



## Friends of Fairgrounds hold meeting to gather volunteers, discuss future

By Julie Mitchell  
For the Tribune

Although the city has yet to secure a sales and purchase agreement for the Napa County Fairgrounds, a local grassroots group with ideas about how the 70-plus-acre property should be used isn't letting any grass grow under its feet.

Friends of the Napa County Fairgrounds on Tuesday held a "volunteer night" for those who support the purchase and restoration of the fairgrounds to sign up

for one of seven committees, each associated with a different enterprise or aspect of the property.

Among the more than 50 citizens in attendance was longtime Calistoga resident Charles "Buster" Davis, owner of Busters Southern Barbeque. In an impassioned appeal, Davis said, "We are looking at a diamond in the center of the city. This is a resource that needs to be utilized." Davis went on to say that he would be happy to sponsor a fundraiser at Bust-

er's and "donate every dollar to the organization."

Negotiations between the City of Calistoga and representatives for Napa County, owner of the fairgrounds property, are ongoing. In March of 2020, the two entities had reached a deal in which Calistoga would purchase half of the property -- everything but the golf course half -- for \$7.25 million. A special municipalities bond to pay the cost was in

See **FRIENDS** page 7

## Matt Reid to fill trustee seat

■ CJUSD board chooses former member to fulfill Elkeshen term

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

Matthew Reid, a winemaker and former member of the Calistoga Joint Unified School District's board of trustees, was appointed this month to the school board to fill the remaining two-year term of trustee Julie Elkeshen, who resigned earlier this year.

Reid was chosen by sitting board members Rudy Gonzalez, Stephanie Rothberg Allan, Indira Lopez-Jones and Jeff Maxfield after a public interview at the trustees' Sept. 12 meeting.

Also interviewed for the spot was Laurel Rios, who already serves on the Calistoga Housing Advisory Committee.

Both Reid and Rios had previously registered as candidates to run in the Nov. 8 election for two four-year terms coming due on the school board.

Lopez-Jones registered to seek reelection in November for another four-year term but trustee Jeff Maxfield decided not to run again, leaving two seats to be filled by voters.

For the appointment to Elkeshen's seat, school superintendent Dr. Audra Pittman said word was sent throughout the school



Matthew Reid

See **TRUSTEE** page 6

## Vermeil attends lunch in his honor at Calistoga's La Prima

NFL Hall of Fame coach Dick Vermeil, seated wearing 'Calistoga' t-shirt, eats lunch at La Prima Pizza in Calistoga on Sept. 14 with members of his Calistoga High School Class of 1954. The group meets annually to see each other and catch up on their lives.



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

By Jacob Tucker  
Tribune Sports Writer

One of Calistoga's favorite sons was back in town last week, visiting his childhood home and reconnecting at lunch with a group of his 1954 Calistoga High School classmates.

"I'm very grateful for having been given the opportunity to grow up in Calistoga," he said in an interview that day. "There are so many people in

this town at that era that influenced my life so positively. I feel better as a human being when I'm in Calistoga than any other place."

Born in here on Oct. 30, 1936, Richard Albert Vermeil is the son of a hardworking car enthusiast. His father, Louis, on top of being the most significant name in the history of Calistoga Speedway, also ran

See **VERMEIL** page 7



PHOTOS BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

## City awards \$37,865 in enrichment grants to local non-profits

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

The City Council on Tuesday evening doled out Community Enrichment Grants of \$37,865 to eight local non-profit groups offering services to the community, including to the youth, elderly and those enhancing the appearance of town and expanding services to members of the entire community.

Vice mayor Irais Lopez-Ortega and council member Gray Kraus were again on the subcommittee, which parsed the funds and then asked for an increase of \$12,865 to cover a shortfall of requests over budgeted monies.

For the year 2022-2023 the two council members read through requests totaling \$61,365. This year's grants were issued as follows: UpValley Family Centers/Enrichment Programs, \$6,000; Soroptimist Read-Aloud Partners, \$2,680; Calistoga Senior Community Programming/Rianda House, \$5,000; Calistoga Spay/Neuter Program/Wine Country Animal Lovers, \$3,250; Calistoga Rotary anti-slip strips for Pioneer Park, \$4,935; Calistoga Art Center/Art Enrichment Scholarships; Brannan Center Rehabilitation, city fees up to \$10,000; and \$3,000 to the Boys & Girls Club Kinder Program.

Alissa McNair with Wine Country Animal Lovers holds "Debbie" in front of the organization's van while conducting community outreach near the Saturday Farmers Market in Calistoga. The non-profit animal rescue group was one of eight organizations to receive a 2022-23 Community Enrichment Grant from the city - \$3,250 for spay/neuter services.