

Sports



DAVID KAREY / COURTESY SONOMA RACEWAY

Sonoma Raceway hosts 'Drags and Drift,' which will put on a holiday show.

St. Patrick's Day at the raceway

Expect drag racing, a car show and green beer

By REBECCA WOLFF
ARGUS-COURIER STAFF

Sonoma Raceway is hosting a St. Patrick's Day celebration complete with a car show, food and green beer on tap.

The Sonoma Drags & Drift Shamrock Show & Shine will take place on Wednesday, March 15, at 4 p.m.

The car show is open to everyone, with proceeds from the entries going to Speedway Children's Charities, the charitable arm of Sonoma Raceway.

Sonoma Drags & Drift gives drivers a safe, legal, and controlled environment to drag race and drift their cars, away from city streets. During the events, Sonoma Raceway opens its world-famous quarter mile dragstrip to any vehicle that passes a basic tech and safety inspection. High School students can compete against uniformed police officers in their patrol cars in the "Top the Cops" class.

From 4 to 7 p.m., the car show will be staged for spectators to enjoy. Those wishing to enter can choose from paddock

showcase spaces for \$25 and covered premium spots for \$50. Event spectators are \$20 and kids 12 and under are admitted for free.

Drag racing runs from 4:30 to 10 p.m., and the cost is \$35 to race with online pre-registration, or \$40 at the gate. Current high school students with ID pay only \$20.

Ride-along passes for drifting can be purchased for \$10 by those 18 and older with valid state-issued photo ID. Spectators ages 16 and 17 wishing to ride along must present a notarized parental consent waiver, available online. Once on file the waiver is valid throughout the year.

Sonoma Drift events are limited to 70 participants per week and, due to their popularity, usually sell out. Organized for ranges in skill from experienced enthusiast to beginner, single or tandem drifting, there is a course for every skill level to gain experience, hone skills and have a great time on track. Cost with advance online registration is \$60, \$70 at the gate if there are still slots available.

To register and find more information about the event, visit the raceway's website at sonoma-raceway.com.

Trip to Gold Rush discovery site engages Prestwood students

They enjoyed a variety of adventurous activities — and a light snowfall

By DANIEL JOHNSON
INDEX-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Prestwood Elementary School fourth-graders were already excited about participating in an overnight trip to the spot where gold was discovered in California. And once they began to feel snow falling on their faces when they arrived, their enthusiasm overflowed.

"One day, it was hailing, with some small snowflakes," said Katie Grimes, a fourth-grade teacher at Prestwood who accompanied students and parents on the trip. "A lot of the students had never seen snowfall from the sky."

This captured the spirit of the trip, which were joined by students from Nichole Roberts' fourth-grade class at Prestwood as they participated in the resort's Coloma Outdoor Discovery School, situated on the banks of the South Fork American River, northwest of Placerville. In all, 39 students participated in the trip, which took place on Feb. 21 and 22.

"I also liked seeing new things I haven't seen before, like big mountains, and being able to hike up the mountain," student Sofia Gaytan-Quackenbush said. "I've never been in a cabin before, and that was really fun."

On the field trip, students visited Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, across from the resort. A worker constructing Sutter's Mill, James W. Marshall, discovered gold there in 1848, sparking the California Gold Rush. The park contains a replica of the mill.

"Students were surprised that the real Sutter's Mill no longer exists, and many were shocked that it had been run by only four people," Roberts said.

Many of the students became even more engaged as they panned for glittering gold.

"First, you dip in the water and collect sand, and then you shake it 10 times, like an earthquake," student Ethan Strand said. "Then you swirl it and make a tsunami, and after that you keep repeating it over and over until you find gold. It was fun."

Ethan did indeed find a bit of gold, as did some other students, including Emmet Margrieter.

"The thing I liked the most about the trip probably was the gold panning, because I was able to find gold," he said. "And we



SUBMITTED

Prestwood Elementary School fourth graders visit a former gold mining site while participating in the Coloma Outdoor Discovery School program, offered by Coloma Resort, on Feb. 21 and 22.



SUBMITTED

Fourth graders from Prestwood Elementary School in Sonoma learn how to build a shelter during their field trip to Coloma Resort on Feb. 21 and 22.

learned about all the different machines they used in the Gold Rush. The tool they used for hydraulic mining was the most interesting: It's like a machine that shoots water at the rocks."

Students also heard a presentation from a local Native American speaker about the Gold Rush's impact on their community and the Coloma Valley environment.

"Through traditional stories, he reminded students that we need to take care of our environment," Grimes said. "He also showed them traditional Native American dress, sang traditional songs and talked about the traditional dance that they can still take part in today."

During a dinner, one student came up to Grimes, gave her a hug and thanked her for the trip.

"I was expecting it to be really boring and I was nervous about being away from home, but I am having a lot of fun and I wish I could stay longer," the student said.

The trip was made possible

through a \$2,000 Classroom Grant from the Sonoma Valley Education Foundation.

Roberts said that the teachers applied for the grant to help reduce the cost for Prestwood families.

"Outdoor education can be very expensive," she said. "Our trip to Coloma can be anywhere from \$200 to \$300 per student."

Classroom grants for field trip have been in exceptionally high demand.

"Since August, we have approved 71 Classroom Grant requests — and over one-third of them have been for field trips," said Gail Chadwin, the foundation's director of development. "We hear from teachers that many local families cannot afford to pay for these field trips out of pocket."

In August, Sonoma Valley Education Foundation had \$50,000 available to fund Classroom Grants for teachers in the 2022-23 academic year.

"But due to overwhelming demand from local teachers and rising costs of materials and field trips due to inflation, our entire Classroom Grants budget has already been spent — and we still have teachers asking for help," Chadwin said. "Sonoma Valley Education Foundation is raising funds to help make more grants available so that no teachers' requests will be denied due to a lack of funds. We are grateful to our generous community for continuing to step up and help our teachers and students."

Reach the reporter, Dan Johnson, at daniel.johnson@sonomanews.com.

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Salmon season is in jeopardy

It is a little too early to know for sure, but early reports of drastically lower salmon spawning runs on the Sacramento and Klamath River systems last year could mean a shortened salmon fishing season for both commercial and recreational anglers, even possibly no 2023 season at all.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) held its annual information meeting Wednesday, at which the estimates for the fall-run Chinook salmon on the Sacramento River were said to be way below previous estimates. The details were not available to me as we went to press this week, but I will try to include them in next week's column.

In any case, those recommendations will advance to the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), which meets later this month and in April. From there, it will be up to the CDFW to set the final salmon regulations for this year.



The Meandering Angler
Bill Lynch

Environmentalists and commercial and recreational fishing groups also pointed out that Gov. Gavin Newsom's action last month to suspend two state environmental laws to benefit Central Valley farmers will make the salmon situation worse.

"The flow standard they relaxed is probably the most important regulation we have," said Gary Bobker, program director at The Bay Institute. He said the rule is aimed at simulating natural runoff in rivers, which is critical for native fish to reproduce and thrive.

San Francisco Baykeeper Science Director Jon

Rosenfield said this is the third year in a row, and the sixth time in 10 years, that the state has waived its rules that set basic flow standards in the Delta. The previous waivers were issued because of severe drought conditions, while the new waiver was triggered by the opposite: high-volume storm conditions.

"The governor is taking water from winter-run Chinook salmon, which just experienced their worst incubation season ever," Rosenfield said. "The few that remain could be given a better chance of surviving to the ocean. Instead, they're going to get worse conditions."

Water that flows through the Delta and into San Francisco Bay helps young salmon complete their seaward migrations through the estuary, and it improves the estuary's salinity conditions to the benefit of many species. This year's higher flow helps, but most experts agree it won't be nearly enough for the salmon to

recover.

The good news is that the recent rains have done a lot to improve sturgeon fishing in San Francisco Bay says Keith Fraser at Loch Lomond Bait Shop in San Rafael. Keith says when the weather allows it, anglers are getting out on the northern part of the bay near The Pump House and finding lots of salmon and striped bass. He also said sturgeon and bass action is excellent for anglers fishing from shore near China Camp State Park and McNear Park Pier in Marin County. Keith has plenty of live bait. Call him at 415-456-0321 for more information.

Tom Stienstra, the San Francisco Chronicle's outdoor columnist emeritus, now retired and living near McCloud, California, is a cancer survivor, and it wasn't just any cancer. It included numerous tumors, including several on his brain. His incredible story in the S.F. Chronicle recently about his brushes with death is well-worth downloading and reading.