

- ▼ **No CONCESSIONS**  
*Calistoga Athletic Boosters will no longer fundraise at the races*  
**Below**
- ◀ **A NEW FULL-TIMER**  
*Jaime Orozco promoted to full-time with Calistoga Fire Dept.*  
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*The Wildcats return a young set of players who are ready to go*  
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PHOTO BY KIM BELTRAN

## Fair board members apologize for miscommunication

■ **Plan to respond to letters criticizing operations, calling for fair manager to be fired**

**By Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

It has been a rough couple of years for the Napa County Fair Association Board of Directors and its CEO Carlene Moore. Revenues from the fairgrounds’ various

enterprises have barely covered annual expenses, much less long overdue maintenance issues with the 65-acre property and its facilities. While the Calistoga City Council and the Napa County Board of Supervisors have been working for seven months to hammer out a new management structure for the operation, the patience of local residents who see their fairgrounds declining has grown thin. At a meeting of the Fair board last

Thursday, weeks of public criticism in the form of letters to the board and local newspapers came to head during the public comment period. The many claims of mismanagement and neglect leveled at fair management were met at first by a somewhat defensive group of fair trustees, led by chair Anne Steinhauer. But when the subject of formally responding to the letters came up later on the agenda, and more community members voiced their concerns that the fairgrounds could be lost,

Steinhauer took a less bureaucratic approach in order to show that she and her colleagues on the board genuinely want to work with the community to resolve issues hampering the success of the fair, the golf course and the facility in general. “We’re all here because we love the Calistoga fairgrounds and we want to see it prosper,” Steinhauer told those in attendance. “And you’re absolutely right. We

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## Students return to classrooms

**By Elise Guillot**  
Tribune Reporter

Some 850 Calistoga kids last week headed back to classes on three campuses, welcomed by several new faces – including a new district superintendent – but also by many returning staff members as well. At Calistoga Elementary School on Thursday, youngsters and parents, hand-in-hand, made their way to their classrooms, excited to meet their teachers and see old friends. Diana Romero, a nine-year-old starting her fourth-grade year, said she felt “nervous about making new friends” but was also excited about starting “new things.” “Everyone is happy here,” said CES vice principal George Valenzuela. “People want to be here and they want to stay here.” First-year sixth-grade math teacher Karla Ferrando was also excited about the new year. “My goal is to teach that math is not just about numbers,

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PHOTOS BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER



*Clockwise from above, a group of parents take a final look at their children attending Mrs. Castle’s third grade class on the first day of school at Calistoga Elementary; superintendent Erin Smith-Hagberg greets students and parents on the first day of school; a mom walks her daughters to their classrooms.*

## Trustees asked to reinstate swim team

■ **In first meet of new school year, district board also hears update on riverbank repair at elementary**

**By Elise Guillot**  
Tribune Reporter

In their first meeting of the school year with a new superintendent at the helm, Calistoga school trustees heard a plea for a high school swim team and got an update on a major riverbank repair at the elementary school. Calistoga parent Brian Fennen, a longtime

community pool advocate and school volunteer, spoke for several people in the audience – including a student swimmer – when he told trustees that the junior/senior high school wants to reinstate its swim team that was cancelled last spring. According to Fennen, at the end of the last school year some 30 students had expressed interest in participating on a swim team. Once they heard that would involve being bussed to St. Helena to swim with that city’s Waves program, most withdrew. Given the intense effort and success in getting the Calistoga Community Pool built, he said, the kids want to swim close to home and not

have to spend time travelling to St. Helena for practice. The district cancelled both swimming and cross-country last spring because of funding, according to Fennen, and saw bussing swimmers to St. Helena as a way to save money. For the past five years, CJSHS has had a swim team, which, until last year when it had dwindled to two members, practiced at the Calistoga pool. Prior to last year, the team averaged about 10 students. There are five new freshmen at the high school that want to swim on a district swim

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## Merchants propose new resort

**By Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

The city formally entered negotiations Tuesday night with the owners of the former gliderport property to develop a public plaza, of sorts, that includes restaurants, meeting rooms, a 170-room hotel and 22 apartments, among other things. Through the creation of a developer agreement, the John and Pat Merchant family, through two limited liability corporations, would construct the Hotel Veranda project in exchange for considerations to the city, such as “impact” fees for infrastructure improvements and workforce housing. “In my opinion, this proposal has merit and warrants further discussion,” City Councilman Jim Barnes said Tuesday. “It seems to me this would be the final piece of

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## Race promoter, sports boosters go separate ways

**By Granville Fox**  
Tribune Intern

After decades of raising money to support local sports teams by selling beer and food during races at the Napa County Fairgrounds, the Calistoga Wildcat Athletic Boosters are giving up the concession stand job and focusing on different activities to fund youth sports. The decision came about after the Boosters could not get enough volunteers to work the concession stands at the July 29 AMA Flat Track Motorcycle race at Calistoga Speedway.

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