



Tuolumne Talk

Harmony Wheeler

I'm one of those people who likes to turn the air conditioner as low as it will go and cuddle up in a nice warm quilt or blanket. And, as poor a decorator as I am, I also like to use blankets to warm rooms as wall decorations. My mom had two "best friend" blankets made for a friend and me before I left for college one year, and I kept it hung on my dorm room wall almost every year.

There's something comforting about blankets, sheets and quilts that makes them difficult to live without, especially if your roommate likes to set the air conditioner to "freezer" like me.

Pam Smith finds some level of comfort in her quilt making. This year's featured quilter at the Quilts and Threads Show, Smith said she gets up at 4 a.m. every day to spend two hours in her studio sewing before she leaves for work. She spends many evenings working on her quilts, as well.

"Quilting relaxes me," Smith said. "I enjoy picking out the fabrics for each project and watching it progress. I also like making quilts for gifts. I have made four quilts for my 10-year-old grandson, baby quilts for great-nieces and graduation quilts for my nieces and nephews. I also like to give back to the community. I have made several quilts to be used for fundraisers at

Get ready to curl up near the fireplace

Summerville High School. And two years ago I mentored a senior at Sonora High School to complete a quilt for her senior project."

Smith moved to Twain Harte in 1993 and later took a class to learn quilting as an extension of her creation of doll clothing.

"Most of my quilts are scrappy with many different fabrics," she said. "I do hand appliqué and have hand-quilted some of my quilts. In the last couple of years, I have begun doing folk art quilts that have wool and other fabrics and embellishments. I also am a gardener, and some of my quilts reflect my love of gardens and birds."

Smith made her first quilt in 1999 and will display 14 of her creations at the 23rd annual Quilts and Threads Show, Saturday and Sunday at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds. The Sierra Quilt Guild

Quilts and Threads Show

WHEN: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday

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

COST: \$7 for one day or \$10 for two-day passes

MORE INFO: margaret.osborne@hughes.net or visit sierraquiltguild.com



Courtesy photos

Pam Smith is the featured quilter at this weekend's Quilts and Threads Show at the Mother Lode Fairgrounds in Sonora.

Sierra Lodestar

of Tuolumne County, the Sierra Needle Artists and the Mother Lode Weavers and Spinners organize the yearly event, which Smith says makes a great place to do some early Christmas shopping.

"The quilt show is a very nice way to spend several hours admiring

creative work," Smith said.

Gail Williams, the event publicity chairwoman, agreed, pointing to the quilts and other items on display as beautiful works of art worth admiration.

"I'm pretty much an advanced

Continued on page 11

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Time stands still as you get the shot

At 4 a.m., the beep of the alarm transcends sleep. “Wake up dude!” Jerry half shouted from behind a pot of boiling water, snapping me out of another unusual dream. “The sun’s up in two hours; we should be in the cave with our tripods set up in an hour.”

Jerry spoke the second line in his quintessential instructor-like mater-of-fact tone – a tone that I frequently welcome and dread at the same time. When Jerry’s in “photo mode” you can pretty much count on two things: you’re going to get tired and you’re going to learn a heck of a lot about photography.

In 1997, Jerry Dodrill achieved degrees in both fine art and photography at Pacific Union College in the Napa Valley. Shortly after, he worked under acclaimed adventure and nature photographer Galen Rowell in Berkeley. Soon Jerry was managing Galen’s gallery and workshops. Working with Galen was an amazing opportunity, yet Jerry still describes the experi-

ence as a type of “photographer’s boot camp,” that consisted of grueling back-to-back work days with very early wake-up calls. Since those early years, Jerry’s photography has won several international awards and has been exhibited in fine galleries like the Ansel Adams, Mountain Light, Mumm Napa Valley and the Banff Center for Mountain Culture.

The night before my startling wake-up call, I made the short drive from the East Bay to Jerry’s home in Sebastopol – a small ocean-side community just a few miles west of Santa Rosa. Both of us had been busy over the past few months, so we took the opportunity to catch up outside by an open fire pit. Before too long, I checked the time and noticed it was close to 12:30 a.m.

“Better get to sleep, man,” Jerry said. “We’re waking up at 4 a.m. tomorrow. The full moon is creating a minus-2 tide; we’ll have access to some really amazing sea caves. ... Hope you brought your wading boots.”

The car careened around tight bends as moonlight poured over the lush coastal forest. Heavy metal blasted from the stereo and coffee spilled out of multiple cups along the dash with each turn. Jerry talked about a website and software program that allows him to track the exact location of the moon and each day’s unique tidal patterns. The software also



anticipates weather patterns, some as minuscule as patches of fog or low-lying clouds.

We pulled into the parking lot at Sonoma Coast State Park before the light of day hit the rolling foothills. Shouldering heavy packs filled with camera gear, we stormed off along the coastal ridge. After 600 yards of flat terrain, I followed Jerry down a steep, sandy gully toward the ocean. At this time, on this day, in this exact moment, the tide was magnificent. Only accessible once a year, narrow passages led us directly across newly exposed tide pools to a seemingly blank cliff face.

As I approached the cliff, Jerry suddenly disappeared into a cleft facing the sea. At first, the chasm appeared to be nothing more than a shallow, dark hole. Switching on my headlamp revealed Jerry’s shadowy figure, already halfway through the first tunnel and nearly 40 feet away. I sank up to my thighs in the icy-cold tide pool and waded after Jerry.



Photos by Dean Fleming

Sea caves pose unique challenges to photographers.



Continued from page 9

beginning quilter, if there is such a thing, and I really enjoy seeing the incredible work that the super-quilters do and hanging out with friends who quilt,” said Williams, who has quilted off and on since 2001. “Plus, it’s always fun checking out the vendors and seeing what there is to purchase; not that I need any more fabric!”

According to Williams, at least 23 vendors will be at the event, in addition to more than 200 quilters who will show their works. The show

will take place in the Jon Muir, Sierra and Manzanita buildings at the fairgrounds.

Most of the vendors and quilt displays will be set up in John Muir, with the remainder in the Sierra Building, where the lunch area will also be situated. Kiwanis Club members serve lunch for a fee, and the Mountain Rangers 4-H Club will serve coffee. Becky Rogers, a certified quilt appraiser, will examine quilts brought to the show.

The Manzanita Building houses the boutique, where attendees can

purchase items – quilts, pot holders and much more – made by guild members. The Mother Lode Weavers and Spinners, Sierra Needle Artists, the Comfort Project and the guild’s Community Quilts Project will also have booths. Children’s activities will be at the Community Quilt booth and include a treasure hunt and storytelling on both Saturday and Sunday.

Tickets for the Quilts and Threads Show are \$7 for one day or \$10 for both days. The event also includes door prizes and a drawing for a spe-

cial quilt made by members of the Sierra Quilt Guild of Tuolumne County. Saturday, doors open at 10 a.m. and the event ends at 5 p.m. Sunday, doors open at 10 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. Parking is free. For more information, email margaret.osborne@hughes.net or visit sierraquiltguild.com.

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

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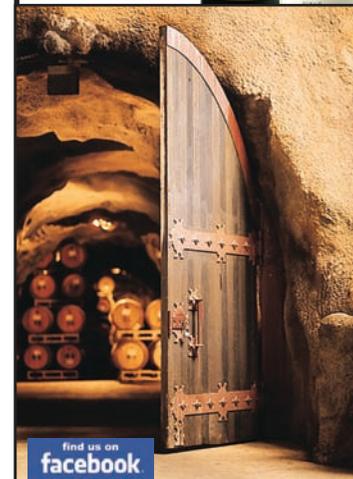
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