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Move to orange COVID tier opens up business options

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

The county’s COVID-19 tier status dropped from red to orange on Wednesday, signaling a loosening of restrictions to allow greater capacity for indoor activities but some local businesses don’t think the change will affect their bottom line, at least for now.

“For Napa County, this means more capacity will be allowed for indoor dining, religious services, movie theaters and other industry with modifications and in accordance with state guidelines,” said Janet Upton, interim county public information officer in a press release.

Every county in California is assigned to a colored tier of the State’s COVID-19 Blueprint for a Safer Economy, based on its test positivity, adjusted case rate and health equity metric. Napa County officially moved from the red (tagged as ‘substantial’) to the orange (moderate) tier status on Wednesday, Oct. 21, at 12:01 a.m.

Counties are assigned to a tier based on metrics showing the speed and the spread of the virus in their borders, and each Tuesday the state updates their status. To move forward, a county must meet the next tier’s criteria for two consecutive weeks. To date, Napa County has met

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PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLEER

Kris and Jennifer Breiner, owners of Fitness First, undertook a relocation during the coronavirus pandemic, moving from their space behind the Calistoga Post Office to a more visible spot at 1348 Lincoln Ave. The move saved them a couple months’ worth of rent, although they’ve invested in extensive remodeling the interior of their new spot. See Page 10 for an update on what’s new at both Fitness First as well as Calistoga Fit, which is hosting an open house tomorrow.

Council worries about virus spike shutting doors again if people don’t follow protocol

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

Cultural differences, crowded housing conditions, weak contact tracing and a lack of information from county health officials is frustrating efforts to tamp down the increase in COVID-19 infections in Calistoga, city officials learned this week.

City manager Mike Kim reported at Tuesday’s council meeting that while Napa County received approval from the state to move from the red tier to the orange tier this week, Calistoga is a hotspot in the county with 142 cumulative cases of the disease, second to American Canyon at 323 cases and Napa

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WISHIN’ ON A COUNTRY STAR



Calistoga native Shelby Darrall making a name for herself as a singer/song-writer

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

If it takes a decade to “make it” in Nashville, singer-songwriter Shelby Darrall is half-way there.

Having independently released two EPs and a single of original material, the Calistoga native was getting noticed, playing gigs from Nashville to Florida, and the trajectory of her career appeared to be arching just as the coronavirus pandemic hit last spring.

“We like to call Nashville the 10-year town,” said Darrall, referring to the belief among country music artists that it takes that long if you’re going to hit the big time in America’s country music capital. “I’m five years in and I think it’s looking pretty good,” the 25-year-old told the Tribune in a telephone interview from her home

in Nashville earlier this month. “I was just starting to get it going right before the world shut down.”

Darrall had scored gigs at Nashville’s The Listening Room Cafe – a hotspot for up-and-coming singer/songwriters – as well as CMA Fest and a song writer’s festival in Key West, Florida. She is now being managed by industry executive Autumn Ledgin, who works with the Good Entertainment Co. (which represents big name country star Jake Owen). Ledgin attended one of Darrall’s shows and reached out to her afterward about the two working together.

“We’re now starting to talk to labels and publishing companies and there’s interest there,” said Darrall.

While she waits for the concert venues and Nashville hot-spots to open back up again, Darrall has been writing music five days a week for the past four months, she said, focusing on a five-song EP that she plans to record next month and release early next year.

Darrall comes by her love of country music naturally, having grown up in a rural, western town with a dad who played in a country band and once had dreams of stardom as well. But she has worked to get where she is today, from teaching herself to play guitar as a youngster to prove she was serious about music, to earning a degree from the Col-

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Cal Fire reaches full Glass Fire containment

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

When Calistoga resident Sonja Murphy walked outside at midnight last Thursday, Oct. 15, to take down her front porch flags, she saw the silhouette of tall trees on fire above Oat Hill Mine Road near her Palisades subdivision.

“I thought, oh no, here we go again, but when I called the police station they said the fire department was already on scene handling it,” she said. “That was a relief. It sputtered out pretty quickly, but it was a little nerve-wracking.”

Murphy and her fellow Calistogans had only returned to town a few days prior from a mandatory evacuation Oct. 5-11. It was the second mandatory evacuation for this town in three years from encroaching flames.

The flames were just a small flare up within the perimeter of the Glass Fire, which was officially extinguished this week from the hillsides of Calistoga but not from the annals of the 2020 fire season. Cal Fire officials announced on Tuesday 100 percent containment of the blaze that burned 67,484 acres over two counties during 23 days of trauma, smoke, ash and turmoil.

Tyree Zander, spokesman for the state fire agency, said residents may see hot spots and suppression repair work for the next few weeks, but fire crews will be

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Shelby Darrall, above in a publicity photo and right, taking a selfie with her family while home for a recent visit. Right to left: Darrall, her father, Chuck, her mom, Shannon, younger brother, Col-lin, and older brother Ryan and his girlfriend, Elle Moore.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHELBY DARRALL