

Napa Valley Register

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■ **FACES & PLACES** — C1



San Antonio's River Walk suggests lessons for Napa

■ **LOCAL** — A3

Swimmer missing at Lake Berryessa

■ **SPORTS** — B1



Justin-Siena at St. Mary's Albany

Burbank at Napa



Sandy Haroutunian Hansen, right, helps take care of her mother Ginny Harrison, who suffers from dementia and now requires round-the-clock care. *J.L. Sousa/Register*

With help, family copes with dementia

Daughter offers 90-year-old mother 24-hour care

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Virginia Harrison lies in bed next to a table full of medication bottles. A row of birdfeeders hangs outside her window, but the blinds are kept closed because the sun hurts her eyes.

She speaks sweetly as she softly pets a cat resting on her chest. She responds to its mechanical-sounding meows — not knowing that the sound and all of the cat's movement are powered by batteries.

For the past year, Harrison, who is 90 years old, has been confined to her bed — although she doesn't seem to realize it. Ask Harrison what she did last week and she'll talk about her travels across the globe, how she helped a mother elephant find her baby and how the Obama family moved in and she's in charge of the children.

Harrison has dementia, and some of her behaviors — like hearing voices — also fit a schizophrenic pattern.

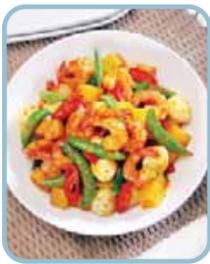
"We shouldn't call this 'mental illness;' we should call it a 'parallel universe,'" her daughter Sandy Haroutunian said. "For all I

Keys to fighting dementia

Bob Nations of Senior Helpers recommends, what he calls, the "four pillars of living:"



Socializing



Eating right
Especially foods high in antioxidants.



Challenging your brain



Staying physically active

To accomplish all four pillars, Bob Nations recommends leaving the house to have a healthy meal with family or friends. To stave off dementia, Nations said it's critical for people to challenge their brains. He recommends crossword puzzles, learning a language, driving a different route to the grocery store or reading out loud, which is more engaging to the brain than reading silently. "If you accept the fact that you're old, you uare going to feel old," Nations said.

For more information about Senior Helpers, visit seniorhelpers.com/napa

Kelly Doren/Register

know, she's tapping into a realm that does exist. It's not for me to judge."

Harrison has lived with Haroutunian and her son-in-law, Dean, for five years. She came to live with the couple after hurting her back.

At first, she was fairly independent. She was able to make her own meals and do her own chores.

"And then, little by little, it got harder and harder," Haroutunian said. "She just wanted to sleep all the time."

Statistics show that by the time a person is 80 years old,

he or she will suffer from three chronic health problems, said Bob Nations of Senior Helpers. Arthritis, heart disease and high blood pressure are among the most common of these conditions — but many seniors also suffer from breathing problems, diabetes and dementia, Nations said.

One in five families are affected by dementia — a number that is expected to grow as the baby boom generation ages, Nations said.

Haroutunian, who is 65, retired one year ago after teaching special education

for nearly 40 years at Vintage High School. During her last week of school, her mother fell in the bathroom and broke her hip. When she was released from the hospital, the doctors informed Haroutunian that her mother would need 24-hour care and couldn't be left alone.

Haroutunian admits she's often felt like a prisoner in her own home — a feeling that wracks her with guilt.

"This woman gave her life to raise me," Haroutunian said. "Why can't I give a few

See DEMENTIA, Page A7

Defense of lawsuit costs taxpayers \$700,000

County stuck with legal bill from suit brought by housing advocates

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Napa County spent more than \$700,000 to successfully defend its housing policies from an affordable housing advocacy group's lawsuit, but it's set to recoup only a little more than \$12,000 of that expense.

The county's costs will undoubtedly grow, given that the group, a nonprofit called Latinos Unidos del Valle de Napa y Solano, lost the lawsuit on every one of its claims but has appealed.

The case is now in the California 1st District Court of Appeals, with Latinos Unidos' opening brief due to the court Sept. 20. David Grabill, an attorney for the group, said it may take more than a year to get a ruling.

"We're hopeful that we'll prevail," Grabill said. "A decision will come, but in due course. It won't be any time soon, unfortunately."

Assistant County Counsel Minh Tran

See LAWSUIT, Page A5

Napa Center revival includes hotel plan

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Developer Todd Zapolski would like to turn Napa's long-shuttered Merrill's drugstore into a multi-story hotel with up to 150 guest rooms.

Zapolski bought the old drugstore and the surrounding Town Center this past May. Since then, he's announced a revitalization plan for the mall and is court-ing new tenants.

Part of that plan includes accommodating more overnight visitors downtown,

Zapolski said. With the success of the Avia Napa and other downtown hotels, there is a "clear need" for more hotel rooms within a walkable distance, Zapolski said.

A hotel also fits with the Downtown Specific Plan, which calls for more density in downtown, he explained. That plan allows for structures as high as 75 feet, he noted.

The developer said he wants "to do something that will be a real addition to that part of town." The Merrill's building can't remain as it is, he noted. "The building is really a hazard the way it is now ... It makes sense to try to preserve the best of the Merrill's building and go vertical."

The best of the building includes the ground floor facade, he said. "We're

See HOTEL, Page A4

Proposed hotel site



Kelly Doren/Register

Blues, Brews & BBQ not just for Napa anymore

Brewers, eaters from all over U.S. get their fill on First Street

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Ray Lara was among the thousands who spent a few hours downtown Napa Saturday sampling beers while listening to music at the Blues, Brews & BBQ.

Lara, a plastering contractor from Santa Barbara, rode his motorcycle to the wine country with a group of friends this weekend to go wine tasting and attend Saturday's festival.

"This is going to be an annual thing for us," said Lara, 55, a first-time visitor to Napa, as he tasted a Guinness.

Sponsored by the Napa



Doug Bell, right, was among 10 contestants in Bounty Hunter's annual Rib Eatin' Contest at Dwight Murray Plaza during Saturday's Blues, Brews & BBQ. Darren Turbeville, owner of Toy B Ville, came in first after eating 33 Bounty Hunter ribs. Turbeville also won last year's contest. *Kerana Todorov/Register*

Downtown Association, Blues, Brews & BBQ, now in its fourth year, advertised outside Napa

to draw visitors. "A lot of people come from out of town which makes our merchants

happy, said Julie Morales of the Napa Downtown Association.

The event featured 20 micro-breweries from as far as Wisconsin and New York state, seven bands playing blues and rock 'n' roll music at three different stages and a barbecue rib eating contest.

Phil Lutgen of Napa was among those who tried various beers. "It's excellent," said the winery owner after tasting Reef Rye Brown Ale at San Diego's Ballast Point's tent.

Terri Deits, a social worker, of Napa, stopped by to listen to the California Honeydrops of Oakland play on stage at First Street.

"We enjoy the blues," said Deits, 54, who came with her husband, Rob. "This band brings a little bit of New

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Russell H. Cooke Jr.,
Alvina 'Al' Tipton

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