

Tomato Fest arrives

There are signs and flyers all over town announcing A Tomato Fest the last weekend in September. Mariposa tomato growers are gearing up to bring the best tomatoes for everyone to taste.

See Story on Page A-8



Cables gain status

First scaled in 1875, the route up Yosemite's Half Dome has been added to the National Register of Historic Places.

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Facelift needs volunteers

Yosemite National Park and the Yosemite Climbing Association invite the public to participate in the annual "Yosemite Facelift" event.

See Story on Page A-3



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POPULATION TRENDS

Survey says: Mariposa County is more diverse today than ever before

By Erik Skindrud
GAZETTE REPORTER

Mariposa County is one of the more diverse rural communities in America, a major study of U.S. Census Bureau data shows.

Since 1980, Mariposa County's "diversity index" has more than doubled, rising from 19.2 in 1980 to 38.9 percent in 2010.

As in rural communities across the country, the change is mainly due to the arrival of Hispanic and Asian Americans, study author Barry Lee explained.

"What's happening in Mariposa County is happening on a smaller scale, but it's a reflection of what's happening nationally," Lee told the GAZETTE.

Mariposa County is more diverse than the country's rural average—which is a score of 29. The

county is less diverse than "immigrant gateways" like Fremont, San Francisco and Oakland—which post a score of 85—however.

The index measures the proportion of white, African American, Hispanic, Asian and other people, explained Lee, a sociologist at Penn State University.

A score of 100 would mean each of the five groups made up an equal fifth of the population.

SEE CHANGE ON BACK PAGE

ERIK SKINDRUD | THE GAZETTE

Salvador Gonzalez founded his restaurant (and taco truck) enterprise in Mariposa in 1996. "I came to the United States to follow the American Dream," he said. "I think I found it in Mariposa."



Barbecue and music set for this weekend

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

Visitors to the Mariposa County Fairgrounds on Saturday might feel like they are a little farther south and east. The sixth annual Blazin' Hog BBQ Competition and Zydeco Music Festival takes place beginning at noon.

There are 11 competitors signed up to present the best their grills have to offer. This is no amateur cook-off either. Winners go away with cash

SEEN HOG ON BACK PAGE

Think it's unusually hot?--It is

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

When the clock strikes 10:49 a.m. this Saturday, fall will officially have begun. Too bad it won't feel like fall.

The fall equinox marks the day the sun

SEE HEAT ON BACK PAGE

Dangerous sparks



DAN TUCKER | THE GAZETTE

One of four spot fires burns dry vegetation along Darrah Road last Wednesday. Firefighters responded to multiple small fires that reportedly were ignited by a vehicle possibly dragging a chain along the road, sending sparks into the tinder dry brush. No injuries or property damage were reported. The suspect vehicle has yet to be identified.

County kids are more fit

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

There are lots of things to do outdoors in Mariposa County.

There is also little access to fast food and sedentary activities like going to the movies or sitting in an arcade.

Some of those lifestyle factors may be reflected in the recently released results of the physical fitness test for 2010-11. The Mariposa County Unified School District data shows that local

kids are far more fit than children statewide.

Students in grades five, seven and nine are tested each year. Sixty-one percent of local kids tested in the Healthy Fitness Zone (HFZ).

Overall Mariposa students outscored the state averages in each of the six areas: aerobic capacity, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk extension strength, upper body

SEEN RESULTS ON BACK PAGE

Former county counsel locked out

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

Former Mariposa County Counsel Tom Guarino has

been locked out of his office in Siskiyou County. This latest turn of event follows a month of investigation of Guarino by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors.

THE GAZETTE has been following the story as it developed. According to the Siskiyou Daily News, Guarino was not on duty for the past month. A reporter for the Daily News said that Guarino had

been attending board meetings in plain clothes since the investigation began, around mid-August.

Last Tuesday, Guarino approached the board with a letter from his attorney, alleging that the board had acted illegally in how it went about the investigation. When Guarino was county counsel in Mariposa County, he used similar language to address the Mariposa County Unified School District Board of

SEE GUARINO ON BACK PAGE

HANTAVIRUS UPDATE

Park employees may be offered free virus tests

By Erik Skindrud
GAZETTE REPORTER

Three people who work in Yosemite National Park have experienced flu-like symptoms that prompted them to get tested for hantavirus, health officer Dr. Charles Mosher said at Tuesday's Mariposa County Board of Supervisors meeting.

While initial tests came up positive, a set of second, more-precise tests showed the three had not been exposed to the deadly Sin Nombre strain that causes hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, or HPS.

Yosemite employees may soon be offered free hantavirus tests that could help experts learn more about the outbreak, Park officials said on Tuesday afternoon.

Officials were still working out the details of the plan this week, NPS spokesperson Vickie Mates said. "If the survey does go forward, we will notify our

SEE VIRUS ON BACK PAGE

SAR's Thorpe receives prestigious state honor



David Thorpe of Mariposa was honored at the California Search and Rescue annual exercise last weekend in Coloma. Thorpe received the Larry Peabody Memorial Award, given by California Emergency Management Agency Deputy Chief Matt Scharper, the state Search and Rescue Coordinator. Present were members of the Mariposa Sheriff's Search and Rescue (SAR)

MARIPOSA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
| CONTRIBUTED

David Thorpe (right) accepts the Larry Peabody Memorial Award, which is given to just one Search and Rescue member in the state each year. Sgt. Chris Ramirez is at left.

Team, along with Thorpe's family.

Mariposa County Sheriff Doug Binnewies commented on the honor. "Dave has done much for our team," he said. "He is a great mentor to our younger members and a leader to our older ones."

The annual award began in 2006 after the passing of Larry Peabody, a professional volunteer tasked with running the state's canine search and rescue program. Peabody assisted the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Now CalEMA) for 27 years with the dispatch and coordination of search and rescue assets in all types of SAR responses, assisting in over 6,000 missions.

The award is given annually after review of numerous submissions from California Search and Rescue teams. It is given to the individual or team that performs their SAR duties with professionalism, dedication and extraordinary excellence. The selection panel consists of Deputy Chief Scharper, California State Sheriff's Association Liaison Sheriff Steve Durfor, and Bev Peabody, Larry Peabody's widow.

Thorpe's nomination came from his relentless dedication to Mariposa's Search and Rescue Team, his outstanding leadership abilities and mentoring of Mariposa's youth. Thorpe is a

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MES plans to adopt new school mascot
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NEWS AFFILIATE



FRIDAY



Sunlit and very warm

92° 57°

EXCLUSIVE

When this insignia is next to the first paragraph of a story, it indicates that the article is a MARIPOSA GAZETTE exclusive.

CHANGE: Diversity Increases Within County

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Few American communities remain 90 percent white—which was once commonplace.

Newcomers are changing the flavor of rural America—literally—if one local anecdote is any indication.

Salvador Gonzalez was born in the village of La Palma, in the Mexican state of Michoacan. He moved to Mariposa in 1992—and founded a Mexican restaurant and taco truck business in 1996.

“At first, we couldn’t use anything that was too spicy—like salsa,” Gonzalez recalled last week. “If anything was too spicy, people would get a stomachache. On that, definitely, things have changed.”

Similar changes are noted across the U.S., where America’s white-bread heartland is learning to ask for carne asada.

Supermarkets across the country now offer Hispanic food sections. Another indicator of newly-arrived Latinos is increased attendance at Catholic churches, study author Lee said.

Father Steve Bulfer is seeing an increase in baptisms for Hispanic families, the St. Joseph’s Catholic Church pastor reports.

Overall, though,

Spanish-speakers here tend to attend Spanish-language services in Planada, outside of Merced.

Bulfer said many Latino newcomers in Mariposa County are too busy working to attend church on Sunday.

“A lot of the immigrants tend to work in the Park, or the motels in El Portal,” Bulfer said. “And when is the busiest time for that? It’s Saturday and Sunday.”

While times are changing, Mariposa County remains whiter than the state at large, with about 82 percent of locals described as non-Hispanic whites in 2011.

Statewide, non-Hispanic white people now make up less than 40 percent of California’s population, according to census bureau numbers for 2011.

For many older Americans, the fact that communities are no longer “white-dominant” can be a tough pill to swallow, says the report, titled “Racial and Ethnic Diversity Goes Local: Charting Change in American Communities Over Three Decades.”

The arrival of people who look different, and often speak a different language, can seem unsettling and even threatening to some.

“Younger people who have grown up in diverse communities take this (new) demographic profile as a given,” the report concludes. “But older whites who have watched the 30-year increase find themselves having to adjust their notion of ‘America,’ sometimes reluctantly.”

Curriculum director for Mariposa County Unified School District Celeste Azevedo has seen the county evolve since she attended first grade here more than 30 years ago.

“It’s definitely more diverse today,” Azevedo said. “We’ve seen a lot of families move up from the (San Joaquin) Valley, and a lot of (Park) visitors have ended up moving here.”

Many people whose first language is Spanish live in El Portal and work for Park concessionaire Delaware North Companies—or for the motels just outside Yosemite’s borders.

Most of the younger immigrants possess good English skills. Less than 50 students in the close to 1,900-student district are “English learners,” Azevedo said.

Restauranteur Gonzalez recalled the odd path that led him to Mariposa—a place he had never heard of when he

moved here in 1992.

While working in the Bay Area, Gonzalez heard about a job at a restaurant called Papa Taco—which sat where the town’s Burger King is today.

A coworker told Sal that Mariposa is near Yosemite National Park. “I had never heard of Yosemite,” Gonzalez recalled. “I said, ‘Where is that?’”

Despite its Spanish name, Mariposa seemed an alien place. Almost no one spoke Spanish. Gonzalez spoke little English at the time.

“It was a totally different thing from the Bay Area,” Gonzalez recalled. “At first, I thought moving here might be a mistake.”

But Gonzalez had a new son. A daughter followed. He liked the trees and the hillsides. Mariposa’s air was cleaner than the air in Richmond—where he had lived and worked before.

“After a year or two, I liked it here,” Gonzalez recalled. “So I wanted my kids to stay and grow up here.”

“I came to the United States to follow the dream—the American Dream,” Sal said. “I think I found it in Mariposa.”



THE SISKIYOU DAILY NEWS | CONTRIBUTED
Former Mariposa County Counsel Tom Guarino (left) is pictured outside his office with Siskiyou County law enforcement officers who denied him access.

GUARINO: Under Investigation

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Trustees. County counsel has no jurisdiction to the school board, however.

Reporter John Bowman said that Guarino was presented with a letter that demanded he leave the office immediately. “This demand was backed up by the presence of an assistant sheriff and two marked patrol units,” Guarino said.

Siskiyou County hired an investigation firm in August. Last week, David Prentice of Cota Cole, LLP, said that the investigation “has to do with his (Guarino’s) own conduct, and he knows what that conduct is.”

Prentice denied that the investigation is related to a recent legal opinion rendered by Guarino.

Following the Sept. 11 meeting, the Daily News says Guarino attempted to enter his office to retrieve personal items. Employees allegedly told him he could not.

A while later, Guarino attempted to enter the office again. This time, he was met in the reception area by deputy county counsel and the sheriff. The sheriff said he was acting on an order of the board and that some employees were “fearful” of Guarino.

The investigation continues, but no details about it have been released.

Guarino left Mariposa County in October, 2008, after accepting the position in Siskiyou.

HOG: Festival is Saturday

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

prizes up to \$500 in each of three categories.

For \$15, visitors can taste the food and vote for their favorite. The cost for seniors is \$10, and \$8 for kids ages 6 to 17. Those under 5 are free.

After grazing the grills, those attending can enjoy a first-class music line up. Good Medicine starts things off, followed by Mark St. Mary and His Louisiana Band. The headline act is The BluesBox Bayou Band, which will perform two sets.

David Jefford, one of the organizers of the event, expects that even more competitors may materialize before Saturday. The event also offers food and beverage vendors, crafts and arts.

The fundraiser benefits the John C. Fremont Hospital Foundation, and has been wildly popular in the past several years.

For information, visit www.blazinhog.com or call 966-3994.

THORPE: Receives Honor

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

instructor in underwater operations, high angle rope rescue, swiftwater operations, search tactics and many other disciplines. He is a mission ready team leader, having completed numerous missions within the county and assisting allied agencies in California.

In addition to Thorpe’s Search and Rescue responsibilities, he is the Communications Branch Chief for Yosemite National Park and a Navy veteran. Thorpe is married to Ann Marie and they have three daughters, Ella Rose, Victoria and April, who are also SAR members.

RESULTS: Students Are Fit

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

strength and flexibility.

“MCUSD’s high scores are a direct result of our K-12 teacher’s instruction on healthy lifestyles, health, nutrition, and life-long physical activity,” said Director of Educational Services Celeste Azevedo.

“Schools, athletics, community sport teams, and parents value physical fitness, and it is clear all of these programs are making a difference in keeping our students healthy,” Azevedo added.

MCUSD students fared well on specific tests as well. Thirty-eight percent of those tested met each of the six standards. A full 100 percent of students passed the walk test, and 69 percent aced the mile run.

Local students surpassed those statewide in many testing categories. For example, 65 percent of fifth graders locally were in the HFZ for body composition. Statewide, that number was 52 percent.

In Mariposa County, 90 percent of students are within a healthy body mass index, according to the report. Body mass index (BMI) is a number calculated from a person’s weight and height. BMI provides a reliable indicator of body fatness for most people and is used to screen for weight categories that may lead to health problems.

Last month, Mariposa County Public Health Officer Dr. Charles Mosher said that one of his biggest health concerns for Mariposa was obesity, and that healthy body weight among children continues to decline. “Kids are getting more and more overweight,” Mosher said. “That’s a trend in the wrong direction.”

In fact, it’s a nationwide trend that has children being diagnosed with diseases formerly reserved for people of their grandparents’ age. For example, Type 2 diabetes used to be an exclusively adult disease. Now kids are being diagnosed with that and high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Hornitos prepares for 26th flea market

The community preparations are under way for the 26th annual Hornitos Flea Market, to be held Sunday, Oct. 7. Gates open to the public at 7 a.m. No dogs are allowed in the sale area. Spaces are available. For information, call 376-2320 or visit www.hornitospc.com.

Sponsored by the Hornitos Patrons Club, members are responsible for numerous projects and activities in Hornitos and Mariposa County. Money is donated to the American Cancer Society, outside benches for Stag Hall, two high school gradua-

tion scholarships, weed abatement of the cemetery and jail, Manna House, Mariposa County High School Sober Grad Night, plus the band trip to New York, a back to school party including supplies for local children and the preservation of history in the town of Hornitos with maps and plaques.

The club also hosts the All Soul’s Day candle lighting ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 2 and the 63rd annual enchilada dinner on Saturday, March 2, 2013.

For more information, call 376-2320 or go to hornitospc.com.

VIRUS: Employees May Be Tested

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

employees of this voluntary opportunity,” Mates said. “The results of the proposed survey, a common epidemiological tool, may make an important contribution to our knowledge about this rare virus.”

Testing would be conducted by California’s Department of Public Health.

Two of the nine recent Yosemite hantavirus cases involved individuals who did not come down with full-blown, lung-involved HPS. According to a 2007 article in the journal Emerging Infectious Diseases, close to one percent of workers who come into close contact with deer mice test positive for hantavirus—even if they never felt ill.

Speaking at Tuesday’s meeting, Dr. Mosher said news about the three tests shows that some Park workers have been worried about possible exposure to the virus.

Medical and public health experts are intensively studying the Yosemite outbreak.

“It would be pretty interesting to know if these staff have antibodies to the disease,” Dr. Mosher said on Tuesday.

In other virus-related news, National Park Service employees have begun using traps to reduce the deer mouse population in Yosemite Valley, NPS spokesperson Mates said.

“We are being proactive and reducing the (mouse) population,” NPS animal epidemiologist Danielle Buttke told the Reuters news agency.

An elevated deer mouse population has been mentioned by several experts as a possible factor in this summer’s Yosemite outbreak.

With no recent illnesses reported, officials are hoping this summer’s episode is over.

With a maximum incubation time of six weeks, officials say a danger period for visitors will expire around Tuesday, Oct. 9—six weeks from when the Park closed 91 insulated “signature tent cabins” at Curry Village.

HEAT: Lasts Into Fall

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

crosses the celestial equator. From here on out, temperatures begin to drop and the days start to get shorter than the nights.

If it seems like this has been an unusually long, hot summer, that’s because it has. According to the National Weather service, the number of 100-plus degree days was double the average this summer.

While specific records for Mariposa are not available, the NWS report shows that Merced had 38 days of high temperatures above 100 degrees. And the thermometer continues to reach above average levels each day.

Highs are expected to reach the mid-90s until Monday, when the high is predicted to be 87. The average high in Mariposa for early September is about 92 degrees. By now, the average falls to below 89 degrees. In a month’s time, that average is 78 degrees.

Fall also brings the promise of rain, but none is forecast in the near future. Mariposa normally gets about half an inch of rain in September, but has been bone dry to date.

Next month, the average rainfall amount more than triples to 1.87 inches. January is the area’s wettest month, according to climatology. The NWS is predicting below normal precipitation for the coming month.

The long-range predictions, however, are encouraging. A mild El Niño is expected to bring an end to California’s long dry spell. Last winter was the driest on record in the state, and locally, that dry winter meant unprecedented access to Yosemite’s high country.

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AccuWeather 6-day Forecast for Mariposa

THU. NIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mainly clear	Sunlit and very warm	Mostly sunny and very warm	Partly sunny	Partly sunny	Plenty of sunshine
60°	92° 57°	91° 58°	88° 54°	84° 54°	81° 51°

California Cities			AccuWeather.com				
City	Friday Hi/Lo/W	Saturday Hi/Lo/W	Sunday Hi/Lo/W	City	Friday Hi/Lo/W	Saturday Hi/Lo/W	Sunday Hi/Lo/W
Alturas	88/36/s	83/36/s	78/36/pc	Paso Robles	96/56/s	91/52/s	85/48/pc
Bakersfield	91/69/s	95/67/pc	90/68/pc	Porterville	92/63/s	94/63/s	91/61/pc
Barstow	99/70/s	96/71/pc	98/66/pc	Redding	94/53/s	92/53/s	89/53/pc
Big Bear	76/44/s	73/41/pc	70/42/pc	Ridgecrest	97/65/s	98/64/s	95/61/pc
Chico	90/60/s	89/61/s	87/56/pc	Riverside	98/62/s	97/63/pc	92/59/pc
Crescent City	58/47/pc	57/45/c	58/47/pc	Sacramento	86/55/s	92/57/s	87/52/pc
El Centro	104/76/s	103/78/pc	103/74/pc	San Bernardino	95/65/s	95/63/pc	92/61/pc
Eureka	59/49/pc	61/46/c	62/45/pc	San Diego	78/67/pc	78/66/pc	78/66/pc
Fresno	92/64/s	92/64/s	90/58/pc	San Francisco	68/51/pc	70/54/pc	70/52/pc
Lemoore	91/60/s	94/61/s	90/58/pc	San Jose	77/54/s	79/56/s	78/55/pc
Livemore	85/52/s	89/58/s	86/52/pc	San Luis Obispo	78/53/pc	76/54/pc	73/53/pc
Los Angeles	86/65/s	85/65/pc	83/62/pc	Santa Barbara	74/57/pc	71/58/pc	69/56/pc
Madera	92/59/s	96/57/s	91/54/pc	Santa Maria	73/52/pc	71/52/pc	68/54/pc
Merced	91/58/s	94/54/s	92/56/pc	Santa Rosa	82/47/pc	84/48/s	82/47/pc
Modesto	89/61/s	90/59/s	90/58/pc	Stockton	90/56/s	91/59/s	88/54/pc
Napa	89/48/s	82/51/s	80/45/pc	Susanville	87/46/s	84/46/s	77/43/pc
Needles	105/80/s	103/76/pc	100/76/pc	Tahoe Valley	78/38/s	74/37/s	71/35/pc
Oxnard	71/59/pc	71/60/pc	69/59/pc	Ukiah	89/45/pc	92/48/s	90/43/pc
Palm Springs	106/78/s	100/78/pc	100/72/pc	Visalia	92/62/s	94/63/pc	92/59/pc
Palo Alto	74/52/s	76/54/pc	73/51/pc	Watsonville	70/50/s	72/53/pc	69/51/pc
Pasadena	91/66/s	86/65/pc	86/61/pc	Yuba City	89/54/s	91/59/s	89/54/pc

W-weather, s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

Moon Phases

First	Full	Last	New
Sep 22	Sep 29	Oct 8	Oct 15

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2012

Yosemite National Park

	FRIDAY: Sunny. High: 81°
	SATURDAY: Sun mixing with clouds; warm. High: 81°
	SUNDAY: Partly sunny. High: 76°

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