Welcome to Culture Connection, Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District's newsletter featuring the stories and people of our community.

The Year of the Pig!

According to the Chinese astrology, 2019 is a great year to make money, and a good year to invest!
2019 is going to be full of joy, a year of friendship and love for all the zodiac signs; an auspicious year because the Pig attracts success in all the spheres of life.

Grass Valley & Nevada City Celebrate Our Chinese Heritage

In 1848, the discovery of gold in California attracted miners from around the world. Among them were the Chinese who settled in camps scattered along the tributaries of the Yuba and Bear Rivers. By 1880, Chinese miners constituted 22% of California's mining population making them the largest single nationality engaged in mining. They were often only allowed to mine claims that had been previously worked by usually a white miner. And despite these adverse conditions they were very successful. Nevada County towns such as Grass Valley, Washington, North San Juan and Nevada City all had prosperous and well established Chinese Quarters. Nevada City's Chinese Quarter once extended along Commercial Street from South Pine past York Street, all the way to the top of Broad Street.

Over one hundred years the Chinese suffered through unfair persecution with laws such at the Foreign Miners Tax and Chinese Exclusion Act, yet they persevered in their new homeland, and went on to make undeniable contributions to the economy, culture and life of the frontier west.

These cultural contributions live on today through local events like the Lunar New Year celebration, the incredible work of non-profit organizations such at Community Asian Theater of the Sierra (CATS), local businesses, and people like you.

We are only beginning to scratch the surface of the great stories that make up our community. Each month we'll be highlighting a different unique aspect of our California Cultural District. We invite you to help drive this conversation, to share your stories, events, art, music, etc., by either emailing us at gvnc@gvncculturaldistrict.org about what you want to know more about or by using the hashtag #gvnculturaldistrict when posting on social media to share what's going on with you.

Thank you!
Community Spotlights

Lunar New Year

Every February, Nevada City is treated to the annual Lunar New Year Festival and Parade. Chinese ceremonial Lion Dancers, a 72’ Chinese Dragon from Eastern Ways Martial Arts of Sacramento, Grass Valley Taiko drummers, and other community entries, are some of the exciting sites.

Children can follow the dragons down Commercial Street to Beryl Robbins Plaza, retracing a section of the historic Chinese Quarter from Gold Rush days. The rest of the afternoon is devoted to great food and entertainment.

Sadly this year's parade and festivities were cancelled do to the snow. Save the date for next year's event on January 25, 2020.

(photo credit: David Wong)
Gold Mountain

Devoted to all things Chinese – part tea shop, part gift store, part museum Gold Mountain is a colorful addition to Nevada City's Broad Street. Founders Dix Sullivan and Jick Icasiano had long been interested in the influence of the Chinese around the time of the Gold Rush era. The current store, Gold Mountain is the result of their synergy with Dix focused on history and beautifully crafted items and Jick bringing superior quality teas through his Still Mountain Teas. Gold Mountain, 312 Broad Street, Nevada City, (530) 265-6686, website.

Nevada City Chinese American Cemetery

The Nevada City Chinese American Cemetery is located at the Inn Town Campground. The boundaries of the cemetery and the exact number of graves it holds are unknown, but it is situated on the historic New Mohawk Quartz Mining Claim in Nevada County.

Among all the Chinese American cemeteries which once were so numerous throughout California, the Nevada City Chinese American Cemetery is one of the few that still has a burner for paper money and other offerings; parts of its original fence and gate also remain. It is the only one with a monument to a single individual. This individual died in 1891 and must have been quite wealthy and influential, but the name on the monument is unreadable. Because of its size and elaborateness, the monument was apparently intended as a permanent
Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)

Founded in 1994, CATS is dedicated to promoting cultural diversity through quality multicultural theater, events, and workshops. Theater goers look forward to the annual CATS productions. High quality and with high production value productions have been recognized regularly for distinction by the Sacramento Area Regional Theatre Alliance (SARTA).

Like the Chinese Lunar New Year Festival, CATS supports cultural enrichment events throughout the year: workshops, cooking classes, films, concerts, and Asian storytelling to name a few.

Part of the CATS mission statement is to enrich the cultural climate of the Sierra Foothills and be a resource on Asian culture and history.
CATS presents their 25th anniversary production *M. Butterfly*
April 11 – May 4, 2019, at the historic Nevada Theater, Nevada City.

*M. Butterfly*, written by Chinese-American playwright David Henry Hwang and directed by Jeffrey Mason and Susan Mason, received the Tony Award for Best Play in 1988. It was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1989. Based loosely on the real-life romance between a French diplomat and a Chinese opera diva in the 1960s-1980s, *M. Butterfly* is a tale of love, deceit, and espionage. Although there are references to Puccini’s *Madame Butterfly*, the opera, this show is NOT the opera.

Click [here](#) to reserve your tickets now!

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**Upcoming Events**

*Save the Date*

**Sierra Poetry Festival, April 27 @ Sierra College Nevada County Campus**

Sierra Poetry Festival marks [National Poetry Month](#) from the rolling foothills of California’s Gold Country to the rugged High Sierra, bringing our rich literary community together to celebrate the spoken word and reach out to brand new audiences in fresh ways. Readings, workshops, music, an activity fair for all ages and youth performances will be preceded by a month of pre-festival pop-up poetry events. [Tickets and info here](#).

Over 1000 events are listed on the Nevada County Arts online community calendar. From concerts and theatrical productions, to gallery openings and literary talks, find out what’s happening in Grass Valley and Nevada City by clicking on the link below. Take advantage of this great free source as well to promote your upcoming events.
What is a Cultural District?

The historic twin cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City merge in the Sierra Foothills amidst pristine rivers and picturesque forests deep within California’s Gold Country. Home to the Nisenan, the area’s oldest indigenous peoples, the district is rich in cultural histories and the arts, and has an exciting emerging wine culture. The twin cities boast outstanding year-round programming in music, theatre and dance; a density of artists and makers; and a festival culture to die for.

We recently presented the Cultural Asset interactive map to Nevada County’s Tourism Committee. You can see what it's all about below!

#GVNCCulturalDistrict

Share what you love about the Cultural District by hashtagging your photos on Instagram and we'll share them in our next newsletter. Pictured below (l to r) LeeAnn Brooke Fine Art hosts Joni Mitchell photography show featuring the works of Joel Berstein and Henry Diltz along with Peter Blachley of Morrison Hotel Gallery, "Guardians of the Dance" a public art installation by artist Jenny Hale and part of California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) Art Initiative, Grass Valley with a dusting of snow by Lenkaland Photography, and Outside Inn & Folk Trails Hiking Club host their monthly history hike.