



IN THIS ISSUE: The Election Tree, Navigating Hospices, Navigating Challenging Terrain, Yarrow, MouseGoggles

The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume XI, Number 6 • May/June 2025



Some of the more than 350 athletes who competed at the 2025 Visalia Senior Games pose for a photo.

Visalia 2025 Senior Games Attract 352 Competitors

The City of Visalia Parks and Recreation Department hosted the 2025 Visalia Senior Games March 27-30.

"This year's Visalia Senior Games saw great success," said Holly Ellis, recreation supervisor for the City of Visalia Parks and Recreation Department. "While, some events were cancelled, many were quite successful."

The largest event this year was pickleball, held over two days and attracting 278 participants.

Track and field had 48, and 26 athletes competed in archery or disc golf.

The oldest competitor was 86 years old and competed in track and field. Another athlete traveled from Arizona to participate.

Ellis expressed the committee's gratitude to those who helped support the event.



"Thank you to Kaweah Health for their support of the Visalia Senior Games," she said. "Through their support,

we were able to waive the athlete registration fee for all participants and were able to host a barbecue on Sunday for all athletes."

She also thanked the Visalia Unified School District for the use of the track and field facilities at Mt. Whitney High School, the Mt. Whitney High School track and field team for hosting the senior games track and field meet, and to Vallarta for their support of the pickleball tournament.

To get involved in the next Visalia Senior Games as a competitor, volunteer or sponsor, call (559) 713-4365.

Information is posted online at liveandplayvisalia.com, as well as on social media (@Visalialiveandplay).

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to be Observed Locally

June is World Elder Abuse Awareness Month and observances will be held in both Tulare and Kings Counties.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations.

Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

Each year, an estimated five million older persons in the United States are abused, neglected or exploited. In addition, seniors throughout the country lose an estimated \$2.6 billion annually due to elder financial abuse and exploitation, funds that could have been used to pay for basic needs such as housing, food and medical care.

In 2024, Tulare County prosecutors filed 24 felony cases and 14 misdemeanor cases of elder abuse, which is a decrease in cases in both categories from 2023. Meanwhile, victim advocates with the Tulare County District Attorney Office served hundreds of victims at various stages of the criminal justice process.

This effort is partially funded through a U.S. Department of Justice Victims of Crime Act elder abuse grant issued through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. The \$247,500 grant runs through 2025.

The grant funds two victim advocates, public awareness announcements, resource folders to give to victims, brochures, outreach materials, and advocate training.

"We are once again grateful to receive this important funding to serve Tulare County's

World Elder Abuse Awareness Event June 13

The Kings County Commission on Aging Council (KCCOA) and Kings County In-Home Supportive Services will host its annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Event, featuring informational booths, food, entertainment and prizes.

"The community will enjoy having a great time while socializing with friends and family," said Antonia Olivera, KC-

COA community social service specialist.

"They will have the opportunity to become familiar with various social service agencies and the services they provide," she said.

The event will be held on Friday, June 13, at 10953 14th Ave., Armona, from 9 a.m. to noon. For more information, call (559) 852-2828.

53rd Senior Day in the Park (See Page 7)

(continued on page 3)

Tulare County Selects New Public Health Officer

On February 11, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors voted to appoint Dr. Asma Tariq to the position of County Health Officer, effective May 4. Dr. Tariq fills the position that has been vacant since Dr. Karen Haught retired in 2023.

Dr. Tariq is a practicing family medicine physician with a passion for teaching and preventative health. She currently provides care in the outpatient and hospital settings and is a core faculty member for the Kaweah Health Family Medicine Residency Program. She also serves as a volunteer faculty member for the University of Southern California.

In her new role, Dr. Tariq will oversee public health initiatives and advocate for education, prevention, and health promotion. She is a lifelong learner and will expand her scope of work by directly engaging in public health programs that foster a community's overall well-being.

Dr. Tariq will assist the agency with improving health outcomes by identifying the needs within Tulare County and collaborating with internal and external partners to meet objectives and working to advance health equity.

"Dr. Tariq recognizes the diverse needs of our underserved



Dr. Asma Tariq

population," said Tulare County Public Health Director Karen Elliott. "She has provided clinical services to our county residents for 12 years and understands the importance of preventative care and health education.

"I look forward to her joining the Tulare County Public Health team and the commitment she brings to improve the well-being of our community," she added.

Dr. Tariq graduated from Aga Khan University in Pakistan with a Bachelor of Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery. She is board-certified through the American Board of Family Medicine and completed her Family Medicine Residency at Kaweah Health.

VETERANS COLUMN

Veterans Work-Study Program

Hey all, It's me again. Dropping pearls of wisdom on you. Well, if not pearls of wisdom, maybe food for thought, or at the very least, things that make you go hmmm.

In this edition, I want to talk about making money while going to school. If you are veteran continuing your education or know of one, and want to make a little coin, listen up.

The VA Veterans Work-Study Program can help you earn money while you're enrolled in a college, vocational school, or professional training program. You must be enrolled at least 3/4-time in a college degree, vocational school or professional program AND you're using an approved VA education benefits program to pay for your education or training.

I know you're asking what are these "approved VA education benefits programs" that you speak of? A couple of examples are the GI Bill, Veterans' Education Assistance Program (VEAP), Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E), and Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA), just to name a few.

What did you say? "How much is the pay"? The pay works like this: You will earn an hourly wage the same as the state minimum wage which is currently \$16.50. But the caveat is that you can't work more than 25 hours per week. You'll get paid every 50 hours or every other week, whichever comes first. Best of all, the hours are flexible. You work as your schedule will allow.

Lastly, you can get a job at almost any approved facility that works with veterans and the work you do must be entirely related to veterans. Some of the facilities in the area are:

VA Hospital/Clinic
COS/Fresno State
The Veteran Services Office
Tulare Library
Employment Development Department (EDD)

For more information and to apply on-line, see the VA's webpage, www.va.gov/education/about-gi-bill-benefits/how-to-use-benefits/work-study/, and let the requested facility know that you applied. Or you can call our office at (559) 713-2880.

Side note, I started as a work study while attending Fresno State and worked at the VA Hospital in Fresno, so I owe my whole career to this program.

'Till next time, be good to each other, we're all in this together.

Cecil Webster, the Veterans Services Officer for Tulare County, is a former U.S. Navy Photographer's Mate 3. Contact him at the Veterans Services Office at 3348 W. Mineral King Ave. in Visalia, by phone at 559-713-2880, or by email at TCVSO@tularecounty.ca.gov.



Cecil Webster



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World Elder Abuse Awareness Day...

(continued from page 1)

senior community” said Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward. “Through local partnerships and the tireless efforts of TCDA victim advocates, we can make sure seniors avoid becoming victims in the first place through education and outreach.”

To honor seniors who reported some form of abuse in 2024, Tulare County HHSA will be planting purple flags on the lawn at Tulare County Government Plaza on Mooney Boulevard in Visalia.

The purple flags will fly at Government Plaza for the entire month of June. The color purple is associated with royalty, dignity and respect – words often used to describe seniors. Community members are encouraged to wear purple in support of prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

Kings County Cases

Kings County Adult Protective Service received 204 elder abuse referrals and served 77 victims in 2024. This is a major increase from 2023 when there were 29 reported victims of elder abuse.

In June, the Kings County Board of Supervisors will be asked to adopt a resolution to declare June elder abuse prevention month.

“Elder abuse awareness is



Tulare County Supervisors and Tulare County Health and Human Services officials at last year's flag planting

essential to protecting the dignity, safety, and well-being of older adults,” said Kings County District Attorney Sarah Hacker. “It involves recognizing the signs of physical, emotional, financial or neglectful mistreatment and taking action to prevent and report it.

“Victims and witnesses are encouraged to report elder abuse to help law enforcement intervene and put an end to the mistreatment,” she continued. “Elder abuse is a serious offense and it occurs here in Kings County. We have had cases where elders have suffered at the hands of their caretakers and family members –

the people closest to them.

“It is the goal of the Kings County District Attorney’s Office to unite with elders and community organizations in solidarity for our elder’s safety,” Hacker added.

Kings County provides resources for elder abuse victims through its Adult Protective Services (search for “elder abuse” at www.countyofkings-ca.gov) and the Kings County Action Organization (www.kcao.org/elder-abuse).

To report suspected elder abuse in Kings County, call (559) 852-4000.

On Friday, June 13, the Kings County Commission

on Aging Council will host a World Elder Abuse Awareness Event featuring food, prizes, music, live performances and informational booths at the Senior Center in Armona.

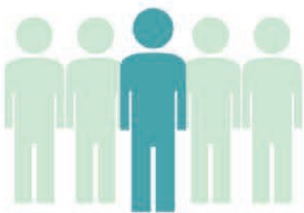
For more information about elder abuse, visit the National Center on Elder Abuse website at www.ncea.acl.gov.

If you suspect elder abuse, you can contact law enforcement or call the County Adult Protective Services toll-free, 24-hour-a-day hotline at 1-877-657-3092 to report confidentially.

In case of an emergency, always call 911.

Mental illnesses are common and are treatable.

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- Crisis Emergency Assistance
- Psychiatric evaluation, consultation, and medication support
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- Services at school for children and youth
- Substance abuse and mental health coordinated services
- Wellness and recovery services
- And more.



HHSA
www.tchhsa.org

For more information and referrals, contact Tulare County Behavioral Health at 1-800-834-7121

If someone poses a danger to him/herself or others or needs emergency help, call 911. Ask for an officer trained in CIT.



Kaweah Health's new Valencia Clinic in Woodlake had its ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 3.

Kaweah Health Opens New Valencia Clinic in Woodlake

Kaweah Health held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its new Woodlake clinic on Thursday, April 3. This is the second Woodlake clinic for the health care district.

The increasing need for services in Woodlake prompted the second clinic, named Kaweah Health Valencia Clinic, as the number of patients and physicians were outgrowing the current facility.

The Valencia Clinic will focus on primary care while the current clinic will remain in operation serving pediatric patients.

"Our rural clinics allow us to bridge the gap between distance and care, ensuring patients receive the continuous medical attention they

need and deserve," said Gary Herbst, CEO of Kaweah Health. "From preventative screenings to chronic disease management, these clinics provide essential services that help keep our communities healthy."

Dr. Rocio Medina, a native of Woodlake, said she benefited from those services in her community as a child.

"I went into medicine because I wanted to make a difference. I didn't realize I would be back to practice at the same clinic I went to as a child," Dr. Medina said. "It is an honor and a privilege to take care of the community."

Woodlake Mayor Rudy Mendoza reminisced about when the only medical care in Woodlake was a mobile trailer

in an empty lot that now houses the Rite Aid.

"I have witnessed a lot of change," Mendoza said. "It is great to see Kaweah Health make this investment in the community."

Tulare County Supervisor Eddie Valero said Kaweah Health's presence in the smaller communities is important to the well-being of Tulare County residents.

"Kaweah Health has an imprint in every single community I serve," Valero said. "Their focus is on family, their focus is on the community, and their focus is on healthcare."

Initially the clinic will have primary care, however specialists will be added as it gets established.

Herbst said Kaweah Health's rural health clinics offer access to the affordable care needed in these communities, taking care of people where they are.

"These clinics aren't just healthcare facilities; they are lifelines," Herbst said. "By offering care close to home, we empower families to take charge of their health, prevent costly emergency visits, and build a healthier future for themselves and their loved ones."

Kaweah Health Valencia Clinic is located at 132 S. Valencia Blvd., and Kaweah Health Woodlake Clinic is at 180 E. Antelope Ave.

The clinics are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. For appointments, call (559) 564-1800.

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Boswell Family Fund Donates \$7 Million for Healthcare in Corcoran

Adventist Health, in partnership with the Corcoran Hospital District and the Boswell Family Fund, held a check presentation event on April 9 to celebrate a transformative \$7,020,000 philanthropic gift – the largest in Adventist Health’s history.

The event, held at Adventist Health Corcoran Medical Office, welcomed community members, patients, local leaders, and elected officials to honor this investment in the health and future of the Corcoran community.

“This investment is more than a donation – it’s a commitment to save lives and ensure every Corcoran resident has access to timely, life-saving care,” said Kerry Heinrich, CEO and president of Adventist Health. “We are deeply grateful to the Boswell Family Fund and the Corcoran Hospital District for making this vision a reality.”

The funding will deliver critical diagnostic and treatment services directly to Corcoran, reducing the need for patients to travel hours for care.

Key services will include:

- \$1.1 million from Corcoran Hospital District to fund 25 home dialysis units, allowing patients with kidney disease to receive treatment from the comfort of home.



The Boswell Family donation is expected to transform healthcare in Corcoran.

- \$3.52 million to install a permanent PET/CT Scanner for advanced cancer and disease detection.

- \$2.4 million to launch a 3D Mobile Mammography Unit, which will be stationed in Corcoran two weeks per month and serve other rural communities the rest of the time.

The emotional highlight of the event came from Maria Matadamas, a local resident, who shared a heartfelt story about her late mother who had to travel two to three hours each way to receive dialysis.

“It broke my heart to see

my mother suffer through such long trips and wait times when all she wanted was to be home resting. I’m happy our city is finally getting the care we deserve,” said Matadamas.

Dignitaries in attendance included:

- State Senator Melissa Hurtado;
- Congresswoman Alexandra Macedo;
- Doug Verboon, Richard Valle, and Joe Neves – Kings County Board of Supervisors;
- Amy Shuklian – Tulare County Board of Supervisors;
- Corcoran City Mayor Sid

Palmerin;

- Corcoran City Manager Greg Gatzka;
- Corcoran Hospital District Board Members; and
- Lisa Shaw – Corcoran Chamber of Commerce.

Medical experts including Dr. Shiveta Cherwoo and Dr. Juan Medina also spoke, emphasizing the life-saving impact of the new services.

“Access to diagnostics like PET/CT scans can make the difference between early detection and late-stage illness,” said Dr. Cherwoo. “This is a critical win for our patients.”

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.

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Compensation Offered for Inflated Generic Drug Prices

California Attorney General Rob Bonta is urging consumers to check their eligibility for compensation for certain generic drug purchases as California joins 50 states and territories in seeking preliminary approval of a \$39.1 million settlement with generic drug manufacturer Apotex over conspiracy to inflate prices and limit competition.

Bonta previously announced the settlement in principle with Apotex last fall, along with a \$10 million settlement with Heritage Pharmaceuticals. At the time of that announcement, the settlement with Apotex was conditioned on the signatures of all necessary states and territories.

Those signatures have been obtained, and the coalition filed the settlement on March 26 in U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut.

"Today, I'm joining 50 states and territories in announcing a settlement that not only holds Apotex accountable, but also puts money back in Californians' pockets," Bonta said. "If you purchased certain generic prescription drugs between May 2009 and December 2019, you may be eligible for compensation. To determine your eligibility, please visit www.AG-GenericDrugs.com, call 1-866-290-0182 or email info@AG-GenericDrugs.com."

The compensation individuals receive will be deter-

mined on a case-by-case basis and depend on, among other things, how much money they spent on the drugs at issue.

The list includes:

- Baclofen tablets, used to treat muscle spasms.
- Budesonide inhalation, used to treat asthma.
- Carbamazepine ER tablets, used to treat seizures.
- Glyburide-metformin, a diabetes medication.
- Verapamil, used to treat high blood pressure.
- Warfarin, used to prevent blood clots.

The settlement agreements resolve allegations that both Apotex and Heritage engaged in widespread, long-running conspiracies to artificially inflate

and manipulate prices, reduce competition, and unreasonably restrain trade with regard to numerous generic prescription drugs. As part of the settlement agreements, both Apotex and Heritage have agreed to cooperate in the ongoing multistate litigations against 30 corporate defendants and 25 individual executives.

Both companies have further agreed to injunctive relief to prevent future misconduct and to a series of internal reforms to ensure fair competition and compliance with anti-trust laws.

California is in a coalition of nearly all states and territories filing three antitrust complaints, starting first in 2016. The first complaint included Heritage and 17 other corporate defendants, two individual defendants, and 15 generic drugs.

The second complaint, which California joined in November 2024, was filed against Teva Pharmaceuticals and 19 of the nation's largest generic drug manufacturers. The complaint names 16 individual senior executive defendants.

The third complaint, to be tried first, focuses on 80 topical generic drugs that account for billions of dollars of sales in the United States and names 26 corporate defendants and 10 individual defendants. Six additional pharmaceutical executives have entered into settlement agreements with the states and have been cooperating to support the states' claims in all three cases.

The cases all stem from a series of investigations built on evidence from several cooperating witnesses at the core of the different conspiracies, a massive document database of over 20 million documents, and a phone records database containing millions of call detail records and contact information for over 600 sales and pricing individuals in the generics industry.

Each complaint addresses a different set of drugs and defendants, and lays out an interconnected web of industry executives where these competitors met with each other during industry dinners, "girls nights out," lunches, cocktail parties and golf outings, and communicated via frequent telephone calls, emails and text messages, which sowed the seeds for their illegal agreements.

A complete list of of generic prescription drugs part of the settlement can be found on *The Good Life* website, www.TheGoodLifeSV.com.

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**Next Deadline:
Friday, June 13**



Jeremy “Elvis” Pearce, on stage in the background, entertains the crowd at last year’s Senior Day in the Park.

Senior Day in the Park Planned for Friday, May 9

(We also featured an article about this event on the front page of our previous issue.)

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) has announced the 53rd Annual Senior Day in the Park will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Friday, May 9, at Mooney Grove Park, 7000 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia.

This annual event, hosted in partnership with the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging, will bring together seniors for a day filled with “aloha spirit,” entertainment and community celebration.

This year’s Senior Day in the Park will feature Hawaiian-themed entertainment, a lunch, games, giveaways and the popular Cake Walk. Local seniors will have the opportunity to enjoy the festive atmosphere, connect with community resources and participate in activities.

“Senior Day in the Park is not only a celebration of our seniors, but also a vital opportunity to connect them with the resources that support independence and well-being,” said

Rep. Valadao Bill Would Reform Access to Oxygen

On April 10, Congressman David Valadao (CA-22) reintroduced the Supplemental Oxygen Access Reform (SOAR) Act alongside Reps. Julia Brownley (CA-26), Adrian Smith (NE-03), and Gabe Evans (CO-08).

This bipartisan, bicameral bill makes critical reforms to improve access to supplemental oxygen for Medicare beneficiaries. The Senate companion bill is led by Senators Bill Cassidy (R-IL), Mark Warner (D-IN), and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

“Supplemental oxygen is lifesaving, but many people struggle to get access due to burdensome Medicare requirements,” said Valadao. “The SOAR Act makes it easier for people to get the oxygen treatment they need to live healthy, active lives. I want to thank my colleagues for joining me in the fight to ensure the availability of this critical medical resource.”

“No one should have to struggle to breathe, yet millions of seniors face this difficult and frightening reality every day,” said Rep. Brownley.

Angel Avitia, director of CSET’s Community Initiatives department. “This event is a chance to honor their contributions while empowering seniors to access the services and support they need to thrive in our community.”

For more information, visit www.cset.org/sdp or call CSET at (559) 732-4194.

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Which Tax Documents Should You Keep and for How Long?

By Christopher Smith

Now that tax time has come and gone, you may be wondering what to do with all of the legal documents, receipts and business papers you’ve accumulated over the past 12 months, especially your tax documents.

“When you’re working on your taxes, you’re trying to figure out what can you keep,” money expert Clark Howard says. “What can you discard? What had you better keep?”

In this article, we’ll discuss how long to keep your tax documents and why, according to Clark.

Clark mostly subscribes to a “rule of sixes” when it comes to keeping tax documents.

“The more complicated your life is, the more things that involve documentation on your return, you keep for six years,” he says.

Tax Returns

“The IRS has three years to go after you on your tax return and requires backup proof of everything you’ve claimed,” Clark explains. If the IRS discovers substantial errors during an audit, they could ask for records up to six years back. “They’ve got six years to go after you and say, ‘Hey you’ve underreported this terribly.’”

So Clark’s general rule is to keep all tax documents for six



Money Expert Clark Howard

years to be on the safe side.

However, there is one thing that Clark wants you to keep forever: your actual tax return so you have proof of filing. Clark explains that “the IRS has no limit on when they can say you failed to file, so having a copy of the return is something that is very important.”

Home-Related Documentation

Proof of expenses related to home improvement is also worth keeping, Clark says.

“If you own a home, you have the ability to sell that home and pocket tax-free as an individual a quarter-million dollars – and for a married couple, \$500,000 – of the gain you have on a home,” he adds.

However, in rare instances where your gain is more than this, you can still reduce the amount of tax you pay by keeping track of your capital improvements. You would want to

create a file of these home improvements and receipts and then hang on to these until you sell your home and then for six years following tax years.

“If somebody has an inspection done of your home and you have to fix this or do this or do that, those are selling expenses that reduce the amount you are taxed. That documentation is what I want you to keep for six years,” Clark says.

Business-Related Documentation

Clark says if you have a business or perhaps own rental property, you should keep anything that documents your investment.

“For your business, I want you to keep that stuff for a long time. Again, six years,” he says.

“I keep full documentation for six years because I do have the complexities that we’re talking about – owning properties, owning a business, I’ve got a lot of footballs in the air – so the documentation is really key,” Clark says.

Another thing that could affect your tax burden is charitable giving. Clark says it’s important that you keep those documents related to donations.

“If you’re a generous soul and you give a lot of money to charity, I want you to keep your documentation for six years,”

Clark says.

How to Store Your Important Financial Information

If you’re tech-savvy, you may opt to keep your tax documents safe and sound in an electronic format in the cloud. Here are some free cloud options to choose from:

- Google One: 15 GB
- Microsoft OneDrive: 5 GB
- Apple iCloud: 5 GB for owners of Apple products, 1 GB for everyone else

Bottom Line

When it comes to deciding how long you should keep a tax return or related document, at least six years is the magic number, according to Clark.

The reason is that you’ll want to make sure your burden of proof is covered in the case of an IRS audit.

“And anything else in your life, the more complicated your life is, the more things that involved documentation on your return, you keep for six years,” he says.

Clark Howard is a consumer advocate who focuses on saving more, spending less and avoiding getting ripped off. In addition to a nationally syndicated radio show, his website www.clark.com features articles and advice as well as podcasts and videos.



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Air Pollution May Harm Our Brain Health as We Age

Long-term exposure to high levels of air pollution may harm the brain health of older adults in England, finds a new study led by University College London (UCL) researchers.

The research, published in the Gerontological Society of America's *The Journals of Gerontology: Series A: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences*, found that exposure to nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is linked to lower scores in key cognitive abilities, particularly language skills.

NO2 mainly enters the atmosphere through fuel combustion, originating from emissions of vehicles like cars, trucks and buses, as well as power plants and off-road machinery. PM2.5 pollution in outdoor air often originates from the combustion of gasoline, oil, diesel fuel or wood, and consists of tiny particles that can be inhaled deeply into the lungs.

The researchers analyzed data from 1,127 adults aged 65 and over who took part in the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) Harmonised Cognitive Assessment Protocol in 2018.

The team examined exposure to air pollution over an eight-to-10 year period (2008 to 2017) and assessed participants' memory, executive func-



tion (i.e. making plans, solving problems and adapting to new situations), language and overall cognitive function.

Participants completed a range of well-established neurocognitive memory assessments such as the East Boston Memory Test and the Wechsler Memory Scale, alongside immediate and delayed recall, backwards counting tasks, and shape drawing.

The findings showed that individuals residing in areas with the highest levels of NO2 and PM2.5 performed worse on cognitive tests compared to those living in areas with average pollution levels. The most compelling evidence of association was observed in language skills, with individuals in

the most polluted areas scoring in the bottom third of the cognitive tests performed.

The study also found that different sources of air pollution have varying effects on cognitive health. For example, pollution from industries, home heating and combustion of fuels (like coal and oil) were strongly linked to poorer language performance (i.e. the ability to access and produce words quickly).

The authors did not examine the reasons behind their findings but suggest that this may be because increased air pollution exposure is most strongly associated with impairment in the temporal lobe (the part of the brain which is essential for language and semantic fluen-

cy). Further research is needed to understand these links.

"Our study shows that air pollution is not just harmful to the lungs and heart but also to brain health, especially when people are exposed to high levels for long periods," said lead author Giorgio Di Gessa, Ph.D., of the UCL Department of Epidemiology and Public Health. "The most consistent links we found were with language ability, which may indicate that certain pollutants have a specific effect on particular cognitive processes."

Consequently, the researchers urge policymakers to strengthen air quality regulations, particularly in areas where pollution levels remain high, to help protect brain health as the population ages.

"By tracking pollution levels over a decade using high-quality data, our research provides robust evidence that sustained exposure to pollutants is damaging people's brain," said ELSA study Deputy Director Paola Zaninotto of the UCL Department of Epidemiology and Public Health.

ELSA is funded by the National Institute on Aging and by United Kingdom government departments coordinated by the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research.

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CALENDAR

Through June 29 - "Joy of Life"

This solo exhibition featuring the work of Melinda Scott continues at CACHE, 125 South B St., Exeter. Admission is free. For more information, call (559) 592-5900 or visit <http://cach-exeter.org/events>.

May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Thursday Night Dances

These dances, featuring music by Trick Shot, are held 7-10 p.m. at the Porterville Veterans Memorial Building, 1900 W. Olive Ave., Porterville. Tickets are \$5. For more information, call (559) 791-7695.

Thursday, May 1 - "Family Search: AI Research Assistant"

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

May 1-31 - Adam Longatti and Austin McKinzie

This exhibit at Arts Visalia, 214 E. Oak Ave., Visalia, featuring oil paintings of the San Joaquin Valley, will have its opening reception on May 2, from 5-7:30 p.m. For info, visit www.artsvisalia.org or call (559) 739-0905.

May 2-3 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale

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

Friday, May 2 - F1rst Friday

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

May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Friday Night Dances

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

Saturday, May 3 - Bourbon & Bites

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this bourbon tasting museum fundraiser from 6-9 p.m. For more information, call (559) 686-2074 or visit tularehistoricalmuseum.org/events.

Sunday, May 4 - Garden Party Mural Fundraiser

This event, featuring a dinner and live and silent auctions, will

be held at the corner of Pine and E Street in Exeter beginning at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$80. For more information, call The Exeter Chamber of Commerce at (559) 592-2919.

May 4, 11, 18, 25 - 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 information, call (559) 651-6714.

May 7, 14, 21, 28 - Bingo

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

Wednesday, May 7 - "Starting an Uncomfortable Conversation"

The Kaweah Health Hospice Foundation and Kaweah Health Continuing Medical Education will present the 42nd Annual Norman Sharrer Symposium at 5:30 p.m. in the College of the Sequoias Theater, 915 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. The event will focus on effective advance care planning and care discussions. Speakers will include Kaweah Health's Palliative Care and Chaplaincy Manager Sandra Shadley and

Dr. Ryan Howard, a hospice and palliative medicine doctor practicing at Kaweah Health. For info, call (559) 624-2359.

Thursday, May 8 - Speed Connect

This event, designed for seniors looking to make new connections, will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, 4:30-6:30 p.m. The cost is \$15. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

Thursday, May 8 - Bingo Night

Exeter Woman's Club will host this event at 201 Kaweah Ave., Exeter. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. For more information, call (559) 827-1933.

May 8-31 - "Gone But Not Forgotten"

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this exhibit featuring the work of artists who have passed away. The opening reception will be on Thursday, May 8, from 5-7 p.m. For more information, call (559) 686-2074.

Friday, May 9 - Senior Day in the Park

This event is scheduled at Mooney Grove Park, 2700 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia. (See article on page 1.)

(continued on page 11)



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f y t i VISIT KaweahHealth.org/PrivateHomeCare

CALENDAR

(continued from page 10)

Saturday, May 10 - Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk sponsored by Kaweah Health and held at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., Visalia, 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 "Gut Health & Mental Wellness." For more info, call (559) 624-2416.

Monday, May 12 - "Brushstrokes of Exeter History"

The Center for Art, Culture & History Exeter (CACHE) will host this 5:30 p.m. Tales of Exeter and Beyond presentation by Dwight Miller about the 33 Exeter murals and the artists who created them, at 125 South B St., Exeter. For more information, call (559) 592-5900.

Wednesday, May 14 - 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 information, email Jennifer at meow.2000@yahoo.com.

Friday, May 16 - 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 10 a.m. The cost is \$10. For more info, call (559) 713-4365.

Friday, May 16 - Senior Prize B-I-N-G-O

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 1:30 p.m. There is a \$5 "drop-in" fee. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

Saturday, May 17 - Wine & Art Walk

This event, featuring art, wine and appetizers will be held along South E Street in Exeter beginning 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$60 and available through CACHE and the Exeter Chamber of Commerce. For more information, call (559) 679-2474.

Monday, May 19 - 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, May 19 - 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 information, call (559) 737-7443.

Tuesday, May 20 - 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.

Tuesday, May 20 - Grief Support Group

American Quality Life Hospice will present this 5:30 p.m. monthly session at Salser & Dillard Life Event Center, 135 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For information, call (559) 409-2665.

Friday, May 23 - Grand Reopening Open House Event

Marbella Visalia (formerly Prestige Assisted Living), 3120 W. Caldwell Ave., Visalia, will host this 1-3 p.m. event, featuring chef-prepared hors d'oeuvres, live music and guided tours. To RSVP (by May 19) or for more info, call (559) 840-4185.

June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays

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

June 4, 11, 18, 25 - Bingo

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

June 5, 12, 19, 26 - Thursday Night Dances

These dances, featuring music by Trick Shot, are held 7-10 p.m. at the Porterville Veterans Memorial Building, 1900 W. Olive Ave., Porterville. Tickets are \$5. For more information, call (559) 791-7695.

Thursday, June 5 - "Creating an Ancestor Sketch"

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

June 5-28 - Kaitlynn Webster and Benny Jordan

This exhibit at Arts Visalia, 214 E. Oak Ave., Visalia, featuring time conceptualized as art and large scale portraiture, will have its opening reception on Friday, June 6, from 5-7:30 p.m. For more info, visit www.artsvisalia.org or call (559) 739-0905.

June 5-28 - Art Exhibit by Lynnette Despain

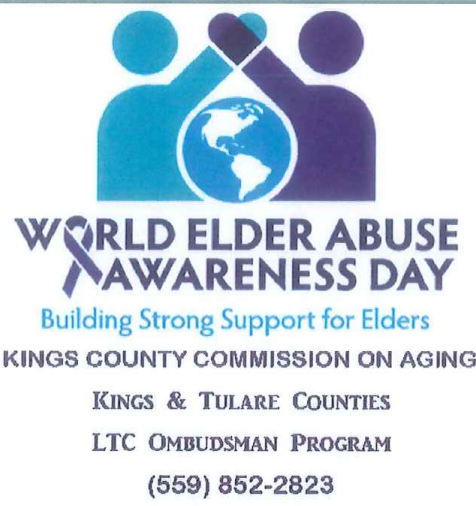
The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this exhibit. The opening reception will be on Thursday, June 5, from 5-7 p.m. For more info, call (559) 686-2074.

Friday, June 6 - F1rst Friday

F1rst Friday in Downtown Visalia, in partnership with the Arts

(continued on page 12)

Kings County Commission on Aging Council



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MORE CALENDAR

(continued from page 11)

Consortium, will present this free community event with art, food and fun from 5-8 p.m. For more information, visit artsconsortium.org/calendar.

June 6-7 - Visalia Gleaning Seniors Yard Sale

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

June 6, 13, 20, 27 - Friday Night Dances

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

Wednesday, June 11 - 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 info, email Jennifer at meow.2000@yahoo.com.

Friday, June 13 - World Elder Abuse Awareness Event

Kings County Commission on Aging Council will host this event, featuring food, prizes,

music, live performances and informational booths, at the Senior Center, 10953 14th Ave., Armona, from 9 a.m. to noon. For more info, call (559) 852-2828. (See article on page 1.)

Saturday, June 14 - Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk sponsored by Kaweah Health and held at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., Visalia, 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 "Physical Activity & Dieting Myths." For more info, call (559) 624-2416.

Monday, June 16 - 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, June 16 - 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 info, call (559) 737-7443.

Tuesday, June 17 - 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.

Tuesday, June 17 - Grief Support Group

American Quality Life Hospice will present this 5:30 p.m. monthly session at Salser & Dillard Life Event Center, 135 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For information, call (559) 409-2665.

Friday, June 20 - Friday Night Dance Luau

The Tulare Senior Communi-

ty Center, 201 North F St., Tulare, will host this special Friday Night Dance event from 6-9 p.m. There is a \$10 entry fee. For more info, call (559) 685-2330.

Saturday, June 21 - Juneteenth: A Day of Freedom

New Life Ministries of Tulare County will host this event celebrating the day of freedom for African-Americans, with live entertainment, music and dancing, food and drinks, raffle and games, at Del Lago Park, 1700 N. Laspina St., Tulare, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.. For more information, call (559) 366-8176.

Better Business Bureau Warns of 'Brushing Scams'

Surprise package on your doorstep? What could be wrong with free products being delivered to your home?

Turns out, you could have been targeted for a recent scam called "brushing." A brushing scam occurs when scammers send unordered packages to people, using their address to create fake verified reviews and boost product ratings.

These items, often inexpensive and lightweight, help third-party sellers appear more legitimate and increase sales.

In brushing scams, third-party online sellers create fake orders, and deliver them to addresses found online. They then act as the receiver, writing a fake 5-star positive online review about the product to increase sales.

The Better Business Bureau is receiving complaints from people getting towels, jewelry boxes, pet toys and more that they never ordered. The items are typically small and have no return address.

To Protect Yourself

Notify the retailer. Brushing and fake reviews are against Amazon's policies, so contact Amazon Customer Service if this happens to you and the

product appears to come from Amazon. They will investigate and take action. If you prefer to contact the business by phone, be cautious about searching for support phone numbers.

Attempt to identify the sender. If you can identify the sender of unordered packages, consider checking for potential false reviews in your name - and ask for the reviews to be removed.

Check your account for recent orders. Some targets of brushing scams can be deluged with unordered packages, creating a serious problem. If this happens, consider whether to refuse package delivery at your home address and temporarily direct items that you did order to a package acceptance service.

Change your account passwords. This may be a sign that personal information has been compromised, and to improve account security, keep a close eye on credit reports and credit card bills.

You are allowed to keep the merchandise!

The Federal Trade Commission says you have a legal right to keep unordered merchandise.



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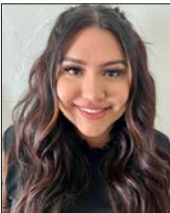

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The mobility course

Ken W. on the stairs

Elain practices with walker

Local Seniors Practice Navigating Challenging Terrain

Residents from Visalia’s Quail Park communities visited Kaweah Health Rehabilitation Center’s mobility course on April 3. Seniors from Quail Park at Shannon Ranch and Quail Park on Cypress practiced safely navigating a variety of terrains while walking or using wheelchairs.

The mobility training course, which opened in September 2024, features a range of surfaces, including river rock, gravel, brick walkways, flagstone, pebbles, crushed rock, turf, curbs and various ramps.

The course helps people who have had life-altering injuries or are experiencing the effects of aging learn how to maneuver through various types of terrain under the supervision of

medical professionals. It is located at 840 S. Akers St. in Visalia.

Residents enjoyed the opportunity to test their skills on the course. Ken W., one of the participants, said, “I’ll be coming back as an outpatient to continue practicing here.”

Some residents were familiar with the course from previous visits, including Judy G., who recalled, “I was here last year, and they really had me working.”

“Our residents are truly appreciative of this chance to participate in the Kaweah Health mobility course,” said Jeff Moyer, executive director of Quail Park at Shannon Ranch. “We are fortunate to have access to such an excellent facility where they can safely practice navigating

different terrains, whether walking or using a wheelchair.”

Quail Park on Cypress is an active aging community for seniors in Visalia, offering independent living, enhanced assisted living, assisted living and memory care options in a resort-style community.


Quail Park on Cypress is located at 4520 W. Cypress, Visalia. More information can be found at qpmcvisalia.com.

Access to the course is available with a referral from your doctor for assistance with balance training.





Judy G. on gravel

The Deadline for Our July/August Issue Is Friday, June 13



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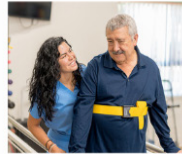




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QUAIL CORNER

Baby Boomers and Dementia

Q&A with Kimberly Jensen

I am seeing more and more Baby Boomers my age get dementia. Is there anything that I can eat or drink that might help prevent me from getting that disease?

There have been a lot of studies done on how highly processed foods that we regularly eat, such as bacon, luncheon meats and basically anything with preservatives, have a negative effect on our cognitive abilities. Start reading the ingredient labels on the foods you purchase and basically anything you cannot pronounce is not healthy for your brain.

The National Institute on Aging recommends that there are foods that are very beneficial for your brain. Fish, especially fatty fish such as salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines, are high in omega-3 fatty acids which have been linked to a reduced risk of cognitive decline and Alzheimer's.

While there is not one specific fruit that definitively prevents dementia, berries, especially blueberries and strawberries, have often been cited for their potential to reduce dementia risk. The reason for this is that these fruits are very rich in antioxidants and flavonoids that help protect the brain from damage and improve cognitive function. Many diets specifically recommend these berries for their brain-protective properties.

There are two powerful green leafy vegetables that are shown in studies to have a positive effect on the brain. Spinach

and kale came out on the top of the list due to them being rich in nutrients and antioxidants that can help protect brain cells from chronic damage.

As far as drinks are concerned, a new study out of Japan found that green tea and macha decreased dementia by 53.8%. The study was conducted in Japan and had 1,000 participants. The participants that drank green tea or macha two times a day showed these remarkable results. This is a drink that has been used in China and Japan for centuries and science has just now caught up to ancient Chinese and Japanese medicine.

Why are these teas so good for the brain? What they are finding out is that these teas help detangle the amyloid plaque in the brain that is associated with Alzheimer's. Basically, over time these plaques and neurofibril tangles can accumulate in the brain which they believe is caused by diet, inactivity and low magnesium.

Macha and green tea also have great impacts on your immune system. They contain an amino acid which helps to reduce a stress hormone in your body called cortisol. By reducing stress, it helps to protect your body from oxidative stress damage that can be done to your brain, heart and gut biome.

If you are stressed and not getting a good night sleep, you are putting yourself at risk for getting sick. It is scientifically proven that those who are more stressed are more vulnerable to getting ill. Protect your immune



system and your body by drinking green tea or macha.

Dr. Robert Love is a neuroscientist and host of the podcast "Brain Fit." He is a researcher and educator in Miami, Florida, who focuses on helping people prevent Alzheimer's Disease with the use of science. He prefers macha over green tea.

Macha is the pulverized green tea leaf that you drink versus just steeping a green tea leaf in hot water and drinking the juices from the tea leaves. He believes that macha will give you a higher amount of the amino acid that makes these drinks such a powerful addition to your diet.

I suggest you listen to his podcasts or visit his Facebook page. He has a lot of videos that will help you keep up to date on the latest research on brain health.

One of the worst things you can do to your brain is to drink alcohol. Alcohol damages brain cells and the damage cannot be repaired once it is done. Even one drink a day has a negative effect on cognitive ability and brain health. I hope this is helpful and that you start to make the only brain you have, healthier.

Do you know of any in-person caregiver/dementia support groups? I have been dealing with my husband, whose dementia has declined dramatically in the past year. I would

like to get away from home and visit with others, going through the same type of stress.

I facilitate three support groups a month that you can attend in Tulare County.

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia, is always on the third Tuesday of the month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. You do not have to RSVP.

Rocky Hill Community Church, 237 S. E Street, Exeter, is always on the third Monday of every month from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. It is held in the church house on the left side of the church building. You do not have to RSVP.

First Baptist Church, 469 N. Cherry St., Tulare, is always on the third Monday of the month from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. It is in room 115. Park in the large parking lot at the back and you will see the 115 classroom from the parking lot. If you have any questions, call me at (559) 737-7443.

There is also an online support group that I can give you information about if you email or contact me directly. If you are a caregiver and cannot leave your home for an in-person meeting, this might be a better option for you. KimberlyJ@qpcypress.com

Everyone is welcome to attend but we suggest that you do not bring the person with dementia with you. We will be sharing helpful tips for you to better deal with difficult behaviors. All caregiver support groups are free of charge and are not specific to only dementia.

Kimberly Jensen has been working with Quail Park as a Senior Resource Advocate for over ten years and has helped hundreds of families find solutions to their senior problems.

If you have a question, you can send it to her at KimberlyJ@QPCypress.com or call (559) 737-7443.

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MouseGoggles Offer Clues to Spatial Navigation, Memory

By David Nutt
Cornell Chronicle

Thanks to their genetic makeup, their ability to navigate mazes and their willingness to work for cheese, mice have long been a go-to model for behavioral and neurological studies.

In recent years, they have entered a new arena – virtual reality – and now Cornell researchers have built miniature VR headsets to immerse them more deeply in it.

Cornell researchers built miniature VR headsets to immerse mice more deeply in virtual environments that can help reveal the neural activity that informs spatial navigation and memory function.

The team’s MouseGoggles – yes, they look as cute as they sound – were created using low-cost, off-the-shelf components, such as smartwatch displays and tiny lenses, and offer visual stimulation over a wide field of view while tracking the mouse’s eye movements and changes in pupil size.

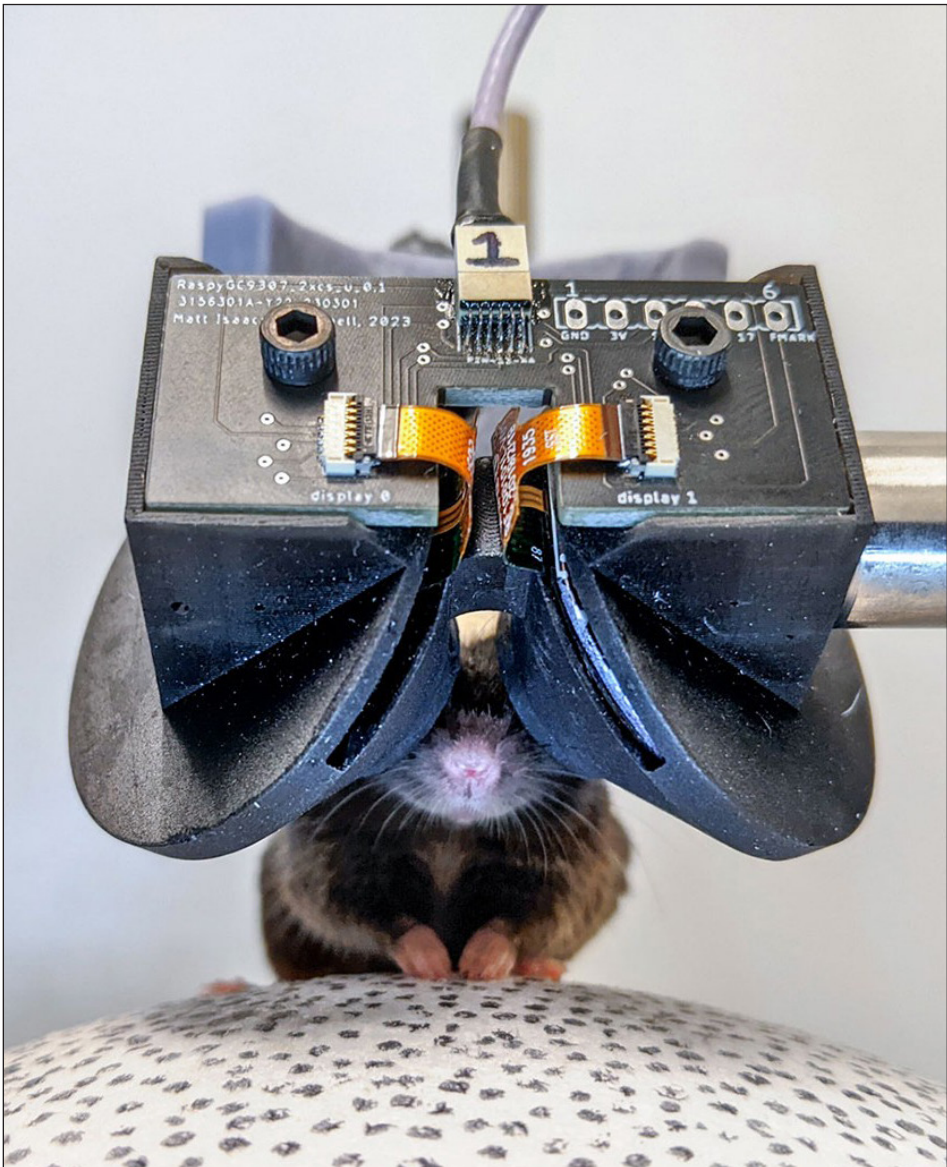
The technology has the potential to help reveal the neural activity that informs spatial navigation and memory function, giving researchers new insights into disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease and its potential treatments.

The research, published Dec. 12 in *Nature Methods*, was led by Chris Schaffer, professor of biomedical engineering in Cornell Engineering, and Ian Ellwood, assistant professor in neurobiology and behavior in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The study’s lead authors are postdoctoral researcher Matthew Isaacson and doctoral student Hongyu Chang.

“It’s a rare opportunity, when building tools, that you can make something that is experimentally much more powerful than current technology, and that is also simpler and cheaper to build,” Isaacson said. “It’s bringing more experimental power to neuroscience, and it’s a much more accessible version of the technology, so it could be used by a lot more labs.”

Schaffer’s lab, which he runs with Nozomi Nishimura, associate professor of biomedical engineering, develops optics-based tools and techniques that can be used, along with other methodologies, to investigate the molecular and cellular mechanisms that contribute to loss of function in neurodegenerative diseases.

One particular line of research has been studying the unexplained reductions in brain blood flow in mice with Alzheimer’s disease. By unblocking tiny capillaries and increasing that flow, the researchers have shown that memory function in mice improves within hours.



The MouseGoggles technology has the potential to help reveal the neural activity that informs spatial navigation and memory function, giving researchers new insights into disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease and its potential treatments.

“That was very exciting from the perspective of, hey, maybe there is something you could do in Alzheimer’s disease that could recover some cognitive function,” Schaffer said. “The next steps are to uncover how blood flow improvements are improving the function of neurons in the brain. But to do those experiments, we needed new capabilities compared to what existed in the world before.”

Beginning about a decade ago, researchers began rigging up cumbersome – and quite costly – projector screens for mice to navigate virtual-reality environments, but the apparatuses are often clunky, and the resulting light pollution and noise can disrupt the experiments.

“The more immersive we can make that behavioral task, the more naturalistic of a brain function we’re going to be studying,” Schaffer said.

Isaacson, who previously designed display systems for fruit flies, set about assembling a stationary VR setup that would be simpler but even more immersive, so the mice could learn more quickly. It so happened that many of the components he needed – tiny displays, tiny lenses – were already commercially available.

“It definitely benefited from the hacker ethos of taking parts that are built for something else and then applying it to some new context,” Isaacson said. “The perfect size display, as it turns out, for a mouse VR headset is pretty much already

made for smart watches. We were lucky that we didn’t need to build or design anything from scratch, we could easily source all the inexpensive parts we needed.”

The goggles aren’t wearable in the traditional sense. A mouse stands on a treadmill, with its head fixed in place, as it peers into a pair of eye pieces. The mouse’s neural activity patterns can then be fluorescently imaged.

Working with Ellwood’s lab, the team conducted a battery of tests on begoggled mice. On the neurological front, they examined two key regions in the mouse brain: the primary visual cortex, to ensure the goggles form sharp, high contrast images on the retina; and in the hippocampus, to confirm that the mouse brain is successfully mapping its virtual environment. Other tests were more tech-oriented, to see if the goggle displays updated quickly and were responsive to the mouse’s movements.

And most importantly, the researchers needed to observe how the mice behaved in their new eyewear. One of the most effective tests was tricking a

mouse into believing that an expanding dark blotch was approaching them.

“When we tried this kind of a test in the typical VR setup with big screens, the mice did not react at all,” Isaacson said. “But almost every single mouse, the first time they see it with the goggles, they jump. They have a huge startle reaction. They really did seem to think they were getting attacked by a looming predator.”

The researchers received an unexpected contribution when they submitted their findings to *Nature Methods*. An anonymous reviewer pushed the researchers to add a set of cameras in each eye piece that could record the mouse’s pupils and verify the animal’s engagement and arousal.

The request was both a difficult task and a fortuitous blessing.

“They challenged us to do something really hard and make it all work,” Schaffer said. “In the last year, there’s been now three papers published with VR goggles for mice. You know, the field was ripe for this to happen. But we’re the only one with pupillometry and eye tracking, and that is a critical capability for much of neuroscience.”

The researchers are looking to further develop the goggles, with a lightweight, mobile version for larger rodents, such as tree shrews and rats, that can include a battery and onboard processing. Schaffer also sees the potential of incorporating more senses, such as taste and smell, into the VR experience.

“I think five-sense virtual reality for mice is a direction to go for experiments,” he said, “where we’re trying to understand these really complicated behaviors, where mice are integrating sensory information, comparing the opportunity with internal motivational states, like the need for rest and food, and then making decisions about how to behave.”

Co-authors include doctoral student Rick Zirkel; postdoctoral researcher Laura Berkowitz; and Yusol Park ’22 and Danyu Hu ’22.

The research was supported by the Cornell Neurotech Mong Family Fellowship program; the BrightFocus Foundation Alzheimer’s disease fellowship program; the Brain and Behavior Research Foundation; and the National Institutes of Health.

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Volunteers Help Families Navigate the Hospice Practice

Tracey Nottingham knows that not knowing what to do when someone you love is dying can be very stressful. That's why she wants to make sure the residents of Tulare County know what to do when facing difficult end-of-life situations with their loved ones.

Nottingham began as the Volunteer Specialist for Kaweah Health Hospice in November, after both of her parents passed away. She was introduced to hospice when her dad's health was failing, and she didn't know anything about hospice or the volunteer services available.

"I work with the volunteers to offer support so patients and their families don't have to navigate this process alone," Nottingham said. "I want patients and their families to be able to relax and enjoy the last days with their loved ones, knowing they will be taken care of by Kaweah Health and our services."

Kaweah Health Hospice provides care for people who have a terminal illness or disease and are no longer seeking a cure. The decision to enter hospice care is usually made by the patient and their family under the guidance of a physician. Once that decision is made, the patient can remain at home or in a long-term care center.

Beyond just the medical



A room at Kaweah Health Hospice

portion of hospice care, there is emotional support that is often offered by volunteers. That is where Nottingham comes in, finding volunteers who can help patients and their families through what can be a difficult time.

Volunteers can help patients and their families in the following ways:

- **Companionship:** Volunteers sometimes simply sit quietly with a patient. Volunteers may interact with patients by reading stories, playing games, listening to music and reviewing photos.
- **Respite care:** Volunteers may stay with patients while their caregiver runs errands, goes to medical appointments, shops, or simply takes a break

from their usual responsibilities. These breaks allow caregivers to recharge so they can continue to care for their loved one.

- **Veteran to Veteran:** Volunteers who are veterans can be of comfort to veteran patients and their families.
- **Specialized:** Volunteers who have skills can share them with patients, including massage therapy, pet therapy, cosmetology, and Reiki, a technique for stress reduction and relaxation.
- **Assistance:** Volunteers at the Ruth Wood Open Arms House help with a variety of duties including visiting with patients, greeting visitors, and assisting with meal preparation.
- **Office Volunteers:** These

volunteers help with a variety of office tasks. While computer skills are helpful, they are not required.

- **Special Events:** Hospice hosts special events for families throughout the year with the help of volunteers. Whether by helping at an event or by assisting with mailings, volunteers help make things happen.

Kaweah Health Hospice volunteers must be at least 18 years old, complete an application packet (which includes health screenings and background check), and complete an interview.

For more information about hospice services or volunteering, visit KaweahHealth.org/Hospice or call (559) 733-0642.

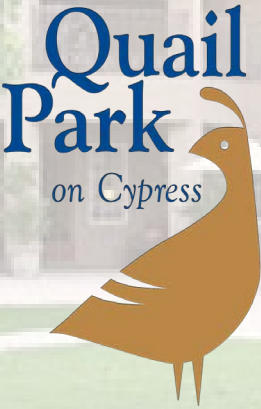


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Seniors Prefer Movies that Reflect Real-Life Experiences of Older Adults

Three-quarters (73%) of adults age 50 and older are more likely to support movies or TV that include characters similar to them in age and life experiences, according to "Breaking Stereotypes: The Push for Real Representation of Older Adults in Movies and Television," a new survey from AARP.

For more than two decades, AARP's Movies for Grownups program has championed movies for grownups, by grownups, by advocating for the 50-plus audience, fighting industry ageism and encouraging films and TV shows that resonate with older viewers.

"The results of this survey demonstrate what we have suspected since we started the Movies for Grownups Awards program - that older adults care deeply about seeing their experiences accurately reflected on screen," said Heather Nawrocki, AARP vice president of AARP Movies for Grownups.

"Likewise, the studios and storytellers who are able to capture the experiences and perspectives of older adults benefit from the significant buying power and loyalty of this age group," she said.

AARP's new research identifies several barriers to improved and accurate portrayals of older actors in movies or TV. Respondents' perceptions



that viewer audiences prefer younger actors is reported by over half (52%) as a major barrier to increased 50-plus representation on-screen.

In addition, over two-in-five respondents believe that industry bias (42%) and limited opportunities for older actors (46%) are significant obstacles to achieving this.

Most respondents (69%) say they consider it important that movies or TV ensure accurate representation of older adults in both casting and storylines, and four-in-five believe that male actors (80%), female actors (84%), and directors, writers, and producers (83%) age 50 and older bring unique perspectives.

People 50-plus have significant buying power in the entertainment industry, with 61 million attending movies and

over 84 million subscribing to streaming services in the past year, according to MRI-Simmons.

Additionally, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that adults 50 and older spent about \$10.7 billion on movies and TV streaming in 2023 - a significant increase from \$8.9 billion in 2022. AARP's Longevity Economy Outlook shows that the 50-plus age group contributes \$8.3 trillion to the U.S. economy annually, a figure that's projected to rise to \$12.6 trillion by 2030.

By creating dynamic, nuanced characters reflecting the life experiences of people over 50, the industry can continue to better connect with this powerful audience, driving both engagement and revenue.



"On Golden Pond," starring Henry Fonda and Katherine Hepburn (pictured) captured the experiences and perspectives of older adults.

Mosquito Season is Approaching!

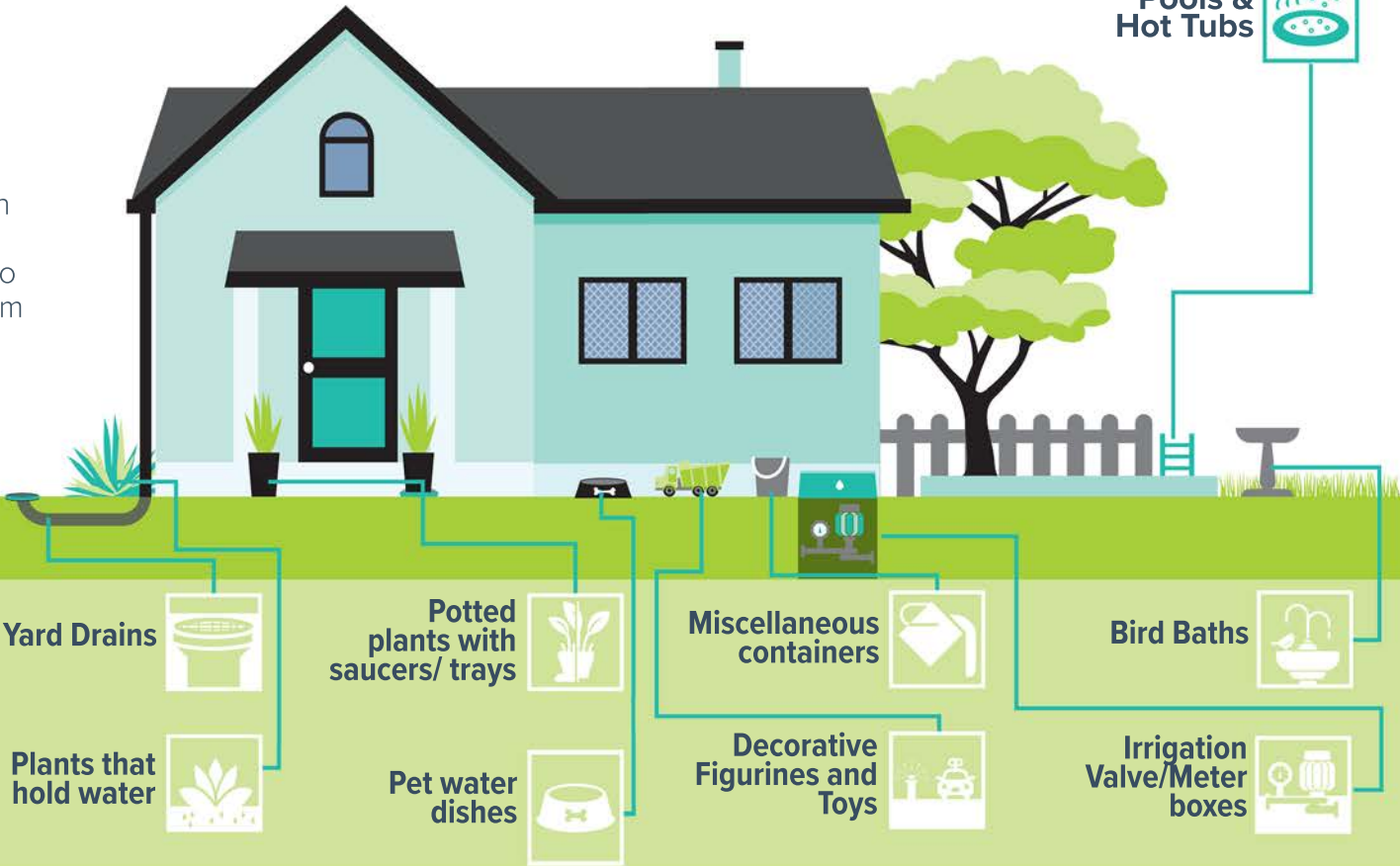
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Helpful Garden Tips for June

By Peyton Ellas
Tulare-Kings Master Gardener

June means hot and dry weather, with occasional drops in temperature. Daytime temperatures average around 92 degrees Fahrenheit daytime and 58 degrees Fahrenheit at night. Expect almost 14 hours of sunshine per day, but don't expect rain: June is historically the third driest month of the year. We need to keep our gardens healthy and growing with water-efficient practices and low-water-use plants.

Planting

Your ornamental planting should be finished by the middle of the month. If you must plant ornamentals in summer, choose water-tolerant plants. In low-water-use gardens, this can be the many sage (*Salvia*), among them California native sage, sage hybrids and cultivars like "Hot Lips" and "Flame"; plus California fuchsia (*Epilobium*), Yarrow (*Achillea*), Butterfly Bush (*Buddleia*), Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia*), Bougainvillea, rosemary, Red yucca (*Hesperaloe*) and high desert plants like Apricot Mallow (*Sphaeralcea*), and the popular bladderpod (*Peritoma arborea*).

In the edible garden, plant melon, winter squash and pumpkin, basil, corn and okra. Edible gardening is a high-maintenance project and is not low-water. But as long as we don't waste or overuse water and we maximize our har-

Monitor your garden, both edible and ornamental, for pest insects like scale, aphid, whitefly, stink bug, spider mite and earwigs. Edible gardens with flowers and hedgerows can be a great habitat for garden allies like lacewing, ladybug, birds, spiders, native wasp, butterflies and moths. Monitor populations of pest insects and see if the beneficials, including birds, can keep the numbers manageable. If some help is needed, follow the "least toxic first" method of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practice before you reach for the kills-everything insecticide.



Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)

Manage mosquitos by limiting standing water and using dunks containing *Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis* (BTI). Plant trays and pet water dishes are a good breeding ground for the daytime biting *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, commonly called the "ankle biter," or Zika mosquito. No mosquito-carrying virus has been transmitted



Bougainvillea

are mowing too short. This flat creeping weed with a red spot on the leaves must be hand pulled or hoed before plants set seeds. Also control the ants with baits, changing the active ingredient every few months.

Conserving

Follow good practices by avoiding over-watering. If you do only one thing, repair leaks! If you can do more, the Save-OurWater website has easy to follow tips for prioritizing water use and conserving water (<https://saveourwater.com/how-to-save-water/around-the-yard/>).

Many of these tips are easy to make into a life-long habit, drought or no drought. If you are still a holdout, trying to hold onto your water-thirsty lawn and England or New England-type landscape, perhaps some of the new garden styles appearing throughout our valley will inspire you to modernize your garden and reduce the water needs of the ornamental landscape so we can contin-

ue to use water as needed to grow our home gardens and orchards without worry.

Maybe this is the year to investigate water-storing features like cisterns, rain garden or rain barrels. Try to tolerate benign insects and keep in mind insects feed bats and birds, including those rare tri-colored blackbirds and beautiful Bull-ock's orioles we've seen this year.

Have a safe, healthy, full-of-garden-wonder month! Happy Gardening!

Questions?

Call the Master Gardeners:
Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

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

Visit our website for past articles, sign up for our e-newsletter, or email us with your questions: http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mgtularekings14/>; Instagram at: @mgtularekings

The Tulare-Kings Counties Master Gardeners will answer your questions in person:

Visalia Farmer's Market, first and third Saturdays, 8 - 11 a.m., Tulare Co. Courthouse;

Luis Nursery, second Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., 139 S. Mariposa Ave., Visalia;

Hofman's Nursery, third Saturday, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., 12491 W. Lacey Blvd., Hanford.



Lagerstroemia (Crape Myrtle)

vest by controlling pests and diseases, we should not be afraid to keep our edible gardens and fruit orchards.

Growing your own food, even a few herbs, is so satisfying that everyone who can should grow in containers or in the ground, balcony or porch plants, or a few acres.

Maintaining

Lawns should be watered deeply and infrequently. Keep your grass at least three inches tall to help the crowns stay cool and not dry out between watering. Consider removing your lawn or reducing the size and/or switching from a high-water-use species to a low-water-use lawn or turf substitute.

in California, but the mosquitos are still a nuisance because they bite multiple times.

Weed Control

Crabgrass thrives in over-watered, over-mowed lawn. Change the lawn care and reduce this weed. **If** you use an herbicide, be sure to follow the directions carefully; don't just throw it on by the handful.

Nutsedge also loves over-watered lawns and planting beds, and it's tough to get rid of. Be diligent with hand pulling, hoeing and spraying to remove it before it takes control of your garden or lawn.

Spurge is often a sign you also have an Argentine ant problem, and in lawns that you



Yarrow



(Above left) The first known plaque to be placed on the Election Tree was in 1905. Photo taken October 31, 1918. (Center) The famous Election Tree is conveniently located on Charter Oak Drive near Venice Hill. Circa 1955. (Right) The Election Tree has been marked by a number of plaques over the years. This one was placed at the tree in 1949.

The Election Tree Still Stands, or Does It?

Trees have played an important part in Tulare County history, and as a result many have achieved celebrity status, including the Douglass Tree that stood in downtown Visalia, the General Sherman Sequoia in Sequoia National Park, and the Election Tree located along the Kaweah River about seven miles east of Visalia.

One of the oldest, the Election Tree, sometimes called the Charter Oak or Witness Tree, dates back to the very beginning of the county, and was part of the county's first election. The story has it that many of the county's earliest pioneers looking for shade, voted under its branches.

Tulare County was created by the California State Legislature in April 1852 by lopping off the huge southern section of Mariposa County, creating a new county comprising nearly 25,000 square miles of land. The only settlement of note in the new county at the time was Woodville, so it was designated the county's first seat of government.

Woodville had an interesting beginning. In 1850, John Wood and a group of men came to a wooded area along the Kaweah River about seven miles east of what is now Visalia. Wood built a log cabin and had plans for other structures as well. Chief Francisco, the leader of the local group of Yokuts Indians, visited Wood and gave him and his men 10 days to leave or face fatal consequences.

The white men stayed beyond the deadline and they were killed. Word of the "massacre" traveled quickly but even so, more white settlers arrived, occupying the area. The settlement of Woodville was named after John Wood.

On July 10, 1852, the new county's first election took place. Grand Island in the Kings River was one polling place and Woodville became the other. July 10th was a typical hot summer day and so election officials at Woodville decided that voting inside of Wood's cabin was unbearable, so they moved the

voting to shade under a nearby large oak tree – a tree that would eventually be called the Election Tree.

Early on, the significance of the tree was recognized by the settlers and many wanted the historic tree marked as such. Even though there was general agreement to mark the tree, there was debate over which tree it was.

First of all, the area was covered with oak trees. Secondly, Wood's cabin was gone, and many of the rivers and channels had changed their course. Adding to the identification challenge, Woodsville had become a ghost town in the middle of private property.


Determining the exact tree became difficult if not impossible. But history buffs were determined to recognize the historic tree. Some old timers swore that they could identify the tree, but memories faded and over time they were not sure.

According to Annie R. Mitchell, Tulare County's pre-eminent historian, in 1905, several men who had voted under the famous tree went out to the site and identified an oak tree on the north side of the Kaweah River "about a mile from the obliterated site of Woodville." However, Mitchell questioned their identification. Why would the early voters walk a mile or so from Woodville to find shade when there were other oak trees closer to the polling place?

But the early settlers won over the doubters and in 1905, a wooden historical marker was placed on the tree that the pioneers had identified. Some openly speculated the tree was chosen because it was adjacent to a public roadway making visits to the historic site more convenient. For many years, historians openly questioned whether the tree was the actual one.

For 120 years, the giant oak tree located east of Road 168 on Charter Oak Drive, about seven miles east of Visalia, has been designated Tulare County's Election Tree. But is it the tree that provided shade for the county's first voters in 1852?

Dusting Off History
with Terry Ommen



Most historians say probably not. Well-respected historians Joe Doctor and Alan George believe the "real Election Tree" toppled over in 1995 on private property about a half mile south of the "plaqued" tree, closer to the site of Woodsville. Solving the mystery of the actual election tree will probably never happen, but for now at least, we need to be satisfied that the old oak tree that has the marker, symbolically at least, represents the location of the election of 1852. Go out and take a look. It's worth the short trip and easy to find along Charter Oak Drive. Know that the spot you are in is in the heart of where Tulare County began.

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