

# Support the grounds or there is no fair

I hate tolls; they slow down traffic and take another \$4 or \$5 out of your pocket that could be spent on something more useful. Ah, the necessary evils we put up with. I drove to San Francisco the other day and had the joy of contributing another \$4 toward the maintenance of the bridge I crossed. But a much larger problem has taken its tolls over the past few years as the economy has gone through its ups and downs. The arts, state parks, county fairs, they're all suffering in various ways. Next year will mark the first year the Mother Lode Fairgrounds will function without the financial support of the state. And now fairgrounds organizers are calling for residents to help fill in the hole and make up for the large amount lost so the facility might stay open and continue to host events for Tuolumne County.

The Friends of the Mother Lode Fair present a fundraiser at the fairgrounds from 1 to 7 p.m. Saturday. The event includes a \$15 tri tip barbecued meal (\$7 for children ages 5 to 12), as well as 4H and Future Farmers of America demonstrations, livestock equipment and feed displays, a vendor fair, drawings



File photo

**The Mother Lode Fairgrounds can only continue to survive if the community steps up to support the Sonora facility.**

with prizes and various kids' activities. There is no admission charge. "Friends of the Mother Lode Fair thought that the community would get behind this with the fair a not-too-distant memory and with the reminder of what would happen if the fairgrounds would close – no

more fair," said Friends President Tori Wagner. "Friends of the Mother Lode Fair is the 5013c nonprofit arm of the fair, giving support through volunteering and fundraising. We raise the money to help the fairgrounds continue to be open for the good of Tuolumne County."

## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



According to Wagner, the money raised at the fundraiser will help pay for music acts, midway acts and arena events during the annual fair. Although sponsorships and gate and carnival income have kept budget cuts from affecting the actual Tuolumne County Fair, Wagner said the economy has affected everything as prices have gone up and a need for support continues. Building supervisors, fair judges and other helpers are paid for their work. Maintenance workers must keep the grounds

clean; security must be hired for the fair and office workers and clerks need to keep everything running throughout the year.

"The fairgrounds has an entire year of events and rentals," Wagner said. "Some of the events are the Celtic Faire, Mother Lode Round-

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## Mother Lode Fairgrounds Fundraiser

**WHEN:** 1 to 7 p.m. Saturday

**WHERE:** Mother Lode Fairgrounds, 220 Southgate Road (off Highway 49), Sonora

**COST:** Free to attend; dinner is \$15 for adults and \$7 for children

**MORE INFO:** [sonoraca.com](http://sonoraca.com) or 532-7725

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Eric Clapton or Carlos Santanas hadn't considered. He also suggests that beginners take lessons, and while that may seem self-serving coming from a teacher of the instrument, his points are well taken.

"Confer with your teacher who is invested in your progress rather than a salesman who is invested in his commission," he suggests when seeking that new instrument. "Private lessons are most essential in the early stages before habits are solidified. Class lessons are not very good for the beginner because they don't allow for the detailed guidance required to establish good technique."

"Ask your prospective teacher to sight read some music for you." I never would have thought of that, but Gordon reminds us that, "Degrees are an indicator, since most music majors can sight read and answer questions about music fundamentals."

Those fundamentals are what connects performers from the world's myriad styles and techniques together, and since playing an instrument involves nearly as much muscle memory as pole vaulting or shuffle board, learning the correct techniques from the start can be crucial to future adap-

tation of personal styles.

But that's the wannabe player in me talking. You'll appreciate his delicate touch with his guitar and I know the beautiful space at Petroglyphe is perfectly suited to these intimate shows. Gordon's not "just" a classical guitarist; he whips through some serious flamenco fandangos and enjoys venturing into the jazz charts, too.

Jon Mendle comes to the gallery on Sept. 23. Having debuted at Carnegie Hall at age 19 and touring with Yo Yo Ma, he released his first album, "L'infidele," in 2011. It was produced by Latin Grammy winner Sergio Assad. Classical guitar will fill Moke Hill's Main Street with glorious sounds at both of these shows.

Whether you're an earnest aficionado of the strings at work or a player working to improve your sound, hearing others perform is one of the most inspirational things I believe we can do. The fact that we get to gather at small spaces and lean in close to notice just how the magical sounds come to life is a huge bonus.

Let the fingers fly!

Reach Mike Taylor at [mtaylor@sierralodestar.com](mailto:mtaylor@sierralodestar.com).

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# The Gold Rush inspired many great artists



Bonnie Miller

## Mining the Past

**B**efore there was photography, the images of the Gold Rush were captured by artists. Whether a painter, illustrator or sculptor, it was up to these early artists to capture the first images of the amazing hunt for gold in the West. One of the most famous was Charles Nahl.

Carl Nahl was born in Germany in 1818. After some early success as an artist in France, he changed his name to the more princely sounding

Charles. He arrived in California soon after learning of the gold strike and quickly abandoned mining and resumed painting. At first he made his living drawing or painting portraits when he lived in Sacramento. After the great fire there in 1856, he moved to San Francisco. Despite

leaving the Gold Country, he continued to produce images of the area.

In 1872, Nahl produced what would become his most famous piece of California art, entitled "Sunday Morning in the Mines." This giant oil on canvas depicts the multiple elements of society in action on a typical Sunday morning in a mining camp. Nahl accurately captured camp details from the semi-naked miner waiting for his laundry to dry to the faithful bible preacher ignoring the drunken young man being saved from a cliff's edge by his friends.

Another accomplished artist who drew lifelike pictures of the mining camps was J.D. Borthwick. He was an educated gentleman from Scotland who sought adventure in the early days of the Gold Rush and kept a detailed and articulate diary of the various happenings in the young and lawless mining communities from Sonora to Hangtown. He is best remembered for his detailed description and vivid drawings of a famous bull and bear fight.

Borthwick wrote his journal with the intent of publishing



Charles Nahl's "Sunday Morning in the Mines."

it upon his return to Scotland, but before he got home, he took off instead for Australia when gold was discovered there. He finally made it back to Scotland in 1856 and he published his book about his three years in California. It became one of the foremost firsthand accounts of life in the early mining camps of the Mother Lode.

Seeking and writing about adventure was clearly what Borthwick wanted out of life. Although he was trained as an artist and was a superb illustrator, he considered himself most successful as a writer. He produced numerous magazine articles and several books in his lifetime. Recently Borthwick rose to fame again when his gambling kit surfaced as an item featured on the History Channel TV show, "Pawn Stars."

Both Nahl and Borthwick had the

good fortune to experience the early days of the Gold Rush. Today the rest of the world has the fortune to enjoy those experiences through the eyes and art of these two men. Early California art didn't stop when the gold was all found; the Gold Country continues to inspire artists today. Another famous but contemporary artist of the Mother Lode is Ushangi Kumelashvili. Ushangi was born in Soviet Georgia, but for years made his home outside Angels Camp. While living in the Gold Country he produced the famous bust of Mark Twain that adorns the Angels Camp Museum today.

To see one of the greatest collections of early California art, visit the famous Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento.

Contact Bonnie Miller at [bmiller@sierralodestar.com](mailto:bmiller@sierralodestar.com).



Mike Taylor

Ushangi created this impressive bust of Mark Twain.

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up, health fair, home and garden show, the free Christmas Eve dinner, the Christmas Craft Fair and many organizations that do annual dinners and fundraisers. Without our fairgrounds, there is no other venue large enough for these to continue in Tuolumne County. Also, weddings, celebrations of life, seminars, horse shows, dog obedience classes, school fundraisers, school programs, RVers and RV clubs, quilt classes, square dance rallies and business conferences all use the fairgrounds because of our unique location in downtown Sonora."

The fairgrounds is also the emergency evacuation center for the county and would serve as the headquarters for disasters like fires or floods.

"The fundraiser is important to let the people of Tuolumne County know and support the necessity of the fairgrounds to the county," Wagner said. "The event will be from 1 to 7 p.m., dinner available the entire time. Learn about the history of the fair, the agricultural connection within the county, vendors and crafts, children activities, entertainment, raffles, auctions and just a day of good ol' Tuolumne County fun."

They're even raffling off a brand new riding lawn mower and trailer with the drawing held in October. Tickets are \$10 each or six for \$50.

Send your Tuolumne County events to Harmony Wheeler at [hwheeler@sierralodestar.com](mailto:hwheeler@sierralodestar.com) and [mtaylor@sierralodestar.com](mailto:mtaylor@sierralodestar.com).

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• • •  
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August 31st  
8:00pm

• • •  
**Jeff Foxworthy**  
September 8th  
7:30pm

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**Concours d'Elegance**  
September 22nd

**Jewelry Shoppe and Museum Hours:**  
11:00 am to 5:00 pm ~ 7 Days a week

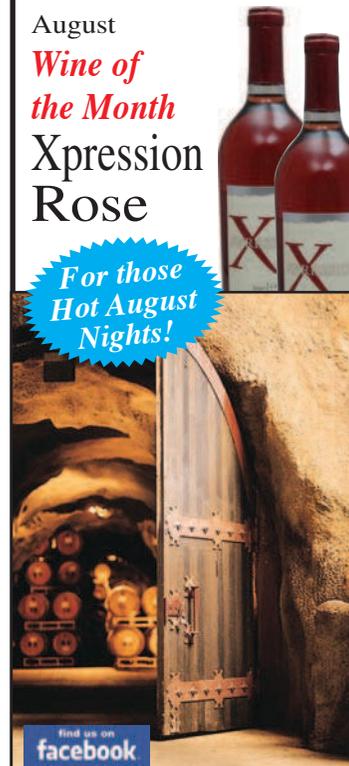
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