

Continued from previous page

joining them around a campfire somewhere on that ranchland. If you want to hear how cowboys sing, these are the guys to listen to.

Sunday's is the first in this year's five-concert Ovarions Performing Arts Series. You can wrangle season tickets for just \$115 (unless you're a council member, then tickets are \$100), and then you're sure

to catch all the good music coming our way. Jan. 22 features Boyz Nite Out, a Bay Area quintet that performs everything a cappella. On Feb. 12, an Ovarions original comes along as the very popular Celtic trio Golden Bough performs for the first time with the McGrath Irish Dancers. You've seen Golden Bough at the Sonora Celtic Faire, but the triad hasn't ever done a show with dancers onstage, too.

Feb. 26 promises laughter and exciting music as Mimi Blais brings her piano to the theater for a workout. Known as the Queen of Ragtime, I'd bet that the ivories will get tickled, but her storytelling will tickle your funny bones, so it's a win-win. The series concludes March 11 with the Ives Quartet and special guest, pianist Yoshikaza Nagai. This quartet has set the

notion of the classical quartet on its ear, performing pieces with attitude and even intrigue and Nagai adds some Mozart to the mix.

It's another great series, courtesy of the arts council, which appears determined to keep us entertained no matter what the season. Tickets are on sale at calaverasarts.org or call 754-1774, and be sure to thank the arts council for setting

us up for another great year. I marvel at how much the nonprofit does with relatively limited resources, so whenever you get the chance, make sure council members know how much you appreciate what they do for the county.

And tell Joe and Lon I said hello.

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

## People rally to help a family in need

I was only a baby when my grandma died from cancer, and since then, I have not experienced the loss of a loved one. I see how my grandmother's death affects my mother, but it didn't hurt me because I never knew Grandma Geri. Two of my mom's friends died years ago, and I recall shedding a tear for one of them, but I didn't know them well enough to mourn.

I know from personal experience that hard times sometimes change us for the better and teach us to persevere, but I've been fortunate enough to miss out on illnesses and how they try loved ones and their children – and so many of those situations

involve children. Tuolumne County mother Heather Karney's 11-month-old daughter, Courtney, was born with a heart defect that has resulted in two surgeries already. According to Brooke Gourley – Heather's friend and colleague – the financial and timely costs of the surgeries have taken their toll on the family.

"It's a local family who is struggling right now," Gourley said. "(There are) a lot of extra expenses when you're away from home and all that. (Heather also has a) 3-year-old named Morgan. It's heartbreaking to watch your best friend. It makes you feel so grateful for what you have."

Gourley said Cutler Segerstrom,

the Sonora insurance company she and Heather work for, is helping them plan a fundraiser for the family's expenses.

Community plays a large role in making us forget our trials and encouraging us to persevere. Years ago, the wife of a leader at my old church in Modesto had a baby so small they could fit her wedding ring around his wrist. The child went through numerous surgeries as he grew, and the family became naturally endeared to the church members, choir and leaders.

My introverted personality makes me a loner in many ways, but at heart I couldn't live without com-

panionship, without community and friends. Last April, I traveled with a group of students and two professors to the Dominican Republic to gather information and photos for a book on the culture there and the role baseball plays in the population. The ability of the people there to use community and love to build a country worth living in despite the poor economy of the Third World country inspired me to let go of some of my automatic judgments and open myself to new ways of living.

At home, I've seen people surround those going through difficult times with loving care, bringing them home-cooked meals and supporting them with encouraging words. As a fairly selfish person, I often have a hard time caring about other people and their troubles, or at least feeling like I care. Giving to others what I want and expect from those around me doesn't come easily to me. The Dominican Republic began a change in me; even I have a desire to better myself, to become a better person and to be a part of something bigger than myself.

The Courtney Karney Benefit, which features a spaghetti dinner provided by Pinocchio's Italian Cafe, is at 4 p.m. Saturday at Tuolumne Veterans Memorial Hall. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children, and \$30 for families of two adults and two or more children. You can get them in advance at Cutler Segerstrom Insurance and Pinocchio's or at the



Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler

### Courtney Karney Benefit

**WHEN:**  
4 p.m. Saturday

**WHERE:**  
Tuolumne Veterans Memorial Hall, 18375 Fir Ave., Tuolumne

**TICKETS:**  
\$10 for adults, \$5 for children and \$30 for families at Cutler Segerstrom and Pinocchio's in Sonora or at the door

**MORE INFO:**  
532-6951 or 559-9774

door Saturday. Call 532-6951 or 559-9774 to learn more.

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

**Authentic Italian Style Wines in the California Sierra Foothills**

Winemaker Ryan Teeter started producing wine for La Folia in 2008 and strives to produce authentic Italian style wines in the California Sierra Foothills. We use only Italian varietals and Italian wine making techniques to produce La Folia's premium wines. The name La Folia translates to "The Madness" and it refers to a passion that burns so deep that it drives you to madness. The 2008 Barbera won the 2011 Calaveras County Fair for Best of Show Red Wine.

**Tasting Room:**  
488 Main St., Suite 101  
Murphys, CA 95247

**Phone: 209-728-5298**  
**Email: [info@lafoliawine.com](mailto:info@lafoliawine.com)**  
**Website: [www.lafoliawine.com](http://www.lafoliawine.com)**

**LA FOLIA**  
*This is our passion... What's yours?*

