

The Good Life

Travel, Leisure & Fun for South Valley Adults 50+

January / February 2016 • Volume 3, Number 1

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Heart of Seniors Luncheon and Resource Fair Set for Feb. 11

The Third Annual Heart of Seniors "Resources & Rejuvenation for the Caregiver" Luncheon, hosted by Senior Care Organization, will be held on Thursday, February 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wyndham Hotel, 9000 W. Airport Dr., Visalia.

"Resources & Rejuvenation for the Caregiver" includes a vital resource fair and vendors, a clothing-appropriate fashion show and a filling lunch. The resource fair opens at 9:30 a.m. with the program starting at 11 a.m. Tickets are available for \$10 per person. Early registration is recommended as seating is limited and the event is expected to sell out.

The program, which starts with the latest in fashion for the mature woman, will feature a keynote address by Jewel Diamond Taylor, a very powerful and sought-after celebrity motivational speaker with extensive experience in motivating and empowering both men and women. Jewel is committed to helping others



The Heart of Seniors Luncheon features a vital resource fair and vendors.

succeed. She offers candid, practical, viable solutions, all while leaving a lasting impression of hope for the future. She will give a special address to caregivers who will be present.

The event is sponsored by Kaweah Delta Home Care Services, Dinuba Healthcare, Kast & Company, Linwood Meadows, Optimal Health Services, Prestige Senior Living, The Providence Group,

Redwood Springs, Valley Home Health, Westgate Gardens Care Center, Delta Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, and Humana.

To purchase tickets for the luncheon or for more information, call (559) 625-3822 or stop by a sponsor location. For online information or to print a copy of the registration form, visit www.facebook.com/Senior-Care-Organization.

Taylor to Make Keynote Speech at Heart of Seniors Luncheon

Jewel Diamond Taylor's list of accomplishments is long and illustrious. Her life has also been marked by personal loss and pain. She will draw from all of her experiences for her keynote

See Taylor on page 5



Jewel Diamond Taylor

Visalia Offers Pickleball, Softball, Volleyball and Soccer for Seniors

By Steve Partir

Once again, the City of Visalia Parks and Recreation Department will include a variety of sports activities among its busy spring schedule for seniors.

"What we're doing differently this year is gearing up our sports program to those 50+," said Recreation Supervisor Jason Glick. "We picked three sports: men's and women's softball, women's volleyball, and men's and women's soccer. These sports have been offered before, but we have not offered them specifically for those 50+."

Softball will be slow pitch with 10 players on each team. Volleyball teams will each have six players, and soccer, which will be played on a field about half the size of regulation, will have teams of seven.

The department has an ulterior motive for offering these sports exclusively for seniors.

"What we're trying to do is build a database for the 2017 Senior Games," Glick said, referring to the big event the city is tentatively planning for the last two weekends in April 2017. The city's inaugural Senior Games held in October exceeded expectations by attracting athletes from 50 California cities, as well as some from as far as Oregon and Texas.

"We wanted to move the event from the fall to the spring," said Recreation Manager Jeannie Greenwood, explaining that move is to avoid competing with the World Games, which are always held in St. George, Utah, in the fall.

Pickleball Tournament

Visalia Parks and Recreation is also planning to host the Central Valley Pickleball Tournament at the Tennis Complex at Plaza Park over the April 29 – May 1 weekend. The event is a response to its

popularity in the city's Senior Games, according to Glick. "Pickleball had the best turnout of all of the competitions."

The double-elimination tournament will consist of the best two-out-of-three games (each to 11 points) in the men's singles, women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles events. All participants will receive an event shirt, and

medals will be presented to the top three players in each age division: under 50, 50-54, 55-59, 60-64, 65-69 and 70+.

Volunteers are needed to help set up before the tournament and to take things down after.

For more information, to sign up or to be added to the mailing list, contact the Visalia Parks and Recreation Department at (559) 713-4365 or recreation@visalia.city.



Visalia Parks and Recreation will host a pickleball tournament April 29 – May 1. (Photo courtesy Visalia Parks and Recreation Department)

Calendar of Events

Around the South Valley

February 4 to March 10 - Empowerment for Better Living Workshop

Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer this free six-week workshop at Chronic Disease Management Center, 325 Willis St. in Visalia. (See page 3.) To register, call (559) 624-3448.

Tuesday, February 9 - 'Diabetes - Let's Talk about Stroke and the Nervous System'

Muhammad S. Chaudhri, M.D. will present the second in a series of monthly seminars at 119 S. Locust St., Visalia, at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required and may be made at (559) 627-0112.

February 10 to March 16 - Empowerment for Better Living Workshop

Kaweah Delta Health Care District will offer this free six-week workshop at The Lifestyle Center. (See page 3.) To register, call (559) 624-4080.

Thursday, February 11 - The Third Annual Heart of Seniors Luncheon

The Third Annual Heart of Seniors "Resources & Rejuvenation for the Caregiver" Luncheon, hosted by Senior Care Organization, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wyndham Hotel, 9000 W. Airport Dr., Visalia. (See page 1.) To purchase tickets for the luncheon or for

more information, call (559) 625-3822.

Saturday, February 13 - 'Barbra and Frank: The Concert That Never Was'

Diamond Horseshoe Entertainment will present this Frank Sinatra and Barbra Streisand tribute concert that has been voted "best tribute show in Las Vegas." Tickets are \$15-\$40. For tickets or more information, visit www.foxvisalia.org or call 625-1369.

Saturday, February 20 - Great Movies/Great Music: Escapes and Escapades

Tulare County Symphony will continue its popular series "Great Movies/Great Music" with music from the great adventure films, showcasing music from some of today's (and yesterday's) most popular and exciting composers, including John Williams, Hans Zimmer and Danny Elfman. Tickets are \$30-\$39.50. For tickets or more information, visit www.foxvisalia.org or call 625-1369.

Saturday, February 27 - Johnny Rivers

Hands in the Community will present rock & roll legend Johnny Rivers in concert. (See page 4.) Tickets are \$25-\$70. For tickets or more information, visit www.foxvisalia.org or call 625-1369.

Tuesday, March 8 - 'High Blood Pressure - What is Happening inside Your Body?'

Muhammad S. Chaudhri, M.D. will present the third in a series of monthly seminars at 119 S. Locust St., Visalia, at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required and may be made at (559) 627-0112.

Tuesday, April 12 - 'Peripheral Artery Disease - Overview and Free Screenings'

Muhammad S. Chaudhri, M.D. will present the fourth in a series of monthly seminars at

Veteran's Corner

Welcome to this edition of Veterans Corner!

Although you may not think about it, at some time in life, you may need emergency care. If and when that happens, the following information will be important.



When you need emergency care and are unable to get to the nearest VA medical facility, just go to the nearest hospital with an emergency room. What you do next determines whether the Veterans Administration will pay your hospital bills.

A medical emergency is when an injury or illness is so severe that without immediate treatment your life or health is threatened. Use your best judgment in deciding if yours is a medical emergency.

After you decide that it is a medical emergency and you go to the emergency room, someone must contact the nearest VA medical center. This begins the approval process.

It's important that you are aware that the VA may limit payment on some services. The VA gathers information about your emergency and the services provided to you. When you call the VA to provide this information, make sure that you are speaking to the Fee Basis

department, as only that department can approve treatment.

After calling Fee Basis to get approval for treatment, ask if a bed is available at the VA medical facility so that you can be transferred when the ER doctor feels you are stable enough to be transported. If they tell you that there are no beds available, the VA may continue to pay for your treatment (excluding any co-pays you may be responsible for) at the non-VA hospital. However, if there is a bed available and you refuse to go to the VA medical facility, you will be held responsible.

How much the VA pays toward your care if you are admitted to the hospital depends on your current VA eligibility status and whether your treatment relates to a service-connected condition or not.

If you leave the hospital before you're treated, the VA may refuse to pay the charges incurred, such as ER or ambulance fees, regardless of your veteran eligibility status.

Ken Cruickshank, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Services Officer for Tulare County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 205 N. L St., Tulare, call (559) 684-4960 or email kcruciks@tularehhsa.org.

119 S. Locust St., Visalia, at 6:30 p.m. Reservations are required and may be made at (559) 627-0112.

Wednesday, April 13 - Spring Open House and Barbecue

The Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust, Visalia, will host this event featuring a BBQ lunch, entertainment, class exhibitions, door prizes, information booths and an opportunity to learn about services for seniors. Admission is free. The BBQ lunch is \$5. For more information, call (559) 713-4381.

April 22-24 - Baskets and Gourds - Containers of Our Culture VI

More than 15 teachers are coming from across the country to teach their art to students, from amateurs to the experienced. The weekend includes a Friday evening reception and exhibition at Arts Visalia, as well as classes throughout the weekend. To download a brochure, visit www.californiagourdsociety.com. For more information, contact Toni Best at (559) 627-5430 or tonibestbaskets@gmail.com.

The Good Life

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COMMUNICATIONS

Partnerships Make 'Stockings for Senior Citizens' Drive a Success

The Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging expressed its gratitude to community members and Tulare County employees who donated items, large and small, to its recent "Stockings for Senior Citizens" project. More than 350 seniors received stockings filled with gifts because of those contributions.

Stockings were stuffed with items such as hats, scarves, gloves, lap blankets and slippers. Senior citizens in the Home-Delivered Meal Program, Multi-Purpose Senior Services and Adult Protective Services received the stockings, as well as a visit from volunteers who delivered the gifts.

"The visit that comes with every stocking delivery may be the only visit that homebound and isolated seniors receive during the holiday season," said Laura Silva, HHSA aging services manager and director of Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging. "The gifts provided in the stockings provide warmth, but it is the visit from folks who gave of their time as they make the deliveries that provides a deeper joy."



Romero Medina receives his stocking. (Photo courtesy Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging)

"We sincerely appreciate such generosity which helps to make this program successful and goes a long way in spreading holiday cheer to the seniors of the community," she added. "Thank you to all those who contributed."

Partnering with the Kings/Tulare Area Agency on Aging were the Tulare County Health & Human Services Agency, CSET, Visalia Senior Housing, Inc., and community members.

Kaweah Delta Announces Free 'Better Living' Workshops

Kaweah Delta Health Care District is offering a free workshop to help people learn how to better manage their health. The workshop is designed for those with ongoing health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, asthma and other chronic conditions.

Topics include dealing with difficult emotions, managing symptoms, goal setting, problem solving, nutrition, understanding medications, making informed treatment decisions, and increasing strength and stamina through better fitness.

The workshop was developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University. Participants demonstrate significant improvements in the areas covered. They also report fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits.

The Empowerment for Better Living workshop will be held once a week for six weeks at the newly opened Chronic Disease

Management Center, 325 Willis St. in Visalia. The center will host the workshop four times this year:

- February 10 – March 16 (Wednesdays)
- April 5 – May 10 (Tuesdays)
- July 12 – August 16 (Tuesdays)
- October 4 – November 8 (Tuesdays)

An Empowerment for Better Living workshop will also be offered at The Lifestyle Center, 5105 W. Cypress Ave. in Visalia, on Thursdays from February 4 to March 10.

All workshops will be held from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

To register for the workshops offered at the Chronic Disease Management Center, call (559) 624-4080. To register for workshops at The Lifestyle Center, call (559) 624-3448.

For more information, visit www.kaweahdelta.org or follow Kaweah Delta on Twitter and Facebook.

Hasbro Launches 'Companion Pets' for Seniors

Hasbro, a company best known for manufacturing popular toys and games for a young audience, is now bringing joy, fun and happiness to an entirely new demographic this winter through an animatronic pet with soft fur, soothing purrs and pleasant meows: Hasbro's "Joy For All" Companion Pet Cat.

The Joy For All brand, which launched November 13 with its

first product line, "Companion Pets," is Hasbro's first foray into products designed specifically for seniors. The brand was inspired by consumer feedback highlighting the appeal of certain Hasbro toys and games for seniors, and the development of Companion Pets was influenced by extensive consumer research with older adults and their



See Companion Pets on page 7 Hasbro's new animatronic pet is the company's first product created for seniors.

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Johnny Rivers to Headline Hands in the Community Benefit Concert

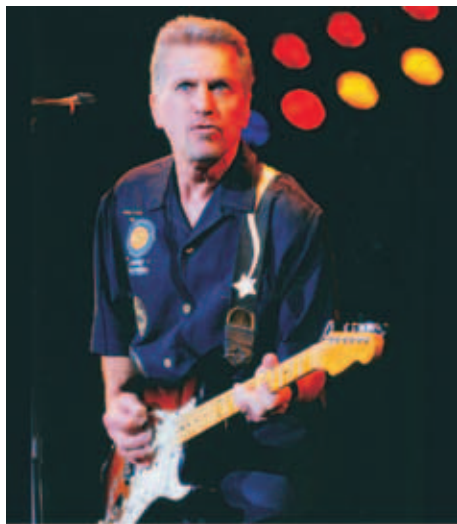
Johnny Rivers, whose 17 gold records and 29 chart hits include "Memphis," "Mountain of Love," "Midnight Special," "Secret Agent Man," "Poor Side of Town" and "Summer Rain," is coming to the Visalia Fox Theatre on Saturday, February 27.

The two-time Grammy Award winner, who has sold more than 30 million records, will perform at a benefit for Hands in the Community, a nonprofit Christian ministry in Tulare and Kings Counties.

"This is Hands in the Community's largest fundraiser of the year," said Lester Moon, the organization's founder and executive director. "All of the proceeds go directly to us, and we in turn are able to buy materials.

"HNC currently has over 30 major home repairs with high importance on our project list," added Moon. "These include fence and roof repairs, new handicap ramps, flooring, house painting, plumbing, electrical upgrades and modifying entryways and bathrooms for handicapped access."

Funding will be used to offset parts or material costs to allow moving these critical projects



Johnny Rivers

forward to completion. Volunteers are available to provide the labor required at no charge.

Many of these projects will enable individuals to remain in their homes by providing improved accessibility and safety. Providing independence and increasing self-sufficiency improves the quality of life for these community members and improves their well-being. HNC will provide project support to the seniors, adults, children, families and at-risk youth within the community without discrimination.

Tickets for are \$25 to \$70. For tickets or more information, visit www.foxvisalia.org or call 625-1369.

Travel Agency Lists 'Senior-Friendly' Destinations

Seniors' needs and desires when traveling are different than those of the younger generation or families. Pristine Agency, a wholesale travel provider in Henderson, Nevada, created the following list of "senior-friendly destinations."

Alaska is perfect for any age as long as it is by cruise or train tour. Alaska is on most people's "bucket list" for good reason. The scenery is breathtaking and like no other place on earth.

Sedona, Arizona features great lodging choices, 5-star restaurants and beautiful scenery. The Grand Canyon is only a two-hour tour bus trip away.

Branson, Missouri is great for active seniors who are able to take in the local museums, night life, shopping and golf. It's affordable and less hectic than other choices, making it a comfortable fit for most seniors.

Santa Barbara is home to the only 5-Diamond bed and breakfast in North America, and is considered a relaxing vacation with its beaches, fine

dining and nearby wineries.

Ireland offers travel from village to village by horse-drawn caravan with stops for local shopping. Visiting the beer pubs and chatting with the friendly town people make Ireland a favorite for seniors – especially for those with Irish ancestry.

Hawaii (the Big Island) is the largest island so it's less crowded and more upscale than others. This is where the rich and famous live, and it is known for its active volcanoes.

Florida is known as one of the best retirement choices in the U.S. It's warm, sunny and the people are friendly, the seafood is abundant and seniors can enjoy miles of peaceful beaches.

Green Valley is in the southern portion of Arizona and highly recommended as a senior travel destination. The town was originally built for retirees and has everything an active adult could need. Golfing, Native American arts, restaurants and boutiques keep visitors busy all day.

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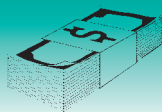
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Finance



Securities Helpline for Seniors Helps Prevent Fraud

The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) released a year-end report on the FINRA Securities Helpline for Seniors 1-844-57-HELPS, which has fielded more than 2,500 calls and helped investors recover nearly \$750,000 in voluntary reimbursements from firms since its launch last April. The report highlights important lessons for investors gleaned from calls and lays out effective practices for firms to consider when working with senior investors.

The report notes that seniors, who can be especially vulnerable, are frequent targets for fraud. This is a growing concern as the number of people 85 years and older is projected to increase more

than 50% between 2012 and 2030. Moreover, cognitive impairment affects more than 20% of adults over the age of 70; and in 2014, retirement assets of those aged 65-74 were estimated at \$3.5 trillion, making that population an inviting target for scammers.

"FINRA created the Helpline to provide assistance to senior investors for concerns they have with their brokerage accounts and investments, and I am incredibly pleased with the positive impact it has had in just a few short months," said Susan Axelrod, FINRA executive vice president, regulatory operations. "The Helpline has also served as a tremendous source of information as we actively engage with seniors, learn of and respond to issues

they are experiencing, and use this real-time intelligence to inform our regulatory programs and provide effective practices to firms."

Calls to the Helpline allowed FINRA to identify several emerging scams, including fraud centering on taxes, bogus lottery winnings and binary options, all of which were flagged by FINRA and resulted in investor alerts. Additionally, helpful tips on using BrokerCheck (FINRA's online tool) before investing and guidance on how to navigate the transfer of an account after the death of a family member were frequent points of discussion with investors seeking help.

Investors can obtain more information about, and the

disciplinary record of, any FINRA-registered broker or brokerage firm by using FINRA's BrokerCheck. FINRA makes BrokerCheck available at no charge. In 2014, members of the public used this service to conduct 18.9 million reviews of broker or firm records. Investors can access BrokerCheck at www.brokercheck.finra.org or by calling (800) 289-9999.

Investors may find copies of disciplinary actions as well as other disciplinary documents in FINRA's Disciplinary Actions Online database. Investors can also call FINRA's Securities Helpline for Seniors at (844) 57-HELPS for assistance or to raise concerns about issues they have with their brokerage accounts and investments.

Taylor

from page 1

speech at the Heart of Seniors Luncheon on February 11 at Visalia's Wyndham Hotel.

She was asked about her qualifications to speak to an audience of seniors.

"Well, for one, I've got my card," she said laughing, referring to her Medicare card. But the 65-year-old Taylor brings much more than that to her presentation.

After seven years of working as a human resource executive in the aerospace industry, Taylor began attending motivational seminars and became energized. She was captivated by the ability of a speaker to help others and decided on a new career path – motivational speaker and life coach.

She also saw an opportunity to make an impact in her new career.

"I saw males, but no females," she said. "I got excited about

the empowerment and transformation, about people getting into the driver's seat of their lives and taking control. That's when I had an 'ah-ha' moment and said this is what I was put on this earth to do. So I just took a leap of faith."

Taylor estimates that she had 15 to 20 local speaking engagements in her first year. Today, 30 years later, she addresses audiences across the United States as well as around the world. She has made presentations at the Pentagon, NASA, the Los Angeles Urban League and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as at several colleges. In addition to seven books, Taylor's articles have appeared in such magazines as *JET* and *Essence*.

While her career has focused on uplifting others, Taylor's personal life has twice experienced loss and grief, first when her mother died of

breast cancer, then again two years ago when her son, John Taylor Jr., died just six weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. Taylor, who studied psychology at California State Dominguez Hills, is also an ordained pastor. She dug deep into those resources to help her get through the grief following her son's death.

"I realized how important it is to stay connected," she said. "And it's made me more sensitive in speaking with people about how to cope and to have emotional wellness, especially people who are older. By staying connected and helping people, I was able to draw on those 'investments' in other people. I had a return."

Taylor, who says that most of her audiences tend to be over age 50, plans to help those in attendance at the February event with the challenges of being older. "They become more lethargic or

overwhelmed, and can become disconnected with their families or friends," she said. "And they tend to not have anything to do with social media, so then they're really isolated.

"But it's more about mindset, not about age," she added. "Sometimes my challenge as a speaker is to give them that spark. Until we can emotionalize it, we'll never do it. They aren't this used up old person with no more significance. They have a lot to offer. They need to change how they see themselves."

The Heart of Seniors, a Senior Care Organization event, begins at 9:30 a.m. at the Wyndham Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn). Admission is \$10, which includes lunch. The event is sponsored by Kaweah Delta Home Care Services, along with Kast & Company Communications, which publishes *The Good Life*.



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Health



Family HealthCare Network's new health center in Traver.

Family HealthCare Network Opens New Traver Health Center

After nearly two years of planning and development, Family HealthCare Network (FHCN) opened the doors of its newest community health center in the rural community of Traver on December 9. Located on a parcel of Traver Elementary School land at 4177 Avenue 368, FHCN's newest site is a school-based health center that was developed in conjunction with Traver Joint School District.

"This project is years in the making and with the support of our partners, patients and the community, we are extremely pleased to officially begin

expanding access to health care for Traver residents, and to be a part of the ongoing development of this community," said FHCN President and CEO Kerry Hydash.

FHCN's Traver Health Center is currently open part-time, Monday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 2 to 6 p.m. Full time hours will expand to Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. To schedule an appointment, or for more information, call call 1-877-960-3426, or visit www.FHCN.org.

Older Adults Encouraged to Get Annual Flu Shot

Anthem Inc. encourages older adults to get their annual flu shot this year... even after the problems with last year's flu shot.

Last year's flu vaccine wasn't as effective as usual, resulting in the highest hospitalization rate for the flu among seniors ever documented. But that doesn't mean this year's shot should be neglected, according to Dr. Richard Frank, medical director for Medicare products at Anthem Inc.

Frank said the flu strain mutated after last year's vaccine was developed. This year's shot has been designed to manage that mutation, which makes public health experts optimistic that it will be much more effective in stopping

the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease.

"The flu vaccine can help people avoid months of potential complications and even hospitalization," said Frank. "It is one of the best things seniors can do to take control and remain healthy this flu season."

For more information about the dangers of flu and the benefits of vaccinations, talk to a health care provider or visit www.cdc.gov/flu. To find the nearest place to get a flu shot, visit www.vaccines.gov and type in your ZIP code on the vaccine finder.

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Companion Pets

from page 3

“We heard from seniors across the country that companionship was important to their happiness,” said Ted Fischer, vice president of business development at Hasbro. “Many live alone, miss having a pet, or are no longer able to care for a pet. While it's not a replacement for a pet, the Joy For All Companion Pet Cat is a life-like alternative that can provide the joy and companionship of owning a real pet, without the often cumbersome responsibilities.”

The Companion Pets build on Hasbro's 15 years of expertise in animatronic technology, and incorporate new innovations including exclusive technology that enables a purring experience the user can actually feel. Companion Pets respond to petting, hugging and motion through built-in sensors, authentic cat sound effects, and soft fur inspired by real felines.

In addition to captivating seniors, the Companion Pets can help enhance the interaction between caregivers and their loved ones by incorporating lighthearted fun, joy and laughter into time spent together.

“Whether it's one-on-one time between caregivers and recipients, or multi-generational play with parents, children and grandchildren, we're excited to enable families and friends of all ages to connect more deeply through the universal language of play,” Fischer said.

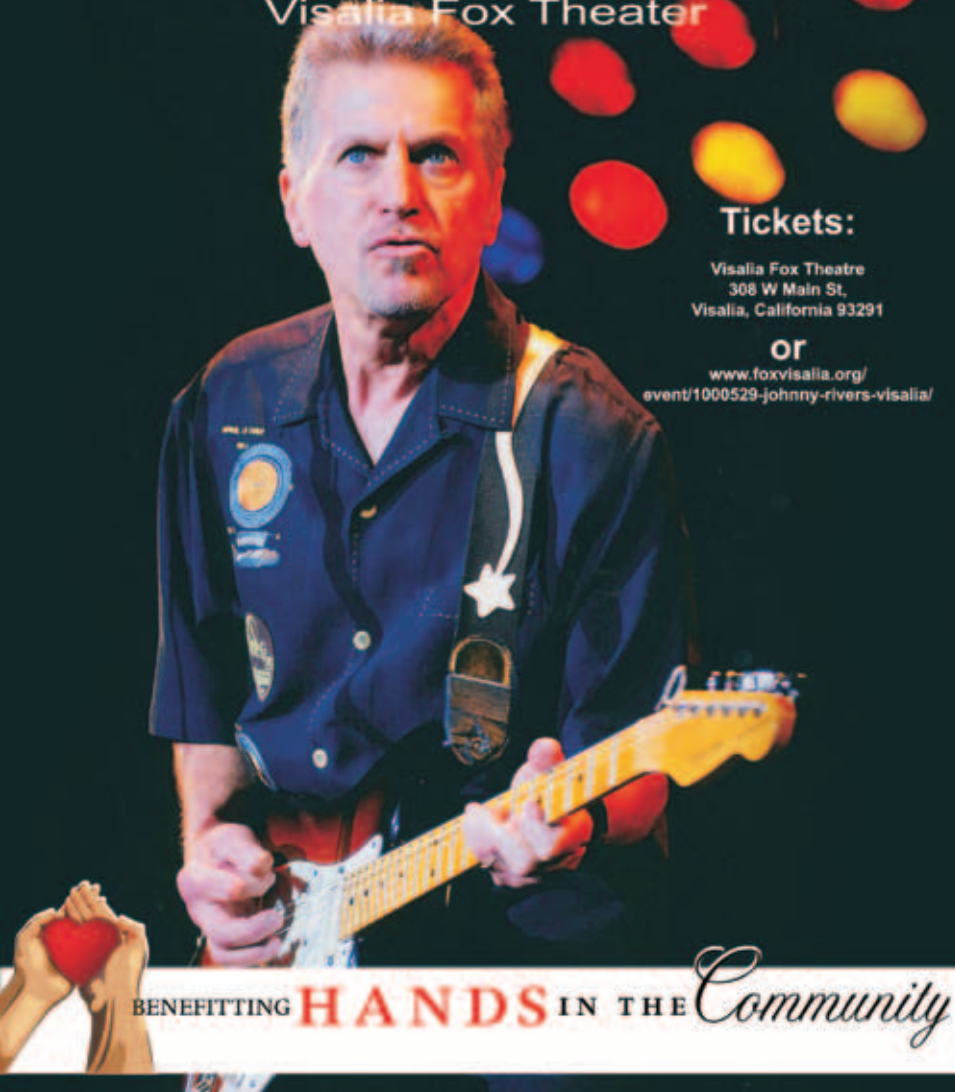
The Joy For All Companion Pet cat is offered in three different fur colors: silver, creamy white and orange tabby. For more information, visit JoyForAll.com.

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History

Dusting Off History with Terry Ommen



The Wire Comes to Visalia

In the mid-19th century, communication with the outside world for little remote settlements in California was a challenge. Mail delivery was slow and important news would take weeks or even months to make its destination. The short-lived Pony Express and the Butterfield Overland Mail stages helped somewhat, but urgent messages were painfully slow.

Visalia was one of these secluded settlements, but by June 1860, thanks to the telegraph, the problem was about to improve. In the late 1850s, the Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph Company began building a telegraph line connecting Los Angeles and San Francisco with a route that would pass through Visalia.

Planting poles and stringing copper wire began in San Francisco, and by October 1859, the work crew had reached the valley floor at the base of Pacheco Pass. The Visalia Weekly Delta followed the crew's progress and on June 16, 1860, they reported the workers were at Cross Creek, just a few miles northwest of Visalia.

Quickly, the town began organizing a celebration to welcome the visitors, and on Monday, June 18th, a procession of decorated vehicles was ready to greet them. Abe Rapeley, Visalia agent for the Butterfield stage line took the lead in organizing the procession and offered his company's spare coaches and his personal buggy. One of the extra Concord



Veteran telegrapher J.C. Ward

coaches was loaded with the Visalia Brass Band, and another coach displayed a cloth banner printed with, "I'll put a girdle round the earth in 40 minutes," on one side, and, "Pacific and Atlantic Telegraph, Visalia, June 1860," on the other.

At about 11 a.m., the vehicles traveled north out of town and met the telegraph crew and their boss, Superintendent James Street. Street was cheered and congratulated, then invited to ride into town on Rapeley's buggy. The procession slowly caravanned into Visalia and as soon they were in front of the courthouse, a cannon was fired and a 100-gun salute welcomed the group.

The town was decorated with bunting and flags. Well-wishers lined the streets and music filled the air. While the celebration was going on, the telegraph workers extended the wire into town and the Exchange Hotel, located on the northeast corner of Court and Main streets became the telegraph office.

The festive procession paraded through the streets and made periodic stops with speakers at each one, extolling the arrival of the telegraph. Following the procession and speeches, the remainder of the day was spent socializing and townsfolk sent free telegraph messages courtesy of the company.

After Visalia, the crew continued their work southbound, and by July, poles were up at Fort Tejon. By October, they ended in Los Angeles.

Although he was not part of Visalia's initial telegraph operation, Joseph Clarence Ward was an important part of Visalia's telegraph history. J.C., as he was known, came to Visalia in 1869 as a veteran telegrapher. He was about 25 years of age at the time and already had become an expert in the field. He had been the personal telegraph operator for General Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War, and had also known Thomas Edison.

When Ward arrived in Visalia, his plan was to stay only a few months, but he ended up staying his entire life. Not only was he Visalia's most well-known telegrapher, he was a prominent businessman, school board member, master mason and mayor.



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