



AmCan Dining

New restaurant dishes up comfortable food/D1

Napa Valley Register

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Buckeyes No. 1

Ohio State battles back against Miami/C1

DUI holiday arrests down

By MARSHA DORGAN
Register Staff Writer

A crackdown by the six county law enforcement agencies on drunk drivers during the holidays netted 33 driving under the influence arrests countywide.

There were two DUI collisions, one with injury during the campaign that started on Christmas Eve and ended at 3 a.m., New Year's Day.

This year's arrests dropped from the number of DUI arrests in Napa County between Dec. 15, 2001, to Jan. 1, 2002, according to sheriff's Capt. Gene Lyerla.

During that period of time, there were 46 DUI drivers arrested, seven DUI crashes, two with injuries and two fatalities, he said.

"Most of the time we were out there (this holiday season), the weather was terrible," Lyerla said. "Maybe people just didn't want to be on the roads. Or maybe people are finally learning not to drink and drive."

Over the past holidays, law enforcement conducted five DUI checkpoints from Upvalley to south county.

Every car was stopped, and the driver was asked if he or she had been drinking. If the traffic was heavy, a random number of drivers were pulled over.

The checkpoints were held between Dec. 20 and 31 in Napa, St. Helena, mid-valley, south county and central county.

Agencies participating in the DUI crackdown included the county sheriff's department, California Highway Patrol, American Canyon, Napa, Calistoga and St. Helena Police departments.

AmCan garbage rates may drop

By ROSEANN KEEGAN
Register Staff Writer

The American Canyon City Council dug through trash rates for three hours Thursday night, but still did not agree on a new, 10-year service contract.

Councilmembers quipped that the evening had turned into an "auction," as managers from Allied Waste, Waste Management and Upper Valley Disposal Service offered eleventh-hour discounts to the bids they submitted to the city two weeks prior.

After three hours of debate and two failed votes, the council asked the companies to return a third round of bids by 5 p.m. Monday. The council will hold a special meeting Jan. 13 at 7 p.m., and for a third time, try to choose a provider.

Thursday, City Manager Mark Joseph recommended the council renew its contract with current provider Waste Management, since the company remained the lowest bidder. The proposed rate for residential customers with a 32-gallon can is \$13.55, a significant decrease from

See AMCAN, Page A2

After the deluge



Joann Strickland peers out the window at her cat, Fatboy, from her flood-damaged home on First Avenue. Mold and water damage have made the home uninhabitable for Strickland, her 1-year-old baby, Mora (pictured on wall), another child and her pets.

Napans still suffering weeks after floods

By NATHAN CRABBE
Register Staff Writer

Weeks after heavy storms pounded Napa and caused flooding, at least 14 families remain homeless as repairs continue on their waterlogged residences.

Coombsville resident Joann Strickland isn't sure when she'll be able to return her family to their flood-soaked home. Runoff from a nearby property caused the residence to fill with water after storms last month, Strickland said.

She's since torn out damaged carpeting, but mold already growing on walls poses a risk to her family, including 1- and 8-year-old children.

Strickland's insurance is no help

"Some of them are not going to be able to return at all."

Marge Dixon
Red Cross director

because she lacks flood coverage — even though runoff, not traditional creek flooding, damaged her home. To make matters worse, her source of income has been thrown into flux because she runs a computer business out of the home.

The county looked into the situa-

tion, she said, but provided little assistance. She's now seeking community help with repairs and has secured a lawyer to determine whether she has any legal remedies.

"I have no alternative," she said.

At least 14 families were displaced from their homes by flood-

ing, said Danda Winford of Catholic Charities in Napa. The group is helping four of those families find new housing and fill out forms to receive financial assistance.

The local Red Cross has paid for nine displaced families to stay in motels, said director Marge Dixon. Many of those families live near Napa Creek, Dixon said, where flooding covered the insides of several homes in mud.

"Some of them are not going to be able to return at all," she said.

Finding housing has been hard for displaced families to do in December, she said, because it's a slow time for real estate. Additionally, she

See FLOODS, Page A2

Napa's New Year baby

Stacey Shepard admires her new son, Eli Martin McLaughlin, the first Napa baby born this year at 6:05 a.m. Jan. 1. He was born at Queen of the Valley Hospital, weighing 8 pounds, 13 ounces. His father is Lance McLaughlin and his brother is Jacob, 4. The family lives in Napa. For more information see "Let's be Frank" on Page A3.



ANDREA ROTH/REGISTER

Former county auditor/controller dies at 79

Benning's 30 years of service also included the role of assistant county treasurer

By L. PIERCE CARSON
Register Staff Writer

In charge of Napa County's fiscal affairs for more than two decades, former auditor/controller Bob Benning succumbed to cancer at a Napa convalescent hospital Friday. He was 79.

Benning served in county posts for 30 years — 23 of them as auditor-controller and, another seven as assistant county treasurer.

A fiscal conservative, Benning was in office when voters approved construction of the county's downtown Napa government complex. He had a reputation as a man who looked

before he leaped into new accounting and auditing practices — and was skeptical of rushing headlong into the computer age.

Shortly after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, Benning enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and was assigned to the Pacific theater of operations. Wounded during the battle for Guam — he lost a leg — Ben-



Benning

ning was hospitalized at Mare Island.

During his recuperation, Benning discovered the Napa Valley and decided to work for a local accounting firm following his discharge.

That decision may have been influenced by the meeting of his future wife, Pat, a Navy yeoman stationed at Mare Island at the time.

Benning was subsequently recruited by Napa County Treasurer Charles J. Harney to serve as his assistant, where Benning was introduced to public finance and county government. He decided to seek the office of county auditor and was first elected in 1955.

He left public service after being defeated in a try for a seventh four-year term of office in 1978.

"Bob served as the county's administrative officer as well prior to the board hiring (first county administrator) Al Haberg (in 1966)," noted Dewey Andersen, who served as chairman of the Napa County Board of Supervisors during Benning's tenure.

"He championed our cause, was a good businessman and financial adviser, and, most importantly, a good man. Not only did I like working with him, I thought a lot of Bob."

Survivors include his widow, Pat, and four children: Robert, Peggy and Anne, all of Napa, and Barbara, a resident of Oregon.

Services are pending. The Claffey and Rota Funeral Home in Napa is handling arrangements.



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INSIDE

American Canyon D1
Ask Dr. Brothers A5
Bridge D3
Business B1

Classified E1-10
Comics C5
Daily briefing A4
Movies D3

Obituaries A5
Opinion Letters B3
Scoreboard C4
Sports C1-4,6

WEATHER

Partly cloudy with a slight chance of rain. Daytime highs in the upper 50s to low 60s. Partly cloudy tonight. Lows in the low 40s.

See Page C6

TODAY'S OBITUARIES

Elda Lestl
Phillip Williams
James Church

Martha Tucker
Cornelia Smiegal

See Page A5

LOTTERY RESULTS

Friday

Fantasy 5: 13, 10, 30, 6, 4

Evening Daily 3: 7, 0, 9

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