

Feb. 26, 2021

TREASURES LOST ▼

Community mourns passing of  
Gene Duffy Jr., Dick Loomis

BELOW



## Elementary school students return to campus

*Kindergarten teacher Melanie Rivas leads students into her classroom Tuesday morning on the campus of Calistoga Elementary School. Calistoga Joint Unified primary students were allowed to return this week to part-time, in-person classes.*



PHOTO BY  
CLARK JAMES MISHLER

### COVID-19 numbers, state-approved plan allows for in-person learning

**By Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

A large segment of the Calistoga Joint Unified School District's student population went back to the classroom this week for the first time since last April.

Calistoga Elementary School was given the green light to have students on campus as part of a "hybrid" plan that combines distance and in-person learning.

The move was made possible be-

cause the county's seven-day average for new daily cases per 100,000 people had, last week, dropped to less than 25 – a state requirement for reopening primary schools. On Tuesday, that seven-day average was down to 10.6, according to Napa County Public Health officer Dr. Karen Relucio. (That number was adjusted to 6.8 by state officials because of high testing rates, she noted.)

"It was heartwarming to observe the mutual excitement of students,

staff, and families as kids arrived on the Calistoga Elementary School campus this week," superintendent Erin Smith-Hagberg said. "Our staff is to be credited for all of the planning that went into preparing for the reopening day and reports were that all went smoothly at the site."

The district also had to meet the additional requirements of having its COVID-19 safety plan approved by Napa County Public Health as

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### Community partnerships translate to large mental health safety net for Calistoga Joint Unified students

**By Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

For some, it's simply a matter of receiving one-on-one adult attention and being heard.

For others, even young kindergartners, it's anxiety caused by different fears: Will I or someone I love get COVID-19 and die? What will happen to me now that my parents are divorcing? I can't keep up with school because I have to work and help support my family.

For yet other students enrolled in Calistoga Joint Unified School District's mental health therapy program, emotional, behavioral and academic problems can stem from a variety of causes. It could be an undiagnosed condition such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; the trauma of physical, mental or sexual abuse, or some other life-altering event.

"I wish that something like this program existed when I went to school here," said Irene Peña, a Calistoga resident and licensed therapist who immigrated here with her family from Mexico in 1995. She was nine years old.

"It can be a difficult transition, coming from a different country, a different culture and not knowing anyone or speaking the language," she said. "I work with a lot of kids dealing with the same issues who have just arrived from either Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador. Some of these kids have experienced a lot of trauma either because of what they have endured in their home country or on their journey to get here," she added. "They've left everything and everyone they know behind, and for those seeking asylum, it's

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### With COVID cases on the decline, Napa County may move to red tier March 10

**By Pat Hampton**  
Tribune Publisher

With the number of daily COVID-19 cases plummeting and vaccinations on the rise, Napa County could drop into the red tier by March 10 which will allow some indoor dining, as well as the reopening of hair and nail salons, places of worship, indoor fitness centers and others.

"It looks like our cases are going down," Dr. Karen Relucio, public health officer for Napa county, told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday. "We're averaging 15 new cases a day. That's a big departure from six weeks ago when we had 100 cases a day."

Healthcare workers have administered 42,997 vaccinations in Napa County as of this week, she said. To vaccinate all county residents, her department would require 327,000 doses. So far 13% of the county population has received both injections.

Based on availability, Phase 1A vaccines are targeted at

healthcare workers and residents of long term care facilities; Phase 1B for agriculture and food workers, educational and childcare workers and emergency services personnel. Beginning March 15, people age 16-64 who are deemed to be at the very highest risk for morbidity and mortality from Covid-19 will be eligible for vaccination. Relucio said to vaccinate everyone described in the first two phases her department would need 98,000 doses but has received less than half that amount.

Relucio said it has been almost a month since Gov. Gavin Newsom lifted the regional stay-at-home order that reopened outdoor dining and indoor personal services such as haircuts. When the order was lifted, Napa and eight other counties moved into the purple tier of the four-color system Newsom instituted in July as part of the statewide Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Purple means the disease

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### Gene Duffy Jr., Dick Loomis succumb to cancer



*Gene Duffy, Jr. on the sidelines of a Calistoga High School football game covering it for the Tribune.*

■ Longtime Calistoga residents were active in community and supporters of youth programs

**By Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

Calistoga lost two more longtime residents and champions of community this week when Gene Duffy, Jr. and Dick Loomis died after battles with cancer, family members said.

Loomis, who lived in Calistoga from 1976 to 2008, died Monday, Feb. 22, in San Rafael, where he had moved back into his childhood home to care for his ailing

mother.

Duffy, 70, passed away on Feb. 18 in Santa Rosa, where he had lived since retiring in 2010 from the name-sake treatment center founded by his father in Calistoga in 1967.

Both men raised their families in Calistoga, were active in community affairs and well-known throughout the town.

Loomis and his wife of 37 years, Hester (who died in 2011), had two children, Jeff and Kelly, who attended Calistoga schools and were active sports and Boy Scouts. In fact, according to good friend Jim Flammson, Loomis was among a small group of

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### Planners OK glass-making business

**By Pat Hampton**  
Tribune Publisher

With open arms and little hesitation the planning commission on Wednesday unanimously approved a use permit for an art glass studio at the corner of Washington Street and Lincoln Avenue.

Mark and Michiko Weiner are moving their studio from Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts where they operated Martha's Vineyard Glassworks for 27 years to downtown Calistoga.

Planning and Building Director Zach Tusinger said the couple was working with the city building inspector and fire chief to meet build-

ing and safety requirements as well as "jumping through hoops" to have service from PG&E.

The studio/store will have a glassblowing floor and a retail space "where customers can hold and feel the beauty of handmade glass pieces," Mark Weiner wrote in his business plan.

The building has served for decades as the home for All Seasons Bistro, which was closed by owners Alex Dierkhising and Gayle Keller last year. The two-story building is owned by realtor Bob Beck and a partner.

Commissioners were concerned about making sure safety measures were in place because of

the residential apartments on the second floor of the building.

"We're working on it," said Mark Weiner. "But it's been a restaurant for a long time." Weiner said they are also working with local architect Tom Stimpert for project plans.

"Michiko and I chose the Napa Valley area for the synergistic possibilities between high quality hand crafted wine and high quality hand crafted glass and design work," Mark Weiner wrote in a letter to the city's planning and building department. "Calistoga is particularly interesting to us because

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