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Welcome to Culture Connection

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

Stay Strong. Stay Safe. Stay Creative.

First Thursday's Creatives Meetup

TOMORROW, Thursday, **November 3rd at 5pm**, join us alongside Sierra College arts department for our monthly Creatives Meetup. This will also serve as the closing reception of the College's faculty and staff art show, held in the Lobby Gallery of the Multi-Purpose Center, or N12.

Our meetups are for everyone interested in finding a safe space among other creatives and collaborators. Come and find your balance, make new friends, share in upcoming opportunities and bump into true professionals with the help of your fellow creatives.

To find us, turn up Robert Ross Way from the roundabout up from BriarPatch. Once on Robert Ross Way, take the first right and you will be able to access the parking lot for the Multi Purpose Center. Parking is free.

We will have signs directing you inside from there, can't wait to have you join us. Wine and bites will be served!

California Creative Corps Grants for Artists!

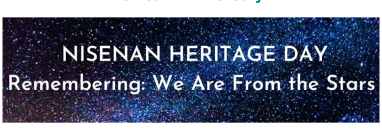
Off Center Stage at The Center for the Arts, 315 Richardson Street, Grass Valley, CA

Join us next **Tuesday, November 8th at 5:15pm** for a Listening Session following California Arts Council's announcement that Nevada County Arts Council will be responsible for re-granting close to $3.4 million in workforce development funds to artists across nineteen counties in Upstate California.

The California Creative Corps program follows over two years of global suffering as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. During these years, creative sector professionals across the US have been proposing ways to employ artists in programs similar to the Works Project Administration (WPA) and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). The launch of a statewide Creative Corps pilot program is the result of a recommendation from the Governor's Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery and is the first of its kind in the nation. All eyes are upon us!

At our Listening Session, we will be introducing what the State sees as a new method of evaluating the relative health of communities. Using the *California Healthy Places Index (HPI),* we are identifying issues that are specific to Nevada County, inviting input on solutions, and inviting artists to position themselves to create awareness around them.

Nisenan Heritage Day 13 Year Anniversary!



Saturday November 5th from 11am - 3pm join the Nevada CIty Rancheria Nisenan Tribe and Caifornia Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) for their 13th annual Nisenan Heritage Day.

Partnering once again with Sierra College NCC, the event will be held at their beautiful campus, conveniently located in the heart of town. The day will include a special activity co-facilitated by Calculus Roundtable and their "Math & Science of Indigenous People" Program. Not to be missed!

This is an all-age friendly event with activities suitable for children. Opening Welcome and introductions begin at 11 AM. Admission and parking are free.

Learn More

The Foundry Sings

The rafters of the 160 year old Stone Hall at the Miners Foundry Cultural Center willl ring on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.! Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the singing begins at 6:00 p.m. The Miners Foundry features a no host full bar and snacks available for purchase.

Rod Baggett, choral conductor at Nevada Union High School and Seven Hills Middle School, along with multi-instrumentalist and singer Jonathan Meredith, will lead voices unified in song. This unique countywide experience aims to gather people of all ages and singing levels under one roof to share in the power of song. The Foundry Sings is inspired by the popular Choir! Choir! Choir!, a weekly drop-in singing event based in Toronto, Canada, which has attracted professional musicians such as Rufus Wainwright to sing with the group.

Get Tickets! I $10

PURCHASE TICKETS

David Sedaris at The Center for the Arts

On **Thursday, November 17th, at 7:30 pm**, **Center for the Arts** will host a talk and book signing with acclaimed essayist, humorist, and short story writer **David Sedaris.**

"With sardonic wit and incisive social critiques, David Sedaris has become one of America's pre-eminent humor writers. The great skill with which he slices through cultural euphemisms and political correctness proves that Sedaris is a master of satire and one of the most observant writers addressing the human condition today."

Photo: David Sedaris

PURCHASE TICKETS

2022 Smallworks Holiday Show

The Artists' Studio in the Foothills (ASiF) is thrilled to announce its **15th Annual Smallworks in the Foothills Holiday Show!**

On **Friday, November 11th from 5 - 8pm**, ASiF invites the public to celebrate this special holiday exhibit with live jazz by Gregory S. Young. Each year the Smallworks Holiday Show brings the center's gallery walls to life with hundreds of original, one of a kind works of art... paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, mixed-media art, jewelry, pottery and sculptural, functional & wearable works of art - all small and perfect for holiday gift giving.

Many agree this is ASiF's best show of the year - combining holiday gift shopping with a fine art gallery experience that brings together and supports the local and regional artists of Nevada County.

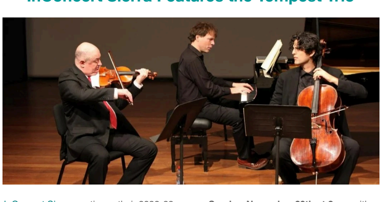
The Smallworks Holiday Show will host open gallery hours for holiday gift shopping from **11am - 2pm every Saturday & Sunday** beginning Saturday, November 12th, through Sunday, December 18th. Private appointments to visit and tour the exhibit are also available throughout the show.

And don't forget to mark your calendars for next month as **ASiF's Holiday Open House Event** on **Saturday, December 10th from 11am - 4pm.** This is an all day art event featuring special guest artists with pop up exhibits, demonstrations and family friendly holiday gift making workshops throughout the day.

ASiF is located at 940 Idaho Maryland Road, in Grass Valley.

Photo: AsIf Artists' Studio

InConcert Sierra Features the Tempest Trio



InConcert Sierra continues their 2022-23 season **Sunday, November 20th at 2 pm** with a performance by the Tempest Trio. Pre-concert forum begins at 1:15, doors open at 1pm.

Combining technical mastery, expressive depth and performance experience, pianist Alon Goldstein, violinist Ilya Kaler and one of InConcert Sierra's favorite cellists, Amit Peled, have joined forces to form one of the most exciting trios on the international scene since the legendary "Million Dollar Trio" of Arthur Rubinstein, Gregor Piatigorsky and Jascha Heifetz.

Program:
LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Piano Trio No. 4 in B-flat Major, op. 11, "Gassenhauer"

JOACHIM STUTSCHEWSKY
Hasidic Fantasy

Intermission

JOHANNES BRAHMS
Piano Trio No. 2 in C Major, op. 87

The concert will be presented at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church at 12889 Osborn Hill Road in Grass Valley (off Hwy. 174). General admission tickets are $48.

Photo: Tempest Trio

PURCHASE TICKETS

For Judy Merrick, Laughter is the Medicine

Last week we had the pleasure of sitting down to chat with Judy Merrick, Events Manager of The Stone House. The Stone House owned by Jonathan Rowe, is one of the oldest and most iconic buildings in downtown Nevada City. "This place is really special, and I know that one of my missions behind being here is to bring art and variety to our town," Judy shared. While it is currently known for hosting fabulous DJs and rocking parties Judy has big dreams of transforming the space into a venue for more of what she believes this town needs. On the one side, a new nonprofit is taking shape under the direction of Jenna Bien and the moniker Corner Stone Wellness Institute. This consists of two components, health and education. They will be hosting a variety of workshops for adults and children with the aim of increasing accessibility to wellness based educational resources within the community.

One the other side of things we'll be seeing more immersive experiences such as dance, theater, play readings, writers' workshops, and fashion shows - to name a few. "That's where my personal passion comes in, hailing from New York City, to bring more theatrical pieces. Different ways that people can express themselves and step outside of their comfort zone." You wouldn't know it to look at her, the self-described class clown, but Judy has a wealth of background in theater. She graduated from USC with a BFA in acting and then went on to study at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in London, and the American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York City. "One thing that became really clear to me over the course of the pandemic is the necessity of art. I have always felt strongly about this, but there's something about the immediacy of art, especially theater, that I think is fundamental to our wellbeing. It brings us all to the same level. Where we can have compassion for what someone else is going through. I had a great teacher that used to say… sometimes a great play is just walking by the house that you've always walked by and opening up the curtains."

A peak inside is what makes theater so important, especially in these times. It gives us an opportunity to understand each other and through this understanding we begin to cultivate compassion. "I've played lots of twisted rolls, serial kills, beggar women, whores with a heart of gold. Certain stereotypes that go back to what I was saying, what is the story behind the story on stage? One of the things you learn in acting is to never judge the roll you're taking on. And if you're going to judge, do it in the mode of the character." Judy likened this reason and methodology of performance to therapy, the same shadow and inner-child work we try to do as adults. Looking at the stories behind the way that we are. "As an actor you're having that catharsis, when it's done well and written well that happens for the audience too. That's where the value lies."

With all the work that she's done "off Broadway" — playing an integral part for renowned theater companies such as The Amoralists, End Times, Wide Eyed and Nose Dive (to name just a few), through co-directing, acting, producing, and prop-creation — one thing she loves about theater in New York is its immediacy. "Plays are being written and produced almost in real time. Coming out of the playwrights' experiences of the not so rich and glamourous, their stories straight off the streets. I'm really excited to see what theater is going to come out of the pandemic, how can we get something like that here in Nevada City?"

Before Covid Judy's partner Sky Seals was the Venue Manager during the grand re-opening and revitalization of the Stone House. Judy co-ran an improv troop called the House of Yes with Raina Blair. Now she is stewarding a new group of performers through Apologies in Advance, with performances at her brother Colter Merrick's business ElixArt and at The Stone House. "After the first variety show coming out of Covid I had someone come up to me and say, 'I was laughing, and I was in so much joy from laughing that it also made me feel sorrow, because I realized I hadn't laughed that hard since before the pandemic.' It really broke my heart." This is some of the magic and medicine that Judy weaves into her work. Holding space for laughter to be contagious, compassion to be cultivated, and for her audience and actors to be extemporaneous. It's one of the many reasons she enjoys teaching improv. It requires that everyone stay in the moment. There is no right or wrong or room for judgement (of self or others). It pushes us up against the things that make us uncomfortable and provides the opportunity to exercise our silliness, our bravery, and our wit. Being in the moment even has proven health benefits! "It can really release a lot of tension that we hold about ourselves, our thoughts, and our bodies. It can be extremely healing."

Judy currently hosts two drop-in improv classes at The Stone House. Tuesday nights from 6-7:30 for adults, and Thursday afternoons from 3:45 to 5:30 for children. "Improv makes you a better person because you're saying yes instead of saying no to something. It's about building upon someone else instead of tearing down what they're saying."

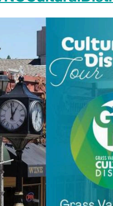
This time last year Judy took the stage as a compelling Demeter in the House of Fates theatrical retelling of Persephone's Tale. Written by Jessica Burgnon, they played one night at the Nevada Theater and sold every seat in the house. "I would say about 75% of the people there had never seen a piece of theater before. And their response was, 'oh THIS is THEATER? Let me know when the next one is!' How do we cultivate that audience? How do we create something that they are aware of and want to connect with?"

Currently she is working on another stage production, co-directing two shows of Into the Woods — one with Nevada City School of the Arts and one with an adult cast — with David Endecott-Hicks of Lyric Rose Theater Company, a local non-profit dedicated to bringing great theater and outreach through the performing arts to Nevada County and beyond. Judy met David at her first Nevada County Arts Council Creative's Meetup. "I'd been personally calling in someone talented and intelligent, with a good business sense. When he appeared in my life, everything changed. I highly recommend going to the mixer, you never know who you'll meet!" Shows for Into the Woods will take place at the Nevada Theater the first two weekends in January. She will also be hosting a fundraiser for the production the Sunday after Thanksgiving, at The Stone House.

"I think what's really great about theater collectively is the layers of vision, everyone's interpretation of the pieces — from the director, to the actors, and the audience — everyone's personal touch. That every night is giving birth to a performance, a unique mix of experiences and incidentals, when the curtain closes it will never be created again. That's not replaceable. We can't lose that." As we move forward from here, realizing that our time is precious, what are we choosing to engage with? "What do we choose to perform and how can we get the most value out of our time and that of the audience. To deliver the message that is the most important, what is the individual and the collective needing right now? How do we cultivate space for more of that?"

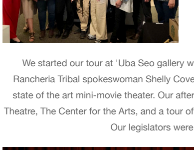
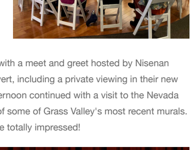
Judy — through curating events at The Stone House and her own theatrical endeavors — has something for everyone. Keep an eye out for Havana Nights, the Zion Collective feat. Simrit, Friendsgiving, Sketchy Sundays, and the 2nd annual Vintage Fashion Show. She is always open to collaborations and wants to connect with members of our community interested in edgier theater, actors and playwrights, and anyone wanting to get out of their comfort zone and play!

You can reach Judy directly at getyourimprovon@gmail.com.

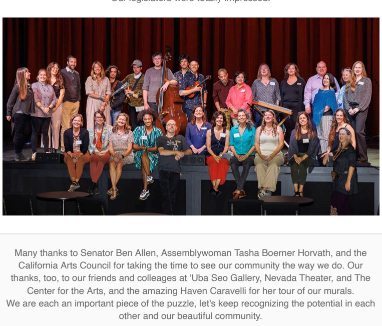


#GVNCCulturalDistrict

During October we hosted Senator Ben Allen and Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath along with the Chair of California Arts Council and senior staff members as they began their tour of California Cultural Districts. The tour provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the vital role these districts play in fostering community identity, enhancing economic development, supporting artistic expression, and amplifying art. What an honor to be their first stop along the way!

We started our tour at 'Uba Seo gallery with a meet and greet hosted by Nisenan Rancheria Tribal spokeswoman Shelly Covert, including a private viewing in their new state of the art mini-movie theater. Our afternoon continued with a visit to the Nevada Theatre, The Center for the Arts, and a tour of some of Grass Valley's most recent murals. Our legislators were totally impressed!



Many thanks to Senator Ben Allen, Assemblywoman Tasha Boerner Horvath, and the California Arts Council for taking the time to see our community the way we do. Our thanks, too, to our friends and colleages at 'Uba Seo Gallery, Nevada Theater, and The Center for the Arts, and the amazing Haven Caravelli for her tour of our murals.
We are each an important piece of the puzzle, let's keep recognizing the potential in each other and our beautiful community.

Buisness of Art Symposium

Another moment from this past month that we celebrate was our Business of Art symposium, held at the Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning on October 1st. What a successful event, with marketing and media workshops, business planning, partnerships, legal advice, and mentoring offered. Expert speakers, panelists, workshop leaders and facilitators from Grass Valley, Nevada City, and the Bay Area shared their passion and knowledge. Sherri Young, founder and Executive Director of the African-American Shakespeare Company delivered a keynote from the heart, and session leaders included Jose Di Gregorio, Miles Toland, Scott Thomas Anderson, Tahiti Peherson, Julie Baker, Jai Hanes, JB Eckl and many others!

NEVADA COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL
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WWW.NEVADACOUNTYARTS.ORG
#CultureCA #NevadaCountyArts #GVNCCulturalDistrict

The California Arts Council has selected 14 districts to serve as California's inaugural state-designated Cultural Districts. Nevada County is home to two of them - Grass Valley-Nevada City and Truckee.

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