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El Dorado, today called Mountain Ranch. I distinctly remember sitting down with him and whenever I posed a query on a ranch or building anywhere near the town, his nimble fingers danced on his laptop and photographs and documents appeared out of the ether. In scouring the globe for information on his newly adopted hometown, Wally traveled all over the western states collecting whatever he could get his hands on. While sitting with people, judiciously documenting their tales both tall and rigidly factual – he’s known to politely ask to hold that cherished photo so he can slip it into his scanner. Bam! Another piece of history

is part of a massive collection. Everything he has gathered about Calaveras County has landed in the historical society’s collection, too; that’s the beauty of this man.

In 2009, Wally’s crowning achievement – well, so far – opened at the museum on Main Street in San Andreas. For decades, society members had wrestled with what they were going to do with a stunning piece of history. It had lazily languished on the spot where it was first built, sheltered from time’s ravages by a corrugated tin roof.

The structure was “merely” the Double Springs courthouse, a teeny tiny building that played host to the very first Court of Sessions (a pre-

cursor to the Board of Supervisors) meeting in 1850. The camphor wood building was shipped here from China as a kit, like those kit homes once sold in the Sears catalogue.

“It is remarkable that a wood structure like this survived,” marveled then society president, the late Jeff Tuttle. He beamed as Wally pointed out the high points of the rebuilt courthouse façade, now proudly part of the permanent collection in the upstairs museum. “I can’t say enough about what Wally has done,” Tuttle enthused. “He’s obsessive and it shows.”

Wally singlehandedly marshaled a small group of volunteer craftsmen and women into action to make the

exhibit happen. With a woodworking shop on his property, who better to fashion shingles just as they were created more than a century ago? The exhibit today is a striking little cubby, where postal artifacts and old court records are showcased with a forced-perspective mural – by Pete and Lori Kelly – casting the structure as if you’re walking back in time.

Richard Everett, the exhibit curator for the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park who was on hand for the opening, said his research indicated that 74 of the kit buildings came to California through San Francisco. Many were constructed on Yerba Buena Island, but those were destroyed by fire. It

is believed that the Double Springs courthouse is the only one of those prefabricated places to survive.

“I am so impressed,” Everett said of the project and its coordinator. “This is incredible. This guy is a gem.”

If you can get a ticket, \$30 gets you to the prime rib affair that starts at 5 p.m. Saturday. You can congratulate Wally yourself if you’re there, otherwise, I propose we all raise our glasses and toast Mr. Motloch. We must be grateful to people like Wally; those who do what they can to remember where we came from are irreplaceable. Thanks, Wally.

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

# Twain Harte opens up to draw you in

In the short time I’ve lived in Twain Harte, I’ve never really taken the time to get to know this gem of a town. My mom has her favorite place to get smoothies, I love the Chinese restaurant in downtown and we’ve been to a few events like Oktoberfest and the recent community garage sale; but I know there are plenty of nooks and crannies I have yet to explore.

When friends visit, I’m quick to take them to the antique and tourist shops of Columbia State Historic Park and Jamestown, but then I forget about the miniature golf course and quaint shops of Twain Harte. It seems that community events are a fun, basic way to attract people to the shops of the area. In the town where resident

## Twain Harte Nights

**WHEN:** 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday and July 19 and Aug. 16

**WHERE:** Joaquin Gully Road, Twain Harte

**COST:** Free to attend

**MORE INFO:** Sandra Asquith, 586-5565 or [asquith@mlode.com](mailto:asquith@mlode.com)

Sandra Asquith said visitors are more likely to find trees than people, events give people like me the opportunity to get to know Twain Harte. And I know I’ll likely end up at one of the upcoming Twain

Harte Nights, as a dear friend of mine visiting for the summer absolutely loves the old cars that will appear there on select Thursdays this summer.

“This event brings together peo-

ple from both Tuolumne and Calaveras counties to the main street in Twain Harte for an evening of fun and food,” said Asquith, coordinator for Twain Harte Nights, which is hosted by the Twain Harte Business Association. “We have a live band for your dancing pleasure, a variety of local foods, crafters of all different kinds, specialty cars and beer and wine.”

Asquith said the event brings focus to the Twain Harte area.

“Everyone who attends these events comments on how much fun they have and that the event brings out the small-town spirit in everyone because everyone is so friendly,” Asquith said. “Some

## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



folks bring their chairs and just sit and enjoy the music. Others love the music to dance to, while still others love to shop, both at the street fair and also at the local merchants. There is an awesome consignment store with some beautiful clothing, a wonderful kitchen store and several boutiques with something for everyone.”

From 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday and July 19 and Aug. 16, the Twain

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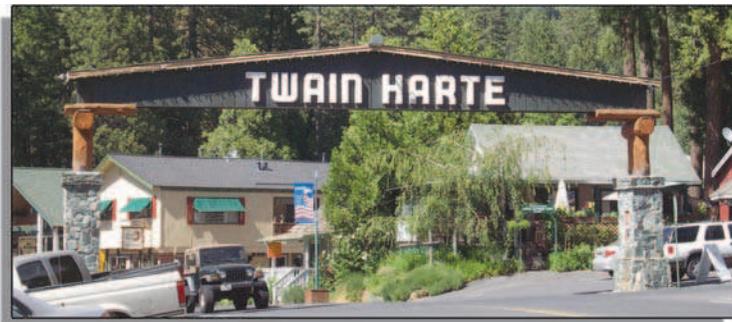
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Harte Nights program presents a street fair in the middle of Joaquin Gully in Twain Harte. Each of the three nights finds a farmers market with fresh vegetables and eggs from Bende Farms; car shows with makes like Corvette and Porsche, antique cars and classics; and various other booths. Shops are also open.

Live music is performed by The

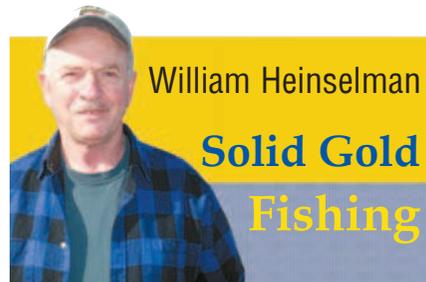


Wandering Acorns on Thursday, Full on Fergus on July 19 and The Hills Brothers Band on Aug. 16.

For more information on how you can participate, call or email Asquith at 586-5565 or asquith@mlode.com.

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

## Highway 88 has all you can tackle



We all know fishing is all about stories, right? Well, in the past couple of years, I've watched another story develop, and this week's column is all about a man named Darrell Rice and his contribution to those who love camping and fishing up the Highway 88 corridor.

Early last year, Darrell owner of Buckhorn Plaza Hardware, called me about his desire to carry a line of tackle for all the anglers that venture up Highway 88. We met and after feeling his genuine concern for his future fishing tackle, I offered to help him select the good stuff. I also let Darrell know that his Highway 88 location was right near some of the best fishing in the Sierra.

He gladly agreed and gave me his catalog to take home so I could indicate choices for his fishing department. Now, a year or so later, I gave Darrell a call and we discussed his camping and fishing supplies.

When traveling east up Highway

88 from Jackson, you pass through Pine Grove and Pioneer and then reach Buckhorn. Upon arrival, you'll notice Buckhorn Plaza, which contains Darrell's Buckhorn Plaza Hardware. He doesn't have a sign declaring his store's fishing and camping inventory, but you'll appreciate it when you stop by.

The fishing is rich up the Highway 88 corridor at both low and high elevations. Darrell's store is at 26659 Tiger Creek Road, and Tiger Creek Road takes you to the Tiger Creek after bay and the North Fork of the Mokelumne River – both of which are an angler's gold mine for large German brown trout. The back roads of the area lead to several interesting places to fish, including the Tiger Creek "regulator" and Salt Springs Reservoir. Only the locals know the many stories of monster German browns caught from these reservoirs!

Farther up Highway 88 are Bear River Reservoir and Silver, Caples, Red and Blue lakes. At these destinations, anglers have the opportunity to catch rainbow, German brown, brook, cutthroat and lake trout (aka mackinaw). Not only does Highway 88 offer some of the state's best



William Heinselmann

Walt Byers, left, and owner Darrell Rice have all the best bait at Buckhorn Plaza Hardware.

fishing, but recreation seekers find backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, kayaking, mountain biking, river rafting, snowmobiling and snow skiing. Highway 88 offers some interesting history, too.

When you enter Darrell's store,

you'll find the fishing tackle just past the checkout counter and to the left. You'll find Wedding Ring, Rapala and Kastmaster lures, just to name a few, and a wide assortment of hooks and sinkers. If it's a dodger or flash-

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Strawberry Goat Cheese  
Bruschetta

**Saturday at Ironstone**  
Hawaiian Theme  
Pouring:  
Obsession & Muscat Canelli  
Pairing:  
Tiki Tacos  
•••

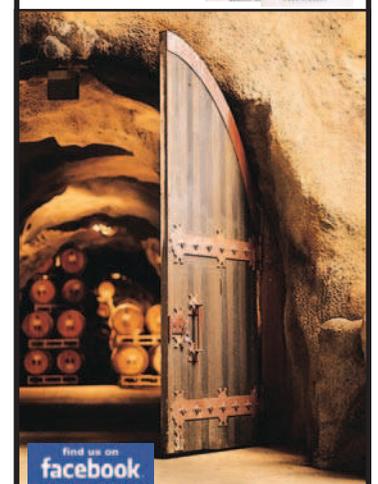
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