



Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler

Inspired youths share their talents at Summerville High

It's open to the public, too. Harford describes the performance as dynamic, high-energy and exciting, one that will wow audiences and touch the hearts of those who attend.

"This is a great opportunity for students to experience the excitement and energy of the performing arts," Harford said. "They will gain experience and confidence with performing, learn teamwork and communication skills and how to express themselves creatively. Also, the Young Americans are excellent role models and teachers."

The heart and spirit of some of the greats come to Tuolumne County next week. Barry Manilow, Carol Channing, Gene Kelly, Johnny Mathis, Julie Andrews – they, and many more, have all endorsed or performed with Young Americans, a nationally known group that travels around the world to pass on to new generations the music and dance at the core of all the great performers who came before them.

Summerville High School and the Connections Visual and Performing Arts Academy host about 45 members of Young Americans, all between the ages of 18 and 22. During their stay, the touring group will see up to 220 fourth- through 12th-graders in the Mother Lode area. Between Feb. 4 and 6, a three-day workshop finds Young Americans staff performing for students and teaching music and dance to participants.

"The participants learn over 50 songs and dances, taking classes in voice, dance, performance, improvisation, choral singing and much more," said Connections Principal Diana Harford.

The workshop culminates in a two-hour performance by both the Young Americans and their students that will be staged in the Summerville High School Gym at 6 p.m. Feb. 6.

Schools across the United States are cutting elective programs to slash costs to focus on academic learning, Harford said, but theater and music programs help counter that by teaching students confidence, communication skills, teamwork, creativity and problem-solving skills. And in the Mother Lode, Summerville High and Connections give students the opportunity to grow in these skills through the arts.

"These are skills that all students benefit from and help make them more successful as adults and citizens," Harford said.

Harford said the Young Americans have received positive feedback around the nation and in the Gold Country.

"Students and parents are very excited," Harford said. "When we first announced that the Young Americans would be holding a workshop here, the response was

Young Americans show

WHEN: 6 p.m. Feb. 6

WHERE: Summerville High School Gym, 17555 Tuolumne Road, Tuolumne

TICKETS: \$10 for adults and \$8 for students

MORE INFO: youngamericans.org



overwhelmingly positive. Students who have participated in previous workshops have described them as 'incredible,' 'amazing' and 'life changing.' When I saw my first Young Americans show, I was astounded at how much the kids had learned in just three days, and I was so impressed by the performance."

Founded in 1962 and documented in a 1968 Oscar-winning film, the Young Americans currently consists of more than 250 members from more than 39 states and eight countries around the world. Harford encouraged the Tuolumne County community to come see the group while it's here in Tuolumne County. The doors open at 5:30 p.m. and tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students.

"The community can support the arts by attending performances at schools, encouraging young people to participate in these courses and voting to support arts programs for schools," Harford said.

Students can still register to participate in the workshop at youngamericans.org; a \$60 registration fee covers the cost of a T-shirt and a show costume. A detailed workshop schedule can also be found on the website. Participants will need to alert their schools that they will miss one full day of class.

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

Hike the Stan along a historic route

A railway to the Mother Lode was a frequent topic of discussion among residents and city officials when the Gold Rush brought flocks of eager miners to the Sierra foothills in 1852. The expansion of transportation to the region with rail lines would mean greater possibilities for residents and investors. Railroads were essential to the logging industry, which could bring steady employment opportunities. At the time, railroads also increased passenger traffic and stimulated commercial industry.

In November of 1897, the Sierra Railway reached Jamestown. At the depot that is now Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, the railway established a maintenance facility, roundhouse and machine shop. Soon the railway reached

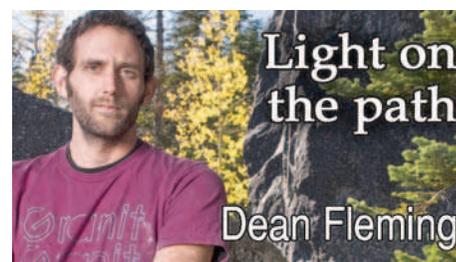
Sonora and shortly after that, work began on a line connecting Jamestown to Angels Camp.

The line to Angels Camp, however, threatened to become among the most challenging sections of railway in the foothills. Under the supervision of engineer W.H. Newell, grades were dug and tracks were laid through the incredibly steep Stanislaus River Canyon. Harrowing switchbacks on grades of up to 4.15 percent were carefully negotiated until finally, in September of 1902, the tracks reached Carson Hill.

The Stanislaus Canyon portion of the Sierra Railway was notorious for its steep, winding switchbacks. But these switchbacks were also well-known for their incredibly scenic views. One particularly

pleasing bend just west of the present-day Stevenot Bridge provided such brilliant scenery it was dubbed "Gee Wiz Point." Unfortunately Gee Wiz Point was not just a site of natural spectacles, but also the location of a few tragic accidents.

On June 26, 1906, a six-car train left Melones en route to Angels Camp. Some of the cars were filled with luggage and supplies, a few were filled with passengers; the fifth car was stacked with 15 tons of dynamite. At a tight bend high above the Stanislaus River, the train jumped the track, which caused all of the dynamite in the fifth car to explode. Tone Airola recorded his memories of the accident, documented in Archie Stevenot's book,



Light on the path

Dean Fleming

"The Sierra Railroad." Airola was in class at the Ramona School when he heard the blast. After the explosion, Airola rushed to the site on horseback and witnessed a horrible scene. The first three cars were still on the track, but the fifth had exploded into small fragments. Almost all of the passengers in the last car had been killed.

Eventually the automobile took hold as the favored mode of transportation for passengers and

Continued on next page

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10am-5pm Mon.-Sat. • 10am-3pm Sun.

Deli Hours:

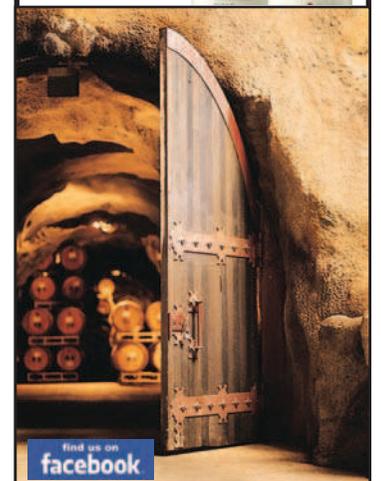
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January

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