

Napa Valley Register



Napa girls top rival

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Home vineyard

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Citizen of the Year

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 28, 2017

napavalleyregister.com

50 cents

FEDERAL POLICIES

Thompson talks healthcare

Obamacare, Medicare issues of concern at Napa senior facility

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Rep. Mike Thompson visited Napa Valley Care Center on Friday morning to answer questions from

seniors and medical professionals about the future of healthcare coverage under the Trump Administration.

The first question came quietly from 70-year-old Gwyn Bissell.

"She hasn't heard any specifics to what the replacement for the Affordable Care Act would be," Thompson said. "There's a reason why she hasn't. There's no

replacement."

Despite criticism of the Affordable Care Act, which is often referred to as Obamacare, Thompson said that there are parts of the legislation that are popular with an overwhelming majority of the country, including the provisions protecting those with pre-existing conditions and allowing young adults to stay on their parents'

healthcare plans until age 26.

"Everybody wants to save those components," he said. "You can't save them by themselves because it becomes costly to do that, that's why the rest of the act is important."

"I had a question about the Medi-Cal block grants," said Julie DeSoto, a long-term care field ombudsman for Napa County.

"So from what I understand the money is going to go each state. Does it have to be spent on Medi-Cal or is it going to go into a slush fund? How are we gonna know where the funds are going?"

Thompson said that most states would probably have some sort of protection in place to ensure that

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HOUSING



JENNIFER HUFFMAN, REGISTER

Gerry Raycraft, left, helps manage the golden shovels for Napa's new Habitat for Humanity project. The man in the white sweatshirt is Jamie Calderwood, a Habitat for Humanity construction site supervisor from Benicia.

Habitat begins home project

One lucky family will get to help build their own affordable house

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As gold-painted shovels glinted in the sunlight, a group of Solano-Napa Habitat for Humanity staffers, volunteers

and supporters held a symbolic groundbreaking on Friday morning for the nonprofit's first Napa home build.

The two-story house, to be located at 891 Saratoga Way in southeast Napa, will be approximately 1,300 square feet and feature three bedrooms and two baths.

Project organizers have managed to shoehorn the future

home onto a 3,004-square-foot remnant of land left between a new housing development and a senior care facility, near a turn where Saratoga Way, Capitola Drive and Erin Way meet.

"It's a challenge to get the square footage" into such a shallow lot, "but it worked," said Gerry Raycraft, director of Solano-Napa Habitat for Humanity. "The intention was to make

sure the end product fit as much as possible into the neighborhood," he said. "We're really happy with the design."

The lack of affordable housing in Napa "is such an important issue," said state Sen. Bill Dodd, who spoke at the groundbreaking.

"Dollar for dollar, there is no

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HOUSING

St. Helena narrowly approves housing

Opponents threaten a lawsuit against city

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ST. HELENA — The St. Helena City Council has approved an 8-unit apartment project on McCorkle Avenue, over the objections of neighbors who are concerned about soil contamination, traffic and safety.

After a two-and-a-half-hour hearing, the council approved the project by a 3-2 vote, with Councilmember Paul Dohring casting the deciding vote that allowed the project at 632 McCorkle Ave. to move ahead. Councilmembers Geoff Ellsworth and Mary Koberstein cast dissenting votes.

Applicant Joe McGrath said he's willing to work with staff to make minor changes to the project's design, but the altered plans won't have to come back for another hearing.

The Planning Commission approved the project on Dec. 6, by a 2-1 vote. Attorney and St. Helena resident David Bradshaw of the law firm Jackson Lewis led an effort to appeal the commission's ruling to the city council.

His wife Vickie Bradshaw spoke against the project on Tuesday, and after the hearing confirmed that she plans to file a lawsuit challenging the city's

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J.L. SOUSA, REGISTER

El Centro Elementary School students Rhaenna Farley, left, and Audrey Jonas work on a mural near a "buddy bench" at the school on Tuesday morning. The school celebrated The Great Kindness Challenge with a variety of activities.

EDUCATION

School encourages kindness

El Centro rolls out anti-bullying initiative

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It's cool to be kind.

That's the message El Centro Elementary school students spread this past week when they participated in a national bullying prevention initiative called The Great Kindness Challenge.

These days, "We're all very conscious of bullying," said school Principal Pam Perkins on

Wednesday. To combat that, "We want to build a culture where we are supportive and kind to each other."

The Great Kindness Challenge "is an opportunity to emphasize that lesson," said Perkins.

In one of many activities during the week, students decorated the area around an outdoor bench, renaming it the Buddy Bench. Anyone who needs a friend to hang out with or a buddy can find support from others at the bench, explained Perkins.

Other activities included a canned food drive, picking up trash, making new friends and making cards for soldiers or to thank someone.

Students were also invited to write about kindness on strips of paper which will be then linked together into a large "kindness" chain and displayed at the school.

"If you did anything kind, just write it down," explained fifth-grader Jaden Wright.

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OBITUARIES | PAGE D2

Marian DeFord Bushong, Barbara Jean Carner, George A. Elicker, Glen Maurice Gentry, Clarence Murrell

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