

Calistoga Tribune

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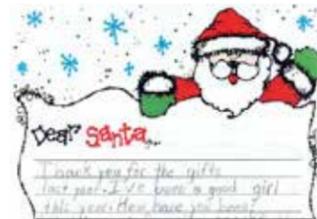
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December 19, 2025

LETTERS TO SANTA
ARE IN THE MAIL

Calistoga kids send Christmas
gift wishes to North Pole!

PAGES 4-5



Nearby quakes likely cause of damaged city water pipe

By Danielle Wilde
Napa Valley News Group

A series of earthquakes on Sunday in Sonoma County and dozens more on Monday south of Clear Lake were the likely cause of a cracked water pipe at the

downtown Calistoga intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Washington Street that was discovered on Monday, according to city staff.

"We're thinking it was a seismic crack from one of the events that happened the last couple of days," Public Works Director

Derek Rayner said. "Whether it happened because of the earthquakes I can't say 100%, but the timing is a little suspect."

On Sunday afternoon, a magnitude 4.0 earthquake struck about 3.7 miles from Glen Ellen in Sonoma County, according to

the U.S. Geological Survey. Felt across the North Bay, it was followed by 3.1- and 3.3-magnitude aftershocks. On Monday, dozens more low-magnitude earthquakes were reported south of Clear Lake.

The downtown Calistoga pipe

rupture was identified early on Monday afternoon as water made its way to the street surface and began to pool at the curbside.

"The intersection was damp

See **CRACK** page 8

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Tiny tots visit seniors

A holiday tradition shared amongst some of Calistoga's youngest residents and its seniors continued Wednesday morning when Hearts and Hands Preschool students took a field trip to Cedars Care Home to sing festive songs, including "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," and to perform choreographed dances. Following their performance, the students presented hand-made holiday cards and ornaments to the senior residents.

Covered CA: Here's how residents can handle plan shifts

By Mariela Gomez
Napa Valley News Group

As health coverage costs rise and uncertainty looms at the federal level, many Napa County residents, like many around the country, are hesitating before locking in a health plan for the year ahead in 2026.

Executive director of Covered California Jessica Altman says that hesitation is already showing up in the data. "We are definitely seeing people waiting, watching and thinking," Altman told Napa Valley News Group. "But if you want coverage starting Jan. 1, you do need to make a decision by the end of December."

Napa County numbers

In Napa County about 6,400 residents were enrolled in Covered California as of June of this year with more than 5,800 receiving tax credits that help reduce their monthly premiums according to the latest available data.

The reliance on financial assistance means many local households could face sharply higher health insurance bills next year if Congress allows enhanced subsidies to expire.

Early enrollment trends already point to hesitation: new sign-ups across the North Bay are down about 35% compared with last year, mirroring a statewide decline of roughly 30%.

See **COVERED CA** page 8

Calistoga winemaker Kirk Venge builds on family legacy

By Len Tolstunov
For the Tribune

Kirk Venge owns and operates Venge Vineyards, located just off Silverado Trail and nestled into the eastern foothills of the Palisades, about a mile from downtown Calistoga.

Venge, pronounced ven-ghée, was born in Rutherford and has been immersed in winemaking from a young age. He is a third-generation Napa Valley winemaker, fulfilling his vision to build on the family legacy, which began with his grandfather, Per Venge, the son of an immigrant from Denmark who took an interest in wine and spirits. It was continued by his father, Nils Venge, who established the family name in the wine-growing com-

munity, growing Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in the Oakville District.

Kirk Venge earned a degree at UC Davis in viticulture and enology and gained winemaking experience interning in Napa Valley and in Marlborough, New Zealand. In 2008, Venge achieved his lifelong dream when he became owner of his family's Venge Vineyards in Calistoga. Venge is also winemaker and proprietor of Croix Estate in Sonoma, which he purchased in 2016 to focus on Chardonnay and Pinot Noir wines. Between Venge Vineyards and Croix Estate, he now has more than 15 wines in his portfolio.

Venge took time from his busy harvest season to sit down at his picturesque Calistoga estate's Bone Ash Vineyard – with a brooding aroma of crushed grapes

and views that rival those in Tuscany – to discuss his passion for winemaking.

Q: Who inspired you to become a winemaker?

"Growing up in a winemaking family, I was drawn to winemaking from a very early age, working in the cellar. I cleaned tanks, monitored fermentation, transferred wine between barrels, picked grapes, and, later, worked with a construction crew that gave me invaluable experience into winery design and construction. As I started to learn the more advanced ropes of my profession, many famous Napa personalities were an inspiration for me, like David Ramey, Paul Hobbs and Ric Forman. All

See **VENGE** page 8



PHOTO BY LEN TOLSTUNOV

Third-generation winemaker Kirk Venge owns and operates Venge Vineyards, located just off Silverado Trail, about a mile from downtown Calistoga.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Farmers Market craft fair Dec. 20

The Calistoga Farmers Market will be celebrating the Christmas holiday on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hot chocolate will be served, Santa will be in attendance to greet his fans and Christmas carolers will be spreading good cheer.

With more than twenty artisan crafters, the perfect gift is waiting to be discovered. Plus, fresh produce, seafood, baked goods, cut flowers and more great additions to holiday tables will be available for purchase.

The Calistoga Farmers Market is open year-round on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the parking lot area between the Sharpsteen Museum and Community Center.

The Farmers Market is at 1311 Washington St., Calistoga.

Christmas Bazaar also on Dec. 20

A Calistoga Christmas Bazaar will take place on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday, Dec. 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Calistoga Fairgrounds' Tubbs Building.

The Christmas Bazaar will showcase local vendors who will be selling everything from handmade jewelry, knitted scarfs and hats, clothing, body care products, beauty and wellness products, candles, artwork and more.

The Tubbs Building is at 1435 N. Oak St., Calistoga.

Luther Burbank Home & Gardens

Luther Burbank Home and Gardens' Carriage House Museum and Gift Shop are open one more time this year for last-minute holiday shopping on Saturday, Dec. 20, from noon to 3 p.m.

Shoppers who still have holiday shopping to do can purchase unique gifts for gardeners, kids and history buffs. Products for sale include handmade blankets, mitts and hats, plus jams, ornaments, painted slates,

copper garden art, and decorative and protective gear for gardeners.

For more information, call 707-524-5445.

Luther Burbank Home and Gardens is at 204 Santa Rosa Ave., Santa Rosa.

Annual Calistoga holiday luncheon

Calistoga's annual holiday luncheon will be on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. at the Calistoga Boys and Girls Club gym.

The city invites residents and their families to come together for a free holiday gathering filled with food, games and cheer. Pre-registration is encouraged to allow the city to accommodate for the number of guests.

To register, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/59xzexar/> or call: 707-942-2838.

The Boys and Girls Club gym is at 1401 N. Oak St., Calistoga.

Christmas Eve church service

Upper Valley Ministries will host a Christmas Eve service open to the public on Wednesday, Dec. 24, from 2 to 4 p.m.

The service will feature the reading of holiday scripture verses and Christmas carols, and will be followed by fellowship, cake, coffee, tea and spiced cider.

For more information, call Bill Nelle at 415-385-7888.

Upper Valley Ministries is at 970 Petrified Forest Rd., Calistoga.

UpStage Winter Theater Workshop

Put a little drama in your loved ones' Christmas stockings by gifting the UpStage Napa Valley's Winter Theater Workshop which will take place across three consecutive Mondays, Jan. 12, 19 and 26, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in St. Helena.

All who are interested in learning basic acting skills are invited to take the workshop, led by UpStage Napa Valley Artistic Director Sharie Renault. Those with no prior experience and veteran actors

Open house gathers friends, food



PHOTO BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER

Napa County District 3 Supervisor Anne Cottrell hosted her third annual Holiday Open House at the Calistoga Library last Thursday. At the event, Napa County residents came together to connect with neighbors, share in the holiday spirit and contribute goods and donations that were collected throughout the evening to benefit upvalley food banks.

alike will learn basic acting skills, including how to move on stage, character development, dialogue and performing before a live audience.

The cost for all three days of the workshop is \$100. Scholarships are available.

For more information and to register online, visit www.upstagegenapavalley.org/ Must have a TIX account to purchase online.

First Presbyterian Church Westminster Hall is at 1428 Spring St., St. Helena.

Tractor Parade named a '10Best'

Calistoga's Lighted Tractor Parade ranked fourth on the USA Today list of top 10 holiday parades in the country, marking the highest placement for the beloved local tradition. The parade, hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, has made the list every year since 2022.

Selected by a panel of travel experts and USA Today editors before being opened to a nationwide public vote, this year the Calistoga parade surpassed major metropolitan parades, including the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, which ranked #8.

The annual parade, now in its 30th year, took place this year on Saturday, Dec. 6, and drew nearly

14,000 spectators to view a dazzling procession of vintage and modern tractors, floats and farm equipment bedecked in thousands of twinkling lights.

For the full USA Today results, visit <https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/best-holiday-parade/>

Calistoga Library holiday book sale

The Friends of the Calistoga Library's annual holiday book sale has begun.

Books make great holiday presents and, featured at the Calistoga Library during the sale are holiday themed books and large coffee table books.

Book sales are the main source of income for the Calistoga Library's summer reading program, which serves local children. Visit the library during regular library hours and find a nice gift for a loved one or for yourself.

For more information, follow Friends of Calistoga Library on Facebook.

The library is at 1108 Myrtle St., Calistoga

County to observe winter break

Napa County will observe a winter break from Wednesday,

Dec. 24, to Thursday, Jan. 1. During this period, county offices will be closed.

Public safety services, including those provided by the Napa County Sheriff's Office and Napa County Fire, as well as essential health and human services, will remain available. For non-emergencies, contact the dispatch center at 707-253-4451. For emergencies, dial 911.

Napa County offices will reopen to the public on Friday, Jan. 2, operating during regular business hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

First Friday Walk at Bothe

Rianda House will host its First Friday Walk at Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, 3801 St. Helena Hwy. on Friday, Jan. 2, from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Start the new year with a rejuvenating three-mile walk through serene redwoods, led by Bobbie Casey and Julie Spencer.

Plan to arrive a few minutes early to check in and park. Rianda House covers the parking fee. The hike will begin promptly at 9 a.m.

Hiking shoes are recommended, and walking sticks are optional.

To RSVP, call Rianda House at 707-963-8555.

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Obituary

Bernard Michael Welsh

July 31, 1943 – Nov. 13, 2025

Bernard Michael Welsh was born on July 31, 1943, in Alameda, California, to Joseph and Mary (Garry) Welsh. He passed away on November 13, 2025, after a brief illness at the age of 82. Barney, as he was known, was the youngest of five (Edward, Joseph, Phyllis and Mary). He is sur-



Barney Welsh

vived by his wife of 56 years, Nannette (Coe) Welsh, his two children Genevieve and Brendan, and four grandchildren: Oscar, Hazel, Lucy and Zoey.

Barney had many jobs in his life but spent most of the past forty years as an organic farmer in Calistoga. He became well known in restaurant kitchens throughout the Napa Valley and beyond, delivering fresh produce and fresh gossip. A loving and devoted husband, father, brother and friend, Barney touched many lives and will be missed by all that crossed his path. His stories and anecdotes, kind words and

“Barneyisms,” the feeling we had while around him - will not soon be forgotten by those lucky enough to be in his life.

Barney and Nannette moved to Calistoga from the Bay Area into a house they bought sight unseen with money that had originally come from a house won in a card game – it’s a long story, and a good one. Barney was known for those.

If you would like to hear the rest of that story or share one of your own, we will have a celebration of life for Barney early in the New Year. Details to come as plans are made.

Obituary

Mary Edna Stevens

Nov. 24, 1936 – Sept. 10, 2025

Mary Edna Frances Stevens was born and raised in Calistoga, CA by her parents, Edward J. Stevens, DDS, and Norine Murphy Stevens.



Mary Edna Stevens

She was co-valedictorian of the Calistoga High School class of 1954. She earned both her AA degree and then the title Registered Nurse at

Santa Rosa Junior College, followed by Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco campuses and pursued a varied nursing career.

When still too young to spell correctly, Mary Edna was already a civic activist. At age 6 she organized a neighborhood club. Rule #1: “Salud” the flag. Rule #10: clean up your mess and go home. Rules #2 - #9 are lost to memory.

In her Junior year in high school Mary Edna was chosen to be a delegate to Girls State, sponsored by the American Legion and held each summer in Sacramento. Her devotion to good government never waned. She was active in the League of Women

Voters, among other efforts, and for years she kept Oakland post offices stocked with forms for those who wished to register to vote.

Mary Edna lived as great religions tell us to: “...care for the sick, feed the poor, welcome the stranger, help the disadvantaged”. At the same time she enjoyed adventures near and far which, more often than one would expect, included unplanned incidents more interesting, hilarious and/or bizarre than any planned event could be in the retelling – and she did love the retelling.

Mary Edna began her nursing career as a medical/surgical nurse in San Francisco hospitals. After some years she moved to Helena, MT and worked for the State Department of Public Health, traveling the state to introduce the then new Medicare program to nursing homes. Returning to Berkeley she worked in nursing administration at Alta Bates Hospital, next as an instructor of Public Health Nursing at Cal State Hayward and, finally, she coordinated needed nursing care with other needed life assistance at the Regional Center of the East Bay in San Leandro, serving families of disabled minors.

In 1975 Mary Edna bought her beloved home in Oakland. She and her neighbors, the Lasmans and the Szlachtas became like one family and, though she was the only one who remained on Laurel Ave., the family ties remain strong.

Once retired, Mary Edna took up line dancing at a senior center. When the center closed during the pandemic the dancing moved to Mary Edna’s driveway, each session followed by a driveway pot-luck lunch.

For many years Mary Edna was a volunteer tutor at elementary schools. She believed that education is a precious gift and that early education plays a vital role in success or failure in adult life. One quote she treasured: “Miss Lois, I’ve had a very good time here today but enough’s enough.” That quote is an accurate description of Mary Edna’s love of life and, finally, her decision to let it go.

Mary Edna was predeceased by her parents and her sister Eleanor Stevens Grieve Ellison. She is survived by her sister Norine Stevens Moses (Donald); nieces Katherine Shields (G. Herbert), Margaret Lee (James), Marie Grieve and Anne Grieve; great nieces and great nephews; long time neighbor and caregiver Czeslawa (Basia) Szlachta and family; and many other loving friends.

A funeral service was held at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Piedmont and a graveside service was held at the St. Helena Public Cemetery.

Donations in Mary Edna’s memory will be welcome at any of her favored charities: Blood donations; Food banks; League of Women Voters; Nature Conservancy; Environmental Defense Fund.

Police Log

Dec. 3-9

Wednesday, Dec. 3

1212 hrs - Officers responded to an unwanted subject on Chablis South. 1548 hrs - Officers responded to an intoxicated driver on Petrified Forest Rd. The driver was contacted and checked OK.

Thursday, Dec. 4

0919 hrs - Officers responded to a possible hit-and-run on Fair Way. 1335 hrs - Officers responded to an intoxicated driver on Lincoln Ave. One female was arrested for drinking and driving. 2244 hrs - Officers responded to suspicious circumstances on Chablis South.

Friday, Dec. 5

1035 hrs - Officers responded to an animal issue on Urbani Pl. 1133 hrs - Municipal code violation reported on Petrified Forest Rd. 1317 hrs - Officers responded to a non-injury hit-and-run on Cedar St. A report was taken. 1426 hrs - Illegal dumping reported on Washington St. 1904 hrs - Caller advised of trespassers on Washington St. Officers conducted an area check. No one was inside the property. 2031 hrs - Officers responded to harassment on Foothill Blvd. 2044 hrs - Officers responded to a possible domestic disturbance on Pine St. Officers spoke to both parties who were then separated. It was a verbal disagreement only. 2218 hrs - Caller advised of a verbal disturbance on Lincoln Ave. All subjects involved were contacted and separated.

Saturday, Dec. 6

1133 hrs - Officers assisted St. Helena PD and Napa PD with a wanted vehicle on Hwy. 29. 1752 hrs - Parking complaint reported on Lake St. 1808 hrs - Parking complaint report-

ed on Wappo Ave. 1840 hrs - Parking complaint reported on Cedar St. 1852 hrs - Officers responded to a verbal disturbance on Washington St. 1934 hrs - Officers responded to an assault on First St. A report was taken. 2227 hrs - Hazard reported on Silverado Trail. Officers responded and removed cardboard from the roadway.

Sunday, Dec. 7

0552 hrs - A found key fob was located on Lincoln Ave. and dropped off at the Calistoga Police Department. 0818 hrs - Officers responded to a domestic disturbance on Foothill Blvd. A report was taken. 1233 hrs - Caller advised of a disturbance on Lincoln Ave. Officers contact both subjects involved. 1524 hrs - Non-injury hit-and-run reported on Myrtle St. A report was taken. 1658 hrs - Non-injury hit-and-run reported on Washington St. 1939 hrs - Public intoxication reported on Lincoln Ave. The females were contacted and were being assisted by friends.



Monday, Dec. 8

1629 hrs - Vehicle with open door reported on Washington St. 2132 hrs - Caller advised of a vehicle driving on Foothill Blvd. with no lights on. 2308 hrs - Officers responded to a possible vehicle burglary on Washington St.

Tuesday, Dec. 9

0850 hrs - Loose dog found on Berry St. Dog returned to owner. 1952 hrs - Loud music reported on Fair Way. 2202 hrs - Illegally parked vehicle reported on Lincoln Ave. The vehicle was moved.

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Perspectives

Quote of Note:

“Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone.”

– Charles M. Schulz, CARTOONIST

VOICES | The fun of rummaging through Christmas memories



Leslie Wilkes

My parents maintained consistent and united poker faces when my sister, brother and I would ask them if they knew what Santa Claus might be bringing us for Christmas. They were so good at it that we often wondered if they even remembered Christmas was only one week away, and whether they had made any constructive communication with Santa.

I knew I had. One year my brother decided that bursting my bubble would make his day, so he decided to reveal to me who the real suppliers of all these Christmas morning gifts actually were. After the tears

from his tragic revelation subsided, I decided I didn't mind knowing the truth. At least now my wish list would be more efficiently communicated to the actual providers.

Knowing that my gifts no longer traveled through the skies but were instead stored somewhere inside my house beginning sometime in November, a whole new pre-Christmas activity opened up for me — snooping. I became a Christmas present snoop, a self-appointed holiday detective. And I was a very good one.

If you think this ruined my Christmas morning joy, you're mistaken. I may have found and inventoried all the family's gifts, but the surprise for me Christmas morning was discovering who would actually receive which present.

But sadly, after just a few successful years, my project backfired.

That particular Christmas I had asked my parents for an overnight bag, specifically one that looked like a large round hat box, with a zipper that went all the way around, and a long loop handle. They were all the rage for sleepovers at friends' houses and would provide an upgrade to throwing my PJs in a brown grocery bag.

Soon after I had made my request, and while on pre-Christmas patrol, I found exactly that bag, tucked into a dark corner of my parents' closet. It was a beauty. I was in heaven. It had to be for me, I was confident.

But Christmas morning came and it wasn't under the tree. Not for me. Not for my sister. This presented a serious problem. I couldn't just remind my parents they'd forgotten my gift that was still up in their closet. That would have ended my

career, not to mention they would have been very disappointed in me.

I suffered in guilty silence all through January. Even through February. Then in mid-March when I was invited to a friend's sleepover, I finally had my chance to gain possession of what I was sure was mine. With great dramatic effort I sighed, “Oh I wish I had an overnight bag, a round one with a zipper that went all the way around, and a long loop handle that I could take for tonight's sleepover.”

My mother perked up with an ah-ha expression, ran up the stairs and rummaged around the depths of her closet. She came laughing down the stairs and handed it to me with a cheerful, “Merry Christmas, Leslie.”

My dilemma was resolved. But I decided I'd better give up that career.

My daughters were not as fortunate as I was to have parents who were a little naïve about their kids' potential for snooping. When they were little, I headed off any possible issue by wrapping their gifts as soon as I brought them into the house.

Whether you were naughty or whether you were nice, Christmas has a way of dusting off old memories, allowing us to experience the fun and magic of the holidays all over again. Maybe none of your memories were as stealthy as mine. But I'll bet you could come up with one or two that have been hiding in the back of the closet of your mind just waiting to be found.

So, go ahead. Rummage around.

Leslie Wilkes has been a resident of Calistoga since moving here from Orange County in 2012.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In honor of MCE Clean Energy's 15th anniversary, UpValley Family Centers wants to extend our sincere thanks for their continued partner-

ship and support of our local community.

This year, MCE generously sponsored several of our key community events — the Napa Valley Pickleball Classic in St. Helena, the

Back to School Community Celebration in Calistoga, and the Día de los Muertos Community Celebration in St. Helena. Their support helped us bring neighbors together, uplift local families and create spaces for cel-

ebration, connection and wellness.

We're grateful for their investment in the Napa Valley community and proud to celebrate this milestone with them.

Congratulations to MCE on 15

years of service, and for the positive impact they continue to make in our region.

Jenny Ocon
Executive Director
UpValley Family Centers

CALISTOGA WEATHER

FRI 12/19	56° 51°	Occasional rain Early rain; otherwise, cloudy
SAT 12/20	55° 53°	A touch of afternoon rain Rain, heavy at times
SUN 12/21	59° 51°	Cloudy with heavy showers Heavy showers early; cloudy
MON 12/22	61° 47°	Sun through high clouds Rain
TUE 12/23	60° 49°	Cloudy with a few showers Rain
WED 12/24	55° 40°	Rain Mostly cloudy
THU 12/25	54° 41°	Rain and drizzle possible Clear

PRECIPITATION for the season is from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2025

Rainfall to date (as of Tues.) **20.18"** Average Yearly Rainfall in Calistoga (calculated weekly) **33.82"**

Weather forecast is from AccuWeather.com Rainfall information is from Raindrop.farm

LETTERS TO SANTA CLAUS

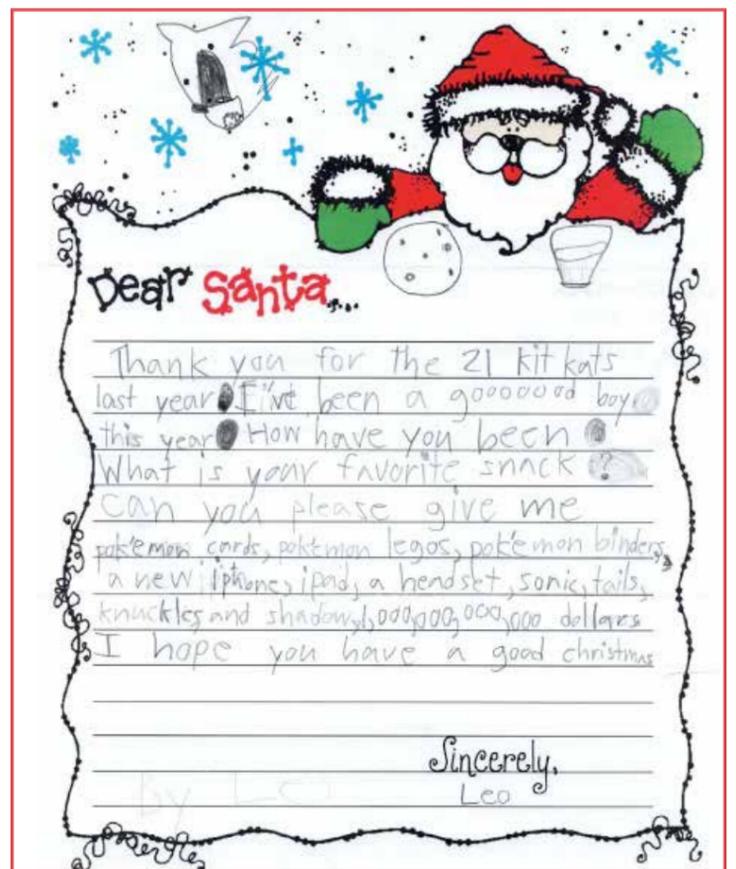
Soroptimist Club shares letters before mailing

Continuing a tradition dating back decades, Calistoga's Soroptimist International Club collected letters to Santa Claus from Calistoga Elementary School and from the City Hall mailbox.

With Santa's permission, Soroptimists shared with the Tribune a few of this year's 120 letters — written by TK-third grade students — before mailing them, special delivery, to the North Pole. Lori Cantrell, retired Calistoga Post Office employee, donated the postage stamps.

Calistoga's youngest residents shared whether they have been naughty or nice, and requested gifts including sparkle slime, a cat, Legos and Pokémon cards.

According to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Santa Tracker, Santa and his reindeer will make their appearance on Christmas Eve between 9 p.m. and midnight, but not until children are asleep.



See more **LETTERS TO SANTA** on next page

NAPA VALLEY Highway29Media
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Calistoga Tribune

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Editor, Reporter: Danielle Wilde
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Student Sports Reporter: Luna Vera
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VOLUME 24 | ISSUE 34

LETTERS TO SANTA CLAUS

Dear Santa Date Dec 5, 2025

My name is Viviane A
 How are you. What is
 Rudolph's favorite
 color is It red may
 I please have a pen
Book and I
 want it to be ZOEY
 Thank you so much
 Santa you are the best

Sincerely,
Viviane

Happy Holidays

Santa Claus
 North Pole

DEAR SANTA,

My name is: Lionel

I am 6 years old.

This year I have been:
 Naughtly Nice

For Christmas, please bring me:

- cars
- toy dinosaurs
- monster truck toy

LOVE, Lionel

Dear Santa,

My name is Hugo
 I am 6 years old.
 I live in Calistoga

This year I have been:
 Nice Naughty A bit of both!

For Christmas I would really love:

red tablet Pizza
stuffed
yellow sparkle
slime giant teddy bear

I drew this for you:

Thank you so much! Date: 12-4-25

Dear Santa,

My name is Sofia
 I am 5 years old.
 I live in Calistoga

This year I have been:
 Nice Naughty A bit of both!

For Christmas I would really love:

che tan stuffie
coffee stuffie
madison mackdumish
67 stuffie

I drew this for you:

Thank you so much! Date: 12-9-25

Letter to Santa

Name Jimmy Rm. # 17

Dear Santa Date Dec. 5, 25

My name is Jimmy C. How
 are you? What does Rudolph
 like to eat? This Christmas
 may I please have a cat?
 I will take good care of my
 cat. Thank you Santa for my
 gift.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Sincerely,
Jimmy

Santa Claus
 North pole

OH Merry

Dear Santa...

Thank you for the gifts
 last year. I've been a good girl
 this year. How have you been?
 What is your favorite snack? He
 old are you? Could you please
 give me an squishmallow.

Sincerely,
Valentina H.

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Public Notices

NOTICE INVITING BIDS 2025-2026 WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT, PROJECT NO. 25-5563

BID ACCEPTANCE DEADLINE: SEALED BIDS will be received by the City Clerk of the City of Calistoga until 2:00 p.m. on January 21, 2026 for the 2025-2026 WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT, PROJECT NO. 25-5563

All sealed bids shall be addressed and noted as follows:

City of Calistoga, City Clerk
1232 Washington Street
Calistoga, CA 94515

Sealed Bid for 2025-2026 WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT, PROJECT NO. 25-5563

Bids will be publicly opened and declared on January 21, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. at the office of the City Clerk, 1232 Washington Street, Calistoga, California 94515.

Bids are accepted for furnishing all labor, materials, equipment, and performing all work necessary and incidental to the construction of the project known as 2025-2026 WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT, PROJECT NO. 25-5563, according to drawings and specifications and according to the Contract Documents and other work not specifically mentioned herein, but which may be required as directed by the Engineer or his designated representative.

Bids tendered after this deadline will not be accepted. The official time clock for accepting bids will be the City Clerk's clock. In order to be accepted, bids must be received

prior to 2:00 p.m. Therefore, a bid received at 1:59 p.m. will be accepted, but one delivered at or after 2:00 p.m. is late and will not be accepted.

Bidders may obtain copies of the bidding documents at www.blueprintexpress.com/Calistoga or by calling BPXpress Reprographics at (707) 745-3593. Bidding documents may also be picked up at BPXpress Reprographics at 4740 East Second Street, 29, Benicia, California, 94510. These items may be obtained at a set price of \$80.00, plus shipping, and is non-refundable. All bidders must purchase a complete bid set from BPXpress Reprographics in order to be added to the plan holder's list, considered responsive and to receive addenda notifications.

Requests for Information before or after the award of contract shall be directed to Brandon Gray at bgray@calistogaca.gov The subject line shall be "Request for information for 2025-2026 WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT, PROJECT NO. 25-5563.

General Description of Work: The work, in general, consists of installation of Metron Prism cellular registers on approximately 694 existing domestic water meters, meter and register replacement of approximately 85 domestic water meters, and related items of work as specified in the Standard Specifications and these special provisions, and as directed by the Engineer.

The Engineer's Estimate for the Base Bid is \$561,000.

This project is subject to compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations.

Pursuant to Section 1770, et seq. of the California Labor Code, the successful bidder and all subcontractors shall pay not less than the prevailing rate of per diem wages as determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations. Copies of such prevailing rate of per diem wages are on file at the office of the City Engineer, City of Calistoga, to view and will be made available to any interested party on request or may be referenced at the Department of Industrial Relations website at www.dir.ca.gov/DLSR/statistics_research.html.

The contractor and subcontractors must furnish electronic certified payroll records to the Labor Commissioner.

In accordance with Labor Code Section 1725.5 (with limited exceptions from this requirement for bid purposes only under Labor Code Section 1771.1(a)), no contractor or subcontractor may be listed on a bid proposal for a public works project unless registered with the Department of Industrial Relations.

In accordance with provisions of California Public Contract Code Section 3300, the City has determined that the Contractor shall possess a valid Class A (General Engineering), Class C-34 (Pipeline), or Class C-36 (Plumbing) License at the time that the contract is awarded.

The lowest bid shall be determined

based on the lowest total of the bid prices on the base contract, without regard to additive or deductive bid items, for all responsive, responsible bidders. If the low bidder is determined to be non-qualified the City will then proceed to the second lowest bidder and review their qualifications

Each Bidder must submit with its bid security in the amount of not less than ten percent (10%) of the aggregate amount of the base bid in one of the following forms: cashier's check made payable to the City, a certified check made payable to the City, or a bidder's bond executed by a corporate surety authorized to engage in such business in the State, made payable to the City.

The successful bidder will be required to furnish a payment bond in the amount equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the Contract Price, as well as a faithful performance bond, in the amount equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the Contract Price.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the City, and waive any informalities or minor irregularities in the bids.

By order of the City Council, City of Calistoga, Napa County, California.

By: Derek Rayner, Public Works Director/ City Engineer

Pub. Dates: 12/19 and 12/26/2025

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS
BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO. 2025-0001146

The following person(s): Happy Valley Vineyards, LLC, 4949 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette, CA 94549, State: CA is (are) doing business as: Happy Valley Vineyards, 4949 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette, CA 94549 County of Contra Costa.

This business is conducted by: Limited Liability Company. Registrant commenced to conduct business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 10/17/2024. Statement expires on: 10/27/2030.

Signed: Steven P. Thomas, MNG Member

I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.

DATED: October 27, 2025

John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County

By: R. Young, County Clerk, Deputy

Pub. 11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

To satisfy the owner's storage lien, PS Retail Sales, LLC will sell at public lien sale on **December 29, 2025**, the personal property in the below-listed units. The public sale of these items will begin at 08:00 AM and continue until all units are sold. The lien sale is to be held at the online auction website, www.storage-treasures.com, where indicated. For online lien sales, bids will be accepted until 2 hours after the time of the sale specified.

PUBLIC STORAGE # 78043,
1025 Golden Gate Dr, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 237-8323
Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com

treasures.com.

169 - Francis, Kevin; 181 - Ortiz Garibay, Leonardo; 206 - Cliff, Gary; 477 - Walker Sr., George; 537 - Seymour, Zach; 629 - Gradias, Chelsea; 675 - Cliff, Gary

**PUBLIC STORAGE # 23109,
1775 Industrial Way, Napa, CA 94558, (707) 304-7486**

Sale to be held at www.storage-treasures.com.

D413 - Herrera, Fabian; F620 - Merkley, Patrick; F621 - Young, Rhonda; H820 - Solorio, Crystal; I925 - Rodgers, Susan

Public sale terms, rules, and regulations will be made available prior to the sale. All sales are subject to cancellation. We reserve the right to refuse any bid. Payment must be in cash or credit card-no checks. Buyers must secure the units with their own personal locks. To claim tax-exempt status, original RESALE certificates for each space purchased is required. By PS Retail Sales, LLC, 701 Western Avenue, Glendale, CA 91201. (818) 244-8080. 12/19/25
CNS-3993211#

LIEN SALE

Pleasure Cove Marina, 6100 State Highway 128, Napa,
01-07-2026@ 11:00am
CA FUNCNTY HIN# FCX00366
D303
12/19/25
CNS-3991673#

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FOR RENT

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE - 1007 Washington St., Suite #3. (Former location of the Calistoga Tribune - next to the Post Office.) For information, call 707-942-0417 or email AttilioLLC@gmail.com

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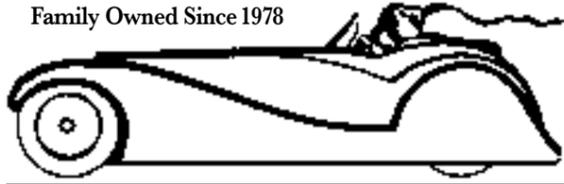
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NEW LISTING	23± acres, vineyard or horse ranch potential.	\$499,000
NEW LISTING	3BD/2BA, 3± acres. Nice location.	\$549,000
	• St. Helena, 3BD/2.5BA, 1658 sq ft, possible ADU, large lot	\$1,395,000
	• 11.4± acres, 2 parcels, exist. home on 7.3 acres, 3 ¹ / ₂ build lot.	\$1,349,000
PENDING	15.98 ± acres Franz Valley School Rd. Pool. Ready to build.	\$1,149,000
	• 9.18 ± planted acres Silverado Trail vineyard, 2 wells.	\$3,249,000
	• 2.06 ± buildable lot on Sanitarium Rd. w/ exist. 1BD cottage.	\$479,000
	• 40± acre home site w/ stunning views on Mtn. Hm. Rch. Rd.	\$679,000

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NapaLandMan.com • napalandman@gmail.com

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707-942-9422 Calistoga-Realty.com
 Darlene Brissard • Elias "Ziggy" Gutierrez • Georgi Costello
 Brian Durnian - Broker



NEW LISTING - Great location. This Michael Way residence is situated on over a 1/3 acre yet it's close to town. Single level floor plan with a living room, formal dining room with wine storage. Family room with fireplace and a sunroom with a gas stove. Landscaped front and rear yards. Back yard has a gazebo for outdoor entertaining, a separate deck with spa, room for an ADU and gated side yard access for R/V parking.
\$1,499,000



NEW LISTING - Great investment opportunity in Calistoga or live in one unit and enjoy income from the other unit. The first level is mainly a carport and storage rooms. The second level is a 1692 +/- sq. ft. 4 bedroom, 2 bath unit and the third level is a 594 +/- sq. ft. 1 bedroom 1 bath penthouse with a deck off the living room. New roof in August 2025. Second level unit has been painted, kitchen updated and new flooring in October 2024. Close to downtown Calistoga, one of the most vibrant small towns in the Napa Valley.
\$1,095,000

CALL FOR A FREE MARKET ANALYSIS OF YOUR PROPERTY!

Public Notices

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 2025-0001188
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Adventist Heart and Vascular Institute, 1100 Trancas Street, Suite 240, Napa, CA 94558, County of NAPA
Adventist Health Physicians Network, 1 Adventist Health Way, Roseville, CA 95661
 This business is conducted by a Corporation
 The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 10/01/2025.
 Adventist Health Physicians Network
 S/ MEREDITH JOBE, SECRETARY,
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Napa County on 11/10/2025.
 John Tuteur, County Clerk
 LISA SPENCE, Deputy
 11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19/25
CNS-3979465#

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 2025-0001187
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Adventist Heart and Vascular Institute, 6 Woodland Road, Suite 304, St. Helena, CA 94574 County of NAPA
Adventist Health Physicians Network, 1 Adventist Health Way, Roseville, CA 95661
 This business is conducted by a Corporation
 The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 10/01/2025.
 Adventist Health Physicians Network
 S/ MEREDITH JOBE, SECRETARY,

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Napa County on 11/10/2025.
 John Tuteur, County Clerk
 LISA SPENCE, Deputy
 11/28, 12/5, 12/12, 12/19/25
CNS-3979477#

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 2025-0001143
 The following person(s): Rachel Avila and Ryan Avila, P.O. Box 2701, Napa, CA 94558 is (are) doing business as: Napa Valley Vending, 20 Enterprise Ct., Suite 9, Napa, CA 94558, County of Napa. This business is conducted by: Married Couple. Registrant commenced to conduct business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 6/1/2025. Statement expires on: 10/23/30.
 Signed: Ryan Avila
 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.
 DATED: October 23, 2025
 John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County
 By: L. Spence, County Clerk, Deputy
 Pub. 12/5, 12/12, 12/19, 12/26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF NAPA

In re: **Leonard E. Goroski Revocable Living Trust, dated July 28, 2014**
Leonard E. Goroski, Deceased
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN to the creditors and contingent creditors of the above-named decedent, that all persons having claims against the decedent are required to file them with the Superior Court at, the Civil Division, 825 Brown Street Napa, CA 94559 and mail a copy

to Lorrie Ann Conlon, trustee of the Leonard E. Goroski Revocable Trust dated July 28, 2014, wherein the decedent was the settlor, at 3994 Hampton Way, Napa CA 94559, within the later of four months after December 12, 2025 or, if notice is mailed or personally delivered to you, 60 days after the date this notice. A claim form may be obtained from the court clerk. For your protections, you are encouraged to file your claim by certified mail, with return receipt requested.
Attorney for Lorrie Ann Conlon
 Anthony G. Celaya, Esq.
 SBN: 232043
 Celaya Law
 1455 First Street, #216
 Napa, California 94559
 707-492-3112
 anthony@celayalaw.com
 Pub. 12/12, 12/19 & 12/26/2025 in the Calistoga Tribune

NOTICE TO CREDITORS IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF NAPA

In re: **Trudy Muffett Living Trust, dated April 10, 2018**
Trudy Theresa Muffett, Deceased
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN given to the creditors and contingent creditors of the above-named decedent, that all persons having claims against the decedent are required to file them with the Superior Court at, the Civil Division, 825 Brown Street Napa, CA 94559 and mail a copy to Andrea L. Muffett, trustee of the Trudy Muffett Living Trust dated April 10, 2018, wherein the decedent was the settlor, at 237 James Rd, American Canyon, CA 94503, within the later of four months after December 12, 2025 or, if notice is mailed or personal-

ly delivered to you, 60 days after the date this notice. A claim form may be obtained from the court clerk. For your protections, you are encouraged to file your claim by certified mail, with return receipt requested.
Attorney for Andrea L. Muffett
 Anthony G. Celaya, Esq.
 SBN: 232043
 Celaya Law
 1455 First Street, #216
 Napa, California 94559
 707-492-3112
 anthony@celayalaw.com
 Pub. 12/12, 12/19 & 12/26/2025 in the Calistoga Tribune

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT

Original FBN Nu.: 2023-0000732
Original Filing Date: 7/12/2023
 The following person(s) Eugene P. Valencia, 70 Renwood Ln., American Canyon, CA 94503 has (have) abandoned the use of the Fictitious Business Name(s) Jem Auto Trim Guard, Renwood Ln., American Canyon, CA 94503
 This business was conducted by: Individual. Statement expires on: 7/12/2028.
 Signed: Eugene P. Valencia
 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.
 DATED: December 3, 2025
 John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County
 By: L. Spence, County Clerk, Deputy
 Pub. 12/12, 12/19, 12/26/25, 1/2/26

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 2025-0001242
 The following person(s): Sonoma Bespoke LLC, 520 Airpark Road, Napa, CA 94558, State: CA is (are) doing business as: Empty Bar-

rels, 520 Airpark Road, Napa, CA 94558, County of Napa.
 This business is conducted by: Limited Liability Company. Registrant commenced to conduct business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A. Statement expires on: 12/2/2030.
 Signed: Max Franks, Managing Member
 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.
 DATED: December 2, 2025
 John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County
 By: R. Young, County Clerk, Deputy
 Pub. 12/19 12/26, 1/2/26, 1/9/26

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 2025 0001249
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
1. MARIS CONSULTING GROUP, 2. MARIS, 3. DEWINTER TECHNOLOGY, 1919 S BASCOM AVE STE 250, CAMPBELL, CA 95008 County of SANTA CLARA
DEWINTER GROUP, LLC, 1919 S BASCOM AVE STE 250, CAMPBELL, CA 95008
 This business is conducted by a limited liability company
 The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 7/30/2025.
DEWINTER GROUP, LLC S/ DEREK DEWINTER, CEO
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Napa County on 12/04/2025.
 John Tuteur, County Clerk [Deputy], Deputy
 12/19, 12/26/25, 1/2, 1/9/26
CNS-3993335#

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 2025-0001237

The following person(s): Oakville Winery Management Corp., 7830-40 St. Helena Hwy, Oakville, CA 94562, State: CA is (are) doing business as: Brun & Chaix, Brun & Chaix Cellars, Brun & Chaix Winery, Brun & Chaix Wines, 7830-40 St. Helena Hwy, Oakville, CA 94562, County of Napa.
 This business is conducted by: Corporation. Registrant commenced to conduct business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: 5/5/1992. Statement expires on: 12/2/2030.
 Signed: Caryn Lederer, CFO
 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.
 DATED: December 2, 2025
 John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County
 By: R. Young, County Clerk, Deputy
 Pub. 12/19, 12/26, 1/2/26, 1/9/26

PUBLIC NOTICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 2023-0000283
 The following person(s): Pine Ridge Winery, LLC, 5901 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94558, State: DE is (are) doing business as: Double Canyon, Double Canyon Vineyards, Seven Hills, Seven Hills Winery, 5901 Silverado Trail, Napa, CA 94558, County of Napa. This business is conducted by: Limited Liability Company. Registrant commenced to conduct business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on: N/A. Statement expires on: 12/8/2030.
 Signed: Jennifer Locke, CEO
 I hereby certify that this copy is a correct copy of the original statement on file in my office.
 DATED: December 8, 2025
 John Tuteur, County Clerk of Napa County
 By: R. Young, County Clerk, Deputy
 Pub. 12/19, 12/26, 1/2/26, 1/9/26

CRACK

Continued from page 1

and wet, and it looked like it had rained,” Rayner said.

Because the leak took place in a high-traffic area of town, Rayner said repairs were done overnight to minimize disruptions to the traffic flow and to about two dozen impacted water customers between the Lincoln Avenue Bridge and Washington Street, which included many businesses that had their water shut off during the repair.

The city’s Public Works crew made repairs from about 9 p.m. on Monday to 4 a.m. Tuesday, digging up a portion of the street to reach the line and install a clamp to seal the crack. The department estimated 5,000 gallons of water was lost.

Rayner said the pipe in question is an “old and brittle,” six-inch diameter cast iron water pipe dating back to 1955 that runs about 110 feet down Washington Street and connects to an 85-year-old, 500-foot-long steel

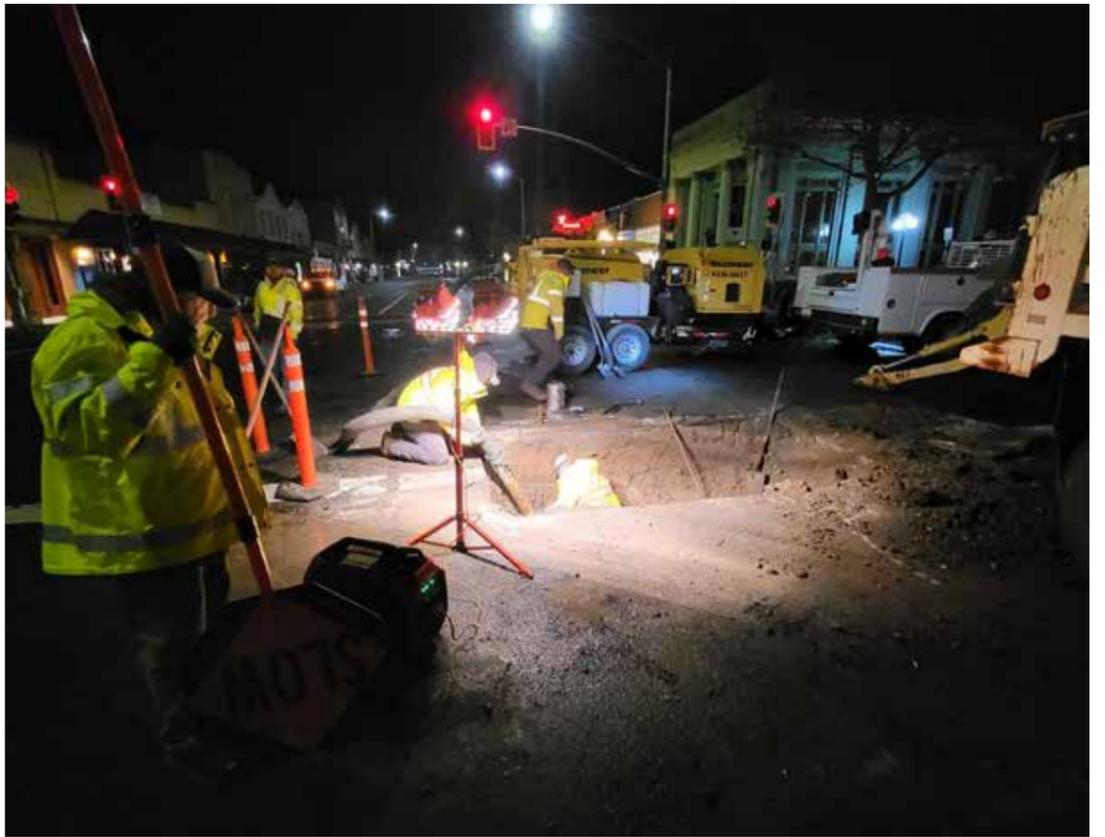
pipe along Lincoln Avenue.

The installed clamp, he added, can “last a while,” but due to the pipe’s age and fragility, the city had already been planning to replace that line in 2026 and is drawing up requests for bid proposals for the project.

In recent years, the city has been working to replace its outdated infrastructure and utility lines. Still, Rayner said, the city has about 3.5 miles of water mains and 2.5 miles of sewer mains that are from 75 to more than 100 years old and are in need of replacement. The cost to install new lines, he said, is roughly \$3 million per mile.

“We have a lot of aging infrastructure,” Rayner said. “Not only are they aging but they can be damaged in minimal seismic events. That’s why we need to get everything replaced.”

He added, “I’m thankful we have a crew that has the knowledge and experience to do these repairs at night and jump into action when we have an emergency and get these kinds of problems fixed.”



CALISTOGA PUBLIC WORKS PHOTO

An emergency repair to a cracked water main under the Lincoln Avenue and Washington Street intersection was made by Public Works Monday night and into Tuesday morning.

COVERED CA

Continued from page 1

Local consumers are delaying enrollment because of news about premium increases or potential federal changes, Altman said, and others are shopping but holding off before committing.

“If something changes at the federal level, we will make sure Californians have time to adjust,” Altman told Napa Valley News Group. “But there’s no guarantee that certainty will come before Jan. 1.”

Californians can switch plans through the end of December for coverage that begins in January, or make changes in January for coverage starting in February.

Covered California does not collect or retain information about undocumented family members and enrollment assistance through community-based organizations is confidential

and available in multiple languages.

No one currently enrolled in Medi-Cal will lose coverage due to the state’s enrollment freeze.

Shop your options

Don’t rely on auto-renewal without comparing plans.

“Most people on Covered California actually have a plan available to them with a lower monthly premium than the one they’re currently in,” Altman said.

Savings can come in several ways: Some consumers may choose to move from a Silver plan to a Bronze plan, which lowers monthly premiums but comes with higher deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.

Others may save by switching from a PPO (Preferred Provider Organization) or EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization) to an HMO (Health Maintenance Organization), which typically offers lower monthly

costs but a more limited provider network.

In some cases, consumers can keep the same metal tier and even the same doctors but save money by switching insurers, since prices change each year.

To encourage shopping, Covered California now includes examples of lower-cost plans directly in renewal notices.

“This is why we’re a marketplace,” Altman added. “So people can compare and use competition to find what works best for them.”

Check your income estimate

Reviewing income information, particularly for those with fluctuating earnings, is key.

“Many of our enrollees are self-employed, in the gig economy or working part time,” Altman said. “Making sure your income estimate is accurate can have a real impact on what you pay.”

Most Covered California enrollees will still qualify for tax credits in 2026, although those credits may be smaller than in recent years.

Middle-income households who recently became eligible for subsidies may see some of the steepest increases.

While average premium hikes make headlines, impact varies widely depending on household income.

The Covered California website offers a “Get a Quick Quote” tool that takes less than a minute and does not require personal information.

“You can even make up a household,” Altman advised. “Just plug in a zip code, income and ages and you can see what plans are available and what financial help might apply.”

For more information, visit www.CoveredCA.com/

VENGE

Continued from page 1

the knowledge eventually paid off when, with financial help from my mother, I was able to buy my own winery, Venge Vineyards, in the foothills of the Palisades Mountains in Calistoga, after purchasing my 12.5-acre Bone Ash Vineyard in 2008.”

Q: What are the essential qualities of a good winemaker? What are your job’s greatest challenges?

“Being a winemaker is an exciting but very challenging profession. You have only one shot a year at making it right. You must be present in the winery and vineyard at every important decision and be a true leader, guiding people and showing them your commitment to excellence – not cutting corners. The intriguing part of any winery is the business part of it, which has its challenges marketing and finding customers. It’s important to concentrate on the customer first.”

Q: What is the biggest myth about the Napa Valley wine region?

“For the last 50 years, Napa Valley has slowly progressed to become a prime wine region of unparalleled quality. The wines were placed on such a high pedestal with such a high price tag that it has become a true

challenge to succeed here for many young wine professionals. It is also hard to compete with other less expensive but excellent wine regions, like Sonoma, Paso Robles, Anderson Valley, Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara. I believe that now, in this difficult time for the wine industry, with a palpable decline of wine consumption and the overproduction of wine, some adjustments and price correction might be needed to compete in the global wine economy.”

Q: Can you talk about your other winery, Croix Estate in the Russian River Valley, Sonoma County?

“In my early wine training, I interned in the Mumm winery in Napa and spent time in Marlborough, New Zealand, making Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Since then, I fell in love with those wines. Croix in French means ‘cross.’ I wanted to show my winemaking skills crossing the Napa and Sonoma winemaking regions, making the best wines that the two regions can offer with their unique terroirs.”

Q: Do you have a winemaking philosophy?

“At Venge, I follow the vineyard-first approach. I believe the quality of the vineyard and its grapes dictates the quality of the wine. We favor expressive aromatics achieved using high-

quality oak, yeast and balanced ripeness. For purchased fruit, I try to select exceptional vineyard sites with a deep appreciation and understanding of the terroir. Our signature wines are often described as ‘opulent,’ demonstrating both balance and structure that allows for quality and aging.”

What is your favorite wine to make? Are some easier and some more challenging?

“My favorite wine to make is Cabernet Sauvignon. It has so much personality and can offer so many aromas and flavors, and it can be enjoyed by itself or paired with food. The easiest wine for me to make is Syrah. It thrives in various climates, it’s resistant to vineyard diseases, has high yields, and rich flavors and complexity. The most difficult wine for me to make is Zinfandel, which is very sensitive to growing conditions. The grapes tend to ripen unevenly, and it’s hard to control its high sugar content. Although it is often a challenge to make a balanced and high-quality Zinfandel, I am proud of our Zin!”

Q: What is your favorite wine to drink?

“Every season offers wine that you can truly enjoy with or without food. In the fall and winter, I enjoy aged Cabernet Sauvignon with its rich and complex flavors. In the spring and sum-

mer, my favorite wine is Pinot Noir, with its delicate, fragrant bouquet, floral and spicy aromas and mild cherry flavors. Plus, it makes an excellent food pairing.”

Q: Do you have any advice for young winemakers just starting out? Are there any personality traits a good winemaker should have?

“I would advise any new winemaker to stretch his or her limits and to make the best wine they can make year after year. Be a craftsman and dream big, make a wine that will stand out from the crowd and create your own winemaking legacy. Perfection and hard work are essential traits of a good winemaker.”

Q: What times of your life brought you the most joy?

“Of course, family, as well as purchasing a winery. I will always remember my mother, Dianna Lynn “Candy” Venge, who unexpectedly passed away in 2011. She had always supported me in all my decisions and believed in me. As my first investor, she helped me to realize my dream and purchase this Calistoga winery. After her passing, we dedicated a special reserve Cabernet Sauvignon from Oakville District in her name, called DLCV. It’s our ultimate benchmark of excellence that is only made in the best vintages to honor the memory of my mother, a life force who was,

and will always remain, my life’s greatest inspiration. Those life moments and decisions shape who we are and become an intrinsic part of our professional legacy.”

Q: When you aren’t making wine, what do you like to do?

“I am an airplane pilot and love to fly. I am quite good at fly fishing and enjoy it in Montana and Idaho. I love hunting and skiing. Those hobbies help me to stay balanced in life and see a broader picture beyond just my profession and wine.”

Q: How would you like to be remembered?

“If you believe in your dreams, they usually come true. I love wine and I’m grateful for the opportunity to do what I love and share this labor of love with my family, friends and our great customers. I would like to be remembered as someone who made great wines and raised their quality to the next level, followed good business etiquette and as someone who always shared his winemaking experience, treated people well and made a jewel from his winery.”

(Questions and answers were edited and condensed for clarity.)

Len Tolstunov is the founder of Calistoga Wine Society, WSET 3, and a contributor to the Tribune, where he writes the column, Conversations Uncorked.