

# Dragoons, golfers and more honor veterans

## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



With the election just past and everyone fighting for what they believe to be right for the freedom and justice of the United States, looking back at history and honoring those who fought and died for our country seems just as important, if not more so, than ever. My grandpa survived Pearl Harbor, and I enjoy hearing my dad's stories of how Grandpa Wheeler became the honorable man I never had a chance to know. I'm sure every veteran has a story to tell, and while I may not be the best listener or have the best attention span, I believe in respecting and learning from those who lived before us and live for us.

"We recognize veterans for their service," said Jim Kirk, a docent at Columbia State Historic Park and a member of the Columbia Foot Dragoons.

The dragoons participate in a special Veterans Day Remembrance on Sunday at the veterans section of the Columbia Cemetery. They will explain the significance of Veterans Day and how it came into being, as well as fire a black-powder salute, raise a flag and name the veterans interred at the cemetery.

"This is their last resting place and we want to honor them," Kirk said.

Kirk said the dragoons started as a militia formed in 1850 and is now a private group that performs five celebrations in Columbia each year. They typically participate in activities on Memorial and Veterans days, Fourth of July festivities, Admission Day and a special reenactment of a chase after a famous Mexican bandit.

"The historical aspect, it's intriguing," Kirk said of participation.

Soroptimist International of Twain Harte will also honor veterans. The club hosts a special luncheon to salute women who served from 12 to 1 p.m. Tuesday at the Twain Harte Golf Club. Veterans are free; general admission is \$15. For more, call 586-6338 or 586-1532.

On another side of the county, Pine Mountain Lake hosts a Veterans Day Memorial Golf Tournament on Sunday, a fundraiser for the Fisher Foundation. Tournament organizer and Chairman Tom Bickmore said the organization was chosen as the recipient by area resident Virginia Tallman, who lost her son in Iraq.

"Veterans Day is important to me because I support our military and witnessed firsthand what war can do to a person," Bickmore said. "My father served in World War II and came home with a number of physical issues, which stayed with him for the remainder of his life. My brother and I both served in the

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Courtesy photo

The Columbia Foot Dragoons remember veterans on Sunday with a special ceremony in Columbia.

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ature; psychologist and author Dr. Linda Abbott Trapp leads discussion on writing about tough truths in personal memoirs; and Linda Field, of the "Manzanita Voices" radio show, records historic tales from the public from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 2 p.m. Ever-popular gentleman poet Black Bart – performed by Glenn Wasson – will be around the jail sharing the best of the bandit's doggerel.

Book signings will take place, vendor booths will be on the street and live music is performed by Jim Lanier and Connie Strawbridge. Wines are poured for tasting from 1 to 4 p.m. inside the

Metropolitan and tech gurus will share tips and tricks on using handheld devices there, too.

Gallery Calaveras celebrates the opening of the incredible Affordable Gifts of Art show with a reception from 1 to 3 p.m. You will surely find a creative bauble for a loved one. The archives and the museum will be open all day, free of charge. You have to check out the museum if you've never been there; it has heaps of historic artifacts and lots of information stored within its walls. The historical society's gift shop is a veritable treasure trove of books on Gold Country history, too.

The day concludes with a terrific opportunity to step inside Sheriff Ben Thorn's old manse, metic-

ulously restored by its current owners. From 4 to 5 p.m., visit with the owners and learn what incredible discoveries they have made as they have labored on the beautiful house.

This whole kit and caboodle is free of any admission charges. I'm rather amazed, but writers are known for being pretty cool with sharing their ideas and techniques. I might suggest you make a donation to the arts council or the Manzanita Writers Press as a "thank you" for staging this day of looking back to look ahead.

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

## Veterans Day Remembrance

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. Sunday

**WHERE:** Columbia Cemetery, Old Schoolhouse Street, Columbia

**COST:** Free

**MORE INFO:** [columbiacalifornia.com](http://columbiacalifornia.com) or 536-1672

## Veterans Day Golf Tournament

**WHEN:** 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday

**WHERE:** Pine Mountain Lake Golf Course, 12765 Mueller Drive, Groveland

**COST:** \$85, \$30 for just dinner and \$40 for Pine Mountain Lake property owners

**MORE INFO:** Tom Bickmore at 962-5517

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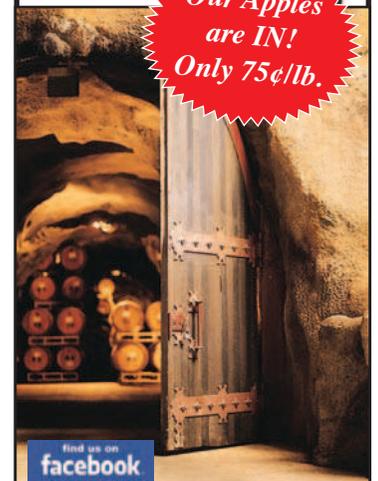
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military and were on medi-vac flight crews and saw firsthand the sacrifices our troops make for their country.”

Bickmore said he toured the Fisher House in 2008. Veterans’ families use the facility while family members receive medical treatment.

“The Fisher House is important to

me because my family lived close to the veterans hospital in Palo Alto and I understand how it helps families during very trying times,” Bickmore said.

The festivities prior to the golf tourney last about an hour and many people come just to watch that part of the event. Activities include a parachute flag drop, a

first tee tribute, a drawing and more. A small parade consists of emergency service vehicles – police and sheriff’s department – to celebrate the heroes at home.”

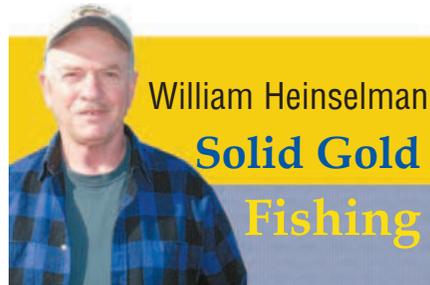
“We have a flyover salute to aircraft that have been lost and a number of other things that take place on the first tee,” Bickmore said. “It lasts about an hour. We

have a dinner after the golf and this year we will have a band after the dinner.”

The tournament costs \$85 per player, which includes the golf, dinner and a donation to the Fisher House. Guest dinners for non-golfers are \$30, which also includes a donation. Pine Mountain Lake property owners pay \$40.

For more information on the Fisher House, visit [fisher-house.org](http://fisher-house.org). Call Bickmore at 962-5517 for more information or reservations.

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



William Heinselman  
**Solid Gold  
Fishing**

## Some of the 2012 season’s a wrap

**W**hat a fun fishing season we had this year, but the last half of it was a bit surprising.

When the season began, trout fishing was the first and foremost attraction in the Mother Lode, followed by kokanee, bass, striper and catfish. While changing fish patterns often don’t mean a whole lot, I want to explain some differences I saw in the 2012 season compared to previous years.

The trout and kokanee fishing was right about normal this year. Both species were extremely generous in handing out limits to hungry anglers. In fact, both the trout and kokanee seasons lasted a bit longer this year, reaching into the month of October. One interesting point about the New Melones trout season this year was there was an abundance of

large and healthy trout caught toward the end of summer and into the fall. Trollers were nailing them, as well as boaters who anchored and still-fished under lights. The fishing hot spots at New Melones remained consistent, too.

I remember back a few years ago that the kokanee fishing was red hot from late spring to mid-summer, but it turned off early in August – like someone hit the off switch. This season was much longer, with anglers catching kokanee a full two months longer at both New Melones and Pardee reservoirs.

While I’m not much of a bass fisherman, my buddies informed me that the season was strong during the late spring at New Hogan; many of the largemouth and spotted bass they caught weighed upwards of 4 pounds; a few were even larger. In mid-summer, the bite dropped off quite a bit. The bass fishing at Pardee always thrills a few anglers and heavy fish were reported this year, but since the bass crowd is so

tight-lipped, it’s hard to get weekly reports. I did hear anglers mention that the fishing slowed, but that was to be expected with the increased fishing pressure – especially since Harold Harding caught the California record smallmouth bass back in 2007.

Striper fishing at New Hogan was normal in the spring, but for the first time in my memory, the top-water feeding frenzies all but disappeared later on.

Another odd change I noticed this season – and last year – was the absence of channel catfish spawning at Pardee Reservoir. Every year during the months of May and June, the catfish come to the shallows to spawn. I couldn’t miss them when fishing the banks; their bodies are large and very dark (almost black in color) and easy to spot as they swim close to the shorelines. There were certain areas the channel cats preferred every year, but their numbers seemed to be on the decline.

The actions of nature are its own and nature takes care of itself, I think. Next season may completely turn back to normal for the striper and channel catfish at New Hogan and Pardee; we’ll just have to wait and see.

Now that winter has cooled the air,



Courtesy photo

Ray Rogers of Murphys recently reeled in a 4-pound brown trout at New Melones Reservoir.

the waters of the Mother Lode will cool rapidly and lakes will transform. The three temperature zones in each lake will neutralize (the thermocline being the center layer), and the cooling effect will continue until our lakes are one consistent temperature from top to bottom (referred to as “lake turnover”).

Trout plants that halted due to warm surface-water temperatures can and will begin again. Trout will now be caught in shallower

depths because the fish are comfortable in the colder oxygen-rich waters. The bass family of fish will do the opposite of the trout; they’ll move to deeper water and stay there, giving the bass a more consistent environment throughout the long winter months. Since the food supply for bass greatly diminishes during the winter, they become lethargic and don’t move around much to conserve energy.

**Tip of the week** – The river and stream fishing season closes on Nov. 15. In our lakes, the winter months offer some of the best bank-fishing of the year. I like to bring two rods: one with a bobber and a night crawler for fishing the surface and one with a PowerBait setup, which consists of a treble hook behind a 3-foot leader and a sliding sinker for fishing shallower water. Also, the winter months are a great time to cast lures. Good luck!

### On the water:

**Don Pedro** – Trout: Fair. The fish are scattered as the water cools. Trolling heavy spoons is good in the bays. Bank-fishing with PowerBait will improve as soon as the trout move toward the shallows.

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Courtesy photo

Rob Morris of Arnold caught a 10-pound channel catfish at New Melones.

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