

Home

Parade celebrates U.S. Constitution

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Thursday, September 7, 2006

By Pam Jung

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Marching presidents, antebellum belles and Civil War soldiers make for great costume watching.
Photos by Turtle Vision



Members of the Ben Ali Shrine - Masons all - from Sacramento join the parade.



Original: The Union photo/John Hart Sean Metroka
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Fred L. Sosabal

It's a big deal, historically speaking, and lots of fun to boot. It's the Constitution Day parade, which takes place Sunday, Sept. 10, in Nevada City.

This parade is the oldest and largest Constitution Day observance in Western America. It's historical because it marks the signing of the Constitution of the United States; indeed, there is even a re-enactment of that momentous event at 1:30 p.m., just before the parade, at the top of Broad Street.

The parade, which starts at 2 p.m., has taken place for the past 40 years. This year's theme is "Freedom of Speech," thus the presence of the local media.

Fred L. Sorsabal, grand master of California Masons, is the parade's grand marshal; and Nevada City's own Col. Sean Metroka, who has served in active and reserve status with the U.S. Marine Corps for 30 years and who just returned home after his second tour in Iraq, is co-grand marshal.

One of the spectacles not to miss is the Marching Presidents - folks like you and me all gussied up in period costumes with the Sacramento Youth Band (one of four marching bands) playing "Hail to the Chief." You'll see all the presidents, from the Washingtons to the present office holder (George to George, in other words); they'll be accompanied by an assortment of first ladies and Secret Service agents. In addition, more than 200 military and settler re-enactors will also march.

The Masons are a big part of the parade because the organization not only started it in 1967, it played a big part in the drafting of the Constitution in 1787, says George Harper, past master of Nevada Lodge 13, and "Of the 39 original signers, 13 were Masons." And because all Shriners are Masons, there are a lot of them in the parade, as well.

Come early to get a good seat and enjoy a free concert by the Nevada County Concert Band at 12:30 p.m. After the parade, the Ophir Prison Marching Kazoo Band performs a concert on Broad Street.

A shuttle service from the Nevada County Government Center on Highway 49 will carry visitors to Saturday's activities and the Sunday parade. Fares are \$1 all day; those in period costumes and youths under 18 ride for free.

The Sunday parade actually caps a full weekend of activities in Nevada City. The action opens at 10:30

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Event Calendar

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July 2008						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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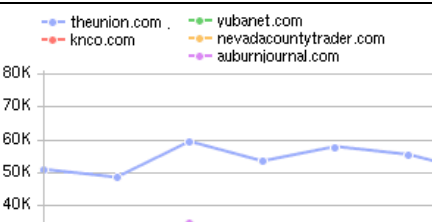
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a.m. Saturday with "Aloha Duck," the 49er Rotary Club's annual Gold Country Duck Race on the rapids of Deer Creek at the foot of Broad Street. The race features more than 10,000 toy ducks racing for a \$5000 first prize, \$1000 second prize, \$500 third prize; along with food, drink and a children's carnival. To adopt a racing duck call 272-DUCK.

Weekend action also includes colorful, smoke-filled battle re-enactments and living history by the American Civil War Association at 1 and 4 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. Sunday in Pioneer Park on Nimrod. Saturday at 7 a.m. at the Pine Grove Cemetery (west side of it), a ceremony with a salute and plaque will honor the grave of a longtime Nevada City resident and Mason John Evans who served in the 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteers from 1861-64 and survived the bloody Battle of Gettysburg. The cemetery is located off Boulder Street and Park Avenue Extension (up which some Civil War e-enactors will march up). Visitors can park in the cemetery or along adjacent streets.

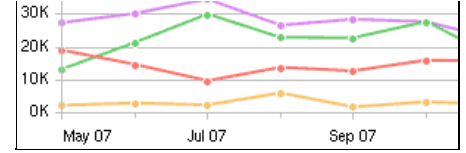
For a complete weekend schedule of events contact the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce at 265-2692 (or 1-800-655-NJOY) or at www.nevadacitychamber.com.

(box)

Most of the photos used in this cover story are by Martin Butler, a Nevada City performance photographer extraordinaire, who with his partner Linda Lamb owns Turtle Vision. Butler loves to attend community performances, unobtrusively taking many pictures which he then posts on the pair's Web site www.theturtlesvision.com. He claims to have 6,500 images posted so far.

In addition to being a creative photographer and a good business person, Butler is also generous to artists and quite a philosopher. He says before deciding what event to shoot he asks the question "How does it affect the human experience?" If it's to the positive side of the ledger and brings a smile to the face, he'll be there.

More about Turtle Vision will be on The Union's Web site at <http://apps.theunion.com/photos/butler090806> Friday (Sept. 8).



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