



IN THIS ISSUE: A film about hospice care, Granny Basketball in Visalia, art and aging, "The Oldest Person in the World," a different loneliness

# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume XIII, Number 1 • July/August 2026



Farmersville seniors celebrate the ribbon-cutting at their new senior center on May 22.

## Farmersville Senior Center Moves to City's Transit Center

The Farmersville Transit Center is now the home of the Farmersville Senior Center & Community Resource Hub.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony on May 22 celebrated the repurposing of the city's 1,400 square-foot transit center at 550 W. Front St. to serve Farmersville seniors.

The facility also includes a 2,000-square-foot covered outdoor seating area.

For years, the Farmersville Senior Center has been sharing space with other community groups at the Farmersville Community Center on Avery Avenue.

"It is the beginning of a new chapter, a fresh start, and a place our seniors can truly call home," said Farmersville Mayor Tina Hernandez. "This building was originally built as a transit station, but for over a year, it has sat vacant."

She credited Mayor Pro-Tem Araceli Ochoa with the idea of adding a "community resource hub" by working with organizations and community partners to provide resources, tools, education and support services for the city's seniors.

Farmersville seniors will likely only use the facility for about 15 years, however, when the Farmersville Transit Center is expected to be needed for its original purpose, to serve the area's transportation needs.

"When the time comes that this transit station is fully needed for transit operations, my hope

is that we will secure grants and funding to build our seniors a permanent center designed specifically for them, right next door on the vacant lot, which would be a perfect location near the fire station in case of an emergency, and near the transit center in the event they all want to go sightseeing," Hernandez said.

## South Valley Observes World Elder Abuse Awareness Month

June was World Elder Abuse Awareness Month and observances were held in both Tulare and Kings Counties.

To remember seniors who reported some form of abuse in 2025, Tulare County HHS and county officials planted purple flags on the lawn at Tulare County Government Plaza in Visalia.

On June 2, both the Tulare and Kings County Board of Supervisors adopted resolutions proclaiming June 2026 as Elder Abuse Awareness Month in their respective counties.

On June 12 in Armona and June 17 in Corcoran, the Kings County Commission on Aging Council hosted World Elder Abuse Awareness Events featuring food, prizes, music, informational booths and entertainment.

"Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, and financial exploitation," said Tulare County District Attorney Tim Ward. "Abuse can also be in the form

## Older Adults Hit Hardest by Internet Crimes in 2025

During an investigation of a fraudulent call center in India, Special Agent Ron Miller identified a potential American victim in her 70s likely being scammed out of tens of thousands of dollars.

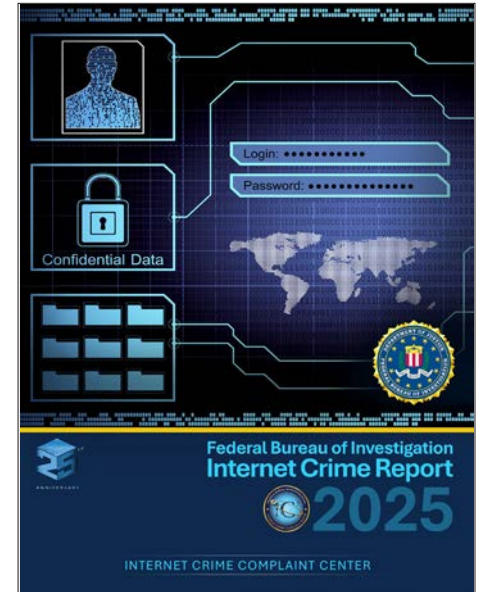
Miller, who is assigned to the Washington Field Office, uncovered the victim's identity as part of an investigation that included monitoring shipments of bulk cash linked to the Indian-based call center targeting U.S. citizens.

Time was of the essence, so Miller quickly tried to contact the victim.

"I knew the financial damage this could cause the victim," he said.

The victim ignored Miller's first two calls. She answered his third with suspicion and then hung up and promptly blocked his number. Undeterred, Miller reached the victim on her office phone, and they arranged to meet in person.

Miller eventually convinced



her she was being scammed. "The victim just broke down emotionally in disbelief after realizing that she had lost her life savings to a scam," Miller said.

The financial toll was devastating. The victim had already sent more than \$500,000 in cash, wire transfers and gift cards. She had also pulled out the equity in her once paid-off

(continued on page 6)



Tulare County Supervisors and representatives of the county's Health and Human Services Department prepare for World Elder Abuse Awareness Month by planting flags at Government Plaza on May 26.

of isolation or neglect. It is estimated that one in ten, or 10% of seniors, are victims of some sort of abuse."

In 2025, the TCDA's Office filed 23 felony and 18 misdemeanor counts of elder abuse, while the KCDA's Office filed 17 counts.

"According to CalPERS, in California alone, more than 200,000 reports of elder and dependent adult abuse are

made annually," Ward said. "Many more cases never come to light."

"As our senior population continues to grow, so does the need for awareness, protection, and access to legal resources," said TCDA Supervising Victim Advocate Nicole Burnham.

Help is available by calling (559) 636-5471 in Tulare County, or (559) 852-4000 in Kings County.



The first meeting for Visalia's new Granny Basketball League team was held at the Tulare County Public Library in Visalia on May 16.

## Visalia's Granny Basketball League Team Holds First Meeting

The Granny Basketball League exhibition game in Visalia led to a May 16th meeting to start a league team in Visalia.

The April 10th game, which featured members of two league teams, the California Poppies and the Oakdale Broncos, was arranged by Barb Trammell, founder of the 800-player league with teams representing 57 cities in 11 states and one Canadian province.

A few local women watching the game found themselves on the court, playing their first basketball game under 1920s-style women's rules.

Granny basketball is different than the basketball that most people are used to.

"You have to stay in your

third of the court," Trammell explained. "There's no running and jumping and no physical contact, and you can only dribble twice."

An organizational meeting will be held later this summer to plan a practice schedule and choose a team name. Suggestions so far have included the Visalia Vipers and the Visalia Vixens.

Trammell stresses that no-previous basketball experience is necessary to play.

For more information about the Visalia team (or starting a team in another South Valley city), call (209) 770-8146.

To learn more about the Granny Basketball League, visit [www.grannybasketball.com](http://www.grannybasketball.com).

### VETERANS COLUMN

## Identification Cards

When I was growing up in the late nineteenth hundreds, there was a saying: If they don't know who you are, then they don't know what you've done. But now, in modern times, the saying should be: If they don't know who you are, then they don't know what benefits you're eligible for. This brings us to this topic: Identification Cards.

We get a lot of questions about the different types of IDs, and hopefully, this will answer some of the most frequently asked questions and offer a little insight.

California Driver's License



Cecil Webster

Eligible veterans have the opportunity to add the word "VETERAN" to the front of their Driver's License/ID card to indicate that they have served in the United States military. The VSD-001 (Veteran Status Verification) form is used to add the "VETERAN" designation to your California Driver's License or ID card. The DMV does not provide this form. Our Veterans Services Office is happy to assist with the VSD-001 form.

Medal of Honor recipients, American Ex-Prisoners of War, and 100% disabled veterans due to a diagnosed disease or disorder that substantially impairs or interferes with their mobility are eligible veterans who may also get a Disabled placard. This benefit waives registration fees and provides a free license plate for one passenger motor vehicle, one motorcycle, or one commercial motor vehicle with an unloaded weight of less than 8,001 pounds. Please note that the DMV may charge a fee.

### Veteran Health Benefit Card

When you're enrolled in VA health care, you get a Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC) that you use to check in to your appointments at VA medical centers. You may also use this card to get discounts offered to Veterans at many stores, businesses, and restaurants. If you have a VHIC, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a Veteran or to get retail or business discounts.

### Military Base Access

Another popular question we get is, "Can I get on base once I'm service-connected?" Every military institution has its own rules for gaining base access. I am speaking only of Naval Air Station (NAS) Lemoore. The veteran must have "service-connected" on a VHIC. An award letter will not suffice. MUST be VA health card. NAS Pass and Decal will run a background check, which will take 7-10 business days. Spouse is eligible but also must complete a background check. Contact NAS Lemoore at (559) 998-3386 for more access questions.

As always, be kind to one another.

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](mailto:TCVSO@tularecounty.ca.gov).



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# Geraldine Soult's Named '2026 Belle of the Ballpark'

The Rawhide Rustler classic competition, the "Belle of the Ballpark," took place on June 10 and, while the weather was warmer than usual, the participants enjoyed their activities as much as ever.

The Belle of the Ballpark this year was sponsored by American Quality Life Hospice and Lux Dermatology.

This year, the Belle of the Ballpark participants participated in "Cheek Pinching," a "Strut Your Stuff" contest (a walk through the Kaweah Health Grandstands at Valley Strong Ballpark), "Yo Mama" jokes, and a new competition this year, "Gen Z Slang" sayings. The new competition has contestants attempting to use slang used by Gen Z.

This year's contestants were Jane Avila of Hanford, Mary Vargas of Valley Christian Home Assisted Living, and Geraldine Soult's of Quail Park on Cypress.

The trio was introduced to the Valley Strong Ballpark crowd this year by sharing their favorite baseball memories.

Jane's favorite memory was playing baseball in grammar school and looking like a "slugger." Mary's favorite memory was getting to sit in the dug-out of Candlestick Park and then watching a Dodger/Giant Game. And Geraldine's favorite memory was when she was a softball player in the 8th grade



2026 Belle of the Ballpark Geraldine Soult's



Mary Vargas, Geraldine Soult's, Tipper and Jane Avila pose for a picture before the 2026 Belle of the Ballpark Competition.

and nervous about going into high school. She said that playing softball gave her the confidence to believe in herself.

Geraldine, at 105 years old, was one of the oldest Belle of the Ballpark contestants in recent years.

"Geraldine is a trooper," said Rawhide Assistant General Manager Markus Hagglund. "She is one of the older contestants we've had, but she's still moving around good and making everyone laugh and having a good time."

After the contest, votes were

counted at the American Quality Life Hospice booth at the ballpark. At the end, it was Geraldine who came out on top as this year's Belle of the Ballpark.

"I don't know what to say, I'm honored," exclaimed Soult's. "I haven't won anything in a long time."

Geraldine will now receive season tickets to Valley Strong Ballpark from Quail Park Communities. She also received a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Visalia Rawhide partner Creative Flowers.

The Rawhide and Assistant

General Manager Markus Hagglund want to thank all of the contestants and their families for coming to the ballpark for this year's Belle of the Ballpark competition.

"We know it was later and hotter than usual this year, but we thank everyone for participating," Hagglund said. "It's one of our favorite events of the year."

For tickets to next year's Belle of the Ballpark competition or for a Rawhide Rustler Package visit [visaliarawhide.com](http://visaliarawhide.com) or call (559) 732-4433.



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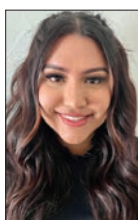
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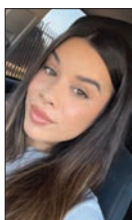
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# Adventist Health Tulare Offers New, Lifesaving Heart Procedure

Adventist Health Tulare is expanding access to advanced heart care with the launch of Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI), also known as coronary angioplasty.

This minimally invasive, life-saving procedure, which treats blocked or narrowed arteries, will allow community members to receive timely treatment close to home without needing to leave the city or undergo open-heart surgery.

PCI is a minimally-invasive procedure used to treat coronary artery disease, which is a condition where plaque builds in the arteries that supply blood to the heart. This buildup can reduce blood flow, leading to symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, and an increased risk of heart attack.

During the procedure, a cardiologist inserts a thin tube through a blood vessel to reach the heart. A small balloon is then used to open the blocked artery, and a tiny mesh tube, called a stent, is set in place to help keep it open and restore healthy blood flow.

As the leading cause of death in the United States, cardiovascular disease continues to impact millions of individuals and families each year. By offering PCI locally, Adventist Health Tulare is taking a significant step toward improving heart health outcomes across



Adventist Health Tulare now offers access to advanced heart care with the launch of Percutaneous Coronary Intervention.

the community and surrounding areas.

Adventist Health Tulare is licensed for an Elective PCI Program, meaning the hospital meets rigorous standards to safely perform this procedure and has the necessary protocols, training, specialized supplies, and expert care team in place.

"This is a transformational moment for cardiac care in our community," said Patrick Hoffman, director of cardiopulmonary services at Adventist Health Central California Net-

work. "The cardiac catheterization lab team in Tulare has been able to diagnose coronary artery disease, but patients often needed to be transferred elsewhere for treatment. With PCI approval, we are no longer limited to just identifying the problem — we can now treat it immediately."

Timely care is critical when it comes to heart disease.

"In cardiology, time is muscle," said Ankur Gupta, MD, interventional cardiologist at Adventist Health in Central California. "When a patient is

experiencing a heart attack or critical coronary blockage, every minute is vital. The ability to open blocked arteries and restore blood flow in real time reduces treatment delays, limits the need for patient transfers, and significantly improves clinical outcomes."

The addition of PCI services also ensures patients can remain close to home during critical moments in their care.

"This advancement allows our community members to receive comprehensive cardiac treatment surrounded by their loved ones and support systems," Hoffman added. "It reflects our commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based care that meets national standards."

The PCI program will be led by a team of experienced cardiologists, including Drs. Ankur Gupta, Reza Rafie, Shashi Sharma, Atul Singla, and Bikram Soni, along with specially trained nurses and cardiovascular technologists.

With this expansion, Adventist Health Tulare strengthens its ability to respond to cardiac emergencies and provide seamless, lifesaving care when seconds count.

For more information about cardiac services at Adventist Health Tulare, visit [www.Adventisthealthcentralca.org/Heart-Care](http://www.Adventisthealthcentralca.org/Heart-Care).



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# Heavy Caring Responsibilities May Hasten Cognitive Decline

Stressful caring responsibilities reduce brain function for people aged 50 and over, whereas light caring duties can actually be beneficial to middle-aged and older people's mental abilities, a new University College London (UCL) study finds.

For the study, published in *Age and Ageing*, researchers used 2004-05 to 2021-23 data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), a long-running, UCL-led nationally representative survey that gathers a wide range of information from about 20,000 people aged 50 and older in England who are re-interviewed every two years.

The survey, which is made up of 12 topics, includes information on the participants' caring responsibilities and their physical and mental health.

For this study, researchers used information about caring responsibilities and responses under the "Cognitive Function" topic.

Cognitive Function relates to the mental processes in general, including basic functions such as being able to pay attention and retain information.

To measure the rate at which brain function changed over time, the researchers focused on questions designed to assess an individual's "executive function" – that is, the more sophisticated ability to juggle competing tasks and make decisions – and memory.

Executive function was measured using survey participants' scores (from 0 to 63) when asked to name as many different animals as possible in a minute. Memory was assessed using participants' combined scores (from 0 to 20) when they were given ten common words to remember immediately and after a short delay.

Using a statistical technique known as Propensity Score Matching – which reduces selection bias by simulating randomization – researchers paired 2,765 carers with 2,765 non-carers, all aged 50 and above.

They found that those providing very intensive care (50 hours or more per week), caring



within the household, or caring for a spouse/partner, showed a more rapid decline in brain function than non-carers.

Conversely, they found that taking on lower-intensity caring responsibilities (between five and nine hours per week), caring outside the household, and caring for parents/parents-in-law exhibited a slower decline in brain function than non-carers.

Building on previous UCL research, they found that heavy carers experienced an extra level of cognitive decline equivalent to about one third of the normal decline seen each year with aging. By contrast, lighter carers showed a slower decline, effectively offsetting about one third of the usual annual decline in brain function.

Memory changes followed a similar but much weaker pattern than for executive function. These effects were not influenced by sex or the wealth of the carer.

"Our study shows that the caring responsibilities many people take on later in life can be a double-edged sword," said lead author Dr. Baowen Xue (UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care). "On the one hand, lighter caring responsibilities can be good for you by providing mental stimulation from interacting with loved ones

or others you're helping and a sense of purpose and usefulness, but being overloaded with caring tasks has exactly the opposite effect and can accelerate people's mental decline in terms of not being as mentally sharp or quick-thinking as they used to be.

"We found that caring within the household or for a spouse or partner – as well as long hours – can have this negative effect because caring for a loved one at home is often associated with providing care for long periods of time," he added.

Researchers are calling for the government to provide "intensive" carers – that is, people with high caring workloads – with better access to funded formal care and replacement care.

"By 2040, around 20% of adults in England will be living with major illnesses," Dr Xue said. "With the (National Health Service) struggling to cope and social care in crisis, much of this growing demand for care will fall on family members and friends who step in as unpaid carers.

"Our findings show that this shift has profound implications: carers' wellbeing is often overlooked and there is a real danger that many people overburdened with caring responsibilities will suffer the consequences," he continued.

"Intensive carers are most at risk and need stronger support to prevent overload, such as better access to funded formal care and replacement care. Lower intensity carers, who may benefit cognitively, should be supported to keep their caring roles manageable.

"For policymakers, understanding carers' health outcomes – as highlighted by our findings – will be essential for designing policies and interventions that protect both those who provide care and those who receive it," he said.

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# Internet Crimes...

(continued from page 1)  
home.

The emotional impact can be as equally devastating, as scam victims often struggle with embarrassment, anxiety, stress and depression.

The case is a prime example of how convincing and manipulative these criminals can be. The victim is a distinguished criminology professor with extensive knowledge in victimology.

"Almost anyone can be a victim," Miller said. "These guys are just that good."

According to a 2025 report from the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), complaints from victims over 60 ex-

ceeded 201,000 and reported losses were more than \$7.7 billion. Complaints increased by 37% and losses by 59% compared to 2024.

The average reported loss for older victims was more than \$38,000 in 2025, with at least 12,400 victims claiming losses of at least \$100,000.

Older citizens are attractive targets for many reasons. First, they tend to have accumulated significant savings throughout their lives. Additionally, older victims may be driven by loneliness to communicate with strangers. And they can be more trusting of people, too, making them more likely to engage with unsolicited phone

calls, text messages and emails. In phishing and spoofing scams, criminals send these types of unsolicited – but convincing – emails, text messages, and phone calls to request personal, financial, or login credentials.

Last year, more seniors fell victim to phishing/spoofing frauds than any other type, with more than 48,000 complaints – more than 24% of all claims, according to the IC3 report

But the biggest money drain for seniors in 2025 continued to be investment schemes, with more than \$3.5 billion in reported losses last year. Schemes that included cryptocurrency as an element en-

snared more than 42,000 older victims, resulting in \$4.3 billion in losses.

The professor that Miller uncovered fell victim to a government impersonation scheme, a scam in which someone poses as a government official to defraud a victim.

In 2025, government impersonation schemes generated 32,400 complaints across all age ranges, with reported losses of nearly \$798 million. Among senior victims, IC3 logged more than 8,600 complaints about government impersonation scams.

Miller said the scammer claimed to be from the Drug Enforcement Administration and said her name and Social Security number had been linked to financial accounts associated with drug trafficking and money laundering.

The scammer also told the victim there was a warrant for her arrest.

After the victim pleaded her innocence, Miller said, the scammer told her they did not believe she was guilty of any criminal activities. She was actually the victim of identity theft, they said – her information was likely stolen by the drug cartels they were investigating.

The scammer offered to help her by clearing her name of any criminal activities and protecting her assets from the drug cartel if she agreed to cooperate with the government.

Cooperation included strict secrecy. The victim could not tell anyone, including other law enforcement – like an FBI agent.

The scammer also told the victim that the drug cartels or the government might try to seize her assets. The best thing the victim could do, the scammer said, was to transfer all her money to the government for safekeeping in a "federal locker" or "government vault."

While rapid reporting to IC3 can sometimes support the recovery of lost funds, "recovering money lost in scams, especially those originating overseas, is challenging and unlikely," said Miller. "Typically, the money is long gone."

The victim in Miller's case can no longer look forward to retirement, Miller said.

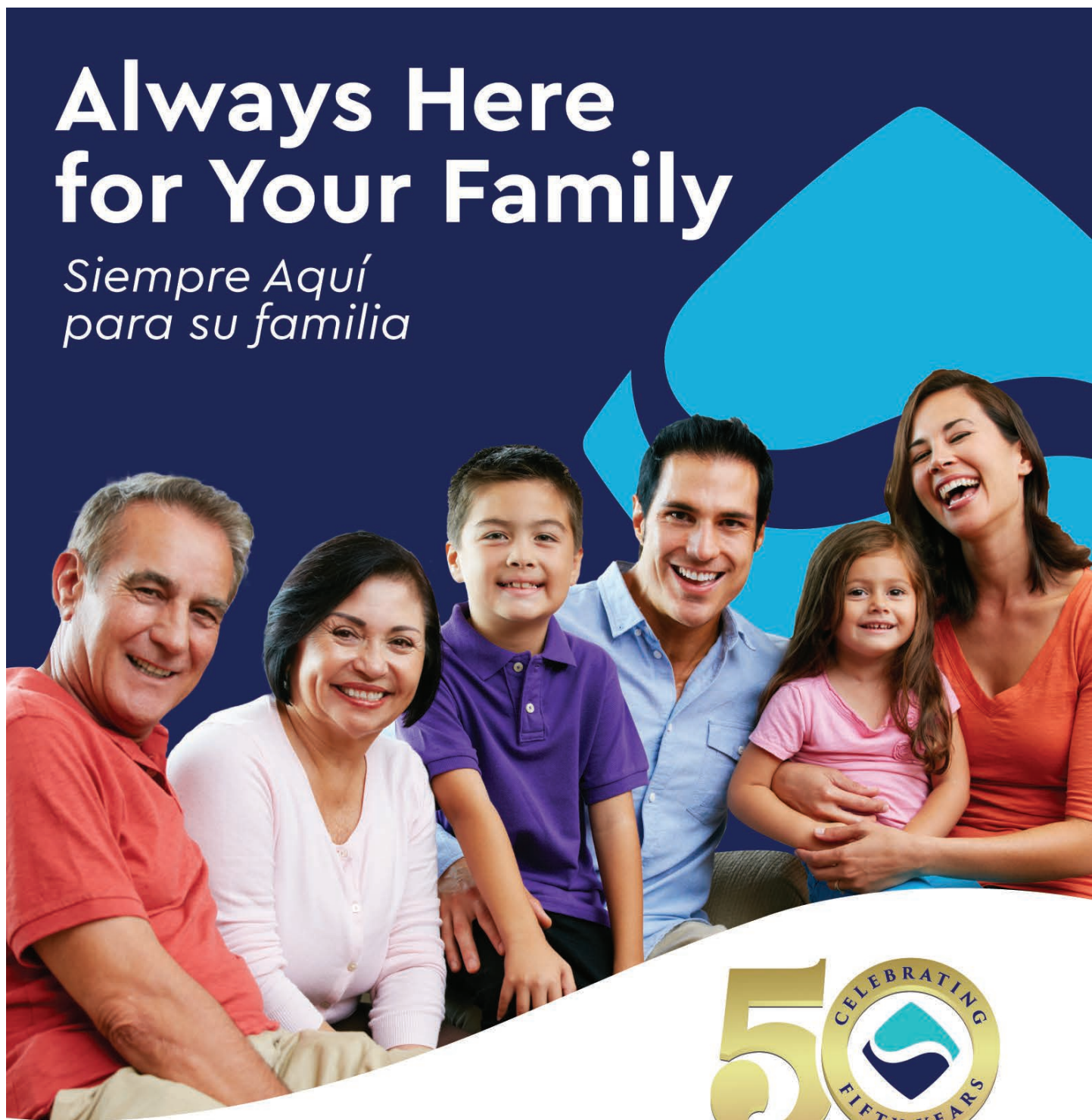
"When the victim liquidated all her savings from her bank accounts and brokerage accounts, the scammer instructed the victim to cash out her home equity," he said.

"They wiped her out of everything."

**Avoiding Scams and Frauds**  
Miller's case highlights some traditional red flags:

- The demand for secrecy, which isolated the victim
- The sense of urgency to

(continued on page 7)



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# Engaging with Arts Linked to Slower Pace of Aging

Regularly taking part in arts activities such as reading, listening to music or visiting a gallery or museum may slow the pace of biological aging, suggests a new study by University College London (UCL) L researchers.

The study, published in the journal *Innovation in Ageing*, looked at survey response and blood test data from 3,556 adults in the UK. Researchers compared participants' arts and cultural engagement with chemical changes to DNA that influence biological ageing without altering the genetic code.

The research team found that those who engaged in arts and cultural activities more frequently, and who engaged in a wider diversity of these activities, appeared to have a slower pace of aging and a younger biological age, as suggested by changes to DNA.

The apparent effects were comparable to those seen for exercise. For instance, people who did an arts activity at least once a week seemed to age 4% more slowly than those who rarely engaged with arts. This was the same as those who exercised at least once a week compared to those who did no exercise.

The links were stronger for middle-aged and older adults aged 40 or above and remained after accounting for factors that might skew the results such as BMI, smoking status, education level and income.

"These results demonstrate

the health impact of the arts at a biological level," said lead author Professor Daisy Fancourt, UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care. "They provide evidence for arts and cultural engagement to be recognized as a health-promoting behavior in a similar way to exercise.

"Our study also suggests that engaging in a variety of arts activities may be helpful," she added. "This may be because each activity has different 'ingredients' that help health, such as physical, cognitive, emotional or social stimulation."

"Our study provides the first evidence that arts and cultural engagement is linked to a slower pace of biological aging," said Senior author Dr Feifei Bu, UCL Institute of Epidemiology & Health Care. "This builds on a growing body of evidence about the health impact of the arts, with arts activities being shown to reduce stress, lower inflammation and improve cardiovascular disease risk, just as exercise is known to do."

The researchers used data from the UK Household Longitudinal Study, a nationally representative sample whose participants' blood samples were analyzed to estimate biological age and pace of aging.

This was done using seven epigenetic clocks – tests that look at age-related DNA changes (DNA methylation). Each of the seven clocks measured methylation (where a methyl molecule attaches to a



nucleotide) at different sites on the genome.

The two newest clocks, DunedinPoAm and DunedinPACE, estimate the pace of aging, with a faster aging score associated with a higher risk of age-related diseases. Both frequency and diversity of arts engagement and physical activity were found to be linked to slower aging.

For the DunedinPACE clock, doing an arts activity at least three times a year was linked to aging 2% more slowly, monthly engagement was linked to 3% slower aging, and weekly activity to a 4% slower aging rate, compared to those who en-

gaged with arts less than three times a year.

In another test, PhenoAge, which estimates biological age, people who engaged in arts and cultural activities at least weekly were a year younger on average compared to those who rarely engaged. People who did exercise at least weekly were just over half a year younger on average.

The other, older epigenetic clocks analysed in the study did not show any benefit for either arts and cultural engagement or physical activity. The team noted this was in line with previous studies finding no link between epigenetic age, as measured by these clocks, and physical performance such as walking speed. The researchers said this may be because these clocks were less sensitive to predicting age-related decline.

Professor Fancourt and her team at UCL have investigated links between arts and health over nearly a decade.

Professor Fancourt is a UNESCO Chair in Arts & Global Health and Director of a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Arts and Health at UCL.

The new study received funding from UK Research and Innovation and Wellcome.

## Internet Crimes...

(continued from page 6)

protect her assets.

- The fear of arrest by law enforcement unaware of the victim's "innocence."

- A law enforcement agency requesting cash or valuables.

Other scam red flags include:

- Unsolicited emails, phone calls or texts.

- Requests to wire money.

- Requests to pay bills or legal fees with retail gift cards.

- Offers that are too good to be true.

The best way to avoid scams is to ignore unsolicited communications, especially calls from unknown numbers. The longer scammers talk to victims, the more successful they are with the scam, Miller explained.

"Just don't engage," he said.

Some common scams

aimed at older people include:

- Grandparent scams: Criminals pose as relatives and claim they need money immediately.

- Tech support: Criminals pose as technology support representatives and offer to fix non-existent computer issues.

- Romance scams: Criminals develop online romantic relations with lonely seniors.

- Charity scams: Criminals collect money for fake charities.

- Contest/lottery scams: Criminals tell victims they have won money and just need to pay some fees to collect.

People who believe they are victims of a scam should contact their banks immediately. They should also file a report at [ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov) and provide as many details as possible.

(Reprinted from [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov).)

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# Over 9 Million Older Adults Missing Out on \$58 Billion in Benefits

The National Council on Aging (NCOA), a national organization dedicated to the right to age well, has updated its interactive Benefits Participation Map that shows more than 9 million older adults are missing out on \$58 billion in benefit programs that can help them pay for food, medicine and other daily costs.

(The map can be found at [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org) by clicking on "Press Room," then "NCOA News" and scrolling to the press release.)

Developed with the Urban Institute, the map provides national, state and local level estimates on participation rates and the number of eligible older adults who are not enrolled in three benefits programs – the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, monthly support for food), Supplemental Security Income (SSI, monthly cash aid), and Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs, help for Medicare premiums, deductibles, and co-insurance).

"Behind every data point is an older adult forced to make impossible choices – between groceries and medication, or rent and medical care," said Ramsey Alwin, NCOA president and CEO. "These life-saving benefits are crucial in helping them stretch their limited dollars and being able to afford essentials."

Many older adults are sim-

ply unaware these programs exist, and others incorrectly believe they are ineligible. NCOA encourages older adults and their loved ones to visit [BenefitsCheckup.org](http://BenefitsCheckup.org) to see what they might be eligible for and how to apply.

### Key National Findings

- Only 38% of eligible adults age 65 and older participated in SNAP in 2023,
- Just 40% participated in SSI, and
- Fewer than half (49%) participated in MSP.

As a result, NCOA estimates that in 2023:

- 9.1 million eligible older adults were not receiving SNAP,
- 3.6 million were not receiving SSI, and
- 6.6 million were not enrolled in MSP.

NCOA estimates that the total value of these unused benefits in 2023 was \$58 billion based on the following assumptions: \$188 a month for SNAP (average for households with an adult age 60 or over in 2023), \$552.29 a month for SSI (average for older adults ages 65 and over as of December 2023), and \$164.90 a month for MSP (the standard Part B premium in 2023).

Not having economic resources is a life-and-death issue in America. Recent research from NCOA and the Leading Age LTSS Center at UMass Boston found that older adults



who make \$20,000 a year or less die nine years earlier than those who make \$120,000 a year or more.

### Key State Findings

The five states with the largest populations of eligible older adults – California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas – were either among those with the highest estimated participation rates or at least ranked in the top half of states. This brings up the national average. As a result, over two-thirds of states had estimated participation rates below the national rate.

Eight states had the highest five participation rates: District of Columbia, Massachusetts, New York, California, Oregon, Alaska (first for SSI),

Florida (tie with Alaska for MSP) and Kentucky.

Seven states had the lowest five participation rates: Wyoming (lowest in all three programs), New Hampshire, North Dakota, Iowa (only for SNAP), Minnesota (only for SNAP), Delaware and Utah.

### About NCOA

The National Council on Aging works with thousands of national and local partners, providing resources, best practices and advocacy to create the conditions for everyone to age with health and economic well-being.

Founded in 1950, it is the oldest national organization focused on older adults. For more information, visit [www.ncoa.org](http://www.ncoa.org).

**2025-2026**  
**CIVIL GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT**



**The 2025-2026 Civil Grand Jury FINAL REPORT**  
is now available to be viewed by the public.

*The following are titles of reports for 2025-2026:*

- ARE FOOD CARTS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW?
- EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN TULARE COUNTY
- EXETER MEASURE P REVIEW
- HELP, I THINK I'VE BEEN SCAMMED!
- POPLAR COMMUNITY SERVICE DISTRICT
- TULARE COUNTY PONDING AND RECHARGE BASINS

You can access the report electronically at the Tulare County Civil Grand Jury's website:  
<https://tularecounty.ca.gov/grandjury/>  
Click Reports, click the year you wish to review.

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A groundbreaking ceremony in Farmersville on June 12 officially started construction on Gardenia Courtyards.

## Gardenia Courtyards Breaks Ground

Construction has begun on Gardenia Courtyards Senior Apartments, a housing project in Farmersville.

The apartments, for those 62 and older, will be located at North Farmersville Road and East Kristen Street, and include 42 units. Thirty-four of the units have one bedroom, eight have two.

The gated community will include a park, a dog park, a boc-

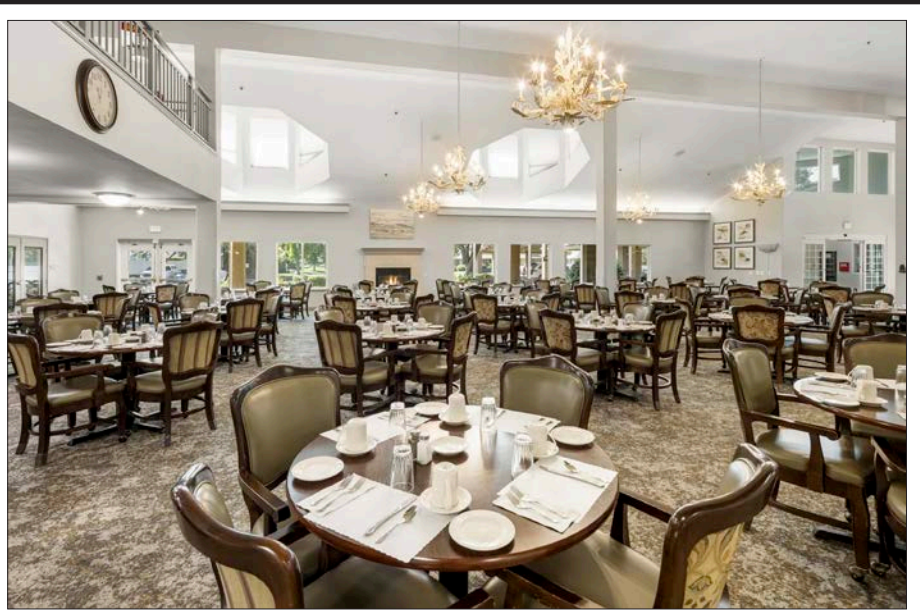
ce ball area, and a covered picnic area.

Rents are structured to accommodate individuals with incomes between 30% and 60% of the median income in the area.

"This project is about more than just housing," said Araceli Ochoa, Farmersville mayor pro-tem. "It's about dignity, independence and ensuring our seniors have a place to call home."

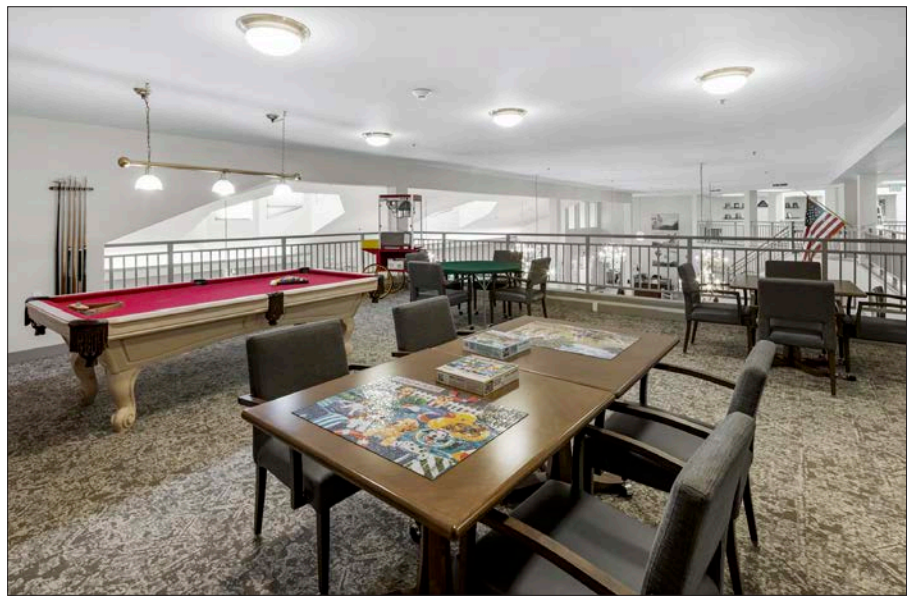


Artist rendering of Gardenia Courtyards.



## Sierra Hills Upgrades its Facilities

Sierra Hills Senior Living in Porterville unveiled its newly renovated facilities on June 16 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony conducted by the Porterville Chamber of Commerce. The \$180,000 renovation improves both the individual living spaces and the shared common areas across the community's 121 apartment homes and cottages. Pictured above is its new dining room and below is its new game room.



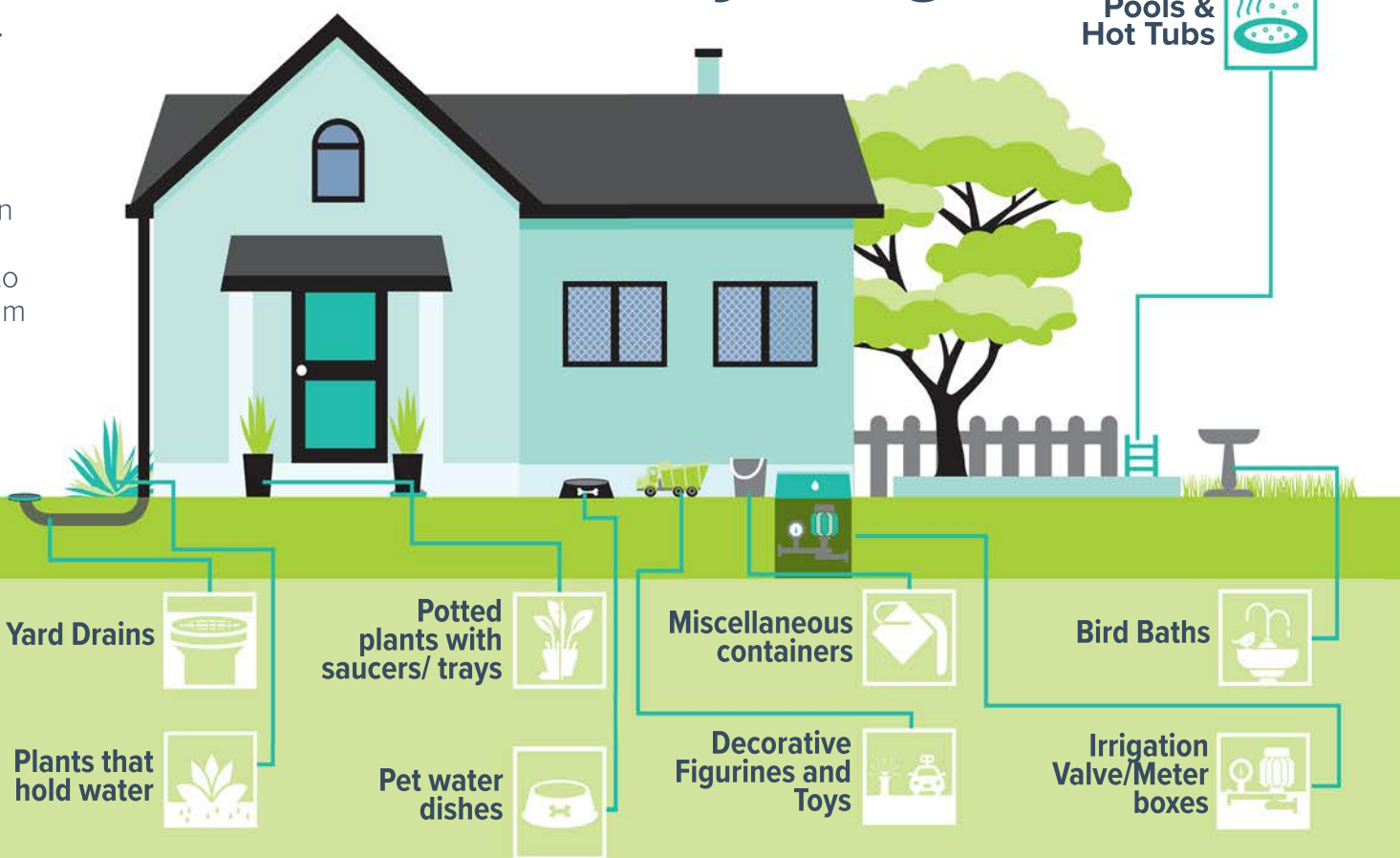
# Mosquito Season is Approaching!

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# CALENDAR

## Now through August 1 – Patriotic Exhibit

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this exhibit featuring military uniforms, the Manuel Toledo Military Collection, armaments and model planes, Rankin Aeronautical Academy Memorabilia, and the Military Leader Memorabilia of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Jr., General Maurice Preston and Manuel Toledo in its Depot Room. For more information, call (559) 686-2074.

## July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 – 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, July 2 - Independence Day Luncheon

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11 a.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Thursday, July 2 – "American State Papers: A Resource for Early American Research"

The Sequoia Genealogical Society and Pamela Bell-Dallas will present a 6 p.m. program

about papers that contain legislative and executive documents from the early years of the United States government, covering the period from 1789 to 1838. Refreshments will follow. This free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more info, call (559) 685-4518.

## July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – 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.

## Friday, July 3 – 3rd Annual Independence Spectacular

This event will be held at Riverway Sports Park, 3611 N. Dinuba Blvd., Visalia, from 6-10 p.m. Admission is free for all ages. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Friday, July 3 – 59th Annual Fireworks Extravaganza

This event will be held at Tulare County Fairgrounds, 620 South K St., Tulare. Gates open at 6 p.m. Admission is \$5. For more information, call (559) 685-2350.

## Friday, July 3 – Freedom Fest

Eagle Mountain Casino will sponsor this event at the Porterville Sports Complex, 2701 W. Scranton Ave., Porterville, from 3 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. Admission is \$15 per car. For more information, call (559) 782-7499.

## Friday, July 3 – 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 [www.artsconsortium.org/calendar](http://www.artsconsortium.org/calendar).

## July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 – 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.

## July 5, 12, 19, 26 – Senior Pride Bingo Sundays

This 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.

## Tuesday, July 7 – Quarter Bingo

This event for those 50+ will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 1:15 p.m. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Wednesday, July 8 – Valley Renal Support Group

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

## July 9-August 1 – Art Exhibit by Wanda Cottengim

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this exhibit in its gallery. Cottengim is a talented artist who expresses her painting talents in watercolors. For more information, call (559) 686-2074.

## July 10-11 – 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.

## Saturday, July 11 – 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 "Skin Health." For more information, call (559) 624-2758.

## Saturday, July 11 – Community Bingo

Grand Oaks Senior Living, 999 North M St., Tulare, will host this free-to-play event. Concession opens at 12:45 p.m. and bingo starts at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (559) 467-6208.

## Friday, July 17 – Senior Resource Fair

Grand Oaks Assisted Living, 999 North M St., Tulare, will host this opportunity to meet representatives from various community organizations, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event features raffle prizes and a free BBQ lunch for those 55+. For more information, call (559) 572-9346.

## Friday, July 17 – 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 admission fee. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Saturday, July 18 – Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk, sponsored by Altura Centers for Health, will be held at Shelter #4 in Del Lago Park, 1700 N. Laspina St. in Tulare from 8-9:30 a.m. The topic this month is "Shoes." For more information, call (559) 686-9097.

## Monday, July 20 – 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., Exeter. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

## Monday, July 20 – 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, July 21 – 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, July 21 – Quarter Bingo

This event for those 50+ will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 1:15 p.m. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Tuesday, July 21 – Grief Support Group

American Quality Life Hospice will present this 5:30 p.m. *(continued on page 11)*



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# CALENDAR

(continued from page 10)

monthly session at Salser & Dillard Life Event Center, 135 E. Caldwell Ave., Visalia. For information, call (559) 409-2665.

## Thursday, July 23 – Senior Dance

This event, featuring music by Tina Marie, will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 5:30 p.m. Pre-sale tickets are \$10, \$12 at the door. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – Senior Pride Bingo Sundays

This 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.

## Tuesday, August 4 – Quarter Bingo

This event for those 50+ will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 1:15 p.m. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## August 5, 12, 29, 26 – 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.

## August 6, 13, 20, 27 – 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, August 6 – "Using Available Tools When Researching Early Pre-Civil War New England"

The Sequoia Genealogical Society and Kathy Burrow will present a 6 p.m. program about finding bits and pieces of family trees in pre-Civil War Massachusetts. Refreshments will follow. This free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more info, call (559) 685-4518.

## Friday, August 7 – Kaweah Health Golf Classic

Kaweah Health is hosting this event to benefit its Pediatric and Surgical Recovery Units at Visalia Country Club, 625 N. Ranch St., Visalia. For more information, call (559) 624-2359, or email Foundation@KaweahHealth.org.

## August 7-8 – 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, August 7 – 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 [www.artsconsortium.org/calendar](http://www.artsconsortium.org/calendar).

## August 7, 14, 21, 28 – 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, August 8 – 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 "Stress Management." For more information, call (559) 624-2758.

## Wednesday, August 12 – Valley Renal Support Group

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

## Friday, August 14 - Luau Luncheon

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11 a.m. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Saturday, August 15 – Walk with a Doc

This informational walk and talk, sponsored by Altura Centers for Health, will be held at Shelter #4 in Del Lago Park, 1700 N. Laspina St. in Tulare from 8-9:30 a.m. The topic this month is "Flu Season." For more information, call (559) 686-9097.

## Monday, August 17 – 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., Exeter. For more information, call (559) 737-7443.

## Monday, August 17 – 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, August 18 – Quarter Bingo

This event for those 50+ will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 1:15 p.m. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Tuesday, August 18 – 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, August 18 – 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, August 21 – 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 admission fee. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

## Saturday, August 22 – Community Bingo

Grand Oaks Senior Living, 999 North M St., Tulare, will host this free-to-play event. Concession opens at 12:45 p.m. and bingo

starts at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (559) 467-6208.

## Thursday, August 27 - Annual Denim and Diamonds Banquet and Casino Night

The Tulare Downtown Association will host this event at the T.D.E.S. Portuguese Hall of Tulare, 515 North I St., Tulare. For tickets or more information, call (559) 685-2350.

## Thursday, September 3 – "TDNA Demystified: A Beginner's Guide to Cracking Your Genetic Code"

The Sequoia Genealogical Society and Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew will present a 6 p.m. program about DNA testing, one of the most powerful tools available to genealogists. Refreshments will follow. This free event will be held at the Tulare Public Library, 475 M St. in Tulare. For more info, call (559) 685-4518.

## Friday, September 4 – 29th Annual Chile Verde Tournament

Tulare-Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is hosting this event at Valley Oaks Golf Course, 1800 S. Plaza Dr., Visalia. For more information, call (559) 734-6020.

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# My Social Security: The Free Account Everyone Needs to Set Up Before Retirement

For many of us, Social Security will be a significant source of income in retirement.

In fact, the Social Security Administration (SSA) reports that Social Security benefits are about 30% of income for people over age 65. According to the 2026 fact sheet, the average monthly Social Security check for retired workers is \$2,071.

But did you know there's an important step you need to take before you reach retirement age? Money expert Clark Howard has one secret to share that will help protect your financial future:

"There's a simple thing nobody uses: my Social Security. You go through a registration process and you're able to see what Social Security says you earned in various years," he said.

## Six Things To Consider About Your "my Social Security" Account

Here's what you need to know before you set up an account.

### 1. It's Your "Online Gateway" to Social Security

My Social Security is an online portal that helps monitor your benefits, request a new Social Security card and much more.

Whether you're currently receiving benefits or not, setting up this account can help you plan for your future.

Account Features: Not Receiving Benefits Yet

Estimate monthly benefits.

Review earnings history.

Get proof that you don't receive benefits.

Replace a Social Security card.



Money Expert Clark Howard

Account Features: Receiving Benefits

Set up or change direct deposit.

Get a Social Security 1099 form.

Print a benefit verification letter.

Replace a Social Security card.

### 2. The Account Is Easy and Free To Set Up

I signed up for a my Social Security account and documented the process. It was much easier and quicker than I expected. It took me less than 10 minutes!

To start, I visited the website and clicked "Create an account" on the page. On the next screen, I selected the option under "Create your new account using Login.gov."

From there, I was sent to a page to log in to an account or create a new account. After I hit "Create a new account," I entered my email address so I could verify it in my inbox.

After I verified my email, I encountered the most challenging part of the process: choosing a security option. The SSA gives you the following ways to secure your account:

Security key

Government employee ID Authentication application

Phone

Backup codes

I chose the authentication application because I already have the Google Authenticator app on my phone. I opened the app on my phone and scanned the QR code to get the key I needed to secure my account.

The next step is filling out your information, which includes:

Name

Birthdate

Social Security Number

Address

Phone number

I was also asked if I wanted to add extra security by sharing my driver's license information.

Then, you receive an activation code via text or phone, which you enter on the screen. And that's it!

### 3. The Statement Looks Both Backward and Forward

The account gives insights into both your current situation and future earnings potential.

You have access to your full earnings record, which shows your taxed Social Security earnings over your working life.

You can also see what you may actually collect from Social Security. You can use the calculator to show your estimated benefits based on the age you start collecting, your average future salary and your marital status.

### 4. You Need To Set Up an Account Before Retirement Age

"Most people won't pay attention to this until age 50," Clark says. "But I want you to have an account by age 30."

Why so early? Social Security benefits are based on your highest-earning 35 years, and you need to make sure the SSA is recording your earnings correctly.

"The crazy thing is that you can see how much Social Security thinks you earned in a year," Clark says. "That's important because if they have the wrong

figures, it could end up reducing the Social Security benefit you get forever."

Consumer Action Center Director Lori Silverman says there's one more big reason to get your account ready before you retire:

"Setting up an online account will prevent criminals from creating an account in your name and then using it to apply for benefits."

### 5. It's Important To Check Your Account Regularly

"You don't have to check it every year," Clark suggests. "Check it at least every third year. It's up to you and me to actively go and check. Don't wait. Do this throughout your working life."

After you create an account, mark your calendar to remember to check your account every few years. Make sure you report any mistakes to the SSA as soon as possible. It will impact your benefit!

To report a mistake, log in to your account and go to the earnings report. There's a blue box with a link to contact the SSA to report any mistakes.

### 6. You Probably Won't Get a Paper Statement in the Mail

The SSA no longer mails Social Security statements to anyone under the age of 60. If you are 60 or older, the SSA will start mailing paper statements three months before your birthday — if you haven't signed up for a my Social Security account.

### Final Thoughts

No matter your age, Clark says Social Security will still be around when you retire:

"I'm not worried that Social Security will go away. I'm worried that the amount of money people will receive will be reduced because the system isn't actuarially sound. But Social Security will continue, no doubt," he said.

It's important to take action now to protect the money you'll receive when you start collecting Social Security.

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# The Loneliness of a Long Life

By Elena Koyunseven  
 themediterraneanlifestyle.com

There is a particular loneliness that does not show up in the studies. It is not the loneliness of being alone. It is not the loneliness of the empty house, the unanswered phone, the chair across the table that nobody sits in anymore. Those lonelinesses are real, and they are written about, and there is a small industry of advice around them.

The loneliness I mean is quieter, and harder to name. It is the loneliness of having changed faster than the people who knew you.

I am fifty-eight. I have lived long enough to have been several different people, and to have left some of those people behind. The version of me at 35 was anxious in a way I am no longer anxious. It is not that the anxiety was cured. It is that the woman who carried it does not exist anymore.

The version of me at 45 made decisions I would not make now, not because they were wrong, but because they were hers, and she is not me. The version of me who drove off the ferry to Mallorca 13 years ago was full of hope and also full of fear, and that fear has been gone for so long now that I sometimes have to remind myself it was ever there.

This is not, on its own, a sad thing. Change is what people do when they are paying attention. The loneliness comes in the gap between who you have become and who the people in your life still remember.

There are old friends who have known me since my twenties, and who love a woman I no longer am. When we meet, they reach for that woman; they tell stories about her, they bring up things she would have said, they laugh at jokes she would have made. I love them for it. I also feel, every time, the small private ache of being recognized for a person who has slowly evaporated. They are not wrong about who I was. They are just no longer right about who I am.

This happens slowly, and it happens for years before anyone notices. The friendship does not break. Nothing dramatic occurs. You simply sit across from someone who knows you better than almost anyone in the world, and you realize they are speaking to a woman who is no longer in the room. You answer in her voice, because you do not know how else to answer. You go home a little tired in a way that has nothing to do with the meal.

I think this is the loneliness nobody warns you about. Not the loneliness of losing people, but the loneliness of being misremembered while still alive. Of



carrying around a self that the people closest to you cannot quite see, because they are still seeing the previous one. Of being, in a small, permanent way, slightly invisible to your own life.

I notice it most with people who have not moved. I moved. I left Germany; I left the woman I was there; I have built a different life on this island, in a different language, with different rhythms and a different body and a different relationship to time. When I go back to visit, the people I left greet the woman who left. They do not know the woman I am now, because she did not happen in front of them. She happened on a small Mediterranean island, slowly, over 13 years, in conversations they were not part of and seasons they did not feel.

This is not their fault. It is the geometry of a long life. You cannot bring everyone you love with you into every version of yourself. Some of them stay in the version of you they first knew, the way light from a distant star arrives long after the star itself has changed.

I have stopped trying to correct them. It used to bother me, the way they reached past me to find someone who was no longer there. Now I just let it happen. I let them love the woman I was. It is a kind of love, and she was worth loving, and they are not wrong to remember her. I just no longer expect to be fully seen at those tables. Full seeing is rarer than people think. Most of life is partial seeing, and partial seeing, freely given, is still a great deal.

What I have learned is that you have to make new witnesses. People who meet you now, in this version, and who do not have to reach past the old ones to find you. They are harder to find at 58 than at 28, partly because you are pickier, and partly because the people who can hold your current self are themselves quietly rare. But they exist.

They are usually the ones who have changed too, who recognize the shape of someone in motion, who do not need you to be consistent with

a previous version in order to take you seriously.

These newer witnesses do something specific for you. They keep the present self real.

Without them, you can drift into a strange kind of solitude in your own life, surrounded by people who love an earlier version of you while the current one quietly fades from view. With them, you are visible to yourself, because someone else is seeing what you actually are right now.

I have a small number of these people. Some of them I have known for only a few years. None of them knew me at 35. They are not better than the older friends. They are just useful in a different way; they hold the present, while the older friends hold the past, and the past needs to be held too, by someone who was there.

The loneliness, I think, is the cost of changing. The reward is that you got to change at all.

A long life is not, in the end, a single life. It is several lives,

lived in succession, in the same body. Each of them is real. Each of them dies, quietly, when the next one begins. The people who knew the earlier ones keep their love for them, which is generous, and which is also loneliness. You are loved across a gap. You are remembered across a gap. You sit in rooms where you are seen accurately by no one, including, sometimes, yourself.

This is not a failure of a relationship. It is a feature of duration. You cannot live this long and be known the same way you were known at 30. The knowing has to keep updating, and most people do not have the bandwidth to update, and so they love a version of you they have already learned. That is not a betrayal. That is what love mostly is.

I am writing this on a morning in May. The light is the light of a season that has not quite arrived. There is a person in the kitchen making coffee who has only known me for a handful of years, and who would not recognize the woman I was at 35 if she walked into the room. He knows the one who is here. That is its own kind of being held.

I would not trade it for being remembered. I would just like, sometimes, to be seen by both at once. That is the loneliness. It does not go away. You just stop expecting it to.

Elena Koyunseven co-founded [themediterraneanlifestyle.com](http://themediterraneanlifestyle.com), which features articles about the Mediterranean way of living, one of the world's first natural approaches to longevity.

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## QUAIL CORNER

# How Can I Make My Home Safer?

Q&A with Kimberly Jensen

**Question:** *I would like to stay in my home as long as I can, but my children do not feel confident about that decision. What can I do to make my home a safer environment?*

Many older adults want to age in place at home, and there are tools available to help. Simple fall prevention home adjustments and supportive devices can help reduce risk and increase comfort.

According to the Centers for Disease Control Prevention, falls are the leading cause of injury for adults ages 65 years and older. Over 14 million, or one in four older adults report falling every year. They can cause hip fractures and permanent injuries.

Falls are preventable!

Here are some helpful tips that you can follow that will make your home a safer environment.

Place better lighting in areas that might currently be dim, especially night lights. Clear walkways in your home to remove trip hazards like cords to your lamps, phone or computer. Remove magazine holders, trash bins, clothing, shoes, pet toys and bedding from areas that you commonly walk.

Bathrooms are a very common place to fall. Place safety features like handrails around your toilet and inside your shower. Remove any rugs in your bathroom/kitchen areas and get non-slip mats instead.

If you have difficulty getting off the toilet, place a toilet riser on the seat so you do not have to struggle to stand up. Bathtubs are very difficult to climb in and out of. Consider having your tub removed and replaced with a walk-in shower.

Stay aware of where your feet are placed before you walk. A simple side-step can land your foot on an item and make you tumble. Wet spots on the floor while you are doing dishes might go unnoticed until your shoe slips over the top of it.

Wear shoes that have backs on them. Backless, slip-on shoes might be easier to put on but they are a danger if they slide off while you take a step backwards.

Be aware of outside dangers. A hose laying on the ground could cause a twisted ankle and put you out of commission

for a very long time. Watch out for gopher holes and sprinkler heads. Try to stay on flat, solid ground as much as possible. Watch out for gravel paths. The small, rounded rocks can slip out from under your foot if it is on a slope. Make sure that sidewalks, patios and porches are swept often to remove pebbles and leaves.

Falls don't just happen because of your environment; it can be from your medication too. Have a meeting with your doctor to go over your medication list. Tell the doctor if any of your medications are causing you to be dizzy or light-headed. See if there can be a change in your medication that does not have that side effect.

There are home health devices you can purchase that will enable you to stay in your home longer. Medication alert devices will remind you to take your medication, or they can remind you of appointments.

There are cameras that you put on your front door so you can see who is there before opening it. Never open the door to a stranger no matter how hard they bang on it or what they say. Call 911 immediately.

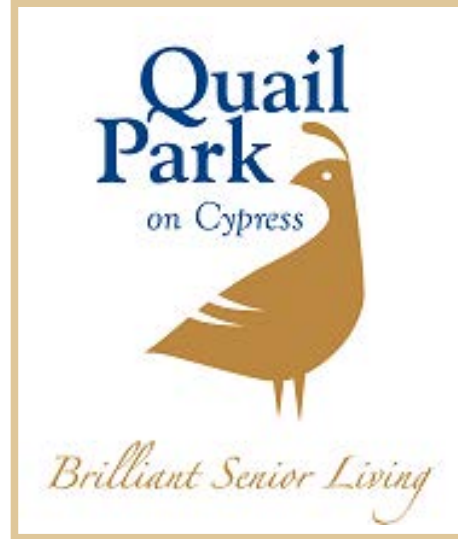
Kawah Health Lifeline has a pendant that you can press if you fall or have an emergency. Consider wearing one wherever you go. They are relatively inexpensive and are well worth the investment if it saves your life.

Telephone scams targeting seniors are growing every day. If you do not recognize the number, just let it go to voicemail and listen to it later. You should never give out your checking account number, social security number, or Medicare or credit card number over the phone.

The scammers pretend that you have not paid your bills and say that they won't charge you a penalty if you give them your information. If you have any doubts, call the company that you work with and find out your account balance information.

I received a bill from my electric company that looked legitimate. I called them and found out my balance was paid in full and that it was a scam. These scams are over the phone and through the mail.

Making these home and lifestyle changes will give you more independence and re-



duce your stress about staying in your home. If you still have anxiety and concerns about the safety of your home, reach out to a family member or friend that can come into your home and give their opinion of things that can be done to make it a safer environment. Sometimes having fresh eyes taking a look will give better insight into things that you did not see for yourself.

**Question:** *What is the difference between skilled nursing and assisted living?*

Assisted living provides long-term housing, meals and social activities for seniors who need help with daily tasks but value their independence. Meals, utilities, transportation and maintenance are often included in the rent cost. The cost of caregiving services is an additional cost (in most communities) based on how often you need help and what type of help is needed.

Most communities have a variety of apartment choices such as studios, one bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. Many senior communities encourage you to decorate with your own furniture since it is your home.

Skilled nursing offers 24/7 medical supervision and rehabilitation, typically for short-term recovery after surgery, injury, or severe illness. You might be able to get a private room for a short time, but most skilled nursing rooms are shared with one or two people.

Assisted living care focuses on custodial care (help with bathing, dressing, medication management and meals). Residents live in their private apartments with caregivers coming into their apartments to help with a variety of care needs. You can get additional on-site physical therapy and occupational therapy if it is required. Home health companies are paid through insurance if they are ordered from your doctor.

Skilled nursing delivers more intensive, round-the-clock medical attention provided by licensed nurses and physical/

occupational therapists. Most people who are in the hospital are discharged straight to skilled nursing for physical therapy to help them get stronger. Patients with more complex medical conditions that require a registered nurse to be there 24/7 would most benefit from skilled nursing.

The living environment of an assisted living very much resembles an apartment complex. You reside in an apartment-style setting with private or semi-private apartments. Assisted living makes it a priority to give you a home-like feeling, social engagement, and community activities along with care services if you need them.

A skilled nursing facility feels more clinical and institutional. Rooms are typically private or semi-private, and the environment is designed for medical observation and recovery. Furniture is provided for you, with a hospital bed, nightstand, clothing storage and television.

Cost and coverage for assisted living is usually much more affordable (often half the cost of skilled nursing if you are private paying there). Assisted living can be covered by long-term care insurance if you have it and can meet the requirements of the policy.

Most assisted living communities are not covered by Medicare or standard health insurance. Costs are paid out-of-pocket or through long-term care insurance. VA Aid and Attendance may be helpful if you qualify for the veteran program.

Skilled nursing facilities have a higher cost to you if you are paying privately because of the intensive medical staffing and specialized therapies that they offer. They are often covered for eligible individuals through Medicare, Medi-Cal or private insurance, especially for short-term rehabilitation. Certain requirements must be met before you can stay long-term on Medi-Cal.

I hope this gives you a better idea to the differences between assisted living and skilled nursing. Many individuals are paying more to stay long-term at a skilled nursing because they are not aware that assisted living communities can meet their needs at a lower cost and in a more personalized and private setting.

*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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# Who is Really Playing Video Games in the U.S.?

If you close your eyes and imagine someone playing video games, a specific picture may enter your mind, but most video game players are probably not who you think, according to the 2026 report from The Entertainment Software Association.

The report finds that playing video games is more popular than ever. More than two-thirds of Americans (67%) play at least one hour each week. The number of Americans who play video games every week totals 212.3 million, up 3% from last year.

### Not Just for Kids

While over 80% of Gen Alpha (ages 5-13) and Gen Z (14-29) play video games, a majority of adults are powering up as well. More than seven in ten Millennials (ages 30-45), 56% of Gen X (45-61) and half of Baby Boomers (62-80) say they play weekly. Even 32% of the Silent Generation (ages 81-90) are joining in.

To put this into perspective, half of all people who play video games in the U.S. are 35 or older.

### Video Games and Gender

Contrary to popular belief, playing video games is split fairly equally between men and women, with 53% of men and 46% of women actively playing. Slightly more boys and men play than girls and women across



all generations, with one notable exception: 52% of Boomer women play games, compared to 47% of men in that generation.

Playing video games is more popular than ever with more than two-thirds of Americans playing at least one hour each week.

Typical video game players are employed full time, using games as just one of their leisure activities. Adult players (18 and up) are more likely to be employed full-time (39%) or to have children (35%), when compared to the general U.S. population (34% and 30%, respec-

tively).

The survey also found that players spend roughly 20% of their weekly screen time playing games, with most game play occurring in the evening or later, skewing highest on weekends.

According to the survey, Americans feel overwhelmingly positive about video games.

Most adults, including those who don't play video games regularly, recognize the positive benefits that video games provide, including:

- Being fun (85%)
- Bringing joy (81%)
- Offering stress relief (78%)

- Providing mental stimulation (79%)

Younger players (Gen Z) especially believe video games offer a great way to bring people together (88%) and build relationships (87%).

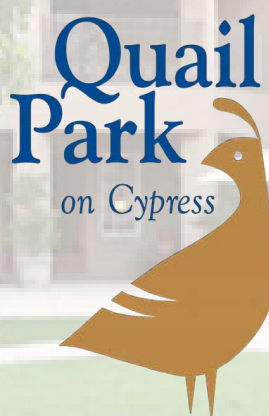
Overall, most adults agree that playing video games helps develop problem-solving skills (76%) and teamwork/collaboration (67%), plus adaptability and resilience (58%) and communication skills (52%).

A majority of players (63%) say video games deliver the most value for their money, compared to streaming services for music, TV and movies.

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# Garden Tips for July and August

By Peyton Ellas  
Tulare-Kings County Master Gardener

Due to the summer heat, July and August can be a light work month in the garden. Continue to repair water leaks and keep up with warm season weeds. July and August are also perfect for the following tasks:

### Planting

This is the time to plan for planting seeds for cool season vegetables such as Asian greens, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, leek, lettuce, pea, spinach and Swiss chard. You can also direct-seed another crop of beans.

You can plant some ornamentals, but it will be a lot easier on you – and them if you wait until fall. Planting during summer heat will require daily watering.

### Maintaining

Citrus requires even steady moisture during these hot months and must be watered regularly. Other established plants, like many California natives, can manage on less water. Narrow-leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) might be in full bloom or producing seeds vigorously.

Don't worry about aphids, red milkweed bug or other insects on your milkweed; it can handle it. And you don't want to destroy monarch eggs by going after pest insects.

If your garden is less than three years old, don't expect



Leek

the new plants to be tolerant of drought. They will continue to need extra TLC until their roots are established. Deep soaking and occasional extra overhead sprinkles for a few plants is the best practice. If you live in a fire-prone area, keep your plants watered so they will help slow down wildfires and reduce flying embers.

Cut back and divide your iris if you haven't already done so. Prune apricot, olive and oleanders, but avoid pruning so much you get sunburn on newer branches. Continue to deadhead roses, and remove suckers and unwanted branches. Open rose bushes up to increase air circulation through the shrub. Remember to use a mosquito larvicide (BTi) anywhere there will be standing water, even in plant trays, to avoid mosquito breeding.

Skip the fertilizer during the hottest part of summer, especially high-nitrogen products. Let everything rest a little, including yourself.

Towards the end of the month, you can start using a pre-emergent to impede germination of cool season weeds. If you have only a few weeds, hoe or dig them out instead of spraying, or investigate where the water supporting the weeds is coming from and make a change in your irrigation practices if you can.

### Conserving

Even in years with adequate precipitation, we can still consider removing or reducing lawn. Beyond the water saving, we can support a wider range of native and beneficial wildlife, including pollinators, if we include more variety of shrubs and perennials, especially native, in our yards. If you need a green patch in summer, consider using a ground cover like *Lippia nodiflora*.

The first step in managing diseases and pest insects is identification. That's so you don't accidentally do more harm than good. A good website to consult is: <http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/menu.homegarden.html>.

Ornamental plants can tolerate some insect damage, and those insects can be bird attractants (food). The exception is Argentine and other non-native ants; control those throughout the garden with ant bait products, switching the active ingredient every few months.

Planning any upgrades or changes to your garden for fall? Consider creating a rain garden, seasonal creek or swale to capture and hold on-site storm water. Gardens with a big picture approach to both drought and flooding – in other words, California's usual weather swings, are resilient and provide value to humans and wildlife every year no matter what the weather.

Consider making your garden, even in the city, a connection for migrating beneficial wildlife. Can you map out a path migrating Monarchs might be able to take through your neighborhood? Is there a neighbor you can give a native milkweed to?

It's okay to leave dried flowers on native plants. Finches



Swiss chard

and other birds will thank you for the seed they can eat. If you want to attract more birds and pollinators, it's fine to be less fussy about trimming every plant and removing every brown stem. I invite you to push your own boundaries, to improve the efficiency and usefulness of the garden, and to share it a little more. It's less work too.

### Questions?

Call the Master Gardeners:  
Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 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/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/)

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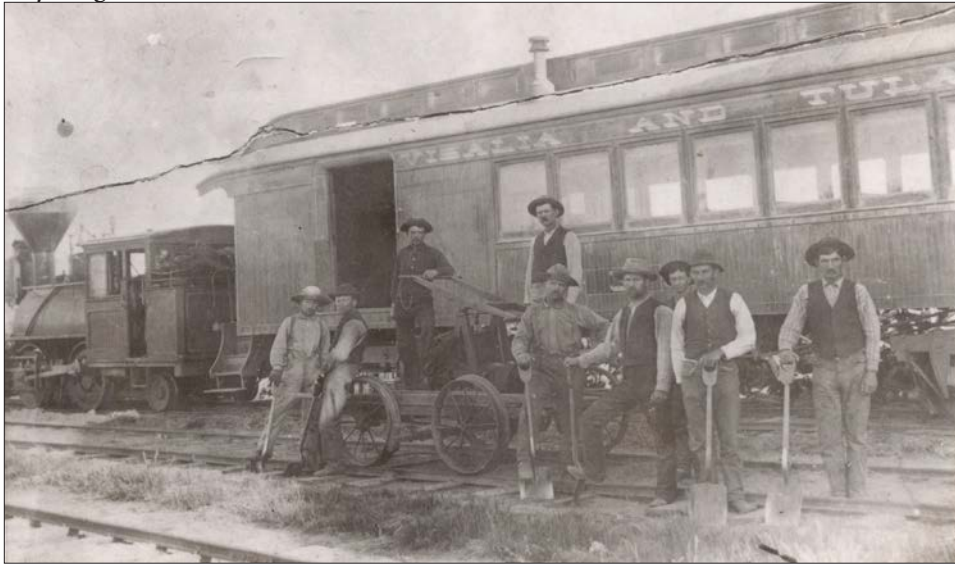
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(Above left) A crew of the Visalia & Tulare Railroad standing in front of a passenger car. On the far left you can see the small locomotive. (Above right) The scene of the accident in 1900 showing the locomotive on its side.

## Problems Plagued the Little Railroad

The idea made so much sense to Jasper Harrell, a wealthy Visalia businessman, and his small group of investors that they moved forward with starting a small commuter railroad line that ran between the neighboring towns of Visalia and Tulare. Residents of the towns interacted a lot, so the train seemed to be perfect. This short line was called the Visalia & Tulare Railroad (V&TRR).

The V&TRR incorporated as a company on October 1, 1887, and held the inaugural dedication event on October 22, 1888. The 11½-mile one-way trip started at Harrell's bank building on the southeast corner of Main and Court streets and ran south on Court. The route made a wide westerly curve and followed Tulare Avenue, then made another wide curve southbound along the Visalia-Tulare Highway, later named Mooney Blvd. Once near the town of Tulare another wide curve brought the track to the train depot in Tulare.

The project required obtaining real estate right of way, purchasing 30-pound steel rails and rolling stock consisting of two wood-burning locomotives, three passenger cars and one flat car. Eleven employees were hired. The track was standard gauge but the locomotives were small, with not a lot of power. The route was flat and the cargo relatively light, so not much horse power was required. But early on, the company probably regretted buying the small locomotives as the train soon gained a reputation as being slow. In fact, it was soon said that a strong boy on a bicycle could get to Tulare faster than the train.

The train had three regularly scheduled daily round-trips with additional runs added when either town had a special event. Each leg of the trip took 30 minutes. The line was accommodating to people who lived along the tracks. If they needed groceries or supplies, they could flag down the train and the crew would pick up the items and deliver them on the return trip.

But not everyone was happy with the train. John H. Woody owned a farm adjacent to the

tracks and his 2,300-pound bull would occasionally get out of his pen. The big animal obviously saw the locomotive as a rival and would stand on the track and stare down his adversary.

The railroad had its share of human tragedy. In 1891, Edgar Woods, a deaf woodchopper, was walking on wet tracks. As the train approached him from behind, the engineer sounded the whistle to alert him, but Woods didn't react and continued walking. The engineer applied the brakes, but the slippery tracks made it impossible to stop and Woods was struck. He was taken to Visalia for medical treatment where his foot had to be amputated.


And there were other injuries connected to the railroad. On one trip, the Healy family was onboard and when it was about a mile from its destination, it was forced to stop due to a washout of the track. Several passengers, including the Healy family, hopped on a handcar and continued on. As the loaded handcar approached the business section of Tulare, it derailed. The accommodating passengers lifted it back onto the track, and continued on. Just before they arrived at the Tulare depot, Mrs. Healy lost her footing and fell from the hand car. It passed over her body, but she survived her injuries. The family sued the railroad and received a judgment.

Even though the railroad had some good years, it struggled financially, but no one could have predicted its dramatic end.

On May 5, 1900, the train left Visalia at about 7:30 p.m. with 35 passengers onboard. Engineer Gilbert D. Inness while by the Caldwell Ranch (near what is now Mooney Boulevard and Caldwell Avenue), and his friend Ed Thomas were adding wood to the engine firebox when Inness took his eyes off the track. At that moment, a cow or calf wandered onto the track. Inness didn't see the animal until it was too late. The engineer immediately turned off the steam and applied the brakes, but not in time.

The train, traveling about 20 mph, hit the animal with

Dusting Off History  
with Terry Ommen



such force that it was cut in half. Sensing the impending collision, Innes and Thomas jumped from the engine at the time of impact and ended up under the overturned locomotive. Miraculously, neither man was seriously hurt. The enclosed passenger coach also derailed and overturned onto its side. The passengers inside were badly shaken and suffered cuts and

abrasions. One, however, was badly hurt, Mrs. Twaddle, the wife of Tulare County Supervisor Thomas Twaddle. Her back was wrenched in the accident causing temporary paralysis.

The struggling little railroad never recovered. The line shut down, and on August 2, 1900, the last piece of rolling stock was sold to a lumber company in Seattle.



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# ENTERTAINMENT

## Sam Green's Quest to Meet the Oldest Person in the World

"The Oldest Person in the World" is a decade-long odyssey chronicling the ever-changing record holders of the title of oldest person alive.

As the title inevitably passes from one supercentenarian to the next, acclaimed filmmaker Sam Green traverses the globe to meet each new record holder, his personal fascination with what the title means becoming entangled with events and milestones in his own life.

What begins as a portrait of longevity becomes a poignant meditation on the passage of time, the randomness of fate and the joy and profound human experience of being alive.

Green took the time to explain why he made "The Oldest Person in the World."

I became fascinated by the oldest person in the world many years ago while making a documentary about the Guinness World Records. As I worked on the movie, I was repeatedly struck by the fact that the oldest person in the world is a record that changes often – one super old person dies, and the title goes to another super old person.

But, more importantly, any time the title changes hands, it



Director Sam Green (Photo by Catalina Kulczar)

So in 2015, when Susannah Mushatt Jones turned 116 years old and became the oldest person in the world just a few subway stops from me in Brooklyn, New York, I figured it was the universe telling me to start this project.

I spent a day filming Miss Susie, as she's known to family and friends, and her 86-year-old niece, Lavilla. It was one of the most moving interviews I've ever done.

Shortly after that first shoot, I reached out to my longtime producer, Josh Penn, and a dear friend who is also involved in

an who recited a three-minute poem from memory that she had learned more than a century earlier.

We filmed in the south of France with Sister André, a 117-year-old nun who said that God "has some nerve" for keeping her alive that long!

And we filmed with Maria Branyas, a 116-year-old outside of Barcelona, who was active on Twitter and seemed completely unfazed by holding the record, saying, "Not a big deal!"

Along the way, I also regularly filmed my son Atlas, who was born in 2015 (the year we began shooting) and becomes a kind



Susannah Mushatt Jones, age 116 in 2015 (Photo by Yoni Brook)

In this way, it will become an ever-evolving "living film," with characters coming and going, just as they do in life. The form will mirror the ephemeral and impossible-to-predict nature of our lives. This will be a life's work.

Since the first shoot with Susannah Mushatt Jones in Brooklyn, back in 2015, we've filmed with seven other oldest people in the world. Each shoot that we've done over the past 10 years has surprised me and reaffirmed my long-held belief that the world is far more interesting than anything I could make up.

We filmed with Emma Morano, a 116-year-old outside of Milan, Italy, whose secret to a long life is "stay away from men!" and who sang us a hit song from the 1930s.

We filmed with Violet Brown, a 116-year-old Jamaican wom-

of yardstick in the film showing time passing. We also see as he learns about time, days, years, seasons – how the world works.

In this sense, the oldest person in the world becomes a vehicle or lens through which to understand something about our odd experience of being alive.

A film about the oldest person in the world, a subject that fascinates people across countries and cultures, can have broad appeal and a pop sensibility, but it's also a movie about the mysteries all of us face as we move through the world

How long will we live? How will we age? Will we get hit by a bus tomorrow or live to a ripe old age? How do we go about our days in the face of those uncertainties?

(For information about where to see this film, visit [www.justwatch.com](http://www.justwatch.com).)



Emma Morano, age 114 in 2013 (Photo by Roberto Masiero)

is big news. Huge news actually – it's covered in newspapers around the world and all over the internet.

Why are we so captivated by this one person who has been around longer than anyone else on the planet? It seemed to me that somehow the oldest person in the world taps into our deepest fascinations and anxieties about aging and death and fate. We are intrigued and tickled that someone can live so long but also profoundly unsettled by the realities of that kind of long life.

film, Alison Byrne Fields, an accomplished impact producer, to see if they might be interested in working on this film as a collective. Both agreed.

One of the challenges with a film about the oldest person in the world is that it will be very quickly out of date. As I mentioned, it's a record that changes often. So we came up with the idea of a never-ending project – we are going to continue to film the oldest person in the world for the rest of our lives, using the material to make a film every few years.



Jeanne Calment, age 121 in 1996 (Photo by Jean-Paul Pelissier, Reuters)



(Above left) Colleen Madden portrays Dr. Linda Vobernik in "Winter Hymns." (Above right) Dr. Vobernik explains the situation to a patient (played by Peggy Trojan).

## 'Winter Hymns' Presents a Day in Hospice Care

By Steve Pastis

In "Winter Hymns," a film currently making its way through the festival circuit, Dr. Linda Vobernik (Colleen Madden) meets a series of patients and families in a single hospital room on a cold, gray winter day.

All of them are dealing with the end of life.

One is a farmer who refuses to accept that his body is failing him. Another, an English teacher, is concerned about her students' futures, while a young electrical line worker is dealing with how cancer has stolen his own future.

As the day progresses, the room itself becomes the bridge between life and afterlife, while Dr. Vobernik's encounters test her faith in her work.

Writer-director Nathan Deming took time from scheduling showings of his film to answer questions about the film for *The Good Life*.

The first question was why he made a film that would be considered by many to be depressing.

"I know how they feel because I thought the topic was depressing before I got interested in it," Deming said. "I thought about doing this because my dad did this. He became a palliative care doctor after being a family physician.

"It's depressing from the outside, but it's obviously absolutely necessary to know and understand," he said. "Death is a part of life, and it's been part of religion and philosophy forever.

"So, I thought it was depressing but necessary," he said. "And then in the film itself, I tried to make it uplifting by the end of it, that we're all going through this. That's one of the messages of the film, whether you're going through grief or your own illness, you're not in it alone. We all go through this. We lose people or we face a serious illness ourselves, and it's important to talk about that."

"Winter Hymns" had its first showing at the Wisconsin Film Festival because premiering there was "really important" to



Writer-director Nathan Deming discusses a scene with actor Colleen Madden and others.

Deming.

"It's pretty much an all-Wisconsin movie, and I'm really proud of my home state," he explained. "One thing I love to do is showcase culture there because I think people on the coast or outside of the Midwest don't really know what Wisconsin's like, beyond a jokey image of beer and cheese."

Deming was excited to premiere his film at the Wisconsin Film Festival but wasn't sure what the response would be.

"I was really blown away," he said about the first showing. "People really loved this movie, and everywhere we've shown it, people linger in the lobby for 20 or 30 minutes afterwards, which I haven't seen very often before. I think it's a really cool testament to hopefully the power of the film, but also the topics explored in it. It's clearly touching a nerve with people."



Tara Mallen and Bernie Starzewski in "Winter Hymns"

All kinds of people have been going to see the film so far, according to Deming.

"But definitely we've got a huge, strong interest from people over 50 who are, I think, very familiar with the themes that the film explores," he said. "I've heard from some people, 'Oh, don't advertise that to seniors. It's depressing. It'll bum them out.' Obviously, I can't speak for everybody. Maybe that's true with some, but I've seen mostly just an overwhelming embrace from people that age because they've lived through it.

"This is not an abstract reality," he said. "They've said goodbye to people they love. They're facing these issues themselves, and I think it's honestly a little patronizing to say that they can't handle it. That's been a huge source of our support and interest.

"Also people who work in

healthcare have been very interested in it as well because the film's also a love letter to what they do," he added. "You watch this kind of struggling palliative care doctor who has too much on her plate. You see her deal with a million things in the movie. It's been great to hear from healthcare professionals as well that they are connecting with it.

"After I finished the movie, I showed it to my parents," he said. "And my mom turned to my dad and asked, 'Is that really what it was like?' And my dad just nodded, 'Pretty much, yeah.'"

Deming's father helped inspire some of the dialog for Dr. Vobernik's character, but Deming had to find other sources for what the patients would say.

"One thing I love doing is exploring character," he said. "I went to the London Film School and studied with this British filmmaker named Mike Leigh ("Secrets & Lies" and "Vera Drake"), who's a master of character being revealed through dialogue.

"They're all fictional characters, but definitely inspired by figures I grew up with in Wisconsin," Deming said. "I tried really hard to capture just normal people. What would it really be like if you wandered into a palliative care office on a Tuesday? Who might you find there?"

"Most days you're going to find completely normal people, a plumber, a priest, an English teacher, you know, just people from all walks of life," he said.

Deming intends to have "Winter Hymns" on cable and streaming sessions "by the end of the year." Currently, however, the focus is on film festivals and other theatrical screenings.

As this issue went to press, Deming was working with local movie theaters to present his film in Tulare County. When a screening is scheduled, it will be posted at "Find Screening" at [www.winterhymnsfilm.com](http://www.winterhymnsfilm.com).

For information about when and where the film will be available to watch on cable or on a streaming service, visit [www.justwatch.com](http://www.justwatch.com).

They fought for us,  
**now let's fight  
for them.**



## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL ELDER ABUSE?

- Verbal assaults, derogatory names or insults
- Threats, intimidation, coercion, isolation

## SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ELDER ABUSE:

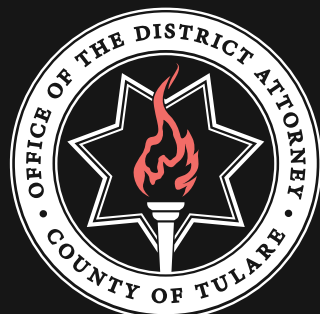
Withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, depression, tense relationship with caregiver

## REPORT ELDER ABUSE

Adult Protective Services 24/7 Hotline:

**(877) 657-3092**

-  PHYSICAL
-  FINANCIAL
-  EMOTIONAL
-  NEGLECT



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