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houses and climbing walls found on Main Street during Lumberjack Day cost big bucks, folks, and without additional fundraisers like this one, activities at the annual party will have to be curtailed. To the credit of organizers, they have made sure all of those entertainments remained as part of the day for little or no charges to this point; the day is about celebrating the town's lumber industry history, after all, not about raking in copious amounts of cash. But to keep the excitement popping on the first Saturday in October, the boosters need to begin collecting pittance to support the cause.

When you call to order tickets, make sure to inquire about how you might help the diehards keep the parade and logging show going well into the future.

Another crab feed finds people in and around San Andreas drooling over their Dungeness on Feb. 4. This event helps provide equipment for the San Andreas Fire Protection

## Original Snail show

**WHEN:** 9 p.m. Saturday

**WHERE:** Sequoia Woods Country Club, 1000 Cypress Point Drive, Arnold

**COST:** Free

**MORE INFO:** 795-1000

District, and if you ever want to meet people who care about the towns in which they live and the people who live around them, meet a volunteer firefighter. It's true that many companies have some paid staff, but many of our communities are protected by fire departments that are mostly volunteer organizations.

I have had occasion to gather with firefighters at control burns and training sessions many times. There is a camaraderie that these people

share that you and I see and appreciate, but I doubt we really understand how deep those bonds of "brotherhood" go. Television shows and movies might hint at the connections that are forged between those who deal with the frailties of the human body and the damage flames can cause, but no hour-long episode can match a life's work caring for others.

My dad worked with the California Division of Forestry (then the department, but not today's Cal Fire

outfit with management heaped high in Sacramento) and I knew as a kid that these people were different. They look at fire as the enemy, an enemy that can be dealt with if the correct tools are at the ready. As the role of the rural firefighter has changed, these men and women truly became the first responders, there when cars crash, coughs overtake the elderly and burn piles get away from the careless. They do so for you, not their own egos or to attain status in some great departmental leger in the sky. When fundraisers like this come along, I think it's important to do what you can to make the job a bit easier.

I have been asked a few times to join the department in my hometown, but I shudder to think how I might react to pulling onto the scene of a horrific vehicle incident (there are rarely "accidents," folks; read the reports for as long as I have and this truth becomes clear) only to find a friend or neighbor tied up with the wreckage. The volunteers who serve

on your hometown fire department are there when things get ugly; they are the closest things to heroes we have in the Mother Lode.

Tickets are \$35 at 754-4693 and members of VFW Post 2600 of San Andreas will be at the ready behind the bar. Two wonderful organizations – three counting the good people in West Point – serving salads, bread, pasta and crab, all for the good of the community; count me in.

Finally, for some tangible fun and to get those neurons firing more loudly, catch the Original Snail in Arnold Saturday night at Sequoia Woods Country Club. This intimate space is perfect for the quartet that harkens to the days of the power trio with power chords and cool guitar licks and solos. This band hit the road when album rock ruled the world and has now reunited to entertain in the Gold Country and beyond. Take a listen; air guitars are optional.

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

## Garden group dresses things up with rocks

The Sierra Rock Garden Society has taken rocks slightly beyond those Pet Rocks you had when you were younger. Although you could probably add a rocky pet as the final touch to a garden, it turns out rocks have a larger purpose beyond decor.

According to Val Myrick, the newsletter editor for the Sierra Rock Garden Society, rocks create better growing conditions for the plants around which they thrive. Plants like to grow under rocks, which also provide shade and good drainage. Of course, the rocks can still create a mountain landscape look, Myrick said.

That was the original concept. And

they add a lot to the garden on the go, that is, a rock garden held in a small pot, like those used a few weeks ago when the club stopped by the Avalon Care Center in Sonora to teach residents how to create and take care of their own rock gardens. The club meets monthly, but about once a year members find a different senior care center to visit and teach residents about rock gardening.

The society mainly counts its members from the ranks of Tuolumne County residents, but it gives members the chance to do things across the country as well. The club is a chapter of the larger North American Rock Garden Society, which holds events

throughout the year in different parts of the country. The Sierra Chapter also brings in national and international speakers. The chapter usually meets the second Wednesday of every month; landscape architect Don Cowter to speaks at the February meeting.

"We've had speakers from Sweden, the Czech Republic, England and South Africa," Myrick said. "They talk about how to grow things from other parts of the country and the world. We often have to learn how to start things under different conditions, how to get it to grow where you live and where to get the seeds."

The club stages yearly plant sales,

holds regular tours of private gardens and nurseries, conducts the occasional rock gardening demonstration and, every once in a while, presents a public garden tour. Members also have sessions at each other's homes to discuss how to start plants from seeds and cuttings, among other gardening topics.

Since the Sierra Chapter started with only three members about 14 years ago, the chapter has evolved to include 30 members.

"I joined because I like people who have a strong interest in gar-

dening," Myrick said. "I am a strong gardener. I like seeing plants grow. I like being outside. I like flowers. It's a time that you're by yourself. It's relaxing, good therapy. I like the social aspect of it, too. And I like teaching other people about it."

Member Evelyn Gordon agreed.

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## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



Sierra Rock Garden Society members give residents at Sonora's Avalon Care Center a close-up look at planning and planting container gardens with rocks and hardy houseplants.

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# Hatcheries are a link in the trout chain

The mission of the California Department of Fish and Game is to manage our state's diverse fish, wildlife and plant resources. As part of that mission, Fish and Game personnel manage the habitats on which these resources all depend and control their use and enjoyment.

This is an enormous task to perform, especially when it comes to the sport of fishing that we all love. Fish and Game staff is responsible for most of the millions of trout and some species of salmon that we

catch every day (in season, of course!). It's easy to take for granted where all of these fish come from and I thought this would be a good time to take a closer look at what's involved in stocking the sport.

First of all, hatcheries are constructed to produce – and then plant – millions of pounds of trout and salmon. A project of this size needs careful attention because the successful management of the trout population here requires vast amounts of knowledge to support and protect the species. One exam-

ple of the importance of good hatchery management can be seen when we look at trout fishing; the sport makes an incredible contribution to the state's economy. A 1999 estimate showed that trout fishing alone generated about \$3 billion and accounted for more than 75,000 jobs. Trout are even planted in some metropolitan areas today so that even more people can enjoy the sport of fishing.

Trout management is broken down into three areas. The first, self-sustaining, indicates there is a

healthy aquatic system that allows natural self-spawning by the wild fish that inhabit particular waters. Since most of the waterways in the state fall under this technique, it is the most widely used; no trout planting is required in these areas.

The second, called Put and Grow, is exactly as it sounds. Fish planted

under this category are 3- to 6-inches long. This technique is commonly used in waters where the spawn-

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William Heinselmann

**Solid Gold  
Fishing**



Photos by William Heinselmann

These beautiful 3-pound steelhead are nearly ready for release.

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“My grandfather taught me to love gardening and I’ve been doing it all my life,” she said. “I enjoy it very much.”

Chapter Vice President Dianne Szymanski joined the club in 2005 and said she thought rocks went well with the 2.5 acres she owns.

“It’s just a really fulfilling hobby making things grow,” Szymanski

said. “I’m really involved in growing things from seed. I garden from the ground up; raise almost all of my plants. I just love to nurture things and see them grow.”

For more information or to join, call Myrick at 533-3193.

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



Society Vice President Dianne Szymanski demonstrates the use of rocks in creating small environments for plants to live.

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