



NEWS RELEASE

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Bret Harte, Mark Twain and the Annual Firemen's Muster return to Columbia State Historic Park

Join us on Sunday, March 27th at Columbia State Historic Park to celebrate the discovery of gold 161 years ago by the Hildreth party and the **Birthdays of the historic town of Columbia**. Gather in the middle of town at noon for a speech, cake, punch, and reenactments as well as docents in costume throughout town. Stop by the museum for the full schedule of the day.

In April sign up for the **32nd Annual Old Mill Run**, Saturday, April 16th-- 10K Run, 2-Mile Run/Walk, Kids Mini Mile, Kids Mile. Events begin at 9 a.m., and benefit the Tuolumne County Community Christmas Eve Dinner. Contact Cathie Peacock for more information at 209-586-4802. On Sunday, April 24th bring the family out to enjoy **Columbia's Victorian Easter Celebration**, dress up in your Victorian Easter finery and march in the Easter Parade. Registration begins at 11:00 am, and the parade is at 12:30. Children will have the opportunity to compete for prizes in Columbia's popular Easter Egg Hunts. The Small Fry Egg Search at noon is for ages 3 to 5; and after the Easter Parade, the Junior Egg Poachers (ages 6 to 8) will try their luck at 1 pm, and finally the Great Egg Scramblers (ages 9 to 12) at 1:30 pm. Find the golden egg and win a prize! These free events are sponsored by the Columbia Chamber of Commerce. Call 209-536-1672 or visit www.columbiacalifornia.com. On Saturday, April 30th and Sunday, May 1 enjoy the **52nd Annual Firemen's Muster**, volunteer fire crews from around the western United States will take part in the competition, presented by Columbia Volunteer Fire Department Engine Co. No. 1. The muster parade begins at 10 a.m. Saturday on Main Street in Columbia. Other events include hose cart races, bucket brigade, skills competition, hand pumper contests and a Saturday dance. Admission is free. Call 209-532-8718 (Brendan Simunaci) or 209-532-3772 (Randall Nickley) for more information.

On Saturdays, April 9th and 23rd, and Sunday, April 17th the historic City Hotel Restaurant presents **Dinner Performances by well known authors and humorists Bret Harte and Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as "Mark Twain"**, featuring Pat Kaunert as Mark Twain and Michael Needs as Bret Harte. They will deliver a lecture on their adventures out West, including mining in the Mother Lode, on the Nevada Comstock, a sojourn in the Sierra Nevada, and fishing at Lake Tahoe, Big Trouble in San Francisco, spinning yarns at Jack Ass Hill in Tuolumne County, The Genuine Mexican Plug, The Jumping Frog, of Calaveras, The Luck of Roaring Camp, and The Outcast of Poker Flat. The sumptuous four course meal includes a choice from three entree--poached pacific salmon, roasted duck, or grilled flat iron steak; a fresh garden salad of organic greens, spice candied walnuts, stilton cheese and quince vinaigrette; cream of carrot ginger soup;

and a delectable dessert of maple pots de creme, topped with roasted shaved almond praline. Cost per person is \$55 including tax and tip. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., the trouble begins at 6:00. Call 209-532-1479 for reservations. For room reservations at the historic City or Fallon Hotels or Columbia Cottages call Reserve America at 800-444-7275 or visit www.cityhotel.com.

Regularly scheduled programs in the park include tours of the town at 11:00am on Saturdays and Sundays. Gold Rush Days is presented on the second Saturday of each month from 1-4pm. Docents in gold rush attire will be stationed throughout town in several different buildings and on the street to converse with visitors about gold rush life.

Columbia State Historic Park is open daily from 10-5 p.m. and offers a unique blend of museums, displays, town tours, live theater, and shops. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on the streets so families can explore the historic setting in safety and comfort. A visit to the City Hotel or Fallon Hotel is a glimpse into one of the most fascinating periods of America's history, as well as one of California's finest restorations. Columbia is central to various Mother Lode and Sierra attractions such as Yosemite National Park, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, and Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

For more information on any of the above, please contact the park office at (209) 588-9128 or www.parks.ca.gov/columbia.

Columbia State Historic Park, located in Tuolumne County, is designated as a National Historic Landmark District, and has been preserved to tell the story of the towns which arose during the California Gold Rush to serve the needs of miners. California State Parks has restored and continues to preserve over 30 of the original brick buildings along the town's Main Street.

Columbia State Historic Park annually hosts over 400,000 visitors, presents school programs for over 10,000 4th graders, and is a major tourist destination in Tuolumne County. Its many historic-style stores and restaurants are run by over 20 Concessionaires whose businesses, along with park staff and volunteers, help recreate the experience of the California Gold Rush for visitors from around the world.