

Books are still the best way to learn

My parents gave me a Nook as a graduation present. It didn't take me long to get involved with its many interactive features. If an e-reader or tablet can bring out the spirit of a child in an adult, it's no wonder that children are so enthralled by technology these days. I've seen pictures of toddlers who fully comprehend these modern wonders, and I know that many children start using computers and such at a very early age, both at school and at home.

Then there's me, taking no hits to my pride as I buy a children's book or two on my e-reader as I happily listen to old favorites read aloud on my Nook Color. I blame it on my friend, Mindy, who started checking out children's books from the library when she spent last summer visiting me at my home. She read a few of the Beatrix Potter – she wrote "Peter Rabbit" – stories to me, and we both enjoyed the illustrations. Such illustrations and stories come to full life on a colored e-reader. And so, I find myself reading picture books now and again for old time's sake – or have them read to me electronically.



E-books make reading a far more interactive process than it is in bound volumes. They can include links, videos, audio and much more. And, according to Lynn McCormick, the youth, literacy and outreach librarian at the Tuolumne County Library, such interaction plays a key role in a child's growth and knowledge. Therefore, the library has partnered with the California State Library to make certain children's e-books available for checkout on the library's website.

"I have done a little exploring, and it is a fun site for children," McCormick said. "I love

any site that helps make reading and learning fun for children. Young children learn through play, but also through doing and reading things that interest them."

County library patrons with library cards can access the BookFlix program for free through the Tuolumne County Library's website at tuolcolib.org. BookFlix comes from Scholastic and combines classic fictional video storybooks with nonfiction books for kids from preschool through third grade.

"Children will delight in watching their favorite books come to life onscreen as they turn the electronic pages of an e-book to discover real-world facts and satisfy their curiosity about the world around them," a press release from the library stated.

Children can use a read-along option that helps them learn vocabulary words, and they can play games and activities to reinforce what they learn. Links to related websites also encourage children to go beyond the page and find out more about their favorite topics.

"Children are exposed to so much technology at a very early age that having multiple plat-

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



forms for a child to develop a love of reading is needed," McCormick said. "This program adds to the learning process, as it starts to help to connect the joy of learning and reading with fun activities in a format that children like."

The library has offered the program since January, but McCormick said it is only now beginning to take off. The library will begin offering adult e-books in early spring. Meanwhile, if you can't wait for your own rentable e-books, you can always check out a "real" book. If you want to learn more about books beyond what you'll find on Wikipedia, the library has plenty of tomes to fill your time.

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

Marine uses pedal power to promote the cause

While serving four years in the United States Marine Corps, 46-year-old Tuolumne County resident Tim Tuomey swam out of nuclear submarines and rappelled out of helicopters. And if you know Tim, you know that's exactly the kind of action he lives for. Weather he's climbing a remote granite face above the blue waters of Hetch Hetchy Reservoir (where he has established a remarkable number of first ascents) or riding his bike

through endless stretches of desert, Tim's passion is high-stakes adventure. This is exactly why, when Tim announced he would be riding his bike across the United States in an effort to raise \$50,000 for injured veterans, we all knew he could do it.

"People ask me all the time, if raising money for injured veterans is my passion," Tim said. "Unfortunately no, it's not a passion. It's my responsibility. In fact, it's everyone's responsibility to take care of

our returning warriors. I once lived by a code that stated, 'A Marine never leaves another Marine behind.' I still hold true to that code. I think our government is doing a lot to help our injured Marines recuperate physically, but they can only do so much before the seams start to split apart. Right now the families of injured veterans are falling through those seams."

The lack of financial aid given to wounded veterans to support their families during recuperation is astounding. In many cases, the

spouses of injured Marines have to work two or even three jobs while their partner's undergo physical recovery. Even though the federal government assists our veterans in recuperating physically, the loss of income to veteran households during this time can be catastrophic.

The hardships of his fellow Marines motivated Tim to make a change. On April 1, he will start Operation Awakening, a 3,164-mile bicycle ride from the Marine



Light on the path

Dean Fleming

Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport to his old base at 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

The goal of Operation Awakening is to raise awareness and provide \$50,000 to the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, a nonprofit that is dedicated to caring for veterans' families while injured Marines recover from physical injuries or undergo mental rehabilitation.

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Courtesy Robert Behrens

Tim Tuomey will travel from Sonora Pass to North Carolina beginning April 1.



Dean Fleming

Tim Tuomey at his Miwok home.