

# Gold Country Living

## A Sierra Nevada Music Cultural Heritage and Long-Standing Tradition

All Hail to the Fiddle! Fiddletown fans, grab your hose and socks and pull and get ready for some high steppin, old time fiddling, and clawhammer banjo pickin! September is here and the Annual Fiddletown Fiddlers' Jam and Fiddle Contest will soon be upon us. Held every third Saturday of September, the Fiddletown Community Center would like you to join in this year's music festival and street fair on Saturday, September 17th. Look for the family fun activities at the base of the Giant Fiddle to last all day from 10AM – 5PM and it is FREE admission.

For the Fiddle Contest, Fiddlers of all ages are wanted to rosin up their bows for this day-long competition. The event also includes musical entertain-ment from bands representing a variety of music genres. This year's lineup features bands hot off the fiddlin circuit including Brothers Comatose, Foothill Billies, Extended Roots, Felipe and Joanne Ferraz, Second Coming, and Giorgi. There will also be an open mic, and a whole lot of fiddling in the "Fiddle Capital of the West".

Enjoy a street fair in a beautiful, historic Gold Rush Town where for blocks there will be handmade crafts, vendors, and old-time fiddle jamming on steps and street corners throughout the town. Savor a glass of wine hosted by the Fiddletown AVA Winetasting. The aromatic smell of barbecue will be ever present thanks to Incahoots BBQ, and Clark's Corner will also provide regional cuisine. Held in the town community center are raffle prizes galore including a \$400 range grill. Prizes awarded throughout the day include wine, gift baskets, B&B stays, art, dining, and also back by popular demand the Horseshoes in the Park contest.

Come to Fiddletown to hear the music but leave learning a lot of history about the California Gold Rush. There will be opportunities to explore some of the oldest Chinese buildings in North America thanks to the Fiddletown Preservation Society that won the 2010 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation.

Fiddletown, California is located in beautiful Amador County up Fiddletown Road. It is a historic town founded in 1849 during the height of the California Gold Rush. The town got its name from the legend that a band of fiddlers from Missouri settled there to gold pan but spent hours fiddling around the blazing campfires of the mining camps instead. Info, visit at [www.fiddletownca.org](http://www.fiddletownca.org)

## Sammy Hagar

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...Murphys sounded like a bar, so he kept calling the town "Murphyville" or "Murphytown". This was his first time at Ironstone and he was very impressed with the venue and the crowd. Sounds like he will want to come back again sometime!

Near the end of the concert, Sammy shot long strands of confetti out into the audience with a "potato" cannon, and then did it again and again until the entire middle section was covered with red and white strings of confetti!

It was a great night, and the weather turned out to be perfect for an outdoor concert, with the full moon just peeking through whispers of clouds. If you've never been to the Ironstone Winery's Amphitheater, that venue is amazing in itself!

Ironstone Vineyards is located in Murphys, CA. Ticketing options include the Platinum Dinner package (premium seating, pre-show four-course Winemaker dinner); Gold Seating (premium seating with no meal); Silver Seating (reserved seating with buffet dinner); Reserved Seating (reserved seating with no meal) and General Admission (lawn seating). Low beach chairs and blankets are allowed into the General Admission section.

Tickets can be purchased: [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com); to charge by phone, please call (800)

745-3000. Tickets are also available at all Ticketmaster Outlets. On the day of the show, tickets to that show will be available onsite at the Ironstone box office, Ironstone Vineyards, 1894 Six Mile Road, Murphys, CA. More information is at [www.ironstoneamphitheatre.net](http://www.ironstoneamphitheatre.net) Be sure to catch the last show of the 2011 Summer Concerts, Don Henley on October 1st, and enjoy an Ironstone concert at this fabulous venue!

## Workshop Offered on How to Write Your Life Story

Bud Gardner, co-author of *Chicken Soup for the Writer's Soul*, part of the New York Times' best-selling series, will conduct a workshop, How to Write Your Life Story, on Sept 24, 9am to 12:30pm at Sierra College. "This workshop is designed for nonprofessional writers of all ages," said Gardner, a long-time teacher of Writing for Publication.

Participants will learn how to organize their project, establish a writing schedule, interview beloved relatives, capture stories without getting bogged down, and much more. \$20 materials fee for the class in addition to the registration fee of \$57.

To sign up for this workshop, call the Sierra College Community Education Office at 916-781-6280 or go online to [www.sccommed.org](http://www.sccommed.org).

**First Day of Fall - September 23  
Don't waste a day of SUMMER!**

## Shenandoah Valley Ecclectetcetera

### # 27 Now, Now my Good Mantis is no Time for Making Enemies

By Michael Spinetta

Apologies to Voltaire for the title of this month's column. But I've learned from his words. Why make an enemy of the mantises that eat the caterpillars in my butterfly gardens? I shall neither make their life comfortable nor call a pied piper to take them away, but enough already.

#### Mantis is Annoying!

Why is the mantis circle of life in my yard centered on my daughter's little patio table? The mantis that jumped into her breakfast cereal – hard enough to splash us with milk – was leaping from its regular station near the "spider web bed".

That bed is in full sun, and I regularly see up to three mantises at once stealing wayward bugs from their spider captors. Sometimes though, the food chain is reversed. Now, I have seen mantises in Spinetta Family Vineyards attack and be attacked by ants all the time.

In the last month, I have watched ants carry two mantis corpses to that kiddie table and chow down. Really, I don't know why. I don't want to know why. I want them to stop and go away, but with what I've seen in nature, that's not going to happen.

#### Mantis or Humantis?

Every year there is an enormous hatch of mantises at the hilltop plantings of our Chenin Blanc / Barbera vines. This year, the hatch was delayed past the typical early summer time. The big hatch happened in early August, and I know that because when I find mantises all over me on a daily basis, it's kind of like being on another planet there.

From miniscule 1/8" long babies to 3"+ adults, the pests out there stand no chance. Mantises will stay on me when I am driving the tractor. And from that vantage, I can see one mantis egg sac per post in the vineyard – at least. Amazing.

Oh yes, one more link in the food chain is felis domesticus. My cat cornered a mantis and was punching and teasing it enough to get the mantis to scream. It put chills down my spine, so I left the two alone. Both walked away fine. A week later though, another mantis was the aggressor to me, flying through the back yard to bite a bit of flesh out of my hand. That mantis survived, too.

So, morally, I believe my cat and I are justified letting these space aliens for insects survive. And the balance of our peace counters the army of ants attacking them. Just leave my butterflies alone (ironically, that one goes out to my cat, too.)

#### Mantises on Film

I took a video about all this, too. You can also see the Monarch



A monarch butterfly vigorously drinks from a thistle in the "Fun and Yummy Chenin Blanc" plot at the Spinetta Family Vineyards in Shenandoah Valley. Photo by Michael Spinetta

that was dive bombing me while I was on my tractor. I think he liked the orange paint on the Kubota. Check it out: <http://youtu.be/45BZo5XfvF0>

#### Pest Problems?

Not enough mantises in your yard? UC IPM Pest Management Guidelines and more information about managing pests, including University of California's official guidelines for monitoring pests and using pesticides and non-pesticide alternatives for managing insect, mite, nematode, weed, and disease pests. There's also a great weed key. <http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/crops-agriculture.html> Click "Grape". [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.grapes.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/selectnewpest.grapes.html) Oh! "Black Widows": [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r302302311.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r302302311.html) You can also see when the information was last reviewed.

#### Support Local Schools

Donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. Write checks to "Amador Community Foundation"; note in the lower left, "Plymouth Elementary Improvement Fund" and send to ACF at P.O. Box 1154, Jackson, CA 95642.



A praying mantis is rescued from my darling, dear daughter Amber's breakfast cereal. Photo by Michael Spinetta

## Plantapalooza Extravaganza!

Saturday, September 17th, 9am-3pm. 6th annual outdoor education day at El Dorado Nursery & Garden. Garden and landscape experts on hand to answer all your questions! Free garden seminars, free BBQ and prizes, fruit tasting by Burchell Nursery; fantastic sales all day at El Dorado Nursery!

For more info, go online to: [www.eldoradonursery.com](http://www.eldoradonursery.com) At the El Dorado Nursery & Garden, 3931 C Durock Road, Shingle Springs, CA. Call 530-676-6555 for more information.

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