

Calistoga Tribune

Independently owned and published in Calistoga for Calistogans since 2002

50¢



- ◀ **ANOTHER MOTHER?**
DNA test reveals secret young Calistoga woman wasn't expecting
Below
- ▶ **NEW GRAND JURY**
Two Calistoga residents named to 2018-19 watchdog panel **2**
- ▶ **PLENTY TO DO**
Check this week's Calendar for fun, educational events **9**

Smoke from several northern California wildfires has settled over Calistoga, causing dramatic sun-scapes like this one on the evening of July 27. Some 13,000 firefighters state-wide are battling 16 major fires that have scorched more than 320,000 acres and damaged or destroyed more than 1,600 structures. Nearly 17,000 homes continue to be threatened and 32,000 residents have been evacuated.

PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER



Smoky skies grim reminder of wildfire threat

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Calistoga residents as well as those throughout the region began keeping a wary eye on the horizon – and the news – this past week after wildfires to the north claimed lives, destroyed homes and spawned mass evacuations in several counties.

A massive smoke plume from a raging fire that began July 23 near Redding

in Shasta County clouded skies for hundreds of miles, including Calistoga, where it sparked fear and triggered memories of the deadly October 2017 Tubbs Fire. That blaze, the cause of which remains under investigation, began the evening of Oct. 8 three miles north of the city limits. It burned nearly 37,000 acres in Napa and Sonoma counties, destroyed 5,636 structures and killed 22 people. As of Aug. 1, according

to Cal Fire, it is ranked as the most destructive wildfire in the state's history.

It's understandable that many Calistoga residents – all of whom were forced to evacuate the city for five days due to the Tubbs fire – might be feeling nervous or uneasy, Calistoga firefighter Ryan Smithers said Wednesday. However, he noted that

See **FIRES** on page 3

Senior Apartments finally opening doors to tenants

■ August rent has been waived for new residents, who were left in housing limbo by series of delays

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

For Nora Hiller, the journey home has been a long and winding road.

Forced to move after becoming ill and losing her job, the nearest place she could afford was in Williams, 76 miles northeast of Calistoga on Highway 5 in Colusa County.

It wasn't a nice place, she said of the run-down apartment she rented in a complex where sketchy people came and went and she didn't feel safe.

Tomorrow, Hiller, along with 28 other "senior" residents, will move into brand new digs at the Calistoga Senior Apartments on lower Washington Street. The 30-unit complex, an affordable housing project developed through a partnership between the city and the Corporation for Better Housing, was originally slated to open at the end of March. Then the end of April. Then June.

According to Bill Perryman of Domus Management Company, which will oversee

See **APARTMENTS** on page 11

Don Williams decides to join race for seat on City Council

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Retired teacher and wood floor installer Donald Williams filed papers this week to run for a seat on the Calistoga City Council.

The terms of Gary Kraus and Jim Barnes expire this year, as does the mayoral term of Chris Canning.

Barnes is seeking re-election and has filed his paperwork with the city clerk's office.

According to city clerk Kathy Flamson, Kraus has taken out the paperwork necessary to run but has yet to return it for an official filing. Canning has

See **ELECTION** on page 6



Calistoga resident Donald Williams has filed paperwork to run for a seat on the Calistoga City Council.

First day of classes for new school year to start Aug. 16

By Claudia Aceves
Tribune Reporter

The first day of classes in the Calistoga Joint Unified School District is Aug. 16, and faculty and staff at both campuses are gearing up to prepare classrooms and finalize coursework for the students' arrival.

Calistoga Junior Senior High School's registration day, where students will receive their class

schedules, is set for Aug. 8. Student orientation will follow on Aug. 9.

CJSJS will welcome new math teachers Sara Raike and Rachel Wittenberg, and English language arts teacher Jessica Musser.

New teachers at Calistoga Elementary School are Lindsey McFarland, Lauren Kurtz, Marc Morita, Bailey Tucker and Paulina

See **SCHOOL** on page 7

DNA test leads Calistoga woman to 'mother' she never knew existed

By Claudia Aceves
Tribune Reporter

Calistoga resident Antonia Picardi read the disclaimer on the DNA test she took last August that warned "you may learn information about yourself that you do not anticipate" but she thought nothing of it.

Twenty-two years old at the time, her curiosity about genetics testing had been piqued by a professor she had while working toward a zoology degree at Humboldt State University.

As far as Antonia knew, she was about 50 percent Scandinavian on her mother, Allene Hansen-Picardi's side, and 50 percent Italian on her father's side. John Picardi died when Antonia was five. She wanted to know what a DNA test might reveal about her.

The 2012 Calistoga High School graduate purchased a 23andMe DNA testing kit and followed the directions, send-

See **DNA** page 5



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTONIA PICARDI

Antonia Picardi, left, poses with Melissa Rost, who turned out to be the egg donor Picardi's parents, Allene and John, chose 23 years ago in order to have another child. The two women learned about each other through 23andMe DNA testing.