



Mike Taylor

Sluice Box

Making the music heard

When newcomers arrive in the Mother Lode, they often encounter an initial culture shock. They might initially encounter what they consider to be cultural gaps in their new communities and they can either bemoan the decline of foothill civilization or jump up and help it flourish.

Such is the case of the Chambers brothers, Stephen and Jeff, who have founded a remarkable community-based music program in Pioneer. You may say, "But, Mike, that's in Amador County," and

Jeff, the youngster at 52, has impressive credentials in the music world, having played the trumpet since grade school. He's also recorded several CDs with the Native American flute. Steve, 55, taught elementary school music early on and has, along with Jeff, taught private lessons for decades.

"When we had band (classes in school)," Jeff said, "we had it five days a week."

He said he's saddened by many school districts barely offering music; children might get to play their horns only a day a week in structured rehearsal with the school band.

The brothers realize the world is

an expensive one and that school-based programs don't come cheap, so they started the "Pick Up the Baton Community Music Program." Students from middle school all the way to age 91 participate in various classes offered. The loosely structured school presents classes for jazz ensemble – both Jeff and Steve started the Speakeasy Jazz Orchestra (speakeasyjazz.com) last year; Summer Wind Band, open to students from eighth grade through adult; the Cadet Band, for fifth grade and older; and voice and youth choruses. They also teach any players who want to learn in beginning classes; Arlene White coordinates the classes and Muriel Stettler teaches private voice lessons.

"You can really judge a community by its music," Jeff said at a rehearsal recently, horns bleating and clarinets fluttering in the background. "We saw there was a need so we started a school."

Most classes meet at the Faith Lutheran Church in Pioneer, where the brothers say they've found a nurturing congregation willing to allow instruments to be played.

"A lot of the kids sitting here," Jeff says, pointing to the Cadet Band rehearsing portions of the soundtracks from the "Harry Potter" and "Pirates of the Caribbean" films, "have only had one year of music. We challenge them and they step up and meet the challenge. It's nice to have the high school section leaders. They know what the songs are supposed to sound like."

Lloyd Bosworth takes pride in the fact that he's still playing any instrument at all. He began playing in



Photos by Mike Taylor

Lloyd Bosworth, 91, enjoys frequently rehearsing with the Pick Up Your Baton music groups, performing on his baritone sax.

1929, but "... in 1945 I sold my horn. I didn't play for 57 years."

Married to his wife, Carol, for 70 years, Lloyd, an active 91, says he enjoys practicing on the baritone saxophone. Today he says he owns a soprano, alto, tenor and baritone sax. "The baritone's my favorite. I like the ability to be able to play. I practice every day."

"Sometimes he plays love songs," Carol said with a grin. "I'll be singing along in the other room."

For \$85 the music program offers classes on many weekdays for players of all ages. Some beginners require a nomination from their schoolteachers, but the brothers are more than happy to add instruments to the ensembles.

"Getting the participation has been amazing," Jeff said.

Throughout the year, several of the groups perform free concerts in the community. The April show was a standing-room-only event and another is planned for 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 22, but, unfortunately, the brothers didn't yet have the location established as of press time. This isn't fly-by-night, folks; it's the directors trying to find a large enough venue. Call 295-3198 or visit windsquietsound.com/pick-upthebaton.html and I'm assured the location will be posted.

Maybe it's time for all of us former players to pick up those horns for the fun of it!

Contact Mike Taylor at mtaylor@sierralodestar.com.



Jeff Chambers



Steve Chambers

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Dial 911 for Emergencies

Got brambles? Bring a basket

On a hot summer day when temps peak 100 degrees, there is only one thing to do: sit half-naked on the couch in an air-conditioned house, cool drink in one hand, remote in the other. That's just one day, though, what about the rest of the 90-plus days of summer?

In the spirit of adventure, I ventured out to Sierra Glen Ranch with my friend Elizabeth "EJ" Jones. The ride to Sierra Glen took about 35 minutes from Columbia. Passengers get a first-rate view along the way, but drivers should keep their eyes on the road as it has many twists and turns along the way. At the end of the ride, we found one of Tuolumne

County's oldest farms.

"The farm has been 'Sierra Glen' for the last 50 years," said Rebecca Lagarbo, bakery manager and events coordinator. "But it's been around much longer; the house was built in 1860. Recently I had a 75-year-old man come here saying he worked on the farm when he was a teenager."

The farm boasts 640 acres, which holds fresh produce harvested in a continuous wave from mid-June through the first part of November. Berries, cherries, nectarines, peaches, pears and 22 kinds of apples all have their day. The berries lead the season and are



Kim Mathie

Tuolumne Talk

available through August.

"Most people get here as close to 7:30 a.m. as they can," Lagarbo said, surprised we ventured out to

Sierra Lodestar