

Calistoga Tribune

Independently owned and published in Calistoga for Calistogans since 2002

50¢



- ◀ **TREE HAD TO GO**
A 70-foot tall, century-old pine tree on Berry Street had to come down
Below
- ▶ **MARKETING INCREASE**
City approves three-year, \$1.3M marketing contract with Chamber
3
- ▶ **SAFE IS THE PATH**
Work is underway on the extension of a sidewalk through Logvy Park
12

Grand Jury to county: Take responsibility for future of fairgrounds

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

The board of supervisors should “assume a proactive position and take full responsibility for the future of” the fairgrounds in Calistoga, said the Napa County grand jury in a report released last week on its year-long investigation of the facility and its operations. The citizen watchdog group dubbed the Napa County Fairgrounds “the County’s Orphan Asset,” noting that “it

is in serious and deteriorating disrepair.” In its report, the grand jury said it decided to investigate the fairgrounds after a group of Calistoga residents complained about the condition of the Mt. St. Helena public golf course, located on the 70-acre fairgrounds property. “What the Grand Jury found was disturbing. The condition of the golf course was not the

See JURY page 12

Deadline today determines whether sprint cars get to race tomorrow

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Citing concern for the public’s safety, the Napa County Fair Association Board of Directors on Wednesday night gave race promoters until 5 p.m. today to get engineering approvals on a new gate they are building at Calistoga Speedway or else cancel the Boys & Girls Club Dirt Classic set for tomorrow. HMC Promotions and its subcontractor David Abreu had until noon yesterday to satisfy state and county building require-

ments that would allow them to continue construction of a new access gate at the track’s start/finish line. Abreu, who has in recent years completed more than \$1 million in track upgrades, started the gate project earlier this month by cutting a hole in the concrete barrier and wire catch fencing in front of the grandstand. County, city and fair officials found out about the “unauthorized work” at a June 5 meeting to discuss organizational details of this Saturday’s event – a sprint car

See RACE on page 12



NASCAR champ Tony Stewart is among drivers set to race in Calistoga tomorrow.

After bid snafu, council switches bridge contract

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

The City Council was set to award a nearly \$4 million construction contract to one contractor Tuesday night but chose another who argued that his competitor hadn’t met all the specifications of the bid. Alamo contractor Gordon Ball’s bid of \$3.9 million to replace the Berry Street bridge was \$46,438 higher than that of Ukiah’s Granite Construction Company. Public works staff was recommending that the city hire Granite for the job but Gordon Ball appealed that decision based on the fact that it believed Granite hadn’t met bid guidelines outlined in an addendum to the city’s bid specifications.

Reservoir repairs may be delayed due to dispute with Fish & Wildlife

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

A plan to drain the city’s water reservoir at Kimball Dam next month in order to replace a 75-year-old intake tower and damaged emergency relief valve may be put off due to a disagreement with the state Department of Fish and Wildlife. The City Council on Tuesday night, however, awarded a contract for the \$1.8 million repair project to San Rafael contractor Maggiora and Ghilotti. All other necessary permits – including from the Division of Safety of Dams – have

See BRIDGE page 3

See RESERVOIR page 11



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Instructor Vilma Dodds works with a group of youngsters from Calistoga Elementary School taking swim lessons in late May at the Calistoga Community Pool.

Thanks to pool group, CES students learn to swim

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

Sweltering temperatures are enticing Calistoga families to the Community Pool where swim lessons, Noodle Nights, BBQs, Aqua Yoga and swimming with mermaids await young and older swimmers.

Swim lessons will build on skills that Calistoga’s elementary school children received in the spring during the school year when the Calistoga Community Pool Project (CCPP) funded swim lessons for 320 children with each receiv-

See SWIM on page 6

■ Pool hours are:	
6:30 am - 7 pm M,W	
8:15 am - 7 pm T,Th	
6:30 am - 5 pm Fri	
9:30 am - 5 pm Sat	
9:30 am - 5 pm Sun	
Fees: 2-17 Free	
55+ \$3	
18+ \$5	

A 100-plus year-old Italian Stone Pine tree that has towered 70-feet over the Berry Street home of Karen Mann (right) must come down, arborists say. It will be reduced to a two-foot high stump by end of today.



PHOTO BY
YVONNE HENRY

Tree leaves after 100-plus shady years

By Yvonne Henry
Tribune Contributor

“It breaks my heart,” explained homeowner Karen Mann regarding the 100-plus year-old Italian Stone Pine in her front yard at 1304 Berry Street. “But all agreed it had to come down.” Mann has cared for the tree over the last 31 years, even removing parts of the porch and roof to allow for trunk growth and scheduling routine pruning. Last year, the arborist called her attention to a vertical seam and bark inclusion in the trunk suggesting an internal defect, with the potential for thousand pound limbs falling. “Not good, and not safe for the tree, the owner, or the neighborhood,” offered job foreman Michael Anderson. Mann spent a year interviewing five arborists in order to determine the extent of the problem and any pos-

sible solutions. “It took me a year to decide because I love this tree. I bought this house because of the trees and raised my boys with the trees.” The arborists all agreed there was the potential for danger, but they did not agree as to when the danger would arrive. Pines are among those susceptible to summer branch drop according to surveys in California according to the University of Florida webpage on landscape plants. Summer branch drop is a phenomena resulting in failure and breakage of large diameter, live branches typically on calm summer days. Mann shared that the decision was finally made with the help of a man from Sonoma County known as the tree whisperer. “After an hour of hearing the same things

See TREE on page 6