

# Calistoga Tribune

Independently owned and published in Calistoga for Calistogans since 2002

50¢

September 11, 2015

- ▼ **ROTARY PLEDGE**  
First of five \$5,000 donations for new B&GC 3
- ▶ **HARVEST TABLE**  
1,000 feet of dining for 800 guests along Lincoln Ave. 1
- ▶ **THE KITCHEN TABLE**  
Rosie talks about 20th Century canning 6



## Judge dismisses mobilehome case

■ Rancho owners will appeal to Supreme Court

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

A district judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by a mobile home park owner against the city for what it claimed was a violation of the U.S. Constitution's Fifth Amendment.

Judge M. Margaret McKeown, presiding judge for the US Court

of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, ruled Sept. 3 that there was no taking of Rancho de Calistoga's rights and no due process or equal protection violations. McKeown's ruling to dismiss the lawsuit upheld the same decision reached by the Napa County Superior Court in July.

"Each time a court closes one legal avenue to mobile home park owners seeking to escape rent control regimes, the owners, undaunted, attempt to forge a new path via another novel legal theo-

ry," McKeown wrote in her opinion.

The Rancho de Calistoga Mobilehome Park, which encompasses 184 mobilehome spaces on 26.5 acres, was originally developed by Hal C. Aguirre and R. C. Roberts. When the Roberts and Aguirre partnership dissolved in the mid-1970's, one of the parcels was transferred to Aguirre, who formed Rancho de Calistoga ("Rancho"), the California general partnership that now owns and operates the

Park of the same name.

A park owner may increase the rent every year by the lesser of 100 percent of the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index or six percent of the base rent.

In 2010, Rancho owners decided to notice a rent increase from \$471.39 to \$625 per month, which an economist retained by Rancho deemed to be "not excessive but ...slightly below market." An administrative hearing officer,

See **RULING** page 2

## Fair board contracts agency for master plan

■ Supervisor Diane Dillon encouraged future plan

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

Figuring out what needs to be done to make the fairgrounds viable and sustainable in order to have a long term place for the Napa County Fair, board members voted to spend up to \$100,000 in developing a master plan for the facility.

Fair directors recently approved a contract with RCH Group of Rancho Cordova, a fair and exposition planning agency, for an analysis of the fairgrounds and all of its entities in an effort to plan for the long-term future of the 50 acres that sit in the middle of Calistoga.

"We're also opening up a broad conversation with everyone about compatibility," said fair CEO Carlene Moore. "Calistoga alone can't sustain these facilities, we need to appeal to other revenue generating activities."

Board member Bob Beck said it goes back to strategic planning "when the board's two main goals are to serve the citizens of Napa County, not just Calistoga, and to be self-sufficient."

See **FAIR** page 2

## Pit crew member killed at speedway

■ Taking a new tire to car in 27th lap proves deadly

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

The eighth annual Louie Vermeil Classic was hit by tragedy as the main racing event was drawing to a conclusion Saturday night.

Pit crew member Jeff Stich grabbed a 90-lb sprint car tire and hopped on the back of an ATV to take it to driver Damion Gardner whose right rear tire blew in the 27th lap of Saturday's night's main event at Calistoga Speedway.

Witnesses said Stich, a resident of Concord, was sitting on the back of the ATV holding the spare tire as someone drove to Gardner's car when it appeared the tire he was holding struck the ATM's rear tire, flipping Stich forward and off the ATV, causing him to hit the ground head first and sustain severe head injuries.

Stich, a pit crew member for Damion Gardner Racing the past 15 years, was attended by emergency personnel at the track before being airlifted by helicopter from Lovy Community Park to Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital's trauma center with severe head injuries. He never

See **SPEEDWAY** page 2

## WILDCATS UPEND WARRIORS 46-8



PHOTO BY GENE DUFFY JR.

Calistoga Wildcats' first league game against the Laytonville Warriors gave CHS it's first win of the season as the Cats outplayed their opponents in an eight-man game.

## Cats claim huge win in season's opener

By Gene Duffy Jr.  
Tribune Sports Writer

Calistoga's inaugural foray into eight man football got off to a great start Friday night in Laytonville when the Cats roughed

up the Warriors 46-8 in NCLIII action. Wasting no time, Calistoga jumped on Laytonville for three quick scores to take a 22-0 lead after the first quarter, increasing the lead to 30 by halftime.

Calistoga's offensive line

dominated the smaller Warrior defense as the Cats piled up 291 yards on the ground for the evening. Dustin Anderson led the Calistoga attack carrying the ball five times for 126

See **FOOTBALL** page 12

## Long hours, little sleep for firefighters away from home

■ Crew gone a full month battling fires

By Claudia Aceves  
Tribune Cub Reporter

Calistoga firefighter Joe Russo leaned pensively on a fire engine parked inside the open firehouse, admiring the blue skies and relieved to be back at the station.

"When you don't see the sky for three weeks, it's kind of weird,"

Russo said. He had recently returned from 32 days of assisting in putting out several of the California fires. "It takes a couple days to adjust to being back."

The first call to Calistoga firefighters was on July 25 for the Queen Fire in Humboldt County. Firefighters Jason Tamagni, Blake McCormick and Eric Paine

responded.

On July 28 Russo and Jaime Orozco, who was also gone for 32 days, responded to the Rocky Fire east of Clear Lake. It has been the largest fire in California this year burning 69,438 acres.

"Same guy there with me for 32 days," Russo said about his time with Orozco. "You get pretty close."

Russo and Orozco were at the

Rocky Fire for nine days before returning to Calistoga to pick up firefighter Ryan Smithers and heading to the Jerusalem Fire northeast of Middletown.

Then the trio went to the Mad River Complex in Trinity County on Aug. 16 and the South Complex Fire on Aug. 20. They were finally sent home by incident manage-

See **FIREFIGHTERS** page 7

## Harvest Table

By Pat Hampton  
Tribune Publisher

Sixteen restaurants and more than 35 wineries will be serving guests throughout the evening on Sunday when the second annual Harvest Table is set. Bars will open at 4:30 p.m. and dinner served promptly at 6 p.m. to the 800 people who bought tickets that averaged \$100 each.

Chamber of Commerce CEO Chris Canning said the tables will stretch along Lincoln Avenue between Cedar Street and Fair Way.

Lincoln Avenue will be closed to vehicle traffic from 2 to 11 p.m. Downtown businesses are planning to be open for guests before, during and after dinner.