



IN THIS ISSUE: "Killer Grannies," RetroEscapes' '50s Land, Earthquakes and Visalia, "Best Retirement Destinations"

# The Good Life

News, Health & Leisure for South Valley Adults 50+ • Volume XII, Number 4 • January/February 2026



The annual Heart of Seniors event features entertainment, in addition to a luncheon, fashion show, raffles, and informational booths.

## Heart of Seniors Set for Thursday, February 12

The 11th Annual Heart of Seniors event, where seniors, along with their families and caregivers, can learn about the continuum of care resources that are available locally, will be held at the Visalia Wyndam Hotel, on Thursday, February 12, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will feature a lunch, fashion show, entertainment, raffles, informational speakers, and informational booths.

Dr. Donya Ball, international keynote speaker and best-selling author, will be the keynote speaker at the event. She is the author of two best-selling books, *Adjusting the Sails: Weathering the Storms of Administrative Leadership* and *Against the Wind:*



Dr. Donya Ball, keynote speaker

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Tickets, which include lunch, are \$10 and now available for purchase.

For tickets, call (559) 300-9101 or (559) 805-6710 or visit <https://heartofseniors.com>.

## Visalia Senior Games to Become Visalia Games

The Visalia Senior Games are now the Visalia Games, with competitions open to more age groups.

(Registration for the games opened on January 1, but the dates of the competitions were not announced before this issue went to press.)

"The additional generations will not impact senior competitions," said City of Visalia Recreation Supervisor Holly Ellis. "The Visalia Games will continue to honor the legacy of the Visalia Senior Games by keeping dedicated senior age divisions.

"Younger participants will simply compete within their own age groups, allowing seniors to continue enjoying competitive play against peers," she explained. "The number of events available to seniors will



be the same as those available to younger participants."

The senior divisions will continue in ten-year increments (50-59, 60-69, 70-79, etc.), preserving the familiar structure for athletes 50 and over, according to Ellis.

"Primarily, seniors will compete in their own age divisions," she said. "However, based on participation numbers in each sport/event, seniors may have the option to compete alongside younger divisions when their own division does not have enough competitors to run a meaningful event. This ensures seniors always have a competitive opportunity rather than facing a division with no opponents."

The 2026 Visalia Games will have a different schedule than the 2025 Senior Games.

"The games will take place within the same week, with some events potentially taking place on weeknights," Ellis said.

She explained that the changes were made "to transform the event into a multi-sport, multi-generational celebration of health, fitness and friendly competition across Visalia.

"Expanding participation strengthens the event while preserving the legacy of the Visalia Senior Games and maintaining dedicated 50+ divisions," she said.

For information about how to register, call (559) 713-4365 or email [recreation@visalia.city](mailto:recreation@visalia.city).



## CMS Announces Savings for Seniors on 15 Major Drugs

On Nov. 25, 2025, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced a net savings of 44%, or \$12 billion, from last year's negotiated Medicare spending on 15 drugs used widely to treat cancer and other serious chronic conditions.

The Maximum Fair Prices (MFPs) for these 15 drugs will become effective January 1, 2027, bringing the total number of negotiated drugs to 25 when combined with the 10

previously negotiated drugs with MFPs that took effect January 1, 2026.

The 15 drugs in this second negotiation cycle, used to treat cancer, diabetes, asthma and other chronic illnesses, represent some of the highest Medicare Part D spending.

The drugs include Ozempic, Rybelsus, Wegovy, Trelegy Ellipta, Pomalyst, Ofev, Ibrance, Linzess, Calquence, Otezla, Vraylar, Tradjenta, and Janumet.



Family HealthCare Network's newest health center is at 858 N. Cherry St., Suite D, Tulare.

## FHCN Expands Services with New Tulare Health Center

Dr. Jatinder Chopra, M.D., an internal medicine specialist who has devoted 47 years to caring for the Tulare community, has officially joined Family HealthCare Network (FHCN). As part of this transition, FHCN has acquired Dr. Chopra's long-standing practice, ensuring that patients will continue to receive care at the same Tulare location.

The health center, located at 858 N. Cherry St., Suite D, Tulare, will offer annual wellness visits for adults, walk-in appointments, and internal medicine. It will be open Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

A sliding fee scale is available, with services starting at just \$20 for eligible patients.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 877-960-3426 or visit fhcن.org.

## Kaweah Health Names Marc Mertz as New CEO

The Kaweah Health Board of Directors selected Marc Mertz, a strategic healthcare executive with national consulting expertise, as the organization's new chief executive officer.

Mertz, who started his new role as CEO on December 22, succeeds Gary Herbst, who previously announced his retirement.

Mertz, who previously served as Kaweah Health's chief strategy officer, joined the organization in 2018. Prior to that, he served as vice president and physician services practice leader at GE Healthcare (formerly The Camden Group) in El Segundo, CA. He also held positions as president of Health Check Incorporated in Mexico Beach, FL, and vice president of The Horizon Group in Virginia Beach, VA.

The board conducted a nationwide search that attracted dozens of highly qualified candidates. Following a rigorous screening process, the pool was narrowed to a select few finalists who participated in extensive interviews with the board, the medical staff, executive team, and community members.

"We are excited for Marc to step into the position of CEO, bringing not only more than 20 years of experience outside our organization, but also a deep knowledge and understanding of Kaweah Health and our unique challenges," Kaweah Health Board President Mike Olmos said. "Marc is the right person to guide Kaweah Health through the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead."

Mertz's consulting background in mergers and acquisitions, physician services growth, and system-wide strategy provides him with the expertise to navigate complex healthcare challenges. He has



Kaweah Health CEO Marc Mertz

built critical partnerships at Kaweah Health with leading institutions including Cleveland Clinic and Valley Children's Hospital, bringing world-class resources to the community.

Mertz serves as the liaison for Kaweah Health to national, state, and local government officials. He also oversees the community engagement groups and patient experience team, which serve as sounding boards for the community.

"I'm honored to have the confidence of the board to serve Kaweah Health as its new CEO," Mertz said. "During my time here, I have witnessed firsthand the fantastic care we provide to our patients. I am proud of our legacy and accomplishments, and I look forward to working with our employees and our medical staff to reach new levels of high-quality, compassionate care for our community."

Beyond his executive role, Mertz is deeply connected to the community as immediate past president of the Rotary Club of Visalia and a board member for the Visalia Chamber of Commerce, the Mineral King Preservation Society, and Riata Ranch International.

### VETERANS COLUMN

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# RetroEscapes Plans to Recreate '50s, '60s, '70s

RetroEscapes is a groundbreaking theme park experience proposed for Las Vegas that celebrates the iconic moments, cultural touchstones, and beloved memories that shaped generations.

The park will transport guests through carefully crafted lands representing different eras, each capturing the magic, music, design and spirit that defined those unforgettable decades.

From the neon-lit diners of the 1950s to the arcade wonderlands of the 1980s, every detail is designed to spark joy, connection, and wonder.

"RetroEscapes is designed to let people not only remember the past – but step directly back into it," RetroEscapes co-founder Daniel Leo Wittenkeller told *The Good Life*. "We're building a place where the 1950s through the 1990s are fully immersive, living environments. When you enter one of our lands, it should feel like you've walked straight out of a time machine.

"Unlike traditional theme parks built around fictional IP, our intellectual property is memory itself – the moments, music, places and cultural touchstones that shaped generations," he said. "For guests 50 and older, RetroEscapes is a



chance to relive the world they grew up in – where they ate, the cars they drove, the fashion they wore, the music they danced to.

"RetroEscapes will be deeply cross-generational," he continued. "Parents and grandparents can share stories and show their families what life actually looked and felt like in the decades they lived through. That's the emotional core of the project.

"People often say, 'I miss the way things used to be,'" he added. "RetroEscapes exists to bring that feeling back to life."

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

Plans for RetroEscapes, a theme park in Las Vegas, include lands celebrating the 1950s (above left), the 1960s (above right) and the 1970s (below).





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# Greece Named World's Best Retirement Destination for 2026

Sun-soaked, safe, and surprisingly attainable – Greece claims the top spot in *International Living's 35th Annual Global Retirement Index*, emerging as Europe's new value leader for retirees seeking culture, comfort, community, and easy access to Europe.

The guide evaluates the world's top destinations for retirees across categories, including cost of living, healthcare, housing, visas, climate and ease of integration.

"Greece's rise to number one marks a shift in Europe's retirement landscape," said Jennifer Stevens, executive editor of *International Living*. "For years, Portugal and Spain led the way, but recent visa changes and rising costs have retirees looking elsewhere. Greece now offers what many are seeking – a beautiful, welcoming, and affordable European base with accessible residency options and a lifestyle that feels rich in every sense."

Greece scored particularly high in climate, healthcare and housing – categories that reflect not only its natural beauty and quality of care, but also the welcoming culture that helps newcomers feel at home.

Residency options are another factor that set Greece apart this year. The country's



Chania, Crete, Greece

Golden Visa program, which grants residency through property investment, remains one of Europe's most accessible, particularly now that Portugal has tightened its rules.

"All in all, when it comes to Golden Visa options, I'd say Greece is more than the new Portugal... it may be even better," noted *International Living's* Global Diversification Expert Ted Baumann.

The *2026 Index* draws on input from *International Living's* network of correspon-

dents and expats around the world, combining real data with on-the-ground experience.

### Why Greece Stands Out

With more than 8,000 miles of coastline, hundreds of islands, and over 300 days of sunshine a year, Greece offers retirees a high quality of life at a surprisingly modest cost.

"Greece quietly transforms the way you live," said *International Living's* Greece correspondent Leena Horner, who

retired to Corfu four years ago. "It's not just one thing; it's the climate, the *sigasiga* attitude of taking life slowly, the vibrant community, and the daily connection with nature."

Horner and her husband live comfortably on about \$3,400 to \$3,500 a month. Comparable seaside homes rent from \$700 to \$1,200 a month, and a dinner for two with wine costs \$35 to \$60.

"The private healthcare here has been consistently

*(continued on page 11)*



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# Kaweah Health to Open New Primary Clinic

By Larry Kast

Patients seeking primary care services have a new option, thanks to Kaweah Health.

A new primary clinic will open in a 7,000-square-foot space on the first floor of the Cigna Building at 5300 W. Tulare Ave., Suite 100, Visalia, after signing a 10-year lease agreement with the County of Tulare, which owns the building.

And Marc Mertz, the newly named CEO of Kaweah Health, couldn't be more excited.

"This is going to give us a tremendous advantage in the recruitment of physicians," said Mertz.

Mertz isn't the only one looking forward to the new clinic.

"It's exciting," said Dr. Gaylene Soloniuk-Tays, a family practice physician with more than 40 years of experience who will be moving her practice to the new clinic location.

"You can bring on the doctors, but where are you going to put them? There hasn't been available space," said Mertz. "The design (of the new location) along with the multispecialty component will really help us with recruitment."

Joining Soloniuk-Tays when the location opens will be family practice physician Dr. Wil-



Kaweah Health's new primary clinic at 5300 W. Tulare Ave., Suite 100, Visalia.

liam Roach, nurse practitioner Andrew Kim, and pediatrician Dr. Ester Flores Midence. But with 18 exam rooms and two procedure rooms, along with an additional 4,000 square feet of available expansion space, Mertz said the new clinic location has the capacity to accommodate more than 20 medical providers.

"It's going to be a one-stop location," said Mertz. "We love the location and the parking. There is no clinic in town as nice as this."

Additional available space would allow for ancillary services to be added, such as a laboratory draw station, x-ray

and retail pharmacy, all of which could be added at some point in the future. Mertz also talked about using the additional space for specialists such as orthopedic and general surgeons to see patients.

Soloniuk-Tays agreed. "It's really exciting," she said. "It's a very central location. It will be much more convenient."

The new location offers ample and convenient parking, a welcome change from the medical offices surrounding the downtown Visalia hospital location.



Dr. Gaylene Soloniuk-Tays

### Additional Physicians Needed Locally

Visalia, and the rest of the Central San Joaquin Valley, is noted for being a medically underserved area, a designation made by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. Mertz added that of 50 primary care and medical specialties, the Visalia area is understaffed in 45 of the categories.

"Every three years, we do a study," said Mertz. "Every time we do the study, we are short (physicians)."

As for older patients, Mertz  
*(continued on page 11)*

## Westgate Gardens Recognized by U.S. News & World Report

Westgate Gardens Care Center in Visalia has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report for being among the best nursing homes for short-term rehabilitation.

Westgate Gardens is a 140-bed, skilled nursing facility dedicated to providing high-quality, compassionate care in a warm and welcoming environment.

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# Cholesterol-lowering Drugs Could Reduce Risk of Dementia

Low cholesterol can reduce the risk of dementia, a new University of Bristol-led study with more than a million participants has shown.

The research, led by Dr. Liv Tybjærg Nordestgaard, found that people with certain genetic variants that naturally lower cholesterol have a lower risk of developing dementia.

The study, which is based on data from more than a million people in Denmark, England and Finland, has been published in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*.

Some people are born with genetic variants that naturally affect the same proteins targeted by cholesterol-lower-

ing drugs, such as statins and ezetimibe. To test the effect of cholesterol-lowering medication on the risk of dementia, the researchers used a method called Mendelian Randomisation – this genetic analysis technique allowed them to mimic the effects of these drugs to investigate how they influence the risk of dementia, while minimising the influence of confounding factors like weight, diet, and other lifestyle habits.

By comparing these individuals to individuals without these genetic variants, the researchers were able to measure differences in the risk of dementia. They found reducing the amount of cholesterol

in the blood by a small amount (one millimole per litre) to be associated with up to 80% reduction in risk of developing dementia for certain drug targets.

"What our study indicates is that if you have these variants that lower your cholesterol, it looks like you have a significantly lower risk of developing dementia," said Dr. Nordestgaard.

The results suggest that having low cholesterol, whether due to genes or medical treatment, can help reduce the risk of dementia. However, the study does not say anything definitive about the effect of the medicine itself.

One of the challenges is

that dementia typically does not appear until late in life, and therefore research in the area typically requires a very long period of follow-up.

It is still not known exactly why high cholesterol can increase the risk of dementia, but one possible explanation proposed by Dr. Nordestgaard is that high cholesterol can lead to atherosclerosis.

"Atherosclerosis is a result of the accumulation of cholesterol in your blood vessels," he said. "It can be in both the body and the brain and increases the risk of forming small blood clots – one of the causes of dementia.

"It would be a really good next step to carry out randomised clinical trials over 10 or 30 years, for example, where you give the participants cholesterol-lowering medication and then look at the risk of developing dementia," Dr. Nordestgaard added.

The study used data from the UK Biobank, the Copenhagen General Population Study, the Copenhagen City Heart Study, the FinnGen study, and the Global Lipids Genetics Consortium.

Funding was provided by the Medical Research Council, Independent Research Fund Denmark, and Research Council at the Capital Region of Denmark.

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## AAA Projects 21.7 Million Americans to Cruise Next Year

The booming cruise industry is expected to kick off another record year in 2026, following a year expected to be a better-than-expected 2025.

AAA projects 21.7 million Americans will go on ocean cruises in 2026 and 20.7 million this year, a higher number than AAA originally projected for 2025. AAA is forecasting that the year-over-year increase will be an 8.4% jump from 2024 to 2025 and a 4.5% bounce from 2025 to 2026.

"These numbers highlight the growing popularity of ocean cruises among U.S. travelers," said Doug Shupe, corporate communications manager for AAA Texas. "Whether it's a relaxing Caribbean getaway or an adventurous family reunion in Alaska, ocean cruises offer convenience, variety and experiences that create lifelong memories."



Author Janet Lynch

## Janet Lynch Releases Latest Novel

In *More to Life*, the new book by local author Janet Lynch, retired school teacher Colette Corbyn goes kicking and screaming into assisted living, when she has already planned to live out her days in the privacy of her own home.

As she begrudgingly settles into Shady Meadow, she makes an unlikely friend, Margaret, who claims the Women's Movement demeaned women.

A loud, obnoxious neighbor, Dottie, seems to be off her rocker, but she's actually addicted to opioids and has an alarming secret life.

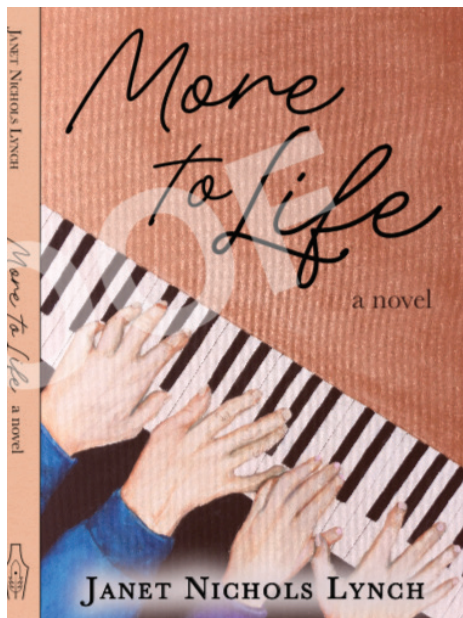
Best-selling novelist Susan Hartley, afflicted with Alzheimer's, doesn't recognize her latest book, and becomes violent when she mistakes Colette for her sister.

Colette struggles to come to terms with her sometimes-contentious daughter Brooke and seeks a relationship with her grandson Carter, long lost down the rabbit hole of QAnon. Colette thinks she is done with romance until she meets Harry, who suffers from AMD and can only read music through a magnifying glass.

As Colette and Harry share their love of piano playing, Colette discovers complications in his life which may prevent their relationship from enduring. With compassion and wit, Lynch demonstrates that old age has its perks, and, nearing the end of life, every day is worth living to its fullest.

About her novel, Lynch says, "As we age, our joints may stiffen with arthritis, our eyes may dim with macular degeneration, and our physical energy may wane. We have to exert greater effort to maintain the quality of life we are accustomed to, but we refuse to give up the things we love, especially our independence.

"My protagonist Colette is devastated when her daughter places her in an assisted-living residence, but there she finds more to life, including friendship, adventure, romance and



a rekindling of the piano-playing she loves."

Lynch continues about how she loves to move through her own life, "As a septuagenarian, I refuse to quit running, biking, swimming, hiking, traveling, piano-playing, writing and raising hell with the grandkids. Every day counts, and I'm living each of them to the fullest, just like the characters in my novel *More to Life*."

Lynch was born in Sacramento and graduated with a BA in music from California State University, a master of music degree in piano from Arizona State University, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Fresno State University. She has taught music and English at the community college, high school and middle school levels, and private piano to all ages.

Lynch lives in Visalia with her husband, composer Timothy Lynch, and they have two grown children, three grandchildren and three cats. She has completed 20 marathons and numerous other races and triathlons.

As an avid cyclist, her longest ride was from Phoenix to Washington, D.C., and she is nearing the completion of her goal of cycling in all 50 states. She is on Facebook at facebook.com/jnicholslynch, on Instagram at janet\_nichols\_lynych, and on Twitter at JanetNicLynch. Her website is JanetNicholsLynch.com.

## Oxygen Presents 'Killer Grannies'

"Killer Grannies," a new true-crime series on the Oxygen network, hosted by Oscar-nominated actress June Squibb, chronicles shocking cases involving a killer no one would suspect: Grandma.

In every self-contained episode, a rollercoaster ride of a case unfolds as investigators dig deep and chase every lead until they finally catch their unexpected killer.

Through gripping archival footage, selective recreations and cinematic imagery, and in-depth interviews with investigators, prosecutors, friends and family, each episode will peel back the plastic cover on the couch to uncover a world of sinister plots and evil deeds



June Squibb

unpacking why and how these maternal matriarchs of the family can turn deadly.

## CSET Needs Volunteers for Free Tax Assistance Program

Community Services Employment Training (CSET) is recruiting local volunteers to assist with the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

VITA provides tax preparation and electronic filing services at no cost to Tulare County households with less than \$69,000 annual income.

In 2025, VITA preparers helped file 4,217 tax returns for low and moderate-income residents, returning more than \$5.4 million to Tulare and Kings County residents.

For the 2025 VITA tax season, approximately 100 volunteers will be needed to serve as IRS certified tax preparers.

"CSET is looking forward to providing valuable free tax preparation for our local families," said Community Initiatives Division Director Raquel Gomez. "We are excited to provide this important service for the 18th consecutive year to Kings and Tulare County residents."

No prior experience is necessary to become a VITA volunteer. With your assistance, local families in Tulare County will be informed about eligible

cash-back tax credits, such as the state and federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

Retired financial professionals, as well as adults and high school youth exploring careers in the finance industry would serve as excellent volunteers.

Bilingual volunteers are especially needed for this upcoming tax season.

CSET's VITA program will conduct volunteer training in person in Visalia and Porterville, and online for the 2025 tax season. Training will take place during the month of January 2026, and the free tax preparation drop-off services will be offered to the public beginning February 2026.

VITA volunteers will be providing tax preparation services in five primary locations: Earlimart, Orosi, Porterville, Tulare and Visalia.

For more information and to apply online, visit [www.cset.org/vita](http://www.cset.org/vita).

Interested volunteers may also contact Homer Ruiz at (559) 741-4641 or Homer.Ruiz@cset.org; or Alejandra Flores at (559) 946-6331 or Alejandra.Flores@cset.org.

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# CALENDAR

**Friday, January 2 - F1rst Friday**

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

**January 4, 11, 18, 25 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays**

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

**January 7, 14, 21, 28 - Bingo**

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

**Thursday, January 8 - "Ancestral Road Trips: Finding Ancestors East of the Mississippi"**

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. presentation by Madeline Yanov exploring U.S. migration as the American colonies expanded. 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.

**Thursday, January 8 - Bingo Night**

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

**January 8, 15, 22, 29 - Thursday Night Dances**

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

**Wednesday, January 14 - 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).

**January 15-February 21 - Tulare County Varied Impression Art Exhibit**

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this exhibit showcasing the talents of artists throughout Tulare County. For more info, call (559) 686-2074.

**Friday, January 16 - Prize B-I-N-G-O**

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

**Monday, January 19 - Exeter Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

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

**Monday, January 19 - Tulare Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

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

**Tuesday, January 20 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group**

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

**Tuesday, January 20 - Grief Support Group**

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

**January 24-March 29 - "Beneath the Surface"**

This art exhibition of Kristine Vogt and Acquired Works, will be presented at CACHE, 125 South B St., Exeter. The artists' reception is on Saturday, January 24, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more info, call (559) 592-5900 or visit <http://cach-exeter.org/events>.

**January 30-February 1 - Visalia SpringFest**

This three-day home and patio event returns to the Visalia Convention Center. For more information, see article on page 9 or visit [www.visaliahomeshows.com](http://www.visaliahomeshows.com).

**February 1, 8, 15, 22 - Senior Pride Bingo Sundays**

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

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

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

**Thursday, February 5 - "Restoring Deep Creek Cemetery"**

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. update on the progress being made to restore Deep Creek Cemetery in Farmersville. 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.

**February 5, 12, 29, 26 - Thursday Night Dances**

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

**Friday, February 6 - Galentine's Brunch**

This "cheerful celebration of friendship and fun" will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 9:30 a.m. Tickets are \$25. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

**Friday, February 6 - 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).

**Wednesday, February 11 - 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).

**Thursday, February 12 - 2026 Heart of Seniors**

This event, which will feature a luncheon, a fashion show, informational booths, raffles, and keynote speaker Dr. Donya Ball, an international keynote speaker and best selling author, will be held at the Wyndham Visalia Hotel, 900 W. Airport Dr., Visalia. (See article on page 1.)

**Thursday, February 12 - Bingo Night**

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

**Friday, February 13 - Sweetheart Luncheon**

This event will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St., Visalia, at 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$6 for Visalia seniors. For more information, call (559) 713-4365.

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\*\*PROMOTIONS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

(continued on page 9)

# CALENDAR

(continued from page 8)

### Monday, February 16 - Exeter Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

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

### Monday, February 16 - Tulare Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

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

### Monday, February 16 - "The Merryman of Marinette: The Men who Bankrolled Exeter's Citrus Boom"

This "Exeter and Beyond" talk by Dwight Miller will be presented at CACHE, 125 South B St., Exeter, at 7 p.m. Admission is free. For more info, call (559) 592-5900 or visit <http://cach-exeter.org/events>.

### Tuesday, February 17 - Visalia Caregiver/Dementia Support Group

Quail Park on Cypress, 4520

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

### Tuesday, February 17 - Grief Support Group

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

### Thursday, February 19 - Senior Winter Dance

This event for ages 50+, featuring live music by Tina Marie, will be held at the Visalia Senior Center, 310 N. Locust St.,

Visalia, 6-8 p.m. Presale tickets are \$10, \$12 at the door. For more info, call (559) 713-4365.

### Friday, February 20 - Prize B-I-N-G-O

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

### Saturday, February 28 - Book Signing and Historical Presentation

The Tulare Historical Museum, 444 W. Tulare Ave., Tulare, will host this presentation by the nephew of Admiral Richard Crowe sharing stories of var-

ious people in his family going back as far as 300 years. The bulk of his book covers the Zumwalt, DeWitt and Ford families who came from the Midwest. For more info, call (559) 686-2074.

### Thursday, March 5 - "In-Person Interview with Geraldine Soult"

The Sequoia Genealogical Society will host this 6 p.m. in-person interview with Geraldine Soult, a 105-years-old Tulare historian. 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.



## Visalia SpringFest Returns to Convention Center

The 33rd Annual Visalia Home & Patio SpringFest returns to the South Valley with more than 300 booths and displays at the Visalia Convention Center.

This year's home show includes everything for the home and garden, unique sheds, barbecue islands, awnings, pools, a variety of garden art and pottery, and affordable decorating and

home improvement options.

Senior Day is back and on Friday, seniors attend for free. Saturday and Sunday admission is only \$5 for seniors.

Hours are 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturday, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday. For more information visit [VisaliaHomeShows.com](http://VisaliaHomeShows.com) or call (800) 700-7469. (See ad on page 11.)

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# Medicare Advantage Warning: Read This Before You Auto-Renew

By Christopher Smith

Planning for the potential for expensive healthcare at the end of our lives is one of the least exciting parts of retirement.

However, it's a real and significant part of financial planning.

According to the Administration for Community Living, a federal agency, almost 70% of people turning 65 years old today will eventually need some type of long-term care (LTC).

Even a few years of long-term care can be a major financial burden.

Genworth Financial, one of the larger long-term care insurers, reported in its 2023 *Cost of Care Survey* that the median cost of a semi-private room at a nursing home was \$104,000 per year.

How is Clark Howard preparing for potential long-term care costs for himself? And what are the options? That's what a listener of the Clark Howard Podcast asked.

On a podcast episode, Bobbi in New York asked: "How have you prepared for potentially significant long-term care costs? Do you have traditional or hybrid insurance coverage, or are you self-funding?"



Money Expert Clark Howard

Clark breaks down the solutions for long-term care into three groups: those who qualify for Medicaid (based on low income), those with a net worth of at least \$3 million excluding your home and those in between.

For the group with significant wealth, Clark doesn't recommend paying to protect against this potential expense.

"I can self-fund and stay in assisted living," Clark says. "When I looked at buying coverage, it just didn't make any sense for me. I've had the good fortune over the years to have enough assets that it can just be a life expense like a health expense."

If you don't own a home and qualify for Medicaid, you also don't need to worry about insuring against the need to pay for long-term care. The

homeownership portion is important because the government can take your home before stepping in to carry your healthcare costs, Clark says.

### What to Do if You're Middle Class

Most people fall somewhere in between wealthy or impoverished.

Everyone in this zone should consider a long-term care insurance solution to protect their finances and quality of life, Clark says.

Traditionally, purchasing long-term care insurance has been the solution to guard against longevity and a daily need for help with basic functions or medical care.

However, the industry has found it extremely difficult to project for future costs, life expectancy and longevity.

"They're difficult to buy," Clark says about long-term care insurance policies. "The industry imploded."

However, there is another solution. You can buy a "hybrid" whole life insurance policy. Look for one with a rider that allows you to convert the benefit from a death benefit into paying for long-term care.

"The hybrid insurance tends to be the least bad alternative," Clark says. "It's a mediocre answer to a very difficult problem. But today, it's the least bad answer. Try to buy from a company rated A++ by AM Best."

Hybrid policies are as much as three times as expensive as long-term care insurance (LTCI). But the money for an LTCI policy vanishes

when you die, even if you never make a claim. LTCI policies also leave you susceptible to price increases. Hybrid policies take care of those potential downsides.

With a hybrid policy, "You can use [your benefit] for long-term care if you need it. If you don't need long-term care, your survivors get the value of the insurance," Clark says. "That seems to be where the industry is going because the insurers have just been so flat incapable of properly predicting cost and risk on traditional long-term care insurance."

### Final Thoughts

The odds of you needing some sort of long-term care are greater than a coin flip.

Considering these expenses can already run into the six figures annually, it's not something you should ignore in your financial and retirement planning.

If you accumulate major assets, you can self-insure. Otherwise, most people need to choose between some imperfect options. Clark recommends a hybrid whole life insurance policy with a long-term care rider.

*Clark Howard is a nationally syndicated talk show host who focuses on helping you save more, spend less and avoid getting ripped off. A listing of all the radio stations that carry his show can be found at [www.Clark.com](http://www.Clark.com) in addition to his podcast *The Clark Howard Podcast* and his YouTube channel.*

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Pictured above is Boquete, Panama, and below is Jaco on the central Pacific Coast of Costa Rica. Panama placed second and Costa Rica third on the list of best retirement destinations.



### Best Retirement Destinations...

(continued from page 4)

good," Horner, an OBGYN, adds. "We pay (\$300) a month total for private insurance for the two of us, primarily catastrophic coverage. For most routine care, we pay out of pocket and have never spent more than (\$1,150) a year."

Even specialized care is a fraction of U.S. costs:

"When my husband needed laser treatment for a retinal detachment, it cost (\$292) in total - treatment, follow-ups, everything. In the U.S., that would have cost at least \$5,000."

Community life is another key factor.

"We live in a rural part of Corfu where locals and expats know one another," Horner said. "There's a willingness to connect and engage with others that's uncommon in more metropolitan locations."

"When I think back to our life in Boulder, CO - the long winters, the high cost of living, the constant busyness - it feels like a distant memory," Horner says. "Here, my mornings begin with coffee on the terrace, and more often than not, they end in the company of friends or with the sound of waves drifting through the evening breeze."

The full "Top 10 Retirement Destinations for 2026" list includes:

- 1. Greece
- 2. Panama
- 3. Costa Rica
- 4. Portugal
- 5. Mexico
- 6. Italy
- 7. France
- 8. Spain
- 9. Thailand
- 10. Malaysia

**Next Deadline:**  
**Friday,**  
**February 13, 2026**

## New Primary Clinic...

(continued from page 5)

emphasized that providers will be accepting new patients, including those who are older.

"You will have physicians with established practices who are experienced in caring for seniors," he said.

In addition to the new clinic, Kaweah Health has urgent care facilities on north Demaree Street as well as on Court Street. While the location on Ben Maddox stopped functioning as an urgent care walk-in clinic, Mertz said the plan is to reopen the facility under the hospital's license once the primary care practices of doc-

tors Soloniuk-Tays, Roach and Flores Midence have been moved to the new clinic location.

Currently, Kaweah Health has 65 physicians and 45 advanced medical providers working in its clinics, along with 14 behavioral health therapists. It operates six rural health clinics, four medical care clinics, six specialty care clinics and one mental health clinic.

For more information or to inquire about becoming a patient, log onto [www.Kaweah-Health.org/clinics](http://www.Kaweah-Health.org/clinics) or call (559) 839-2200.



An examination room in Kaweah Health's new clinic

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## QUAIL CORNER

# Depression & Meeting Others Your Own Age

Q&A with Kimberly Jensen

**Question: The holidays have left me in a bit of depression. It is not a good way to start the year. What are some things I can do to get past this feeling?**

The holidays often leave us feeling either overwhelmed or underwhelmed. Focus on a plan to engage in activities like an old hobby, reconnecting with friends and family, or an exercise program. Getting the structure back into your life routine might help you to shift your focus and get excited for the new year. Set realistic goals for yourself and acknowledge any grief that you have. Try to shift your negative focus and mindset.

Consider scheduling things to look forward to, like weekend trips, lunch with friends or volunteering in your community. Giving time to others creates positive endorphins which are critical to maintaining good mental health. Volunteering or helping those less fortunate is a wonderful way to feel a greater sense of purpose. Depression often starts when we isolate ourselves.

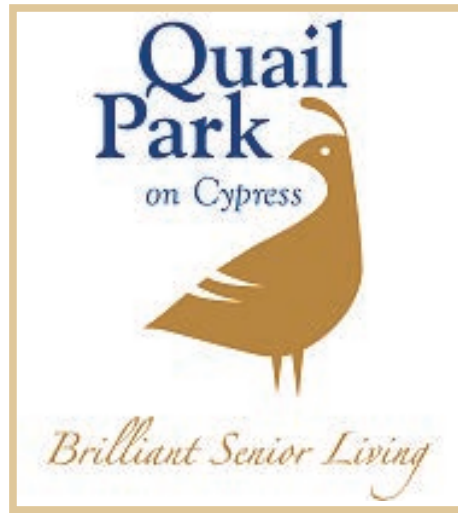
Begin a tradition with people in your neighborhood or community who might be in a similar position. Start a sin-

gles group that meets monthly and create fun activities that you can do together. This will build a network of people who will expand your social circle and become your new friends. You will all be able to share your thoughts and feelings with each other and this will help everyone to manage their stress and sadness.

Try to maintain your routine. Stick to regular meals, exercise and sleep schedules to provide a sense of normalcy. After the holidays, it is very important to re-establish a regular sleep schedule and get back to your regular mealtimes. Lack of sleep can worsen irritability and your ability to cope with stress.

Avoid excessive alcohol consumption that causes depression and focus on filling your diet with healthy foods that energize your mind and body. We only have one body, so taking care of it is critically important so as not to end up battling a disease later in life. A diet that is high in sugar and carbohydrates can negatively impact mood, so focus on a balanced meal to make you feel better.

Engage in activities that relax and energize you, such as



listening to music, going for a walk, or practicing mindfulness. Set goals you can achieve and avoid building up unrealistic expectations for a perfect new year. Make sure to prioritize your daylight time. Spending time outdoors during the day, especially during winter months, will help to improve your mood in a positive way. Spend time in nature or work in your garden.

Acknowledge your feelings. It's normal to feel sadness or grief, especially if you have experienced loss. Allow yourself to feel these emotions. It is alright to not feel happy, and you are not alone in this way. Don't suppress your emotions with medication or alcohol as this can worsen your anxiety and depression.

Seeking professional help by talking to someone is also helpful. If you are struggling, reach out to a mental health professional for support. Many individuals feel drained and empty after the holidays, and it is important to share those feelings so you can be validated.

The holiday seasons of the past are not necessarily the holiday seasons we have now. Families grow up/move away and loved ones pass on. By practicing self-care and getting back to the balance of your routine, hopefully you will be able to kick-start your drive to start enjoying life again. Try to stay positive and thankful for what you have and don't focus on what you have lost. Reaching out for social connection and support will help build new friendships and allow for you to share your feelings.

Many people are feeling the same way you are. You are not alone. Enhance your new year with a new circle of friends, new adventures and a

wonderful new start. Seeking professional help will aid in validating your feelings and let you move on so that you can enjoy the new year.

**Question: I am a senior and I moved to Visalia recently to be closer to my children. I am a very sociable person and love to participate in fun activities. Where can I go in Visalia to meet people my own age?**

Welcome to Visalia. We have a very friendly, vibrant senior community here. I know how difficult it can be to get adjusted to new places and meet new people. I would recommend that you first meet your neighbors and get acquainted with your new neighborhood.

Next, I would suggest checking out the Visalia Senior Center, located at 310 N. Locust St. in Visalia. It has a lot of activities that I think you will enjoy.

According to their website they offer pinochle, table tennis, cycling, chair volleyball, contract bridge, bingo, crocheting, knitting, needlepoint, bunco, garden club and board games. There are so many activities to interest you and even more importantly, you will meet new friends. They also serve lunches there that you need to order ahead of time.

The Visalia Senior Center is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Tuesday and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can contact them at (559) 713-4381.

Being social is the most important thing you can do for your health and wellbeing. It gives you a sense of purpose, enables you to share your thoughts and feelings, and helps you to learn more about yourself and others. I congratulate you on your willingness to reach out and embrace your new community and enjoy life to its fullest.

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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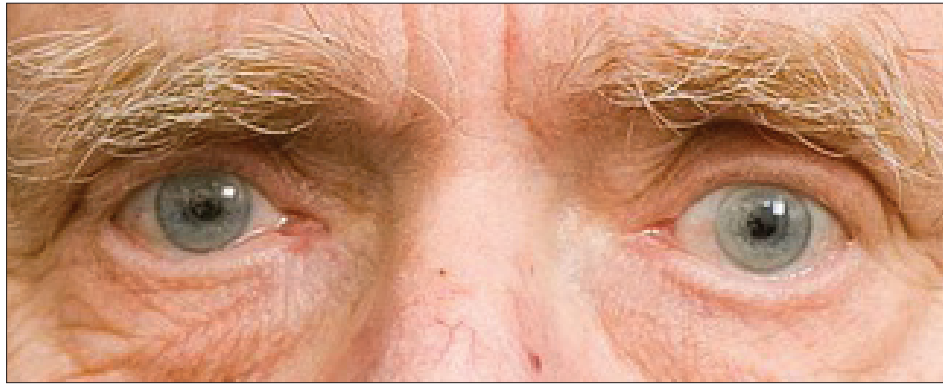
# New Macular Degeneration Treatment May Halt Disease

About a third of all people over the age of 80 suffer from age-related macular degeneration (AMD), with an estimated 20 million Americans age 40 and older currently living with AMD.

The majority of cases are the dry form of the disease, which progresses slowly, eventually resulting in sufferers losing the ability to see objects directly in front of them. Yet despite its prevalence, there is no effective treatment for dry AMD.

Now, Aalto University researchers have reported uncovering a promising way to treat the dry form of the disease in the early diagnosis phase that could potentially stop its progression. The novel approach aims to strengthen the protective mechanisms of affected cells using heat, explained Professor Ari Koskelainen.

"Cellular functionality and protective mechanisms weaken with age, which exposes the fundus (the inside surface at the back of the eye) to intense oxidative stress," he said. "Free oxygen radicals damage proteins, which causes them to misfold and aggregate, then fatty protein deposits called drusen begin to accumulate, which is the main diagnostic criterion for the dry form of age-related macular degeneration."



The approach requires heating the tissue by several degrees, which is complicated, as it's hard to measure the temperature behind the retina, and temperatures above 45 degrees celsius can cause tissue damage. The newly developed method allows for temperature monitoring at the same time as heating is carried out with near infrared light.

Among other benefits, it harnesses the power of heat to trigger healing responses at a cellular level, Koskelainen said.

Misfolded proteins can be treated in three different ways. Heat shock proteins, which are produced by cells in response to environmental stress, can repair them to their original shape. If this does not work, the misfolded proteins are primarily directed to be broken down into amino acids.

If accumulations have already formed, a process called autophagy comes into play, the discovery of Yoshinori Ohsumi,

who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Medicine for the discovery in 2016. In this process, a lipid membrane similar to a cell membrane is built around the accumulation, with recognition proteins on its surface. With the help of these proteins, lysosomal enzymes begin to break down aged and damaged proteins.

"We were able to show that we can activate not only the production of the heat shock proteins, but also autophagy using the heat shocks. This process is similar to waste disposal," said Koskelainen.

The method has been shown to work in mice and pigs, and patient trials will start in Finland in the spring. The

first phase of the trials will ensure the safety of the treatment approach in humans, without yet seeking a therapeutic response. Researchers then hope to progress towards establishing how often the treatment would need to be repeated.

"The treatment needs to be repetitive, since the response can already begin to decline some days after the treatment," Koskelainen said.

The research was first published in *Nature Communications* on October 29, 2025. Meanwhile, researchers aim to commercialize the discovery, and have established a research-to-business start-up called Maculaser.

"An optimistic schedule would see the method already being used in hospital eye clinics in as little as three years' time," said Koskelainen. "The eventual goal is that it would be readily available at your local ophthalmologist."

*Reprinted from A! Sign of Change by permission of Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland.*

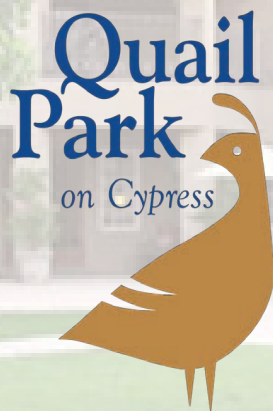
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# Bare Root Planting and Winter Pruning

By Peyton Ellas  
Tulare-Kings County Master Gardener

January in the Central Valley is the month of (hopefully!) rain, mountain snow, freezing temperatures, fog and wind. Growth slows down in winter, but it does continue. Even plants that are dormant are still growing, often only underground, and they are preparing for spring.

Some plants, like many bulbs and wildflowers (and annuals we consider weeds) are actively growing now. Winter and early-spring blooming shrubs, bulbs and perennials love frosty, damp, or foggy weather. Moisture that is not used is stored deep in the soil for summer use.

### Planting

It's possible to plant in winter, but we delay most planting until the (relatively) warmer days of mid to late February. The exception is bare root planting. Here are some tips:

- Bare root fruit trees are now available. Check their pollination requirements. Not all fruit trees are self-fertile, and some will require a cross pollinator. Notice the number of chill hours required. Our winters usually average 700-800 chilling hours.

- Bare root roses - hybrid teas, floribundas, climbers, miniatures, ground covers and shrubs - are available. All roses do very well in the San Joaquin valley.

- Bare root berries and grapes - Plant grape vines, cane boysenberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries and strawberries.

You can also plant beets, carrots, leek, lettuce, onion, parsley, radish, seed potatoes, onions, peas, radish, spinach, artichokes and asparagus directly in the garden this month. Believe it or not, it's time to begin sowing seeds for summer annual flowers and vegetables like tomatoes and peppers.

### Maintaining

We have less to do in January, but there are a couple of

chores that are perfect to do this month. One of them is spraying roses, deciduous flowering trees and deciduous fruit trees with winter horticultural oil to smother overwintering insects like spider mites, scales, mealy bugs and peach twig borers.

You don't have to apply horticultural oil if you are lucky enough not to have these specific pests, but if you've had a problem every spring, summer, or fall, be proactive now and keep your trees and roses healthier year-round. Spray the branches, crotches, trunk and the ground beneath the tree's drip line.



Carrots

Hold off spraying if rain is forecast, or if the temperature is below 45 degrees. Never spray oil on walnut trees. If you didn't spray your peach or nectarine tree for peach leaf curl in November or December, spray now with a copper-based or a synthetic fungicide.

The other main chore of January is pruning deciduous trees and deciduous shrubs, including roses. For all pruning chores, keep pruners and loppers sharp. Sterilize the pruners between plants. Use a 10% bleach solution or white vinegar and rinse or wipe blades off with a clean cloth or paper towel after sterilizing to remove the chemicals. Remove all broken, diseased, or crossing branches first.

Two basic cutting techniques



Raspberries

cut back to an outward facing bud to direct new growth away from the interior of the tree. Prune from the bottom up and from the inside of the plant to the outside. Download our "Tree Selection and Guide" at: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2018-04/23464.pdf>

Keep up with weed control. Add more mulch to depleted areas so there is always a three-inch layer of organic mulch or a two-inch layer of rock or gravel mulch.

### Conserving

I love a good foggy day for chipping some of the brush we've been collecting all year on our rural property. Although we leave brush piles for wildlife, some branches, including the Christmas tree, are great replenishment mulch for our planting beds. Instead of sending leaves off your property, shred them and use them as mulch too as much as you can.

Nature does not like bare soil, and good gardeners understand the importance of caring for the soil by covering it and protecting it from wind, rain and extreme temperature assaults.

Check in on your bee nesting boxes. Often the older ones have filled tubes, meaning they are "in use." Check to make sure spiders or earwigs aren't hanging out nearby waiting to eat the bee larvae inside the tubes. To learn more about this great way to support solitary nesting native bees, visit [xerxes.org](http://xerxes.org).

Wishing you bright winter days in the garden and a Happy New Year!

### 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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Green asparagus

are used in general pruning: thinning and heading. Thinning cuts remove entire branches back to a larger branch or the trunk, resulting in a more natural look. Thinning cuts are also used to allow more air circulation and light into the interior of the tree. Thinning cuts are made first, before heading cuts. You might want to take a break midway through and step back to examine the tree from a short distance. A well-pruned plant looks balanced and strong.

Heading cuts shorten branches and should only be used on small branches. Use heading cuts judiciously to shorten over-long branches. You can take off about a quarter of the previous season's growth on these newer smaller branches if you want to keep the tree smaller. Make sure to



## QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE??

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# Visalia Escapes Serious Seismic Jolts

The word earthquake sends shivers down the spine of even the bravest of adventurers. And it's understandable! They are unpredictable, out of our control, and can cause death and destruction.

Rarely, if ever, has Visalia been at the epicenter of an earthquake, but the town has felt many of Mother Nature's tremors. One of the earliest recorded earthquakes felt in Visalia happened on January 9, 1857. It was a big one and widespread hitting shortly after 8 a.m.

Much of California felt it, including San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles and San Bernardino. Witnesses in Tulare County claimed the shaking lasted 10-20 minutes. Accompanying the jolts came deep rumbling sounds. No property was damaged or injuries reported. About three years later, another small quake shook the town.

Visalians felt another tremor just after dinner on July 5, 1871. Conyer's Drug Store noted that their medicine bottles "were considerably agitated." One customer reported feeling slightly nauseated from the jolt that lasted just a few seconds.

On March 26, 1872 at about 2:30 a.m., another one visited Visalia described in the *Visalia Weekly Delta* as "the most extraordinary earthquake we have ever experienced. It was a series of bumps accompanied by a great deal of noise, resembling the roar of distant cannoning..." The people of Visalia scrambled out of their



Taken during the 1906 flood, this photograph looking west on Main Street in Visalia shows the clock tower of the Bank of Visalia in the foreground at Church Street. It was this clock that stopped running after the jolt of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

homes and into the streets. Julia Lumberry who was confined in jail "was badly terrified and her screams to be let out were heartrending to hear."

Porterville, too, felt the strong effects with several chimneys collapsing. Drug stores lost bottles of medicine as the glass containers fell from shelves to the floor. The quake had made an obvious visit to Tulare County, but fortunately, there was no loss of life. On the other hand, Lone Pine, the epicenter in Inyo County, wasn't nearly as lucky with numerous deaths and considerable de-

Dusting Off History  
with Terry Ommen



struction.

The massive San Francisco earthquake was probably California's biggest, most deadly and destructive in the state's history. And Visalia felt that one, too. On April 18, 1906, at about 5 a.m., Visalians were startled from sleep with three distinct shocks. Pictures fell off the walls and water troughs overflowed. The jolts were so strong they stopped the movement of the clock pendulum in the tower on the Bank of Visalia building.

For Visalia, the effects of the earthquake were a minor annoyance and a serious scare, but for the people of San Francisco, the massive earthquake and resulting fire was absolutely devastating. The final toll in property damage and loss of life is not precisely known, but certainly the damage was in the hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of lives were lost.

At a late hour on December 20, 1932, Visalia was hit with another quake. Two back-to-back tremors woke many Visalians. Dishes and windows rattled. Early reports indicated that theater-goers panicked and raced out of the movie houses for safety, but these rumors were unfounded. Phone lines were swamped, but only minor damage was reported in the city.

Visalians were again awakened early on March 15, 1946, by a series of jolts. The first shock came at shortly after 5 a.m. Three more jolts came

within the next two hours. Witnesses heard dishes clattering in cupboards, and chandeliers swayed. No damage or injuries were reported.

Before the first tremor, veteran Visalia fireman Ernest F. Wood shared that he could hear the earthquake coming in advance and told his wife, "We are going to get a shock." Sure enough, the shock jolted the town and his wife asked, "How did you know it was coming?" He said he could hear it before the shaking began.

In 1983, the southern San Joaquin Valley was hit with a 6.7 magnitude earthquake. It was centered about five miles from the town of Coalinga on an undetected fault line. The little Fresno County town suffered massive damage although no deaths were reported. Many residents sustained injuries. Visalia and other valley towns felt the shake but only minor damage was reported.

Earthquakes are a fact of life in California. When Charles Richter, the scientist who created the equipment used to determine earthquake intensity, was asked where someone could go in California to avoid an earthquake, he answered, "Nowhere...there is almost no part of California where one might not expect a good-sized earthquake. The eventual occurrence of a serious earthquake is about as near to certainty as anything..."



The photo at the top shows the intact Pioneer statue at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia. The bottom photo shows the statue in a pile of rubble after the May 25, 1980 Mammoth Lakes earthquake. The Pioneer statue was damaged beyond repair.

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



## WHAT IS PHYSICAL ELDER ABUSE?

- Inflicting physical pain
- Inappropriate use of drugs, restraints, or confinement

## SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ELDER ABUSE:

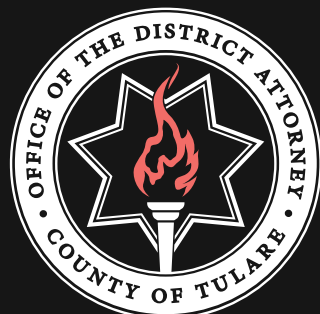
Injuries inconsistent with elder's history, bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, burns

## REPORT ELDER ABUSE

Adult Protective Services 24/7 Hotline:

**(877) 657-3092**

-  PHYSICAL
-  FINANCIAL
-  EMOTIONAL
-  NEGLECT



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