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autumn excitement, get ready for the Friends of the Angels Camp Library Harvest Party Tour from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27. Three Greenhorn Creek homes will be decked out in their fall colors and that's a nice start to the event. But history buffs will get their fill at the Milfiori Gardens and old "Italian Store" stone building in Douglas Flat, both built in the 1860s and lovingly restored. Irish Vineyards in Vallecito will be open, too. Every destination on the tour features colorful fall décor and tasty treats, and wine and cider tasting are on the menu.

Tickets for the party tour are \$25 each, available in advance at the branch library, Calaveras Visitors Bureau and Calaveras Lumber in Angels Camp, or call Betty Sawyer at 736-6723. Proceeds help the Friends of the Library stock the shelves and more at the Angels Camp Library.

I'm getting that warm feeling all over as I see these events come along to both excite and entice us to their activities and that help groups that need assistance. Your atten-

Harvest Party Tour

WHEN: 1 to 4 p.m.
Oct. 27

WHERE: Gardens in Angels Camp, Vallecito and Douglas Flat

TICKETS: \$25 at the Calaveras Visitors Center, branch library and Calaveras Lumber in Angels Camp or call 736-6723

dance is a win-win; you can snuggle up to the quilt show and line up to view the best that fall has to offer. The chill of the impending winter will be stalled by the warmth felt in your heart.

Reach Mike Taylor at mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.

Find storybook adventure at the fairgrounds

Well, after a grueling summer, it seems fall has finally reached us. Whew. I, for one, am ready to move on to the cooler weather and fun autumn activities. As the falling leaves announce the new season, Sonora has plenty to keep Mother Lode and surrounding area residents busy.

As we stroll through the month of October, many activities are bound to be Halloween related. I always enjoyed dressing up for Halloween as a child, but as I grew older, I had no siblings to take out and I began to feel embarrassed dressing up because everyone knows Halloween is for kids, right? Wrong – at least not for anyone who attends the All Hallows Fantasy Faire Saturday and Sunday at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in Sonora.

At age 8, Fantasy Faire co-founder Patrick Karnahan wanted to build a haunted backyard with a friend. He and his buddy spent weeks designing the yard, only to have his friend's mother tell them to "clean that mess up in the backyard now!" a week before they planned to open. Now 53, Karnahan said he gets to have fun and relive his 8-year-old dreams

Tuolumne Talk

Harmony
Wheeler



with the All Hallows Fantasy Faire, a festival that celebrates every kind of fantasy creature and story, from children's fairy tales to horror, and, yes, even "Star Wars."

Hundreds of people come in costume for the event, which features music from eight bands performing Celtic, folk, rock, zombie and Cajun music. Belly, tribal and modern dancers perform; Celtic, Roman and Viking encampments take up part of the fairgrounds; characters from the encampments stage fights with various "creatures"; and pirates walk about the fairgrounds. "Star Wars" characters take visitors to "space jail." Dragons chase after ghosts and Minotaurs. The event also hosts the 13 Chambers of Horror haunted house for adults and stages special games for children. In addition to

Continued on next page

Sierra Lodestar



Harmony Wheeler

Performers from Danse Macabre appear all over the Mother Lode Fairgrounds Saturday and Sunday.

Continued from previous page

archery, pumpkin carving, face painting, clowns and magicians, fire eaters, Snow White and the Huntsman, a fantasy world for small children, witches, a Zombie Graveyard, a market place for Celtic goods and a tavern for adults promise make-believe fun in the real world.

What makes this weekend so different is the dress up.

“We’re talking hundreds of people in costume; it’s all about the costume play,” Karnahan said. “We bring out hundreds of people in costume, have them interact with the public in costume, invent a world for them to hang out in. It becomes magic!”

Karnahan said All Hallows revolves around fantasy fun.

“Whatever you dreamed of as a kid might come to life,” he said. “At

All Hallows Fantasy Faire

WHEN: 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

WHERE: Mother Lode Fairgrounds, 220 Southgate Drive (off Highway 49), Sonora

TICKETS: \$12 for adults (\$20 for two-day passes) in advance at allhallowsfaire.com, \$15 at the gate and \$5 for ages 6 to 12; 5 and under free

MORE INFO: 533-4420

this point, you do see that it is so much more than just Halloween. It’s the magic of the big screen come to life with all your favorite movie characters. It’s the storybook creatures from the books you read as a child. It’s the history of the ancient cultures of the Celtic people and their world brought to the future.”

Karnahan’s Celtic heritage inspired him to create the annual Sonora Celtic Faire in March and the All Hallows Fantasy Faire in October. He said he likes to prove that it’s possible to put a smile on your face without making you board a million-dollar thrill ride. To

him, these fairs are like mom and pop shops that involve all the creativity that he says make living in the Mother Lode special.

“With the faire, I am trying to bring some of the old traditions of

the past and mix them with our modern Halloween theme,” he said. “They say that Halloween in America is now the most popular holiday, second only to Christmas.”

Advance tickets are \$12 for adults and there are two-day passes available for \$20 at allhallowsfaire.com – where you’ll also find schedules and more information on events like the scavenger hunt and the costume contest – the Celtic Knot in Jackson, the Aeolian Harp in Angels Camp and at Mountain Bookshop and Sonora Music in Sonora. At the gate, tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for ages 6 to 12. Children 5 and under get in free.

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

Rail trails make for great rides and hikes



More than 75 years ago, logging endeavors in the Sierra Nevada were completed without the use of chainsaws or trucks. In the early 1900s, tractors were innovative and trains were the primary mode of transport for nearly all heavy materials. Logging amidst the harsh landscape of the western Sierra, with its notoriously rugged landscape and dramatic elevation changes, proved particularly challenging for the logging industry during the earliest portion of the 20th century.

In 1927, at what is now Fraser Flat Campground, the Pickering Lumber Co. established Camp Frasier, the site of a significant split in the old main line of the Sugar Pine Railway. The Strawberry Branch that marked this split proved to be a substantial vein of the Sugar Pine Railway sys-

tem. Before ceasing operation, the entire Sugar Pine Railway grew to 70 miles of main lines and 400 miles of spur lines, branches and sidings.

With new innovations in logging equipment (mainly the use of more efficient trucks), the Sugar Pine Railway eventually closed. Today, Fraser Flat Campground is a popular weekend fishing area along the banks of the tranquil South Fork of the Stanislaus River. On a weekday, the area is so pristine that it’s almost unfathomable to comprehend the sound of steam engines chugging up the ravine or the whistle signals ordering steam donkeys during daily logging operations near the banks of the river interrupting the serenity.

Transforming old railroad grades into hiking, biking and equestrian trails has become quite popular among mountain communities over the past few years. Because of this area’s extensive logging history, there are a number of rail trails in the Sierra, including the poplar West Side Rail Trail just outside Tuolumne. Abandoned railway systems make wonderful trails for a number of reasons. They’re wide

– sometimes more than 15-feet in width – and therefore require very

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