

Deck the stalls with boughs and lights

The hills of the Mother Lode brighten with Christmas lights and red and green décor as the beloved holiday draws near. Stars top the Christmas trees in many homes and the season creates new memories for families and friends as they decorate their homes, stand under the mistletoe and take the kids to see Santa Claus.

At my home, the activities have varied from year to year, but my mom has always enjoyed seeing all the personalized front yards. In the past, we drove around Modesto, looking for light shows timed to music. This year, we plan on visiting the Horse Around Ranch Tractor Museum off of Soulsbyville Road in Sonora.

Sandy Hauschildt invites visitors to her family ranch for a show of Christmas lights covering 2 to 3 acres of land complete with tractors and various buildings. Hauschildt and her sons open the property for private tours by reservation at 928-3249, but from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Dec. 21 to 24, anyone can view the lights. Santa Claus poses for pictures with guests and hot beverages and snacks are served. The event also includes drawings for adults.

As always, Hauschildt's collection of antique tractors will be on display, albeit covered in flashing Christmas lights. Hauschildt's father started the collection years ago. She

Christmas Light Show

WHEN: 5:30 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Dec. 21 to 24

WHERE: Horse Around Ranch, 19010 Yost Ranch Road, Sonora

COST: Free

MORE INFO: Sandy Hauschildt at 928-3249



said she always told him she would light the ranch up one Christmas, and the two laughed about it. But last year her father died, and Hauschildt felt inspired to finally put her words into action.

"When he passed, I really wanted it," Hauschildt said. "I started buying lights, bought costumes and candy and it worked out."

This year marks Hauschildt's second year putting on the light show, which her sons help set up.

"Last year was phenomenal,"

Hauschildt said. "People enjoy seeing the lights. They park at the gate and just walk in. All the kids that sit on Santa's lap get a little toy and if they get a sticker they get another gift. The people who came (last year) were unbelievable. They couldn't believe how beautiful it was."

"It's not like you drive by and ooh, that's pretty," Hauschildt con-

tinued. "We've added more this year. We probably have over 1,000 strands of lights. Candy canes, snowmen, reindeer. (It takes) four huge generators and three small generators to run the lights."

Admission to the light show is free, but Hauschildt said organizers accept donations for the upkeep of the ranch, as well as for the agriculture program at Summerville High.

"People can come without paying an arm and a leg," Hauschildt said. "We want everybody to come, to be a child again and see how beautiful Christmas actually can be just for the family. And the smiles on the children - that's what makes it

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



worth it to me. The biggest thing for me is knowing that they enjoyed their visit here and Santa."

The Horse Around Ranch is at 19010 Yost Ranch Road, off of Soulsbyville Road in Sonora. For more information, call Hauschildt at 928-3249.

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

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The winter (and holiday) season brings cold weather and plenty of shopping. This is a great time to buy tackle and accessories for all types of fishing because many sales are offered. But one fishing item that really stands out in my mind for winter deals is the boat.

If you're into fishing the way that I am, sooner or later you'll want a boat. I bring this up because oftentimes shopping for a boat for yourself (or someone else if you're inclined) during the winter months can bring you a really sweet deal.

Boat ownership opens up a whole

One of the first things that's different when fishing from a boat is that you'll find certain species of fish much easier. With a little angling practice and by watching other boaters, you'll quickly learn the hot spots for whatever species of fish you're after on the Mother Lode's lakes. Once you find and begin fishing these areas, you'll see how the conditions change in relation to the advancement of the seasons. This may sound difficult, but don't worry; as long as you keep in touch, it's easy to learn new fishing techniques.

Continued on page 11




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