

The Jumping Frog Jubilee of 1865

It was the summer of 1865, and Calaveras County was a booming mining frontier. Roads were rough and travel was slow, so miners rarely ventured far for entertainment. It was in this lively setting that Mark Twain wrote his first published work, *"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,"* the story of a gambler named Jim Smiley.

Jim Smiley, a miner and gambler, often paraded through the streets of Angels Camp carrying a basket under his arm, proudly boasting about the extraordinary jumping ability of his prized frog. The gambling houses, taverns, and their proprietors were all well acquainted with Jim's stories.

Around this time, two slick visitors from New York arrived in town just ahead of an arrest warrant. Making their rounds through the gambling halls, they soon encountered Jim Smiley and his famous frog. The New Yorkers teased and challenged Smiley until a contest—and a wager—was arranged.

Easily distracted, Jim left his prized frog, Dan'l Webster, in the care of the strangers. While Jim was away, the slickers secretly filled the frog with buckshot. When the contest began, the city slicker's frog easily out-jumped poor Dan'l Webster, and Jim Smiley lost \$40 in gold.

Mark Twain, an up-and-coming American humorist who lived just across the Stanislaus River at Jackass Hill, was a frequent visitor to the Calaveras County mining camps.

Local legend has it that he first heard this tall tale from Ross Coon, proprietor of the historic Angels Hotel. Whatever the inspiration, Twain's story sparked a tradition that lives on today as the Calaveras County Fair & Jumping Frog Jubilee.

"The most outrageous lies that can be invented will find believers if a man only tells them with all his might."

— Mark Twain

**SET A NEW WORLD RECORD
YOU CAN WIN \$20,000!**



**Calaveras County Fair &
Jumping Frog Jubilee
May 14-17, 2026
Frogtown.org**

FUN JUMP - Rosie the Ribiter Stage

\$5 Entry Fee per Jump

Kids \$2 per Jump on Thursday Fun Jump

Thursday, May 14

Kids 12 and under jump for \$2

10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Entry Booth Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. - FUN JUMP

1:30 to 2 p.m. - *Frog Break*

Friday, May 15

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - FUN JUMP

1:30 to 2 p.m. - *Frog Break*

Saturday, May 16

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - FUN JUMP

1:30 to 2 p.m. - *Frog Break*

Sunday, May 17

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - FUN JUMP

Watch up close or from a distance - as frogs prepare to compete!

Visit the Frog Spa - Under the Main Stage to see how our frogs are pampered. Our volunteers provide a hands-on experience you'll really enjoy.

Check Out the Frog Expo Area - To the right of the Main Stage. It's the frog warm-up zone for our frog teams.

Get Ready to Jump!

Jump for fun or in competition.

Just \$5 a frog. Kids from 18 months to 80 years have jumped.

Rules of The Jump

Serious frog jockeys bring their own competitors, but anyone can rent a frog to join the fun.

Frogs must be 4 inches from nose to rear end and fit on an 8 inch pad.

Frogs placed on the pad are coaxed to leap three times and that distance is recorded.

The 50 longest jumpers qualify for the Grand Finals. Awards are presented to the three longest leapers with a First Prize of \$1,000.

\$20,000 If You Set a New World's Record

\$20,000 For the longest jump breaking the World's Record of 21 feet, 5 ¾ inches in the Grand Finals.

All the Fair Information

Visit www.frogtown.org, or call 209-736-2561.

Visit Angels Camp

See the outstanding **Jumping Frog Jubilee Exhibition** at the Angels Camp Museum and the sidewalk **Hop of Fame** plaques honoring the winning frog and jockey for every Frog Jump!

COMPETITIVE JUMP - Main Stage

\$5 Entry Fee per Jump

Kids \$2 per Jump on Thursday Fun Jump

Thursday, May 14

Kids 12 and under jump for \$2

10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - FUN JUMP

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Competitive Jumping

Friday, May 15

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. -- Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Competitive Jumping

Saturday, May 16

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Competitive Jumping

Sunday, May 17

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Entry Booth Open 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Competitive Jumping

2 p.m. - Legends of the Pioneers - Main Stage
"Stories and songs from movie cowboys and real-life cowboys."

3 p.m. - INTERNATIONAL FROG JUMP GRAND FINALS

The 50 longest jumpers compete for awards, cash, and \$20,000 if they break the World's Record!

