-kind metaverse-based community that encourages and supports socialization and human connection among older adults, was the subject of a January 17th online podcast presented by Pro-Aging Community and hosted by its founder, Steve Gurney.

The main speaker was Robert Signore, founder and president of Thrive Pavilion.

"The goal of Thrive Pavilion is to allow older adults who are isolated at home or who are caring for a spouse, who like to socialize with other adults but can't leave home, the opportunity to do in the virtual world what they can't do at home," said Signore.

The community has about 800 members, the majority being 60 to 70 years old, with a few in their 50s and some over 80.

Thrive Pavilion offers visitors games and events such as coffee hours, card games, mini-golf, bowling, Family Feud, Wheel of Fortune and a monthly birthday party. Future games will include mahjong, cribbage, puzzle games and escape rooms.

"We also have events that revolve around lifelong learning," added Signore. Presentations include a wide range of subjects, from artificial intelligence to diabetes to World War II codebreakers.

The Thrive Pavilion partners with other creators, especially for its immersive content (where the viewer engages with what they're seeing).

"We have creators that we partner with that do dice games or escape rooms or Family Feud," said Signore. "We also partner with several other creators and content providers. They provide a lot of intellectual content to us."

### How Thrive Pavilion Started

"The genesis of it was the work that I was doing in technology for senior living and what had happened in the pandemic," said Signore. "We're all certainly familiar with how people became very isolated in essentially having to stay in their apartments.

"They tried the things like Zoom calls and YouTube videos and the forms of technology that existed at the time to try and help people stay connected," he continued, adding that those technologies did not help the impacts of social isolation and loneliness during and after the pandemic.

"There are really a lot of older adults that live at home, that are not in communities and are isolated for various reasons, whether social circles are smaller, whether they may have physical limitations, transportation limitations, or who are caretakers for a spouse that might be immunocompromised or has dementia.

"So even as the pandemic was lifted, people at home were still socially isolated," he continued. "And that really was the genesis for my family to form this nonprofit organization called the Thrive Pavilion, really to see if we could experiment with these types of social virtual reality experiences in the metaverse where older adults from their home could come in and join other older adults in computer-simulated environments and participate in activities that are intellectual or social - and have some fun.

"We have lots of different activities at different times of the day. Lots of people from the U.S., from Canada and some people from the U.K. participate in the community."

"I had a Facebook friend a couple of years ago that got virtual reality and she kept posting on Facebook about going to different places and seeing things and traveling the world and going to different clubs and talking to people," explained 83-year-old Pat Parker about why she became a member. "It just sounded so fascinating that I discussed it with my husband, but we never did.

"And then a little over a year ago, my husband died and I said that I was going to get (a headset) to give myself something to do because I live alone, just me and my cat.

"So I got it on New Year's Eve and I put it on and started it up and discovered how to work

it, and that kept my mind off of things. At first, I just did some exercises and meditations, and did things alone. And then I decided to search on Facebook for (virtual reality for seniors) and Thrive Pavilion came up and I joined it. It was the best thing I ever did in my life. I think it saved my life actually. I was becoming really, really lonely.

"I made a million friends," Parker continued. "I made a couple of really close friends and we talk all the time off of the VR reality, we message. They're not close to me, so we can't visit in person, but it's just like you're with them.

"It's so hard to describe it to someone that's never done it, but it's real. It's not fake, it's not cartoony. These are real people talking to you where their real voices doing things with each other."

Members of Thrive Pavilion create an avatar, a character to represent them online. Members can also decide what to wear before they visit the site - even on a daily basis, something that Parker especially enjoys.

"My avatar has on a black hat and a necklace just like this," she said, "but there's a black hat on my avatar, and I don't own a black hat. I like to change my clothes. It's so much fun. I think mostly the women like that, but there's hundreds of outfits and shoes and pants and glasses and hats, and it's just fun to do."

### Membership Expenses

"There are no costs to participate or to become a member," said Signore, explaining that the website is funded by sponsors, including corporate sponsors who buy naming rights to one of the features on the website, as well as individuals who "purchase park benches for loved ones."

However, he added that anyone who participates needs to invest in a headset, which have costs starting at about \$250 at Best Buy or on Amazon.

"The best thing to do is go to our website, [www.ThrivePavilion.org](http://www.ThrivePavilion.org), or our Facebook group, which is also called Thrive Pavilion. It has our calendar up there so you can see

what we're doing every day," said Signore. "If you're an older adult, you can join us through your Meta Quest headset, whether it's a Quest Two, a Quest Three or Quest Pro."

### Questions

Signore responded to questions during his presentation, one from someone concerned about using a headset while wearing glasses.

"If you can use glasses, then you certainly can use the headset and make it as clear as possible," Signore responded, noting that his Quest Pro headset "actually fits over my glasses really well. So I can wear this with my glasses without a problem in this headset.

"But the other thing you can do is for a small extra cost - maybe \$30 - is you can buy prescription lenses," he added. "So you can put these lenses over the eyepiece here, and then you don't have to wear glasses."

Another question was about accommodating people with physical limitations.

"Obviously the technology may not work in every situation where somebody may have a physical limitation, and certainly vision is an important aspect of it right now, but we do not have any members now that suffer from significant low vision - but the technology is improving all the time," said Signore.

"You certainly, at this point, still need some ability to ambulate, particularly for motion to move your body or to turn around," he said. "That can be a limitation. If you can't use your arms or your hands, we probably would not be a good solution for you."



Each member creates an avatar to represent them online.

# Diets Rich in Plant Protein May Help Women Stay Healthy

By Annie Young  
Tufts University

Women who consume higher amounts of protein, especially protein from plant-based sources develop fewer chronic diseases and are more likely to be healthier overall as they age, according to a study led by researchers at the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) at Tufts University and published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Analyzing self-reported data from more than 48,000 women, the researchers saw notably less heart disease, cancer and diabetes, and cognitive and mental health decline, in those who included more protein in their diets, such as fruits, vegetables, bread, beans, legumes and pasta, compared to those who ate less.

"Consuming protein in mid-life was linked to promoting good health in older adulthood," said Andres Ardisson Korat, a scientist at the HNRCA and lead author of the study. "We also found that the source of protein matters. Getting the majority of your protein from plant sources at midlife, plus a small amount of animal protein seems to be conducive to good health and good survival to older ages."

Findings were derived from

the seminal Harvard-based Nurses' Health Study, which followed female health care professionals from 1984 to 2016. The women were between the ages of 38 and 59 in 1984, and deemed to be in good physical and mental health at the start of the study.

Ardisson Korat and fellow researchers, including senior author Qi Sun of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, examined thousands of surveys collected every four years from 1984 to 2016 on how frequently people ate certain foods to pinpoint dietary protein and its effects on healthy aging.

They calculated protein intake by multiplying the number of times each food item was consumed, by its protein content and then, using the Harvard University Food Composition Database, totaling the amount of protein across all food items.

The researchers then compared the diets of women who didn't develop 11 chronic diseases or lose a lot of physical function or mental health, with the diets of those who did. Women who ate more plant-based protein, which in 1984 was defined as protein obtained from bread, vegetables, fruits, pizza, cereal, baked items, mashed potatoes, nuts,

beans, peanut butter and pasta, were 46% more likely to be healthy into their later years. Those who consumed more animal protein such as beef, chicken, milk, fish/seafood, and cheese, however, were 6% less likely to stay healthy as they aged.

"Those who consumed greater amounts of animal protein tended to have more chronic disease and didn't manage to obtain the improved physical function that we normally associate with eating protein," said Ardisson Korat.

Animal protein was modestly tied with fewer physical limitations in older age, but plant protein had a stronger, more consistent correlation across all observed models, and was more closely linked with sound mental health later in life. For heart disease in particular, higher plant protein consumption came with lower levels of LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol), blood pressure and insulin sensitivity, while higher animal protein intake was tied to higher levels, along with increased insulin-like growth factor, which has been detected in multiple cancers.

Dairy protein alone (mainly milk, cheese, pizza, yogurt and ice cream) was not significantly associated with better health status in older adulthood.

The team acknowledged that the benefits of plant protein might derive from components in plant-based food, rather than the protein. Compared to animal foods, plants contain a higher proportion of dietary fiber, micronutrients and beneficial compounds called polyphenols that are present in plants, rather than exclusively protein.

Ardisson Korat also said data from other groups is needed, as the Nurses' Health Study surveyed primarily white females working in health care.

"The data from the study tended to be very homogeneous in terms of demographic and socioeconomic composition, so it will be valuable to follow up with a study in cohorts that are more diverse. It's a field that is still evolving," he said.

But the team's findings so far support the recommendation that women eat most of their protein in the form of fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, although they should also consume some fish and animal protein for their iron and vitamin B12 content.

"Dietary protein intake, especially plant protein, in mid-life plays an important role in the promotion of healthy aging and in maintaining positive health status at older ages," said Ardisson Korat.

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Members of the Rawhide Rustlers Senior Club



This Rawhide Rustlers Senior Club member is lucky at bingo.

# Rawhide Rustlers Senior Club to Continue in 2024

By John Gomez

The Visalia Rawhide will continue one of the more popular offerings at Valley Strong Ballpark for the 2024 season, the Rawhide Rustlers Senior Club.

The only exclusive senior club for baseball fans 55 and older, the Rawhide Rustlers Senior Club comes with perks to boost the fan experience. Club membership comes with one ticket to every Wednesday home game and a membership t-shirt, in addition to exclusive giveaways and activities throughout the season. It also includes bingo at every

Wednesday game.

Membership in the Rawhide Rustlers Club starts at \$30 and runs through the season.

The Rawhide Rustlers Seniors Club began in 2019 as a way to attract more of the senior community to the ballpark, by not only offering discounted tickets, but adding exclusive giveaways and activities.

"I love the great entertainment and it's such a bargain," said Fred Fifield, club member.

"First off is the friendly staff. That's really why we keep going, but I love baseball, I love my friends, and I want them to love (baseball) with me," said

club member Pam Evans.

"You get to see a lot of the same people and make numerous friendships from the Rustlers," said member Bret Rideout, who added, "Every Wednesday instead of the \$13 a seat, it's \$3 throughout the season. It's a cheaper seat for all the Wednesday home games."

The Visalia Rawhide Rustlers Club is sponsored by Parks Visalia and American Quality Life Hospice.

### Belle of the Ballpark

Not specifically a part of the Rustlers program, but a very popular event at the stadium is the "Belle of the Ballpark,"

a pageant that encourages ladies, ages 60 and over, to show off their talents in front of a crowd by participating in fun activities with their peers.

Women from the Tulare and Kings County area are nominated by local senior housing facilities to participate in this fun and unique event.

Geraldine Oliver, who was crowned the 2023 Belle of the Ballpark, will be defending her crown at the event, which will be held on May 8th at 6 p.m.

For more information, call Rawhide Ticket Operations Manager Dalila Palacios at (559) 732-4433, ext. 101.

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# CALENDAR

**Friday, March 1 - F1rst Friday**  
F1rst Friday in Downtown Visalia, in partnership with The Arts Consortium, will present a free community event with art, food and fun from 5-8 p.m. For more information, visit <https://artsconsortium.org/calendar>.

**March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - 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.

**March 1-2 - 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 information, call (559) 733-5352.

**March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays**

This weekly event is held at the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building, 609 W. Center St., Visalia. Doors open at 11:15 a.m. For more info, call (559) 651-6714.

**March 6, 13, 20, 27 - 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.

**Wednesday, March 13 - Valley Renal Support Group**

The only kidney support group in four counties will meet at Evolution's Gym, 1425 E. Prosperity Ave. in Tulare, from 6:30-8 p.m. The meeting will also be on Zoom. For more info, email Jennifer at [meow.2000@yahoo.com](mailto:meow.2000@yahoo.com).

**Thursday, March 7 - Vintage Mourning Apparel**

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. show n' tell program on vintage mourning apparel by Dallas Pattee. Refreshments will follow. The free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more information, call (559) 685-4518.

**Saturday, March 9 - Walk with a Doc**

This informational walk and talk sponsored by Kaweah Health and held at the Visalia Mall, begins with registration at 8 a.m., followed by a warm-up at 8:15 a.m., and "Talk with a Doc" at 8:30 a.m. The topic this month is "ReThink Your Drink." For more info, call (559) 624-2416.

**March 9-10 - Rusty Roots Show**

This event, featuring arts and crafts, clothes, antiques, jewelry, furniture and more on sale, will be held from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

on Sunday, at the Tulare County Fairgrounds, 620 S. K St., Tulare. For tickets or more information, visit [www.rustyrootsshow.com](http://www.rustyrootsshow.com).

**Friday, March 15 - St. Patrick's Day Luncheon**

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. The cost for Visalia residents 55+ is \$6. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

**Saturday, March 16 - Downtown Visalia St. Patrick's Day Parade**

This annual event will begin at 10 a.m. and run along Main Street, from Church Street to Willow Street.

**Saturday, March 16 - Irish Fest in the Park**

Visalia Breakfast Lions will host this event from 1-5 p.m. at Visalia Recreation Park. Tickets are \$50 in advance, \$60 on the day of the event. For tickets or more info, visit [www.visaliabreakfastlions.org](http://www.visaliabreakfastlions.org).

**March 16-17 - Lemoore Gem, Mineral & Jewelry Show**

This event, hosted by the Lemoore Gem and Mineral Club, will be held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, at 470 Champion St., Lemoore. For more information, visit <https://lemooregemandmineralclub.org>.

**Sunday, March 17 - 2024 Spring Concert**

The Kings Symphony Orchestra will present its Spring Concert, featuring the Young Artist Contest winner, at 4 p.m. at the Hanford Fox Theater. For tickets or more information, visit [www.kingsymphony.org](http://www.kingsymphony.org).

**Sunday, March 17 - 2024 Senior Games: Archery**

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

**Monday, March 18 - Exeter Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

Quail Park on Cypress will present this 10:30 a.m. monthly session, facilitated by Kimberly Jensen, in the Café at Rocky Hill Community Church, 237 South E St. in Exeter. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

**Monday, March 18 - Tulare Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

Quail Park on Cypress will present this 12:30 p.m. monthly session at the First Baptist Church, 469 N. Cherry St., Tulare. For more info, call (559) 737-7443.

**Tuesday, March 19 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this

10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

**Friday, March 22 - Lyle Lovett and his Acoustic Group**

Lyle Lovett will headline an 8 p.m. concert at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Prices are \$49 to \$119. For more info, call (559) 625-1369 or visit [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org).

**Saturday, March 23 - 2024 Senior Games: Disc Golf**

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

**March 23-24 - South Valley Art Tour**

During the South Valley Art Tour, a collection of artists north of Highway 198 in Tulare County will welcome visitors into their personal workspaces for a behind-the-scenes tour. For more information, visit <https://artsconsortium.org/events/acsvat/> or call (559) 772-0001.

**Friday, March 29 - Eggstravaganza Luncheon**

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. The cost for Visalia residents 55+ is \$6. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

**Friday, March 29 - Melissa Etheridge - The I'm Not Broken Tour**

Melissa Etheridge will headline an 8 p.m. concert at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Prices are \$50 to \$100. For more info, call (559) 625-1369 or visit [www.foxvisalia.org](http://www.foxvisalia.org).

**April 3, 10, 17, 24 - 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.

**Thursday, April 4 - An Introduction to PERSI: (Periodical Source Index)**


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

**Friday, April 5 - F1rst Friday**

F1rst Friday in Downtown Visalia, in partnership with The Arts Consortium, will present a free community event with art, food and fun from 5-8 p.m. For more information, visit <https://artsconsortium.org/calendar>.

**April 5, 12, 19, 26 - 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.



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# CALENDAR

### April 5-6 - 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 information, call (559) 733-5352.

### Saturday, April 6 - 2024 Senior Games: Track & Field

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

### Sunday, April 7 - 2024 Senior Games: Swimming

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

### April 7, 14, 21, 28 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays

This weekly event is held at the Visalia Veterans Memorial Building, 609 W. Center St., Visalia. Doors open at 11:15 a.m. For more info, call (559) 651-6714.

### Wednesday, April 10 - Valley Renal Support Group

The only kidney support group in four counties will meet at Evolution's Gym, 1425 E. Prosperity Ave. in Tulare, from 6:30-8 p.m. The meeting will also be on Zoom. For more info, email Jennifer at meow.2000@yahoo.com.

### Saturday, April 13 - Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk sponsored by Kaweah Health and held at the Visalia Mall, begins with registration at 8 a.m., followed by a warm-up at 8:15 a.m., and "Talk with a Doc" at 8:30 a.m. The topic this month is "Mental Health." For more info, call (559) 624-2416.

### Tuesday, April 16 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 737-7443.

### Friday, April 19 - Downtown Historical Walk

This journey through Downtown Visalia, exploring the not-so-well known gems of the city's past, will start at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 9 a.m. The cost is \$8. For more info, call (559) 713-4365.

### Monday, April 22 - Exeter Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress will present this 10:30 a.m. monthly session, facilitated by Kimberly Jensen, in the Café at Rocky Hill Community Church, 237 South E St. in Exeter. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

### Monday, April 22 - Tulare Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress will present this 12:30 p.m. monthly session at the First Baptist Church, 469 N. Cherry St., Room 15, Tulare. For more info, call (559) 737-7443.

### Tuesday, April 23 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia, will host this 10:30 a.m. monthly session. For more info, call (559) 737-7443.

### Friday, April 26 - Taste of the Valley

The Hanford Chamber of Commerce and Central Valley Wine Tours will host this evening of local wine tasting and food sampling. For more information, call (559) 582-0438.

### Saturday, April 27 - 8th Annual Backyard BBQ & Cornhole Event

Hands in the Community is sponsoring this event, featuring food, fun and A&W floats, from noon to 4 p.m. Tickets, \$120 for a team of two, include entry, BBQ lunch, drinks and raffle prizes. For more info, visit www.hnconline.org or call (559) 625-3822.

### May 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 information, call (559) 733-5352.

### May 4-5 - 2024 Senior Games: Pickleball

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

### Wednesday, May 6 - "Belle of the Ballpark"

The Visalia Rawhide will host this competition for Tulare County's contestants 65 and older. (See article on page 11.) For more info, call Dalila Palacios at (559) 732-4433.

### Friday, May 10 - Senior Day in the Park

This event is scheduled at Mooney Grove Park, 2700 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. (More information in our next issue.)

### Saturday, May 18 - 2024 Senior Games: Table Tennis

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)

### Saturday, May 25 - 2024 Senior Games: Cornhole

For more information, call (559) 713-4365. (See article on page 1.)



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# Playing an Instrument Linked to Better Brain Health in Seniors

Engaging in music throughout your life is associated with better brain health in older age, according to a new study published by experts at the University of Exeter (in the U.K.).

Scientists working on PROTECT, an online study open to people aged 40 and over, reviewed data from more than a thousand adults over the age of 40 to see the effect of playing a musical instrument - or singing in a choir - on brain health. Over 25000 people have signed up for the PROTECT study, which has been running for 10 years.

The team reviewed participants' musical experience and lifetime exposure to music, alongside results of cognitive testing, to determine whether musicality helps to keep the brain sharp in later life.

The findings show that playing a musical instrument, particularly the piano, is linked to improved memory and the ability to solve complex tasks - known as executive function. Continuing to play into later life provides even greater benefit. The work also suggests that singing was also linked to better brain health, although this may also be due to the social factors of being part of a choir or group.

"A number of studies have looked at the effect of music on brain health," said Anne Corbett, Professor of Dementia



Research at the University of Exeter. "Our PROTECT study has given us a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between cognitive performance and music in a large cohort of older adults. Overall, we think that being musical could be a way of harnessing the brain's agility and resilience, known as cognitive reserve.

"Although more research is needed to investigate this relationship, our findings indicate that promoting musical education would be a valuable part of public health initiatives to promote a protective lifestyle for brain health, as would encouraging older adults to re-

turn to music in later life," she added. "There is considerable evidence for the benefit of music group activities for individuals with dementia, and this approach could be extended as part of a healthy aging package for older adults to enable them to proactively reduce their risk and to promote brain health."

Stuart Douglas, a 78-year-old accordion player from Cornwall, has played the instrument throughout his life and now plays with the Cober Valley Accordion Band, as well as the Cornish Division of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society.

"I learned to play the accordion as a boy living in a mining

village in Fife and carried on throughout my career in the police force and beyond," he said. "These days I still play regularly, and playing in the band also keeps my calendar full, as we often perform in public. We regularly play at memory cafes so have seen the effect that our music has on people with memory loss, and as older musicians ourselves we have no doubt that continuing with music into older age has played an important role in keeping our brains healthy."

The idea for the study came from University of Exeter Medicine student Gaia Vetere, a pianist who contacted the PROTECT study team.

"As a pianist, I was interested in researching the impact of music and cognition," she explained. "Being fairly new to the world of research and publishing, this was a challenging but also truly enriching experience."

The paper, *The Relationship between Playing Musical Instruments and Cognitive Trajectories: Analysis from a UK Aging Cohort*, is published in the *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*.

The PROTECT study is entirely online and is open to new participants ages 40 and over. For more information, visit: <http://www.protectstudy.org.uk>

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# Health System Not Ready for Seniors with Disabilities

By Judith Graham  
KFF Health News

The number of older adults with disabilities – difficulty with walking, seeing, hearing, memory, cognition or performing daily tasks such as bathing or using the bathroom – will soar in the decades ahead, as baby boomers enter their 70s, 80s, and 90s.

But the health care system isn't ready to address their needs.

That became painfully obvious during the covid-19 pandemic, when older adults with disabilities had trouble getting treatments and hundreds of thousands died. Now, the Department of Health and Human Services and the National Institutes of Health are targeting some failures that led to those problems.

One initiative strengthens access to medical treatments, equipment and web-based programs for people with disabilities. The other recognizes that people with disabilities, including older adults, are a separate population with special health concerns that need more research and attention.

One initiative strengthens access to medical treatments, equipment and web-based programs for people with disabilities. The other recognizes that people with disabilities, including older adults, are a separate population with special health concerns that need more research and attention.

For too long, medical providers have failed to address change in society, changes in technology, and changes in the kind of assistance that people need," she said.

Among lezzoni's notable findings in recent years is that most doctors are biased. In survey results published in 2021, 82% of physicians believed people with significant disabilities have a worse quality of life than those without impairments. Only 57% said they welcomed disabled patients.

"It's shocking that so many physicians say they don't want to care for these patients," said Eric Campbell, a co-author of the study and professor of medicine at the University of Colorado.

While the findings apply to disabled people of all ages, a larger proportion of older adults live with disabilities than younger age groups. About one-third of people 65 and older – nearly 19 million seniors – have a disability, according to the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire.

## Doctors' Responsibilities

In 2022, lezzoni, Campbell, and colleagues reported that 36% of physicians had little to no knowledge of their responsibilities under the 1990 Amer-

icans With Disabilities Act, indicating a concerning lack of training. The ADA requires medical practices to provide equal access to people with disabilities and accommodate disability-related needs.

Among the practical consequences:

- Few clinics have height-adjustable tables or mechanical lifts that enable people who are frail or use wheelchairs to receive thorough medical examinations;

- Only a small number have scales to weigh patients in wheelchairs; and

- Most diagnostic imaging equipment can't be used by people with serious mobility limitations.

lezzoni has experienced these issues directly. She relies on a wheelchair and can't transfer to a fixed-height exam table. She told me she hasn't been weighed in years.

Among the medical consequences are that people with disabilities receive less preventive care and suffer from poorer health than other people, as well as having more coexisting medical conditions. Physicians too often rely on incomplete information in making recommendations. There are more barriers to treatment and patients are less satisfied with the care they do get.

Egregiously, during the pandemic, when crisis standards of care were developed, people with disabilities and older adults were deemed low priorities. These standards were meant to ration care, when necessary, given shortages of respirators and other potentially lifesaving interventions.

There's no starker example of the deleterious confluence of bias against seniors and people with disabilities. Unfortunately, older adults with disabilities routinely encounter these twinned types of discrimination when seeking medical care.

Such discrimination would be explicitly banned under a rule proposed by HHS in September. For the first time in 50 years, it would update Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a landmark statute that helped establish civil rights for people with disabilities.

The new rule sets specific, enforceable standards for accessible equipment, including exam tables, scales and diagnostic equipment. And it requires that electronic medical records, medical apps and websites be made usable for people with various impairments and prohibits treatment policies based on stereotypes about people with disabilities, such as covid-era crisis standards of care.

"This will make a really big difference to disabled people



of all ages, especially older adults," said Alison Barkoff, who heads the HHS Administration for Community Living. She expects the rule to be finalized this year, with provisions related to medical equipment going into effect in 2026. Medical providers will bear extra costs associated with compliance.

Also in September, NIH designated people with disabilities as a population with health disparities that deserves further attention. This makes a new funding stream available and "should spur data collection that allows us to look with greater precision at the barriers and structural issues that have held people with disabilities back," said Bonnielin Swenor, director of the Johns Hopkins University Disability Health Re-

search Center.

One important barrier for older adults is that unlike younger adults with disabilities, many seniors with impairments don't identify themselves as disabled.

"Before my mom died in October 2019, she became blind from macular degeneration and deaf from hereditary hearing loss. But she would never say she was disabled," lezzoni said.

Similarly, older adults who can't walk after a stroke or because of severe osteoarthritis generally think of themselves as having a medical condition, not a disability.

Meanwhile, seniors haven't been well integrated into the disability rights movement, which has been led by young and middle-aged adults. They typically don't join disability-oriented communities that offer support from people with similar experiences. And they don't ask for accommodations they might be entitled to under the ADA or the 1973 Rehabilitation Act.

Many seniors don't even realize they have rights under these laws, Swenor said. "We need to think more inclusively about people with disabilities and ensure that older adults are fully included at this really important moment of change."

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## QUAIL CORNER

## Power of Attorney, Gleaning Seniors, Staying Together Despite Dementia

Q&amp;A with Kimberly Jensen

**Question:** My friend wants me to be her Power of Attorney. Why is it so important to have one and are there any pitfalls that I need to be aware of if I do become her Power of Attorney?

Power of Attorneys are very important to have in place before a crisis occurs. If you are not able to make your own health and financial decisions, your Power of Attorney can step in and handle your medical and financial decisions for you.

They can manage your finances, medical care and legal issues that might arise if you are incapacitated. For example, if you get dementia and can no longer make decisions on your own behalf, they will step in and handle your affairs. A Power of Attorney should be drawn up by an attorney to make sure it is done correctly.

The potential disadvantage of being a Power of Attorney is that it takes a lot of time and thoughtfulness on your part. You will be responsible for your friend's estate (or liquidation of it), their health decisions, bills and finances.

There could be legal damages brought against you if you breach your duty and do not do what is in the best interest of your friend. If your friend needs assisted living or memory care, it will be up to you to search for the best one for them with the funds that they have available. If they don't have assets to sell for their

stay in an assisted living, it will be up to you to find permanent long-term stay placement at a skilled nursing that can provide 24/7 care for them. Many skilled nursing facilities do not have Medi-Cal beds available.

Take this very seriously. Speak with an attorney to find out all the legal responsibilities you will have and what will be expected of you if you take on this role.

**Question:** I am a senior and I am finding that the cost of food is so expensive. I am struggling just to put food on my table. My friend told me about the Visalia Gleaning Seniors. What do they do and how do I reach out to them?

Everyone is feeling the pinch of inflated food costs, especially seniors living on a fixed income. The Visalia Gleaning Seniors' website (<http://visaliagleaning.org>) states that they "provide food assistance to seniors in Farmersville, Exeter, Dinuba and Visalia by providing them with fruits, nuts and vegetables contributed by farmers, ranchers, packing houses and other organizations."

Their purpose and objectives are to help overcome economic hardship for their senior citizen members. I understand they are starting to reach out to the Goshen area. I have also seen meat donations come in from grocery stores that are very beneficial.

There is a membership fee of



\$60 a year. If anyone would like to sponsor a senior for a full year, please reach out to the Visalia Senior Gleaners. The organization is run by volunteers who care about seniors in our community.

Visalia Senior Gleaners is non-profit and can only function because of the donations and generosity of businesses and people in our community. It is an amazing organization that is truly making a difference in seniors' lives.

They also have a thrift store on-site filled with furniture, kitchenware, home décor, books and so much more. Proceeds from the thrift store go back into the non-profit. Contact them if you have items you would like to donate or if you want to find out more about their food program. Call them at (559) 733-5352 for more information or mail them at Visalia Gleaning Seniors, 28600 Road 156, Visalia, CA 93292.

**My parents are currently living in their own home and my father is the caregiver for my mother who has dementia. It**

**had gotten too difficult for him, and he almost dropped her in the shower. Is any assisted living allowing for couples to remain together if one of them has dementia, or do we have to place mom in memory care and have dad visit? They really want to stay together.**

Some assisted livings will allow couples to remain together if the person with dementia is not a wander risk and doesn't have risky behaviors. Call around to the different assisted living communities and see what their stance is on this subject. Quite often a person with dementia will stick like Velcro to the side of their spouse. It makes the person with dementia feel safer and more secure.

Other times you might have someone with dementia be constantly exit-seeking. This is a huge danger, because most assisted living facilities that are not memory care facilities do not have secure exit doors. It will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, or not permitted at all at some of the communities.

*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](mailto:KimberlyJ@QPCypress.com) or call (559) 737-7443.*

## Three Tips for Reducing Fall Risk for Older Adults

Falling represents one of the most pressing health concerns facing older adults.

As people consider ways to prevent falling, either for themselves or a loved one, it can seem daunting - with so many risk factors, how can we prevent them all?

It doesn't have to be overwhelming - here are three ways you or a loved one can take action:

### 1) Start or Expand a Workout Routine

We begin losing muscle mass in our 30s, and that deterioration increases the risk of a fall as we age.

To counteract that, a regular fitness routine can help maintain and even build muscle mass and improve balance, lowering the risk of a fall. The CDC recommends 150 minutes of activity per week, which breaks

down to 30 minutes, five times a week.

If fitness isn't currently part of your daily habits, see your primary care physician to get a physical and recommendations on where to start. From there, they might offer some basic exercises you can perform daily to get started. You might also want to consider seeing a certified trainer with expertise in the fitness needs of older adults.

If you're already active, safely increasing and mixing up your activity not only helps physically, but challenges the brain and can help with cognition.

### 2) Go Room-By-Room

Scan your home for fall risks, and as you do, here are a few things to consider:

- Remove loose cords and wires or fasten them to baseboards or the floor where possible;
- Remove unnecessary clutter like piles of newspapers, magazines, laundry, etc.;
- Install non-slip mats or pads in the shower or tub;
- Install weight-bearing grab bars or railings for assistance getting up and down

in the bathroom; and

- Check that all light bulbs work, and have replacements on hand.

### 3) See Your Doctor

We mentioned earlier seeing a doctor about starting a fitness program, but it's vital to keep up with routine appointments, especially if you haven't been in a while.

For one, the doctor can perform tests to gauge your balance and walking gait, two important factors in fall safety for older adults. Gait and balance diminish with age, so it's vital that your doctor track any deterioration.

Furthermore, eyesight and hearing tests are also vital - many falls occur because people can't see a hazard, or hear something or someone, around a corner. If you already wear glasses, make regular eye appointments to ensure your prescription still fits your needs.

*This article is courtesy of Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia. To learn more about their wellness programming or community, or to book a tour, visit [prestigecare.com/Visalia](http://prestigecare.com/Visalia) or call (559) 735-0828.*

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# Tips for Caregivers and Families of People with Dementia

A caregiver, sometimes referred to as a caretaker, is anyone who provides care for another person. Millions of people living in the United States take care of a friend or family member with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Sometimes caregivers live with the person or nearby, other times they live far away.

For many families, caring for a person with dementia isn't just one person's job, but the role of many people who share tasks and responsibilities. No matter what kind of caregiver you are, taking care of another person can be overwhelming at times. These tips and suggestions may help with everyday care and tasks.

## Everyday Care

Early on in Alzheimer's and related dementias, people experience changes in thinking, remembering and reasoning in a way that affects daily life and activities. Eventually, people with these diseases will need more help with simple, everyday tasks. This may include bathing, grooming and dressing. It may be upsetting to the person to need help with such personal activities.

Here are a few tips to consider early on and as the disease progresses:

- Try to keep a routine, such as bathing, dressing and eating at the same time each day;
- Help the person write down to-do lists, appointments and events in a notebook or calendar;
- Plan activities that the person enjoys and try to do them at the same time each day;
- Consider a system or reminders for helping those who must take medications regularly.
- When dressing or bathing, allow the person to do as much as possible;
- Buy loose-fitting, comfortable, easy-to-use clothing, such as clothes with elastic waistbands, fabric fasteners or large zipper pulls instead of shoelaces, buttons, or buckles;
- Use a sturdy shower chair to support a person who is unsteady and to prevent falls. You can buy shower chairs at drug stores and medical supply stores;
- Be gentle and respectful. Tell the person what you are going to do, step-by-step while you help them bathe or get dressed; and
- Serve meals in a consistent, familiar place and give the person enough time to eat.

## Communication and Behavior

Communication can be hard for people with Alzheimer's and related dementias because they have trouble remembering things. They also can become agitated and anx-



ious, even angry. In some forms of dementia, language abilities are affected such that people have trouble finding the right words or have difficulty speaking. You may feel frustrated or impatient, but it is important to understand that the disease is causing the change in communication skills.

To help make communication easier:

- Reassure the person. Speak calmly. Listen to his or her concerns and frustrations. Try to show that you understand if the person is angry or fearful;
- Allow the person to keep as much control in his or her life as possible;
- Respect the person's personal space;
- Build quiet times into the day, along with activities.
- Keep well-loved objects and photographs around the house to help the person feel more secure;
- Remind the person who you are if he or she doesn't remember, but try not to say, "Don't you remember?";
- Encourage a two-way conversation for as long as possible; and
- Try distracting the person with an activity, such as a familiar book or photo album, if you are having trouble communicating with words.

## A Healthy and Active Lifestyle

Eating healthy and staying active is good for everyone and is especially important for people with Alzheimer's and related dementias. As the disease progresses, finding ways for the person to eat healthy foods and stay active may be increasingly challenging.

Here are some tips that may help:

- Consider different activities the person can do to stay active, such as household chores, cooking and baking, exercise, and gardening. Match the activity to what the person can do;
- Help get an activity started or join in to make the activity more fun. People with dementia may lack interest or initiative and can have trouble starting activities. But, if others do the

planning, they may join in;

- Add music to exercises or activities if it helps motivate the person. Dance to the music if possible;
- Be realistic about how much activity can be done at one time. Several short "mini-workouts" may be best;
- Take a walk together each day. Exercise is good for caregivers, too!;
- Buy a variety of healthy foods, but consider food that is easy to prepare, such as pre-made salads and single portions; and
- Give the person choices about what to eat, for example, "Would you like yogurt or cottage cheese?"

## Home Safety

As a caregiver or family member to a person with Alzheimer's or related dementias, you can take steps to make the home a safer place. Removing hazards and adding safety features around the home can help give the person more freedom to move around independently and safely, including:

- If you have stairs, make sure there is at least one handrail. Put carpet or safety grip strips on stairs, or mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape so they are more visible;
- Insert safety plugs into unused electrical outlets and consider safety latches on cabinet doors;
- Clear away unused items and remove small rugs, electrical cords, and other items the person may trip over;
- Make sure all rooms and outdoor areas the person visits have good lighting;
- Remove curtains and rugs with busy patterns that may confuse the person; and
- Remove or lock up cleaning and household products, such as paint thinner and matches.

## Taking Care of Yourself

Being a caregiver can be extremely rewarding, but it can also be overwhelming. Caring for a person with Alzheimer's or a related dementia takes time and effort. It can feel lonely and frustrating. You might even feel angry, which could

be a sign you are trying to take on too much. It is important to find time to take care of yourself.

Here are some tips that may offer some relief:

- Ask for help when you need it. This could mean asking family members and friends to help, or reaching out to local services for additional care needs;
- Eat nutritious foods, which can help keep you healthy and active for longer;
- Join a caregiver's support group online or in person. Meeting other caregivers will give you a chance to share stories and ideas and can help keep you from feeling isolated;
- Take breaks each day. Try making a cup of tea or calling a friend;
- Spend time with friends and keep up with hobbies;
- Get exercise as often as you can. Try doing yoga or going for a walk;
- Try practicing meditation. Research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, anxiety and depression, and insomnia; and
- Consider seeking help from mental health professionals to help you cope with stress and anxiety. Talk with your doctor about finding treatment.

## Planning for the Future

Making healthcare decisions for someone who is no longer able to do so can be overwhelming. That's why it is important to plan healthcare directives in advance. To help plan for the future, you can:

- Start discussions early with your loved one so they can be involved in the decision-making process;
- Get permission in advance to talk to the doctor or lawyer of the person you're caring for, as needed. There may be questions about care, a bill or a health insurance claim. Without consent, you may not be able to get needed information;
- Consider legal and financial matters, options for in-home care, long-term care, and funeral and burial arrangements;

Learning about your loved one's disease will help you know what to expect as the dementia progresses and what you can do.

## Questions?

Contact the Alzheimer's & related Dementias Education & Referral Center, a service of the National Institute on Aging at the National Institutes of Health. Call 800-438-4380 or email [adear@nia.nih.gov](mailto:adear@nia.nih.gov) to talk with an information specialist.

*This content is provided by the National Institute on Aging (NIA), part of the National Institutes of Health.*



## Family Game Nights (and Days) Can Bring Generations Together

When you were younger, you might have had "family game night," huddled around the kitchen table with dice and tokens. Besides the happy memories this brings, those game nights may actually help boost one's health.

Social connections, sense of purpose and an active mind can be key parts of healthier aging. Coming together to play games can be one way to encompass all three - while helping to reduce isolation.

In light of this, Ageless Innovation's Reach Out and Play campaign, sponsored by AARP, will host board game events across the country through the end of the year.

Various organizations will host board game events, and people are encouraged to also host their own with family and friends. These activities will bring people of all ages together through the power of play, and create meaningful connections for older adults.

Social isolation and loneliness for older adults can have a massive effect on their health.

Loneliness has been found to lead to health risks, such as depression, cognitive decline, hypertension and more.

Social isolation may lead to cardiovascular disease, a reduced quality of life and other health issues. Personal connections, no matter what the activities, can help foster better health.

"Social connection, camaraderie and even some problem-solving - all of these things can be important contributors to the health of older adults," said Dr. Philip Painter, chief medical officer at UnitedHealthcare Medicare & Retirement. "Events like this can bring people of all ages together for fun, but also drive a sense of wellness, which is so vital as we age."

For information on Reach Out and Play, including how to find and register for an event in your area, visit [aarp.org/agelessplay](http://aarp.org/agelessplay). The site also includes reimagined versions of Scrabble, The Game of Life, and Trivial Pursuit - interpretations that encourage intergenerational play.

## Health Problems Tied to Risk of Depression and Anxiety

A new study in *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences* has found people with multiple chronic conditions reported persistently high levels of anxiety and depression, and worse physical function. And compared to white study participants, those who identified as non-white experienced worse health-related quality of life as multiple chronic health conditions increased, the study found.

"As people get older, it's not just that they develop hypertension and that's it. It's that these conditions - which are often very manageable - start to accumulate and, unfortunately, along with that come some negative quality-of-life side effects," said corresponding study author Eileen Graham, Ph.D., FGSA, an associate professor of medical social sciences in the social determinants of health division at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

What may begin in earlier adulthood as a less severe condition may increase in severity with age and may be compounded by developing other conditions. For example, a person may be diagnosed with hypertension in midlife, then later develop type-2 diabetes and arthritis.

"There are so many unknowns with a complicated care regimen, such as needing to coordinate with multiple doctors, taking contra-indicating drugs and dealing with possible complications, it can lead to anxiety in patients," Graham said. "Between that and the impaired physical function that is associated with having multiple conditions, all of these may contribute to higher reports of depressive symptoms."

The most sobering finding,

Graham added, was the decreased quality of life from the presence of two or more long-term health conditions - known as multimorbidity - among racial minorities.

"I was disappointed, but not entirely surprised, to see that the effect of multimorbidity on quality of life was much starker among non-white individuals," Graham said. "This points to a greater need to understand how the healthcare system can better support people from underrepresented communities."

The chronic conditions experienced by people in the study were wide ranging, Graham said. They included angina, hypertension, high cholesterol, liver disease, thyroid disease, celiac disease, chronic kidney disease, gout, arthritis, peripheral artery disease, diabetes, lung fluid, bronchitis, cataracts, deafness, hearing problems, hip fracture, asthma, emphysema and cancer.

The study found higher depression among people with circulatory, musculoskeletal, metabolic and respiratory diseases, but not for digestive diseases, kidney or ear disease, cataracts or cancer. Those with respiratory diseases tended to start out with high rates of depression but their depression improved over time.

Graham said more research is needed that explores what sorts of supports are necessary for older adults to mitigate these impacts. Better coordination among care providers to help alleviate patient anxiety surrounding care regimens could help, or assistance from healthcare systems to help patients build a more robust support network.

The study, titled "Longitudinal Associations Between Multimorbidities and Patient-Reported Quality of Life," used data from the "Health Literacy and Cognitive Function Among Older Adults Longitudinal" study, a prospective cohort study of adults in late midlife and older adulthood. Participants were enrolled from August 2008 through October 2010 from one academic general internal medicine clinic and six federally qualified health centers in the Chicago area.

Throughout the study, participants reported anxiety, depression, and physical function using the Patient Reported Outcomes Information System, chronic conditions and socio-demographic characteristics.

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### CALENDAR

April 10th - Office closed for Training.

April 15th-30th - Cemetery Clean-up

May 27 - Annual Avenue of Flag Memorial Day Event - Please donate your casket flag by May 3rd. Flags available for purchase. Please call the office for more information.

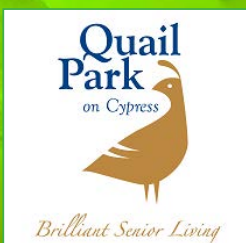
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# Five Key Benefits of Hiring Older Workers

By Gary A. Officer  
President and CEO of the Center for Workforce Inclusion

When you think of new hires, who do you picture? While you may expect applicants to be 20-somethings straight out of college or 30- to 40-somethings making a career change, in reality, you'll likely see more applicants who are older adults.

According to a report by the U.S. Special Committee on Aging, workers 55 and older will soon represent 25% of our nation's workforce.

However, just because more older adults are applying for jobs doesn't mean they are getting hired. Many older applicants face ageism during the hiring process.

A survey by AARP found that it took older workers who were displaced during the Great Recession twice as long to find a new job than younger workers. The association also found that only 4% of firms have committed to programs that help integrate older workers into their talent pool.

Businesses that ignore this fast-growing workforce segment need to rethink their hiring process. With record-low unemployment numbers, many job openings across industries still need to be filled. But there is a mostly overlooked talent pool readily available - older Americans.

Now more than ever, businesses must recognize that older workers bring much-needed experience, emotional intelligence and generational diversity to our workplaces.

Not convinced? Here are five key values older workers offer employers.

## 1. Problem-Solving Abilities

Problem-solving is a critical skill that is attained over time. Through their lived experience in the workforce, older workers have accumulated a wealth of industry-specific knowledge that they can use to make informed decisions that help your business thrive.

More importantly, they can impart this knowledge to younger colleagues, providing mentorship opportunities that benefit the mentors, mentees and the business as a whole.

The result is a more innovative team. A 2018 study by Cloverpop found that multi-



Age is a value-add, not a detriment.

generational teams with an age range of 25 years or more (from the youngest member to the oldest member) met or exceeded expectations 73% of the time, while those with a narrow range of less than 10 years did so only 35% of the time.

## 2. Reliability

Older workers are incredibly reliable. This usually means that they are known for punctuality and dependability. You can count on them to show up on time to meetings, meet strict deadlines and provide a consistency that may be missing from your workplace.

Best of all, they set a positive example for the rest of the company.

## 3. Improved Team Productivity

It's been reported that seven out of 10 workers in the United States enjoy working with people from other generations. Older workers appreciate the creativity of younger workers and younger workers appreciate the value of older workers' experience and wisdom.

These benefits extend beyond workplace satisfaction, too. Significant profitability and performance gains have been reported for companies that have above-average diversity. For example, according to an AARP report, companies with above-average diversity in age, gender, nationality, career path, industry background and education on their management teams report innovation revenue that is 19% higher and profit margins that are 9% higher than companies with below-average diversity.

## 4. Adaptability

Older adults have seen technology rapidly change throughout their lifetime. Contrary to popular belief, older workers are adaptable and willing to learn and master new skills and technologies.

The fact is that they've had to adapt quickly to keep pace with the increasingly connected and technology-forward world. These experiences have taught them to effectively navigate change, a valuable asset for businesses across many industries.

## 5. Low Turnover

Hiring and training new employees can cost a company extensive time, money and resources. To reduce turnovers and increase employee retention, businesses should look to hire older workers.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that older workers ages 55-64 have a higher employee tenure rate than their younger colleagues. They typically stay with a company for nearly 10 years, more than three times the rate of workers ages 25-34.

So, while the assumption might be that an older applicant is ready to retire - that is likely not the case. Many older Americans are delaying retirement, unretiring or simply unable to retire, and are prepared to stay on board for many years to come.

While working for the Center for Workforce Inclusion, I've seen firsthand the benefits of hiring older employees. Embracing age diversity in your workforce can only help to improve your company's overall performance and workplace culture.

For more information, visit [CenterForWorkforceInclusion.org](http://CenterForWorkforceInclusion.org).



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# March Gardening Tips

By Peyton Ellas  
Tulare-Kings Counties  
Master Gardener

Spring is in the air, but we could have reminders of winter and hints of summer all month.

**Planting:** Spring is the second season of major planting. You can plant all varieties of trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers and vines. In the edible garden, plant heat-lovers like cucumber, tomato, melon, beans, eggplant and squash towards the end of the month. You can also plant potato, radish, chives, greens, beets, and herbs of all types. Citrus, avocado and other frost-sensitives should also be planted late in the month to avoid late-frost damage.

When buying citrus, please be sure to buy from a reputable Tulare or Kings County nursery so we don't spread the Asian citrus psyllid. That means saying "no" to the neighbor or family member who has an extra citrus tree for you, and that means not bringing citrus trees into the county from elsewhere in the state.

There are regulations about movement of bulk quantities of citrus fruit to save the California citrus industry, much of which is in our counties. You can find out more from the CDFA website or read the University of California Pest Note at: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn74155.html>

Many plants, native and non, bloom profusely in March. If you need quick color, plant ageratum, alyssum, bachelor buttons, begonias, celosia, cleome, coleus, cosmos, duster miller, gomphrena, inpatients, lobelia,



Begonias

marigolds, nasturtiums, nicotiana, petunias, portulacas, salvias and verbena. It is also the month to start planting summer blooming bulbs such as cannas, calla lily, crocosmia, dahlia, gladiolus, liatris, lilies, ranunculus, tuberose and zephyranthes.

**Maintaining:** Along with bursts of flowers and foliage, March also begins the major insect season. Hand picking large insects is easier on the garden and the ecology. Using traps like boards or rolled up newspaper is another way to catch and remove insect pests like snails, slugs and earwigs.

If you must use chemicals for slugs and snails, use baits containing iron phosphate, which is not toxic to children, wildlife or pets. Baits containing metaldehyde are extremely toxic. Tolerate some plant damage, especially from caterpillars and especially on your ornamental (non-edible) plants. Think of them as the pretty butterflies and moths they will become. Bugs are also a major food source for nesting and hatching birds and for other bugs, toads, lizards and small mammals.

Start setting baits out now for Argentine and other non-native ants and rotate the chemical every three months. Eliminating ants will help control soft-bodied insects like aphids.

Spittle bugs are occasionally an unsightly nuisance, but do little damage and don't stay long. They look like little blobs of wet foam on foliage. They seem to prefer rosemary and sage. If you can't stand it, a strong blast of water can dislodge them.

Weed control is in high gear.

Whether you use mechanical, chemical or a mix of control methods, remember weeds are trying to protect the earth's crust by reducing erosion. If you clear an area of weeds, what will replace these plants? Use rock, bark or living mulch (ground cover plants) to keep your soil on your property.

**Conserving:** While planting for spring, include at least one plant that increases the garden's diversity and usefulness for pollinators and/or other wildlife. Matching a plant with your soil and climate (including water availability) ensures fewer pests and less maintenance. If you want to try milkweed for the monarchs, search out the native varieties, such as "narrow leaf."

If you haven't already done so, check your drip and sprinkler systems, cleaning filters, checking for leaks and make needed improvements. Make sure your system is as efficient as possible. You may consider

upgrading to a "smart" controller that can better adjust to the weather and water needs of the garden.

I've tried several of them now, and most of them are reliable, affordable and easy to use with a smart phone app. You still should check your system periodically to make sure there are no leaks or other problems.

With all this work, it's also important to remember to take time to enjoy the garden's bounty. Don't be afraid to leave the work for another day and just read a book in the sun or shade or watch the busy activity of your California garden in spring. For many gardens, this is their glory season. Be sure and take time to celebrate the beauty you work hard, in partnership with plants and many creatures, to create!

**Questions?** Call the Master Gardeners:

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# Tipton Lindsey – An Important Tulare County Pioneer

There is a man in Tulare County history that contributed so much to make the county what it is today. His name is Tipton Lindsey. His name oftentimes creates confusion as he is not connected in any way to the Tulare County towns of Tipton or Lindsay as his name might imply, but instead the man with the unusual name can lay claim to being one of Tulare County's most important pioneers.

Tipton Lindsey was born in Delphi, Carroll County, Indiana on May 21, 1829. He was the product of an early public school education, and by age 20 he was already "reading law" under a prominent local Indiana attorney.

In 1849, he caught the gold bug and drove an ox team all the way to "Hangtown," now called Placerville. After he arrived on September 5, 1849, he mined for a year with moderate success then left for Santa Clara to pursue agricultural interests.

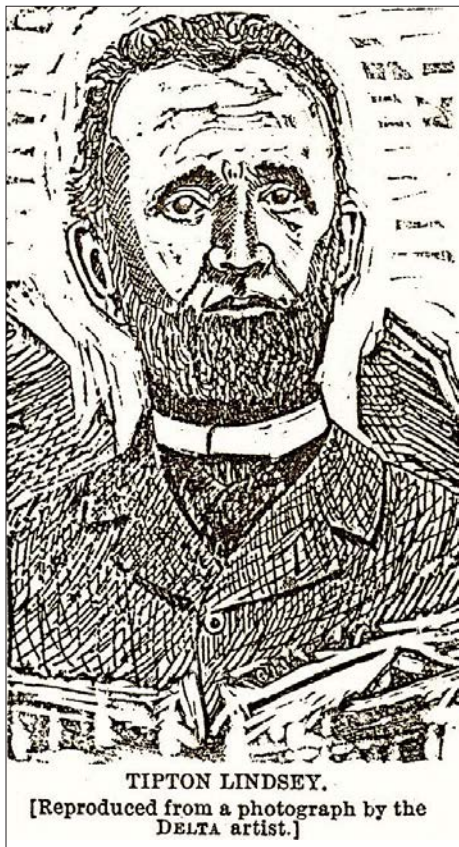
In about 1860, he purchased some cattle and drove them to Tulare County which was known at the time as great cattle country. Shortly after his arrival, he married Eliza Fine. They did well on homestead land near Goshen until 1864 when a devastating drought killed their entire herd.

The couple then moved to a house in Visalia on Cottonwood Street (now named Encina). While in Visalia, he completed his legal studies, was admitted to the bar and established his law practice.

The new lawyer was busy. He served in many public positions over the years including Receiver of the U.S. Land Office in Visalia, Visalia City Council and mayor, member of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and member of the Visalia School Board of Trustees. For four years in the 1870s, he served as a California state senator.

While Lindsey was serving in the state senate, he faced one of the most important issues of the day...should cattle be allowed to roam free or should they be confined? Cattle ranchers in California enjoyed free range grazing for their herds. Farmers that grew crops complained that frequently wandering cattle destroyed or consumed their crops and ruined their business.

Senator Lindsey, once a cattleman, argued the cattle should be confined behind fences. For-



This line drawing of Tipton Lindsey is one of the few images that exist of the man. This appeared on March 3, 1894, in the Daily Morning Delta and was part of his obituary.

mer Senator Thomas Fowler a cattleman who Lindsey had defeated in a recent election had argued for a no-fence requirement for herds.

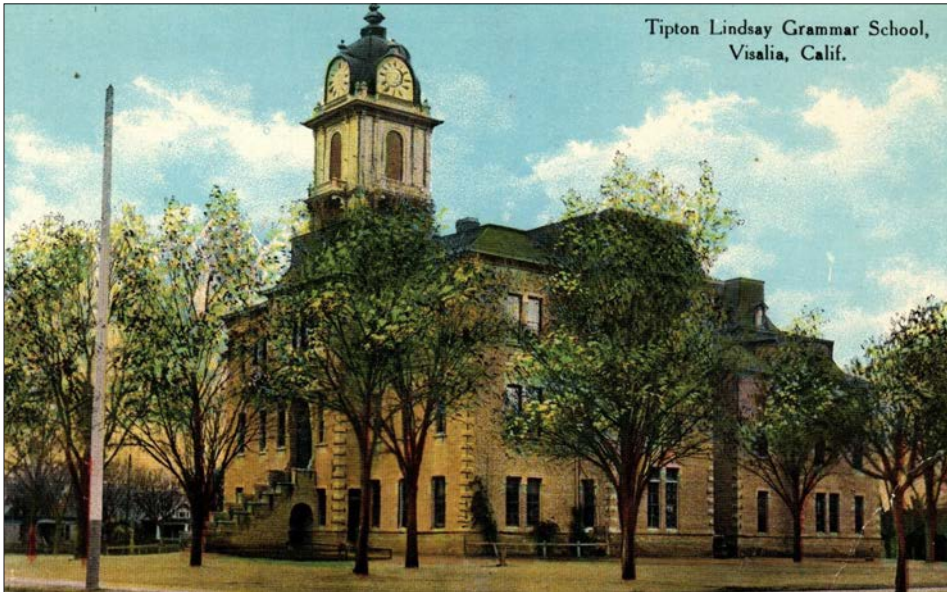
After the Senate vote in 1874, the farmers had won the argument and cattle had to be kept behind fences. Senator Lindsey became a hero to the farmers but was regularly criticized by the cattlemen.

While Lindsey was on the Visalia School Board, his leadership in local education was well recognized. In 1890, a grammar school was built on the northwest corner of Oak and Locust streets. The upper floor served as Visalia's first designated high school.

But his active lifestyle took its toll as reported by the *Daily Morning Delta*, "His close attention to business and advanced age, commenced to tell on his constitution."

In February 1894, Lindsey was diagnosed with having an aneurysm on a large blood vessel. The aneurysm was pressing against his liver causing organ damage. The doctor said his condition was incurable. After hearing the diagnoses, Lindsey began putting his business affairs in order and waited calmly for the end.

The end came on March 2, 1894, at 9:20 a.m. Lindsey




In 1890 the Visalia Public Grammar School was built on the northwest corner of Oak and Locust streets. After Lindsey's death, the school was renamed the Tipton Lindsey Grammar School in his honor. The building was demolished in 1919. (Post card circa 1895)

peacefully died at the age of 64 at his ranch home just southwest of Visalia. *The San Francisco Call* newspaper reported on his death, "There was perhaps no man in the upper San Joaquin Valley better known or more highly respected than this pio-

neer who has joined his early comrades beyond the 'great divide.'"

Tipton Lindsey is buried in the Visalia Cemetery. After his death, the grammar school was renamed the Tipton Lindsey Grammar School in his honor.

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## 'Thelma' Refuses to Let Scammers Get Away with Her \$10,000

Ninety-three-year-old Thelma Post (June Squibb) is strong, sturdy and in charge – defying a lifetime of odds, she's successfully brushed off assisted living well into her nineties, instead, living alone in her cherished condo.

Her independent world is rocked though, when she falls victim to elder-abusing phone scammers posing as her beloved grandson, Daniel (Fred Hechinger), and regrettably sends them \$10,000 in cash.

With her family now worried that she's entering "a new phase," Thelma decides to do the unthinkable – confront the scammers and get her money back – enlisting the help of a reluctant old friend, Ben (Richard Roundtree), and his high-powered mobility scooter, in a perilous mission across Los Angeles, determined to prove she's just as capable as ever.

Here, the fearless, 93-year-old June Squibb steps into a leading role for the first time in her storied 70-year-career – and Richard Roundtree, miles away from his iconic "Shaft," plays her partner-in-crime with vulnerability and quiet strength. Featuring a nuanced, touching performance from breakout star Fred Hechinger and buoyed by the hilarious Parker Posey and Clark Gregg as Thelma's distressed family, anxious to track their aging matriarch down – Thelma is an "action" comedy unlike any other.

"Thelma" marks the wonderful, brilliant Richard Roundtree's final on-screen performance and those on both sides of the camera dedicate the film, in loving memory, to him.

At once a celebration and playful subversion of the action genre as well as a soulful exploration of aging and autonomy – "Thelma" is a showcase for our oldest generation, those rarely centered in life, let alone on-screen.

### The Inspiration for 'Thelma'

For first-time feature writer/director Josh Margolin, the film serves as a love letter to the exploits of his real-life grand-



With the help of her friend Ben (Richard Roundtree), Thelma (June Squibb) sets out on a mission to find scammers and get her money back.

mother, transforming her into a nonagenarian action star and the hero of his debut.

"My grandma refuses to die," said Margolin. "She just turned 103 and has survived the Great Depression, WWII, the death of her husband, a double mastectomy, colon cancer, a valve replacement and an ongoing but allegedly-benign brain tumor.

"So when she got duped by phone scammers a few years ago – and nearly sent them thousands of dollars for my 'bail' – it pierced my long-standing belief that she was somehow infallible – a belief that brought me some kind of undue comfort throughout my own anxious existence," he continued. "The inevitability of losing her has become increasingly real to me, and so has her dogged persistence to hold on to her sense of self, as her body and mind stubbornly slow.

"I wrote 'Thelma' from this place of reckoning. I wanted to explore her fight for what's left of her autonomy just as I was beginning to consider mine. She has always been larger-than-life to me, and I felt com-

pelled to dramatize her story with the trappings of a genre that captures her powerful spirit and celebrates her grit and tenacity – action.

### Vulnerability and Resilience

Margolin called "Thelma" "a twist on the classic 'one last job' flick. Because as far as I'm concerned, watching my grandma get onto a high mattress is as thrilling and terrifying as Tom Cruise driving a motorcycle off a cliff – just in a very different way."

The story is an epic journey on a granular scale because, for Thelma, the little things present great dangers.

"I want the audience to feel these challenges viscer-

ally, never making light of the strength it takes for her to move through the world," said Margolin. "The film shrinks down the tropes of the action genre to a very human scale and uses them to explore aging, fragility and anxiety.

"And I couldn't imagine anyone doing this but June, who I feel so lucky to have gotten to work with. At 93-years-old, she left it all on the field, bringing equal parts vulnerability and resilience – as well as doing the majority of her own stunts. Thelma centers and celebrates her as well as those who would see themselves reflected in a type of action hero we rarely see."

## AARP Announces Movies for Grownups 2024 Award Winners

It's been a banner year for shows and movies by and for people over 50, and Hollywood's notorious ageism, which AARP created Movies for Grownups to combat, seems to be gradually eroding.

Thirty years ago, only three Oscar acting nominees were over 60, and the oldest was 64. In the latest Oscars, six are over 60, and the oldest is 87.

In 2000, shortly before the Movies for Grownups Awards began, the best actress and supporting actress winners were 25 and 24; in 2023, they were 60 and 64.

Many people use AARP's awards to predict who'll win at the Oscars on March 10.

### The Award Winners

Movies for Grownups named "Killers of the Flower Moon," directed by 80-year-old Martin Scorsese, as best picture. Christopher Nolan was named best director for "Oppenheimer."

Best actor honors went to Colman Domingo for "Rustin," while Annette Bening was named best actress for her work in "Nyad."

Best supporting actor was Robert De Niro in "Killers of the Flower Moon," and Jodie Foster was named best supporting actress for "Nyad."

Noah Baumbach (with Greta Gerwig) won the best screenplay award for "Barbie." The best time capsule award went to "Maestro."

Best ensemble was "The Color Purple," and best intergenerational film was "The Holdovers."

Television awards included best actor Bryan Cranston in "Your Honor," and best actress Jennifer Coolidge in "The White Lotus."

"Succession" was selected as best series, and "The Golden Bachelor" received honors as the best reality series.

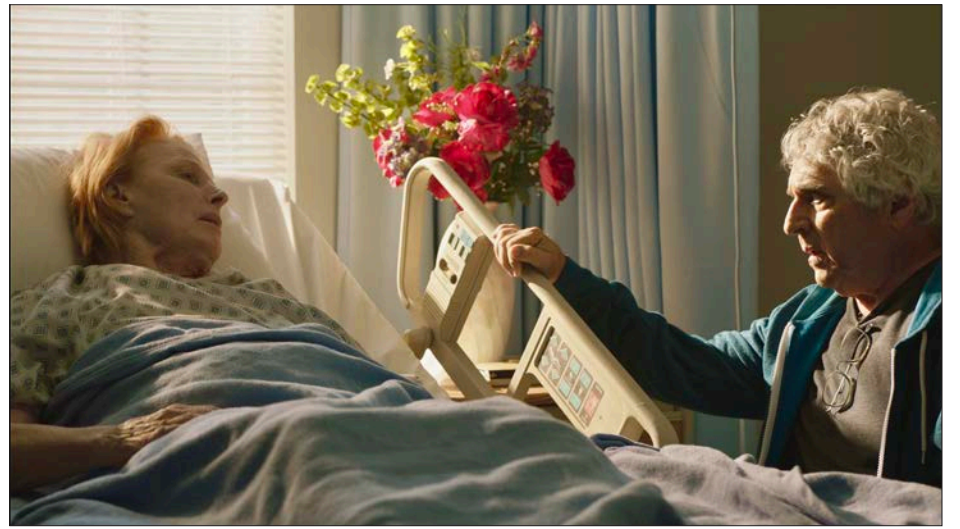


Thelma's grandson, Daniel (Fred Hechinger), helps her on her computer.

# ENTERTAINMENT



Mariette Hartley and Jerry Sroka ponder life on a trip to Tombstone, Arizona.



Jerry Sroka was at Mariette Hartley's hospital bedside following a difficult operation.

## 'Our (Almost Completely True) Love Story,' Described by Its Stars

By Jerry Sroka & Mariette Hartley

When a tall, aging, shiksa icon meets a short Jewish leprechaun in a bird store... what are the chances?

AGEISM: a tendency to regard older persons unworthy of attention or unsuitable for employment. Merriam Webster was very wise.

Mariette Hartley has been acting for over 60 years. She was nominated for five Emmy's and won for "The Hulk" or as she says, "I went to bed with Billy Bixby and woke up with Lou Ferrigno and I got an Emmy for it?" In addition, she has won 3 Clios, done Broadway, toured, shot hundreds of TV series, appeared in films like "Ride the High Country" and "1969," and

who can forget those Polaroid commercials?

Unfortunately, "the business" being "the business," Mariette finds herself having to audition for people who have no idea of who she was or is.

A friend suggests she should have a significant other in her life and pressures her to tackle the dreaded online dating sites to which replies..."Which picture should I use? The one with the two navels or the one with the horse?"

Meanwhile, the leprechaun had a thriving voice-over career in New York, so naturally he moved to L.A. to do TV and film and hasn't worked since.

How they meet, how he wins her, loses her, and wins her,

sounds like a familiar story, but with Peter MacNicol, Tess Harper, Morgan Fairchild, Bernie Kopell, Jack McGee, Peter Onorati, John Rubenstein, Mindy Sterling, Sam McMurray and Stu Pankin...it isn't.

And it has no car chases, no explosions, no aliens, no

nudity and no gunplay. It does have Don Scardino directing, a chance meeting at a bird store, several dates from hell, a trip to Tombstone and a happy ending.

(In addition to starring in the film, the couple also wrote the semi-autobiographical film.)



Jerry Sroka waits on the front porch for his date in "Our (Almost Completely True) Love Story."

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