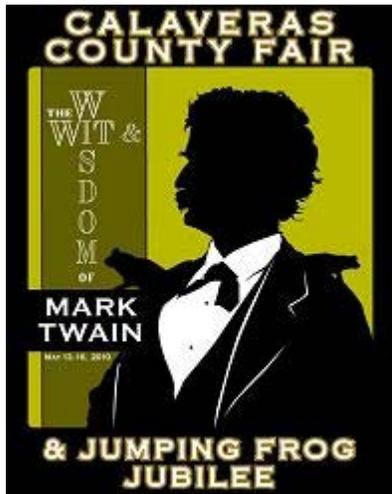


MARK TWAIN LIARS CONTEST



WHO: Working journalists of Calaveras County

WHAT: A contest to produce convincing journalistic-style tall tales in honor of Mark Twain

WHEN: 7 p.m. May 13

WHERE: Frogtown

WHY: Because deception can be fun and profitable, as illustrated in Twain's famous story about the man who gambled on jumping frogs

HOW: Local news professionals will present reports on newsworthy events that supposedly happened before 1900 in Calaveras County. Only one of the stories presented will be true. A live audience will vote on which story appears to be the true one.

PRIZES: All audience members who correctly choose the true news story from among the tall tales will be entered in a drawing for the \$100 prize. There will also be a \$100 prize for the news professional who writes the most convincing untrue news story as determined by the votes cast and \$100 for the news professional who presents the story that receives the most votes. **NOTE:** Writers will not present their own stories and will not know in advance which story is the true one.

THE RULES:

THE WRITING CONTEST:

- 1) Journalists who live or work in Calaveras County are urged to enter the contest. The story should be written in contemporary broadcast style, between 90 seconds and two minutes long. That's generally 350 words or less. Everyone is urged to enter at least one story. You can enter more. The contest committee will select the more limited number to be used the day of the live contest.
- 2) The story should be set in Calaveras County before 1900. These are tall tales, so they are based on reality but in some way exaggerated. Make it amusing. Make it convincing. But also make it a bit lurid, or preposterous. You may want to look at some historic newspapers in the county archives to get a sense of material. Think of consumer lawsuits against the Murrietta Pickling Co., a poetry critic foiling a Black Bart stage robbery, Sheriff Ben Thorn issuing trading cards to introduce children to his deputies, or mine owner William Gwin having his senate re-election bid frustrated when Performing Animal Temperance League activists protest that he shot a donkey during a duel with Congressman Joseph McCorkle. Alternatively, the story could have Gwin losing the National Musket Association vote because he missed McCorkle. Anyway, you get the idea ... take history and bend it a little or a lot.
- 3) Make the story easy to read aloud. Type it double spaced, preferably in a Word file. Put your name, email and phone number at the top. Read it aloud several times. Time it. Make sure it is under two minutes.
- 4) Email your entry no later than 5 p.m. April 20 to the Mark Twain Tall Tales contest committee, care of Laurie Giannini, laurie@frogtown.org

THE TALL TALE TELLING CONTEST

- 1) Journalists who live or work in Calaveras County and who enter the writing contest are entered in the tall tale telling contest.
- 2) The contest committee will select the script you will present. You won't know whether your story is the true one. The Contest Committee may have edited scripts for length or style. It is up to you to make the presentation convincing.
- 3) Contestants must be available the afternoon of May 6th for a rehearsal for the contest.
- 4) Contestants must be on hand at 7 p.m. May 13 to participate.
- 5) The Junior Fair Board will assist with collecting the votes of audience members. Everyone watching the contest will be issued one ballot listing the stories. At the end of the presentations, the ballots will be collected and sorted into boxes and counted. Those ballots that reflect the one true story will be used for the prize drawing for the \$100 audience prize.
- 6) The host will then announce the top most deceptive tall tales and will award prizes to the author of the top tale and to the presenter of the top tale.