

# Farm tour touts the county's best

I learned how to drive on the country roads of the valley. During my college years, I saw a lot of farms as I drove across the country to and from school. My hard drive is backed up with pictures from my journeys – photos I couldn't help but stick my camera out the window of the moving car to snap while my mom froze from the chilly wind. I also have a friend who adores cows, so when she visited California for

the first time last summer, the many cows between Sonora and Modesto kept her entertained.

Visiting farms or just enjoying their natural beauty has a certain charm to it. Think Napa with all its wineries and wine tasting. Think Apple Hill with all of its adorable shops and craft booths. But also think Tuolumne County, with its various farmers markets in Sonora, Twain Harte and other towns. Think Tuolumne County with its approximately 365 farms and ranches – a statistic from the Tuolumne County Agriculture Commissioner. And, perhaps most current, think about the fifth annual Farms of Tuolumne County Farm and Ranch Tour, happening from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at five area farms:

Solomon's Gardens, Mother Lode Ranch, La Bella Rosa Vineyards, Sweet River Ranch and Rancho Torales/Sonora Gold.

"People seem surprised at the diversity of agriculture in Tuolumne County," said Marian Rocha Zimmerly, who is CFO of the Farms of Tuolumne County Board of Directors. "They enjoy meeting the farmers and ranchers, touring the properties, asking questions, visiting the animals, buying products. The tour is considered an agritourism event, which is becoming more common throughout the country as farmers and ranchers seek ways of making their operations more viable."

Zimmerly grew up on a farm that raised cotton, alfalfa and soybeans in Tulare, and her grandparents emi-

grated from the Azores, where they were farmers and dairymen. Her husband's family farmed in Ohio.

"We moved to Tuolumne County from the Bay Area, seeking the rural way of life we had as children," Zimmerly said. "We both have a desire to see farming and ranching thrive here in Tuolumne County and elsewhere. The agricultural way of life is so valuable – its focus on sustainability, stewardship and love of the land, its work ethic – all are worth preserving and promoting."

The annual farm tour contributes to that preservation and promotion. Zimmerly said the tour showcases farms and ranches, educates the public about farming and ranching in the county, shows the diversity of area agriculture and raises awareness of the importance of agriculture, fresh foods and open space. Plus it's a fun and educational event for the entire family.

"Children will especially enjoy all

## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



the animals (cattle, horses, goats, llamas), the horse-drawn carriage rides and learning about ranching and wrangling," Zimmerly said. "It's an inexpensive excursion and an opportunity to tour lovely Tuolumne County and to learn about farming and ranching one-on-one with the farmers and ranchers. There will be wonderful photo opportunities, quality products, good food and a chance to visit with plein air artists who will create in the lavender. It's also a chance to support agriculture. It is also FOTC's main fundraiser. A large portion of the tour proceeds will go toward scholarships for Tuolumne County high school seniors who

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## Farms of Tuolumne County Farm and Ranch Tour

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday

**WHERE:** Solomon's Gardens, Mother Lode Ranch, La Bella Rosa Vineyards, Sweet River Ranch and Rancho Torales/Sonora Gold

**COST:** \$8 in advance at farmsoftuolumnecounty.org or \$10 at your first tour stop

**MORE INFO:** 928-3775

## Farm Tour Workshops

### • Solomon's Gardens:

"Design Concepts for the Foothills" starts at 10:30 a.m. Information on the "Top 100 Successful Plants for Tuolumne County" will be available and there is an heirloom demonstration garden.

• **Mother Lode Ranch:** Mule packing demo; explanation of Indian grinding rocks, Blanket Creek Station stage stop, cattle chutes and horseshoe areas.

TuCARE displays products from animals. Horse-drawn wagon rides through the ranch and learn about Percheron draft horses.

• **Sweet River Ranch:** Mother Lode Weavers and Spinners Guild members demonstrate spinning on wheels and weaving on a table loom, showing the process of making fiber into yarn and using yarn to weave finished products.

*Continued from previous page*

grime growled from his frets.

I've heard of this group but just couldn't remember where as I sought some clips online. Holy hot licks, Batman, this is the real sultry, grungy deal here. I especially like a line from a New Times review: "Roach has a voice like a velvet-covered freight train sliding down honey-coated tracks."

"The blues for me was always my quiet, very private passion," Caruthers told LA Weekly in 2001. "Whenever musicians of any genre get together and jam, they always end up playing the blues. And people would say, 'Man, if I could do this all the time, I would,' as if there was some pervasive rule that stops you from doing that. And there is! It's the record industry, the contracts ..."

The concert is a fundraiser for the playhouse, which the Murphys Creek Theatre Company is struggling to repair. The building was originally a Calaveras County Road Department maintenance facility and the old Black Bart

Players community theater troupe landed a long-term lease on the space from the county decades ago. At the time, community volunteers morphed the maintenance Quonset hut into the theater we see today, complete with seats from what became the Metropolitan in San Andreas, another Quonset hut that once contained a movie theater.

"Roof leaks, floor covering, old seats, there is a long to-do list," said Murphys Creek board member Dixon Collins of the state of the structure.

Tickets are \$25.

Depending on how long Roach and company cavort in the playhouse, diehards might manage a drive over to Ironstone Vineyards afterward to catch the Shane Dwight show there that's followed by a fireworks show just after dark.

The bombs bursting in air are surely all these great blues riffs wafting through the ether. Get out there and inhale the best of it all.

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

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have chosen careers in agriculture.”

In addition to tours of operations and the opportunity to ask questions, various workshops on landscaping and other topics will be offered. Area chefs will offer free samples and wine is tasted. Tours also allow visitors to see olive groves, a lavender field and a boutique winery.

Artists Lorna Hunt, Sherrie Drake and Michael Severin will be on hand to talk and give demonstrations and visitors can expect large displays of carriages and covered wagons.

Shoppers have plenty of options, as well. Various plants, pottery, equipment for making terra tea,

organic seeds, wine, port, almonds, champagne, beef, sausage, lamb, olive and lavender oils, linen spray, natural fiber products and artwork will all be for sale.

“People are becoming more educated about their food and are more interested in buying local,” Zimmerly said. “So we see consumers wanting to know their grower and buy fresh through things like CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), farmers markets and through organizations like Farms of Tuolumne County, which list members and what they sell on a website or in a published farm guide.”

La Bella Rosa will have wine, port

and almond champagne tasting, as well as grass-fed beef from The Homeplace, a restaurant owned by Montezuma Angus. Solomon’s Gardens features a vegetarian dish by Dave Ingram of Chef Dave Cooks. Mother Lode Ranch has Lettie Beeman (of Beeman Cattle and Rawhide Meats), who will serve up award-winning sausages. Rancho Torales features dishes by Christopher Segarini of Christopher’s Ristorante Italiano. The food is from FOTC farmers and ranchers and is prepared by area chefs. The food and wine tasting is meant to be samples of Tuolumne County fare and is free.

Brochures for the event are avail-

able at farmsoftuolumnecounty.org, at the Community Thrift Shop, 797 W. Stockton Road or at the Diamondback Grill, 93 S. Washington St., both in Sonora. Tickets (\$8 in advance) may be purchased at those locations and at the Sonora Certified Farmers Market from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday and at the Tuolumne Certified Farmers Market on Wednesday from 4 p.m. to dusk. Tickets are \$10 during the tour and youngsters under 18 get in free.

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

## Eddie’s does everything right

**W**endy Goode loves her job. She does it well, too, very well. Maybe “fabulous” is an overworked word, but I’ve got to use it. Wendy Goode is a fabulous waitress.

Charles and I have visited Eddie’s Grill in Valley Springs when Wendy was all alone. There she was, smiling like she really, really meant it, circulating smoothly from table to table, leaving in her wake table after table of satisfied customers.

Wendy’s boss, Ray Jursnich, is a lucky guy to have her, but then maybe Ray deserves some luck; his father, Eddie Jursnich, died three years ago. Eddie’s Grill is his memorial.

Most would agree that 2009 wasn’t a good year for Ray. A casualty to the economy, he was laid off from his job at Jackson Rancheria. Today he can say in retrospect that if it had to happen, it could not have hap-

### Vitals:

Eddie’s, 10 Nove St., Valley Springs, 772-3322. Open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Credit cards accepted.

pened at a better time.

“The layoff enabled me to spend every day with my father – the last month of his life,” he remembers.

Eddie Jursnich was a native of Butte, Mont., where he attended college and graduate school. As a young man, Eddie moved to Davis, where he taught elementary school and later became a grammar school principal. Ray believes that Eddie lives on as the spirit of his namesake eatery. Ray opened the grill in his father’s honor in February 2010.

Many will remember Ray from his days behind the bar at the Hotel

Leger in Mokelumne Hill. Working with him as one of the chefs is Clay Major, another Leger alum.

Charles and I first visited the restaurant when it was only a few weeks old. We knew even then that Eddie’s was destined for success. We’ve been back a number of times over the past two years, most recently with “our” daughter and son-in-law, Marion and David Lauter.

After studying the many photographs of Eddie growing up in Butte – nostalgic depictions of the 1940s – we settled into a comfortable corner booth ready to move on to the menu. It has a cartoony sketch on the cover of a smiling man who looks like he’d be fun to know. Of course, it’s Eddie.

There is a lot on the menu to choose from, but I’ve pretty well

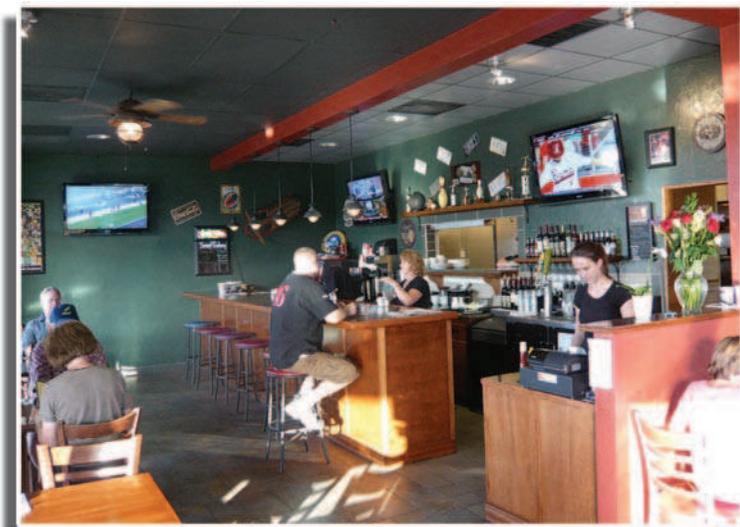
Antoinette May Herndon

### Foothill Flavors



worked my way through it. On this particular evening, I chose pillow ravioli (\$12.75). “Pillow” was an apt description; the ravioli was jumbo-sized and plump. I ended upon taking enough home to build a dinner around the following day. A choice of soup or salad came with the ravioli. I picked the soup, which turned out to be chili – not the wisest choice for a hot summer day, especially when paired with a heavy entre. (Oh, why doesn’t someone start serving gazpacho or cold cucumber soup?)

Continued on next page



Photos by Charles Herndon

Eddie’s Grill has a lively interior and serves equally pleasing food.

**Saturday, July 7th**  
**Don't miss Cafe R&B at 3pm**  
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### Fishing Gear Exhibit

Ironstone Vineyards is pleased to have Bert Kronnick at the Heritage Museum for FREE appraisal clinics!

### Schedule of Appraisals:

July 21st  
August 4th & 31st  
September 22nd

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### July 21st Reba with Whisky Dawn

**Jewelry Shoppe and Museum Hours:**  
11:00 am to 5:00 pm ~ 7 Days a week

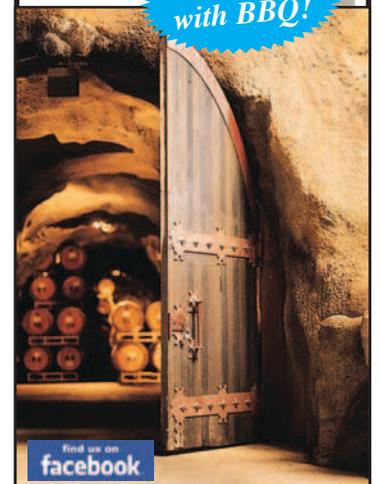
**Tasting Room Hours:**  
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