

# Napa Valley Register



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# Postmaster warns of mail theft

### Residents asked to be vigilant, report losses

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For the past few months, Napa Postmaster Juliana Davison has been periodically sending out letters to residents warning them that there has been an increase in mail thefts.

"This is ongoing," Davison said on Friday. "It's not anything new but it always picks up around the holidays." It's not just envelopes being stolen either, she said, its packages mailed through USPS,

UPS, FedEx, Amazon and other carriers.

"It doesn't slow down any," said Capt. Keith Behlmer, Napa County Sheriff. "Between us and the city (Napa Police) it's hard to find a day that someone's not calling about mail theft."

Postmaster Davison said that she has sent at least 1,000 letters to residents living in areas of Napa that have been targets of mail theft in the past.

"I can't predict where mail theft is going to occur," she said. "I just wanted to remind our customers to be aware of it."

Many of the areas that have

been hit are rural ones, she said.

Over on Congress Valley Road, Rachele Duran said that two white envelopes containing gifts for her children from their grandmother were stolen last week.

"The mail lady remembers putting them in our box," Duran said. The carrier told Duran that several residents in the neighborhood also complained about their mail being missing, she said. Her kids, ages 6 and 8, were looking forward to their gifts, she said.

Another woman on Facebook said, "It's happening a lot in St. Helena and my parents' neighbors got all their UPS and FedEx

packages stolen."

St. Helena Police just arrested a man on suspicion of mail theft and possession of stolen property on Monday after he allegedly admitted to stealing mail and packages. Officers said they recovered mail that had been stolen from 13 different addresses as well as property from 11 additional addresses.

The suspect, 27-year-old Seamus Louis Gilshenan, told police he was taking advantage of opportunities whenever he saw packages sitting out, but was not targeting delivery trucks or vans, police said.

Police said that almost all of

the packages were from St. Helena residences. However, one package was from Napa and one item of mail was from Santa Rosa, police said.

Gilshenan was contacted after Officer Steve Peterson viewed video footage of a package theft in progress, the police reported. The video was provided to the police after a homeowner reviewed their security camera footage and discovered the theft.

Installing cameras or at least putting up a sign warning of surveillance may help deter thieves,

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J.L. SOUSA; REGISTER

## MARIACHI LOS CAMPEROS

Jonathan Palomar performs with the Grammy-winning Mariachi Los Camperos at Harvest Magnet Middle School on Friday during an assembly sponsored by the Napa Valley Performing Arts Center at Lincoln Theater. Students from Napa Valley Language Academy also attended the performance. Los Camperos will perform at the Lincoln Theater on Saturday night at 7 p.m. Student tickets are free.

## HOLIDAYS

# TubaChristmas: More than 'oompah'

### Concert may become a new holiday event

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The music of the Christmas season can be gently sprinkled with the tinkling of sleigh bells. It can also be underpinned by

the rumbling of brawny brass instruments – at least when a TubaChristmas concert comes to town.

For more than four decades, a series of performances has gathered dozens, sometimes hundreds, of tuba enthusiasts for bracing and uniquely low-pitched renditions of the holiday

songbook.

As Napa prepares to host its first-ever TubaChristmas Sunday afternoon at Veterans Memorial Park, its organizers plan to do more than spread Christmas cheer – they hope to continue a long-running effort to give the largest of brass instruments a place away from comic

stereotypes and in the spotlight.

"I want to leave people with the impression that tubas aren't just about back-of-the-band oompah music," said Alan Parks, an assistant director of Napa High School's marching and concert bands and the conductor of the

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# Fine levied for death at Expo

### Tent pole crushed worker after festival

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The state agency that oversees workplace safety has fined a production company \$14,600 for safety violations that led to a tent collapse that killed a worker after BottleRock 2016.

On May 31, Mateo Zavaleta Zarate, 36, of Sonoma was helping dismantle a "platinum tent" in the VIP village next to BottleRock's JaM Cellars Stage when one of the support posts from the large, metal A-frame tent fell over on him, Capt. Steve Blower of the Napa County Sheriff's Office reported at the time.

Zavaleta Zarate was a temporary laborer with Top Productions out of Richmond, an equipment rental service hired to set up and take down equipment used at Napa Valley Expo during BottleRock, according to officials.

The California Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigated the accident and in October issued a series of penalties.

The most serious finding was that Top Productions failed to dismantle the tent structure correctly. "As a result, an employee was fatally injured when the tent structure tilted and collapsed," said the OSHA citation.

Top Productions did not respond to requests for comment this past week. However, the company has appealed the

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## GOVERNMENT

# St. Helena council votes to boost both water and sewer rates

### Mobile home residents decry budget impacts

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ST. HELENA – The St. Helena City Council has approved sharp increases to the city's water and wastewater rates, over the objections of residents who urged the council to postpone the decision

pending further study.

At Tuesday's hearing, council members said they sympathized with ratepayers, but insisted they had to take immediate action to get the underfunded water and wastewater systems in the black and avoid financially crippling fines and lawsuits.

More than 80 people attended the standing-room-only meeting, and more than 20 spoke out

against the proposed rate increases and recommended a delay.

Councilmember Paul Dohring acknowledged the fear and anxiety that residents are feeling, but said that years of poor planning and inadequate financial reserves have left the city with critical infrastructure needs and very little money to pay for them.

With increases to base rates and use rates, a typical water and

wastewater bill for a single-family home during a peak water use month would increase from \$185 under the current rates to \$225 in February 2017 and \$342 by 2021.

The city's operational costs already exceed revenues, and the gap will only get wider as the city undertakes long-delayed capital projects. Without expensive improvements, the city could face multi-million-dollar fines and

major litigation, according to City Manager Jennifer Phillips.

"Imposing higher taxes and rates is the last thing I want, but we have a financial shortfall that's very serious," said Councilmember Greg Pitts. "And if you don't pay for it through wastewater and water utilities, then it's going to take the General Fund, and you

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Ray Dahlgren

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