

# Tea party serves scholarships

**W**e're still early in the holiday season and I've seen many Facebook posts from friends chiding Walmart and other stores for already having Christmas decorations and music for sale. Me? I started watching Christmas movies weeks ago and holiday

music comes easily whenever I'm in the mood for Christmas. So I don't mind that stores seem to continue to ignore my friends' disapproving looks and I hear the tinkling of sleigh bells as I look forward to the first snow of the season. Those sleigh bells aren't far off

at Sonora's Soroptimist International. Santa Claus visits the nonprofit's Nutcracker Tea Party on Saturday, a fundraiser for high school scholarships.

"The tea party is a fun-filled afternoon with entertainment and activities for all ages," said Carol Norwood, the club's publicity chair. "We change the lineup of entertainment each year for the Nutcracker. At this year's Nutcracker we will have Peggy Reza and her Blue Shoes Ukulele Orchestra and Cynthia Restivo. The Blue Shoes Ukulele Orchestra will play a variety of Christmas-themed pieces. The Blue Shoes music is fun and entertaining. "In addition, Cynthia Restivo, well-known storyteller in Northern California, is writing a new Christmas story for our event. Cynthia will be donating a copy of her new CD to a gift basket."

Norwood said the event follows a format similar to a high tea, with a variety of tea sandwiches and desserts prepared by each of the Soroptimist members served along with hot tea and sparkling cider. Members decorate the room with various Christmas decorations, as well, including several Nutcrackers collected by the club's president, Sally Dios.

"As soon as I bought one I could not resist buying more," Dios said. "I love to shop in all kinds of stores and look for new and different ones from what I already have, big and little, old and new. I buy as many as I can."

This year marks the tea party's fourth anniversary.

"We came up with the name of Nutcracker as it is a holiday event and everyone loves the 'Nutcracker' ballet," Norwood said. "A number of the young attendees – girls and boys – get all dressed up in their finest party clothes. It is so cute

watching all their excited faces as they come into the room and see all the decorations and then when the entertainment starts! The arrival of Santa is near the end of the event. The kids line up and one or two at a time go and sit on his lap and get their pictures taken."

The event also includes drawings for themed baskets personalized with various treats by club members.

"One club member is a veterinarian and she always creates a pet basket," Norwood said. "Other than the pet basket, we have in the past only had gift baskets that appealed to young girls and boys, but this year we are adding baskets that will appeal to mom or grandma. The gift basket I am currently working on has a small picnic basket with teacups with saucers and a teapot. I am adding a 'Nutcracker' ballet CD, coloring books, multi-color pack of coloring pens, a wooden doll puzzle, stuffed animal and will probably add some candy. One for a boy will

## Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler



have things like Matchbox cars, toy-like walkie-talkies, etc."

The event begins at 2 p.m. at the Tuolumne County Senior Center. Tickets are \$15 each or \$80 for groups of six. All funds raised will go toward the club's scholarship program, which provides scholarships to graduating seniors from area high schools and Columbia College. The club also provides financial support to Sonora High School's girls water polo team. For tickets or more information, call 532-6218 or ask any Soroptimist International of Sonora member.

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



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## Nutcracker Tea Party

**WHEN:** 2 p.m. Saturday

**WHERE:** Tuolumne County Senior Center, 540 Greenley Road, Sonora

**TICKETS:** \$15 each or \$80 for six at 532-6218



Courtesy photos

Smiles rule the day at the Nutcracker Tea Party Saturday in Sonora.



Storytellers like B.Z. Smith enchant the tea party guests.