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spent relaxing lazily around camp or at the river. Dips into the water can assuage those queasy feelings and sipping on cold water can rejuvenate the rest of the body.

Labor Day weekend can also be a nice time to gather with the community and celebrate what you've got. As a summer's worth of cool activities and presentations were staged at the amphitheater at the Glory Hole Recreation Area at New Melones Reservoir this year by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Saturday brings the Calaveras Community Band to the spot for a summer send-off. Families are encouraged to attend and enjoy all kinds of music

Calaveras Community Band show

WHEN: 6 p.m. Saturday

WHERE: Glory Hole Recreation Area Amphitheater, Whittle Road (off Highway 49), south of Angels Camp

COST: Free **MORE INFO:** 536-9543

performed by your friends and neighbors. You don't have to pay any entry fee for the show, so send the season packing with panache.

I want to conclude this week with

an appreciative nod to Tony Scott and Phyllis Diller. Perhaps ironically, I had just watched Scott's 1986 excitement, "Top Gun," about a week before the film and television

director and producer took his own life. Some considered "Top Gun" a commercial for the Navy or the Defense Department, but upon later viewing, you notice that it's simply a good story well told. Aside from the primping wannabe metrosexuals preening about the locker room and the discussion of the Russians as our arch-nemesis, the film holds up.

"Days of Thunder" is another testosterone-fueled piece of work and I consider "True Romance" a funkadelic classic. A look at IMDB shows he had a flurry of films for both TV and the silver screen in the pipe. He will be missed.

As a child of the 1970s, Phyllis Diller, for me, wasn't a just any old class act; she was THE class act. Her

rifle-fast delivery of lines about the hassles of the household and her fictitious husband, Fang, made the child in me giggle. As I've aged, I have realized that her jokes weren't so much broad comedic talking points, but those finite points at which people truly connect. She laughed at us as she laughed at herself.

Take some of the extra time you have this week to laugh at yourself with the same ferocity that Ms. Diller did. You'll feel better having belly-laughed your way through the end of the season and she'll hear you - especially if you fire up your best Cruella de Vil cackle!

Reach Mike Taylor at mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.

Films flock to Twain Harte for a fest

The Twain Harte Film Festival and I are kindred spirits. I have well over 300 films in my movie collection, I graduated from a journalism program that shared equipment and space with a successful film department and about the same time my family moved to the Mother Lode, the Twain Harte Film Festival began to establish roots. As I've grown in my vocational skills and have grounded myself in the area with solid work and acquaintances, the film festival has also developed. In its second official year, the film festival has gained full nonprofit status and has more than 50 films in the lineup for this weekend's 2012 event.

"We've established ourselves on the international film festival circuit, which has brought us a lot of attention and some incredibly awesome films to this year's festival," said

Zack Gold, president and programming director for the festival. "A wide range of eclectic films will define this fest."

According to Gold, participating films will come from Norway, Sweden, Japan, Brazil, Italy and Spain. The festival will also have a student showcase highlighting the talents of students at Summerville High School's Connections Academy.

"Some of these are world premiere or North American premieres that have never been seen by audiences," Gold said. "Personally, I am excited to see 'Caroline and Jackie.' It's a feature film directed by Adam Christian Clark that premiered at Tribeca earlier this year. We've got great documentaries coming to us as

well, such as 'The Fight for Water' directed by Fresno local, Juan Carlos Oseguera, about the Central Valley water crisis."

Christine Ravely, marketing and finance director for the fest, said she has seen two of the selections that will play over the Labor Day weekend: "Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?" and "The Duck Hunter."

"Both are excellent feature-length films," Ravely said. "The former is a one-man show depicting William Faulkner and his thoughts as to whether or not he should attend the ceremonies to accept the Nobel Prize for Literature. The latter is set in Modena, Italy (subtitled), in 1942, in a town rather insulated from the war. It is a touching story

of four young men and their dreams. If these two films are any indication of our selection of movies, I believe this year's entries will be remembered for a long time."

Hollywood actress Veronica Cartwright will give a special question-and-answer session after a screening of Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds," celebrating the film's 50th anniversary. Jeffrey Weissman (George McFly in parts 2 and 3 of the "Back to the Future" films) also makes a guest appearance and San Francisco Chronicle film critic G. Allen Johnson will give a guest lecture and present awards.

Proceeds from the event go toward scholarships for Mother Lode teens. Last year, scholarships went to Summerville High School's Connections Academy, but Ravely said festival organizers would like to

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



Veronica Cartwright appears in Twain Harte this weekend to discuss "The Birds."

extend scholarships to a wider audience. The Sonora Area Foundation chooses the recipients.

Gold and Ravely said that in addition to raising money for scholarships, the goal of the festival is to become the next Sundance festival, to make the area's economy "boom" again and to increase awareness and attendance at film and non-film events. Now that the festival has nonprofit status, organizers are looking for sponsors and additional community support.

"We need everyone's help," Gold said. "We need people to join our cause; spreading the word and building the snowball of excitement

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The dog days are actually brighter

Wow! Here we are again, struggling through the heat of an August summer in the Valley when opening my PG&E bill makes me even hotter. Officially we have passed the last of the Dog Days of Summer – named for that hot, sultry period of July and early August – but nobody told Mr. Thermometer.

The term “dog days” was used by the ancient Greeks and Romans, who called those days canicularies dies (days of the dogs) after Sirius (the dog star). Sirius is the brightest star in the heavens besides our sun and in ancient times, it rose about the same hour as the sun – probably a lot brighter than me at that time of the day.

More recently, other meanings have been attributed to the “dog days.” The American Stock Exchange sometimes experiences slow days in summer and poorly performing stocks have been referred to as “dogs.” Hot or humid weather can leave us feeling “dog tired” and “lazy as dogs.”

You have probably figured out by now that all my dog talk is leading up to a “dog tale,” and you’re right. I have one to “wag.”

I missed relating my tale for the August 2012 International Assistance Dog Week (Aug. 5 to 12), which was created to recognize the devoted, hardworking assistance dogs that help people with disabilities. But no matter the designated week, the work goes on daily by

groups like Canine Companions for Independence, which was founded in 1975 in Santa Rosa. CCI pioneered the concept of training specially bred dogs to help people with disabilities other than blindness. The group teaches dogs the skills to bring independence to disabled people and members then train the people the skills needed to master an exceptional dog.

The organization came to my attention when I attended a Lions Club meeting with my husband, where his fellow club member, Don Allen of Oakdale, presented a program on the Lions Project for Canine Companions for Independence.

Interested and dedicated Lions members supported CCI from its inception and in 1983, they formally founded the LPCCI non-profit. Its mission is to educate, raise funds and to seek puppy raisers for CCI. The Lions Project now has support from clubs in 32 states; the goal is all 50.

The Lions Project recruiting efforts obviously struck a chord with Don Allen, as he not only presented the program that evening, but he also had in tow a beautiful and sweet Labrador/golden retriever pup named Ellie VI. Being the dedicated Lion that he is, Don’s commitment to the program as a puppy-raiser didn’t end there. He became a member of the LPCCI Board of Directors and is now a past president.

Ellie, Don’s first puppy, was

given to him after a three-hour orientation in August of 2010. The dogs belong to CCI and are adopted out on a temporary basis for a training period of about 15 months. As socialization of the dog is the primary task of puppy raisers, Don and Ellie became a very recognizable duo on the Oakdale scene. The pup had to become comfortable in any situation, so she and Don went everywhere together: stores, banks, restaurants, movies, meetings, trips, everywhere.

Don and Ellie started attending puppy training in Sacramento when

she was just six-weeks old; for the entire time, Ellie lived with Don and his wife, Patti, and the other household pets. Don could have sought out local trainers, but he chose to travel to Sacramento because of a strong support group of puppy raisers called Gold Rush Champions (ccigr.org). It also happened that Ellie’s father, Saris, and his “family” was part of that group.

In February 2012, Ellie matriculated into advanced training at the CCI campus in Santa Rosa. Normally, advanced

Oakdale Roundup

Melinda Owen



training is six to nine months long; the dogs learn to work beside wheelchairs, pick things from the floor and bring them to people, turn light switches on and off, pull on “ropes”

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Janel seen as a pup of seven weeks and as a five-month old.



Courtesy photos

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and possibility through social networking and good old fashioned word of mouth. This would be, possibly, your only opportunity to ever see these films and meet these people. Plus, you get to do it in a beautiful environment. Our film fest

Twain Harte Film Festival

WHEN: Friday through Monday

WHERE: Various locations in Twain Harte

TICKETS: \$8 to \$145 at filmfesttwain-harte.com or 586-9991

would give you the opportunity to meet filmmakers and actors and get to ask them questions face-to-face about the movie making process. You’d get to meet Veronica Cartwright, Jeffrey Weissman and G. Allen Johnson – very unique opportunities – and your money will go to developing scholarships.”

Ravelly agreed.

“People should attend the film fest to gain an appreciation of independent film while supporting arts in the county,” she said.

The four-day festival takes place at the Twain Hart Golf Course, the American Legion Hall and the Twain Harte School. Tickets range from \$8 to \$145. Learn more, see a detailed schedule or buy tickets at filmfesttwainharte.com or call 586-9991.

Send your Tuolumne County events to Harmony Wheeler at hwheeler@sierralodestar.com and mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.

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