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LOCAL BRIEFS

Vine bus service adding routes

Napa Vine Transit is preparing to expand bus service within the city of Napa as of Aug. 14.

It will operate routes A through G, instead of the current N, S, E and W routes. Among the destinations being added is Vintage High School.

Some of the new routes won't be consistent with prior routes. Transit officials advised riders to go to vinetransit.com to see the coming changes. The top of the website has a link to the new routes under the heading "systems alert."

"These changes will restore most of the service that the Vine offered prior to the pandemic. The new schedule includes fixed route service to a number of additional locations. We're particularly thrilled about service to Vintage High School," said Kate Miller, executive director of the Napa Valley Transportation Authority, in a press release.

You can reach Barry Eberling at 707-256-2253 or beberling@napanews.com

Dodd to host open house

State Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, will host an open house at his Vallejo district office with U.S. Rep. John Garamendi on Wednesday, Aug. 2.

The in-person event is an opportunity for the public to meet Dodd and Garamendi, discuss key issues in the North Bay, and learn about state and federal services.

The meeting will last from 5 to 7 p.m. and take place at 420 Virginia St. (Suite 1C) in Vallejo.

An RSVP for the event is optional. For more information, call 707-551-2389 or email Gethsemame.Moss@sen.ca.gov.



Dodd



COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF YOUNTVILLE

Recent print copies of the Yountville Sun, a weekly newspaper whose issues from 1998 to 2022 are now available in digital form on the town of Yountville's website.

Yountville Sun's past issues now online

HOWARD YUNE
hyune@napanews.com

A buyer last year stepped forward to secure the Yountville Sun's future. Now, an archiving project is preserving the newspaper's past — and opening it up on the internet.

The town of Yountville recently announced the completion of a project to digitally scan every issue of the Sun, from its May 14, 1998 debut through 2022. Internet

users can now visit a page on the town website to view the paper page by page — and to type in keywords to search for a story.

The digitizing of the Sun is a milestone in Yountville's efforts to preserve local documents and heritage, town officials said in announcing the newspaper project's completion last week.

"This initiative will forever transform the way the

community engages with its rich history," Hilary Gaede, Yountville's deputy town clerk, said in a statement. "As a part of an ongoing effort to digitalize historic Town documents, Yountville Sun editions have been digitally preserved ensuring that the invaluable stories, milestones, and cherished memories of the community are accessible

Please see **ONLINE**, Page A14



SCREEN SHOT, TOWN OF YOUNTVILLE WEBSITE

The debut issue of the Yountville Sun from May 14, 1998, as viewed in a digital archive recently opened by the town of Yountville.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Fentanyl murder trial update

Three people who have been charged — two with murder — in connection with a 17-year-old Napa student's death from a fentanyl overdose could enter pleas as early as next month.

Alan Jazeel Martinez, Luis Fajardo Melgoza and Erika Garcia Chavez all were ordered to appear in Napa County Superior Court on Aug. 24. Judge Monique Langhorne scheduled the appearance at a hearing Tuesday morning, when attorneys with the county District Attorney's Office said they would need about two more weeks to provide evidence to defense lawyers during pretrial discovery.

The 22-year-old Martinez and 20-year-old Melgoza, both Santa Rosa residents, have been held without bail in the Napa County jail since June 6, when Napa Police arrested them for investigation of murder, drug possession and transport, and other charges. The arrests were connected to the death of Monica Flores on May 25, 2022, after prosecutors say the Vintage High School graduate-to-be ingested fentanyl in purported Percocet pills she had purchased from Martinez.

Garcia Chavez, 23, who is not being held in jail, faces charges of criminal conspiracy and drug possession with intent to sell. Charging documents allege she provided a Cash App account through which Flores bought fentanyl-laced pills from Martinez, and had allowed Martinez to use the account for other illicit drug sales.

Conviction for murder could result in prison sentences of 15 years to life

for Melgoza and Martinez.

Motorcyclist arrested after injury crash

A motorcyclist was arrested on suspicion of felony drunken driving after a crash Tuesday afternoon in Napa resulted in major injuries to his passenger, according to the California Highway Patrol.

CHP officers were called to the Napa-Vallejo Highway (Highway 221) south of Streblov Drive at 4:03 p.m. after the reported wreck of a 2020 Harley-Davidson Road Glide, according to Jaret Paulson, spokesperson for the agency's Napa bureau.

The motorcyclist reportedly was passing vehicles unsafely on the right shoulder of the southbound lanes when he lost control, hit the dirt shoulder and overturned back into the traffic lanes, Paulson said in an email.

The passenger, identified as 31-year-old Esmerelda Ortiz of Union City, was taken by American Medical Response ambulance to Providence Queen of the Valley Medical Center, according to Paulson.

The rider, 35-year-old Jose DeJesus Fernandez Jr. of Fairfield, was arrested by CHP officers. Fernandez, who suffered minor injuries in the crash, was booked into the Napa County jail on suspicion of causing injury by driving under the influence.

The wreck blocked southbound lanes and disrupted Highway 221 traffic for about an hour, Paulson reported.



Napa Valley Register

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PRICING

The Napa Valley Register is a Lee Enterprises Newspaper and is published daily. Effective July 17, 2023, it will be published online daily, and three days per week in print (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays). USPS: 370860. Postmaster send address changes to 1615 Soscol Ave., Napa, CA 94559. Periodical postage paid at Napa.

The subscription price includes all applicable sales tax,

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Jazz

From A1

Blue Note Jazz Festival

At a July 13 meeting of the county's Zoning Administration, county staff deemed the festival's traffic, parking, security, medical and evacuation plans adequate for the Silverado Resort.

Ken Tesler, Blue Note Napa's managing director, then asked Napans to take pride in the "cultural merging of genres" — including host Dave Chappelle, artist-in-residence Robert Glasper, and headliners Mary J. Blige, Nas and Chance the Rapper — and the diversity of artists the jazz festival would offer the estimated 7,000 to 9,000 spectators each day.

Many Silverado Resorts residents were unimpressed.

One man, who did not give his name, complained of regularly hearing music performances at the resorts and asked with whom he could file a noise complaint, and predicted the week of setup and breakdown bracketing the festival might displace his family due to increased commotion and traffic on Atlas Peak Road.

"There's been a number of things over there that I've chosen to overlook, but this is a little bit different," he said, though he didn't explain what makes the jazz festival different.

Others echoed his worries about traffic and noise, while questioning the safety of a large festival in an area already menaced by wildfires.

Resident Dan Mufson wondered if Blue Note leaders understood the fire dangers in the surrounding Atlas Peak area, and asked who would make the call on canceling the event in case of a red-flag weather warning for high fire risk. Others warned the festival, and the resulting road congestion, would jeopardize their ability to



REGISTER FILE PHOTO

The mansion at Silverado Resort and Spa in Napa.

evacuate.

Napa County Fire Chief Mike Marcucci sought to tamp down such worries, calling Napa County's current fire risk average or slightly below, with dangerously powerful winds not expected until later in the year. (The Atlas Fire, which threatened Silverado mere hours after the conclusion of a PGA Tour golf event, began on the night of Oct. 8, 2017 — well into the fall when trees and plants have had more time to become drier and more flammable.)

Other speakers, however, questioned the festival itself — and the types of music and performers it showcases.

A woman who gave her name as Sue Sparks, a 36-year Silverado member, called Blue Note "the most wonderful thing that's happened in Napa Valley" — then added: "The clientele that's going to attend this festival is not your golf enthusiast — it's not the kind of person that we would like to invite to our homes."

Sparks continued by decrying the afterparties at the Silverado Mansion House for the late-night noise and disturbances she expected would ensue.

"Who is going to be escorting those people?" she said. "They're going to be loaded out of their minds!"

Another Silverado resident soon called her out on those statements.

Mel Preimesberger, while agreeing with locals' traffic concerns, called for more sensitivity and, as a Black woman, expressed her frustration at the term "those people."

"That's the elephant in the room," she continued. "It's all Black artists."

She criticized the assumptions made about the character of performers and those coming to see them. (Sparks later apologized as Preimesberger finished speaking.)

A woman who identified herself as Sparks' sister stepped up, trying to deny that her sibling's use of the words "those people" was racially insensitive. A moment later, however, she used the same words to describe her distaste for the hip-hop and rap that the Silverado festival would present, calling the festival artists "very sexually explicit — they waggle their tails all the time — it's pretty much vulgar to me."

The woman called Silverado resort the wrong venue for concerts of Blue Note's size and type, contrasting them with golf fans at the Fortinet Championship who "walk around whispering." Nonetheless, she added, she has a ticket to the festival this weekend.

Speaking in the jazz festival's defense, resident Alan Goldstein pointed to the benefits of live music at Silverado and a diversity of music events generally.



MITCHELL GLOTZER PHOTO

St. Helena's Charles Krug Winery, which hosted a Big Bad Voodoo Daddy in June 2022, hosted that year's Blue Note Jazz Festival before the event's move to Napa's Silverado Resort and Spa. The festival runs from Friday to Sunday.

"(I was) troubled, frankly, by some of the comments that were made about the nature of the music and the nature of the attendees," said Goldstein, although he expressed sympathy for those worried about noise and traffic. "I just wanted to make sure ... that the board is aware of the fact that there are residents who see this as a benefit and who welcome events like these."

On Monday, Tesler of Blue Note Napa reiterated his confidence in the smooth operation of the jazz festival and the benefits it will bring.

"There's always a trade-off," he said. "We bring in tremendous economic growth; we bring in tremendous cultural diversity; we bring in wonderful experiences. ... Music heals; music makes people happy."

"Yeah, there are small inconveniences, a road closed here or there, amplified music for a few hours when it's not your taste isn't a great experience," he continued, but "we listen to everybody" and the majority have spoken in favor of such events.

As for comments about the artists and festivalgoers, Tesler drew a hard line.

"It's unacceptable to characterize anybody who comes to our music festival or any musical experience," he said, "and I'm proud that we bring in a culturally diverse audience, and we don't tolerate racism of any kind."

Last year's inaugural Blue Note Jazz Festival, held at Charles Krug Winery in St. Helena, was marked by traffic hiccups and some noise complaints, the Register reported. The complaints were filed due to an incident in which Chappelle, the host, pushed the final jam session nearly 20 minutes past a 10 p.m. curfew on Saturday and Sunday.

While improvisation sometimes compels musicians to play a little longer than planned, Tesler said festival organizers work hard to stick to the curfew.

Oxbow RiverStage

Tesler also manages operations for the Oxbow RiverStage, a summer concert series at downtown Napa's Oxbow Commons park.

When asked about noise complaints at the venue and the stage's orientation, he jokingly replied that "now it's facing up."

While the concerts have been a strong success by many metrics — Tesler said about 5,000 guests saw Neil Young perform on Sunday — organizers have faced their share of noise complaints.

The stage initially faced the Napa River and Alta Heights for the RiverStage's 2019 debut but was flipped around for its first post-pandemic season in 2021, partly because residents east of the Napa River made clear that the concerts were a disturbance. This year, however, Tesler said "the business community wanted us to turn it around" and Blue Note Napa, after several meetings, moved the stage back to its original position.

Naomi Chamblin, an Alta Heights resident who owns the Napa Bookmine bookstore, wrote in an email last week that "I personally love to listen to the concerts from my front porch" and she appreciates how respectful the concerts are of the quiet hours after 10 p.m.

As a small business owner, Chamblin "appreciates the excitement it brings to Napa" and that most large music events "are great for business," because they draw not only tourists but residents and give people a reason to wander through central Napa.

Tesler explained that "we try to accommodate the best we can" for those who find the concerts abrasive but that so long as a majority of people support them, they will continue.

Porchfest

One local event that does seem widely esteemed is Napa Porchfest, the community music crawl that has brought local and regional performers to Napa's Old Town neighborhood each summer since 2011. This

year's festival, which will take place from 12:30 to 5 p.m. Sunday, will showcase a record 149 bands at 74 porches and yards, according to Malan, Porchfest's music coordinator.

A key to Porchfest's appeal to Napans is the price of admission — zero.

As one who works to bring live music into Napa, Main described Porchfest as his chance to give back to make music accessible to everyone "so that they can enjoy the music and they don't have to pay for it, because not everybody can afford these (other) events."

In a sense, Porchfest is an opportunity for the "people who do have complaints about traffic or noise to come down and enjoy music with everybody else" free of charge, he said.

Tesler of Blue Note Napa praised Porchfest as a "great grassroots event" with a natural connection to the community.

"High tides float all boats," he said, calling Napa's growing musical scene a loop of positive reinforcement benefiting artists and audiences alike.

Porchfest's smaller footprint and lower decibel level also helps its reputation, according to Malan, saying what few noise complaints organizers get are from bands complaining about other performers interfering with their sets.

By contrast, Malan acknowledged the impact festivals on the scale of BottleRock and the jazz festival can have on the community, but said "the climate was right for these types of events — Napa had everything. ... They had everything except for the entertainment."

"We try to listen, and we try to accommodate the best we can," said Tesler, "and I hope at the end of the day when you weigh the good versus the bad — the music that we bring to this community, and all the benefits from economic to cultural to the music itself — that the good phenomenonally outweighs the bad."

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Online

From A2

for generations to come."

The archives cover nearly the entire history of the Sun during its ownership by Sharon Stensaas, who co-founded the weekly with her late husband Oscar Rhodes and ran it as editor and publisher before selling the paper to Highway 29 Publishing last November. (A message left with Stensaas, who retired after the sale of the Sun, was not immediately returned.)

The preservation effort did not involve current Sun staff but rather a company that already was working with Yountville to convert town documents into digital form, Gaede said in a Tuesday interview.

ECS Imaging Inc. of Riverside received back issues of the Sun that Michelle Dahme, a former Yountville town clerk, had stored in half a dozen "banker's boxes" of heavy cardboard, according to Gaede. A

scanner captured images of printed pages, and optical character recognition software converted printed words into electronic text that can be searched on a computer or smartphone.

Scanning and conversion took six months and was completed in June, according to Gaede. Yountville's web page hosting the Sun archive went live July 20.

Editions of the Sun appear on-screen as pairs of pages, corresponding to each sheet of paper in a physical issue. Users can zoom into and out of pages, search for issues by date, and type in keywords to find text passages.

The town staff plans to add newer issues of the Sun to the virtual archive about twice a year, Gaede said.

Kim Beltran, who became the Yountville Sun's editor after Highway 29's purchase, said Tuesday she has not yet had time to extensively search the newspaper's digital collection but already appreciated having a window to Yountville's past so readily reachable.

"It's kind of neat to go back and look at old stories, and (see) the history of the town and how much things have changed," she said.

One of the first details to catch her attention, Beltran said, was the mission statement the Sun's founders included in the paper's inaugural issue 25 years ago. On the second page was a three-paragraph promise to Yountville to "accurately reflect its character, contents, changes, successes and failures; provide a place to express and examine different viewpoints; and invite visitors to partake of Yountville's unique opportunities."

"I invite you to read the Sun's mission statement," wrote Stensaas. "It appears on this page. Hold us to it. Make this forum and this newspaper yours."

The Yountville Sun digital archive is available at <https://bit.ly/43DuKuA>.

You can reach Howard Yune at 530-763-2266 or hyune@napanews.com.