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

Did you know?
Starting in 2019, April will officially be Arts, Culture and Creativity Month in the state of California. Here in Western Nevada County this is one more opportunity to share with the world how seriously we value our arts, culture and creative scene.
You can find out more about Arts, Culture and Creativity Month at Nevada County Arts Council's new page on [Advocating for the Arts](#). For now, for those who wish to learn more about becoming an arts advocate, here are two important events for your calendar:

1. Join us for [Free Arts Advocacy Training](#) this Wednesday, **March 20**, when Nevada County Arts Council and Californians for the Arts team up at City Hall in Nevada City in preparation for California's Arts, Culture & Creativity Day in Sacramento.
2. Join us on **April 23** for [Arts, Culture & Creativity Advocacy Day](#) at the Capitol in Sacramento as part of the month long celebration of [Arts, Culture & Creativity Month](#)!

Let's connect, advocate and mobilize our efforts to advance the arts across the county and across the state!

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**State of the Arts**

California Alliances for Arts Education visits Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District!

Last month, educators, teaching artists, students and parents assembled at the
historic Miners Foundry Cultural Center in downtown Nevada City to hear key findings from the Nevada County Arts Council's survey of arts education in public schools across Western Nevada County. This survey was conducted in partnership with Nevada County Superintendent of Schools and California Alliance for Arts Education.

Why a survey? Baseline data about arts programming in schools highlights our unique and creative “flagship” programs, and helps us identify gaps in addressing standards or issues of access.

Our survey is a key component of county-wide cultural planning. It recognizes that Nevada County is unique in California as the only rural county home to two state-designated California Cultural Districts – Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District and Truckee Cultural District.

Cultural planning takes into account the support for, and re-invigoration of, arts education in our schools. In the context of planning, this survey will assist local school leaders in making decisions that will affect future generations of students, the quality of education they receive, the livability of our region, and the likelihood of investment in it in years to come.

Read the full report HERE.

Learn more about the Launch of The State of the Arts HERE.

Photo by Kial James - kialjames.com
Save the Date!

Public Launch of the Nevada County Economic Impact Study of the Arts

With special guest Randy Cohen, Vice President of Research and Policy at
During 2018 we worked with Americans for the Arts to initiate the first countywide economic impact study of the arts, surveying close to 100 entities engaged in arts programming, and well over 1000 audience members across Nevada County.

Join us during California Arts, Culture & Creativity Month at this important public launch, and learn more about how the arts create jobs, generate commerce and drive tourism in Nevada County.

Where:
Board of Supervisors Chambers
Eric Rood Government Center
950 Maidu Avenue
Nevada City, CA 95959

When:
Thursday, April 18 at 5-7pm
Doors 5pm, Launch 5:15pm, A Toast to the Arts 6:30pm

Register here!
Visibility and the Power of Public Art
by Shelly Covert

Shelly Covert is the Tribal Council Spokesperson for the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe, the Executive Director of the non-profit organization California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) and a Nevada County Arts Council Board Member.

In late 2016 CHIRP created an art initiative called Visibility Through Art to raise awareness of the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan Tribe. Visibility Through Art - Creating Community Conversations first showed in 2017 as part of Nisenan Heritage Day. CHIRP engaged local artists to create art that authentically represented the Nisenan and their rich, but all but forgotten history here in Nevada County.

A second event, Visibility Through Art - Invisible No More, was held to engage with the community. Tens of hours were spent in conversation with the artists, talking about Nisenan history, culture and people who once tended these
landscapes before the coming of the Gold Rush. Over 20 local artists participated, donating their time and art pieces back to CHIRP. Local artist Mira Clark also helped with organizing the event. The Tribe hopes that the pieces will one day hang in our own, locally based, Nisenan Cultural center.

In 2018, the artist group included Jenny Hale and her piece “I am Still Here,” featuring a Nisenan dancer superimposed over an image of 1864 Nevada City. After the Nisenan Heritage Day art event was over, the piece was displayed publicly during Victorian Christmas and Wild & Scenic Film Festival in the window of Asylum Down. Jenny saw the opportunity to raise visibility for the Tribe by creating more public art; and with the help of local business owner and friend, Eileen Jorgenson, they set out to help make it happen.

Jenny and I partnered closely to create a dynamic work that was authentic and reflective of my deep desire to show the community the beauty of Nisenan culture. Jenny’s work with “light” led to the creation of large, backlit pieces that are especially lovely at night.

Jenny felt like my paintbrush. She took our many conversations and translated them onto paper. My dance belt is featured in the piece “Guardians of the Dance” that was displayed at the Oustomah Lodge (Oddfellows Hall in Nevada City) and my image was used as the model. But when the faces were done, I could see my daughter, my aunts and my mom reflecting back at me. It was a true collaboration.

There may have been a bit of “cosmic alignment” having the art displayed in the lodge named after the original Nisenan town name ‘ustomah which sits under today’s modern-day town of Nevada City.

We continue to navigate the sensitive and real topics of cultural appropriation, privilege and erasure. Giving a non-native artist permission to paint something of such cultural importance was a constant struggle and is not to be seen as a “pass” for others to do the same. A Native artist recently asked me how my consent for this project might affect her and other Native artists who fight to keep cultural content in their own hands. And, while I don’t have an easy answer, I do see the importance of making it clear; this was a very special collaboration and it would not have worked without the Tribal Council having the final say to the details of the pieces.
The collaboration with Jenny Hale was absolutely crucial for the beauty of the work. She was open every step of the way to my many critiques, ideas, and worries. In the end, the artworks absolutely further CHIRP’s mission: to preserve, protect and perpetuate Nisenan culture. Visibility of the Nevada City Rancheria Nisenan is paramount to getting our Federal Recognition back. And, what better way to accomplish this than through the arts.

Thanks to Jenny, Eileen and Oustomah Lodge in Nevada City as-well-as NC Chamber of Commerce, Peggy Petersen of Asylum Down, and GoFundMe sponsors who assisted with the costs of installation.

Guardians of the Dance, by Jenny Hale, will be displayed in the window of Sierra Gold; the jewelry shop next to Asylum Down, 300 Broad Street, Nevada City.

UPCOMING EVENTS
Nevada County Arts Council will present its 3rd Annual Sierra Poetry Festival on April 27, 2019 at Sierra College in Grass Valley, attended by some of our most exciting local, national and international poets and performers. Opportunities to join our family of benefactors are now available.

Sierra Poetry Festival encourages both a strong local presence and international and universal themes. Each year we choose a special anchor for these themes. For 2019 our anchor point is *Breath and Shadow*, breath indicating the ebb and flow of nature and the seasons, and shadow being symbolic of our ephemeral existence and self-reflection.

Get Your Tickets

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.

#GVNCCulturalDistrict

Share what you love about the Cultural District by tagging your photos on Instagram with #GVNCCulturalDistrict and we'll share them in our next newsletter.

Featured here is @zap.zinfandel during the Foothills Celebration in downtown Grass Valley. Lorraine Gervais having a really fun night at Grass Valley Brewing Co. Artist Jill Mahanna is grateful for the rain but has to say that it does affect her painting productivity. Fawnridge Winery at the Foothills Celebration pouring at La Te Da on Mill St. last week.