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Tess Athena and Iskandar Sexto pay their respects Wednesday afternoon to the 160-year-old blue Atlas cedar at the corner of Broad and Bennett streets in Nevada City. The tree was at the center of controversy after PG&E wanted to cut it away from power lines. A Nevada City arborist recently declared the tree as being sick and needing to come down.

## Saying bye to Bella

Tree supporters say they'll continue to physically protect about 10 trees

By John Orona  
Staff Writer

About 30 Nevada City tree supporters gathered underneath the dappled shade of a blue Atlas cedar on Broad and Bennett streets Wednesday afternoon to say their final good byes.

The tree, initially a symbol of the activists' resistance to PG&E's plans to cut 263 trees in the city, was determined by Nevada City arborist Zeno Acton last week to have significant heart rot, making it unlikely to last a year.

"The fact that the tree has stood as long as it has, with slowly degrading structure, is testament to the strength of tree tissues and is proof of the challenges of determining when a tree might fail or die," the report stated.

Matt Osypowski, organizer for community group Save Nevada County Trees, described the event's atmosphere as somber and loving, explaining losing this tree was different than the others because the decision was made as a community.

He said residents have created an intimate relationship with the tree nicknamed Bella, with people sitting in the tree, painting it and playing music nearby.

"There's certainly grief, but there's also a sense that this was a choice



Flowers are brought to "Bella," the blue Atlas cedar, that will soon come down in Nevada City.

that we came together. It wasn't something imposed on us by an outside corporate force and that makes it a healthier kind of grief," Osypowski said. "We did the right thing in working as hard as we did to make sure there was actual, thorough, scientific analysis done of this tree before the decision to remove it."

### WORK MOSTLY COMPLETE

According to PG&E spokesperson Brandi Merlo, the majority of the tree mitigation work has already been completed in Nevada City, and the company hopes to finish the rest "as soon as possible," due to public safety concerns.

"With respect to the

timing of the remainder, there are various factors that are at play, among them are weather and the availability of resources," Merlo said in an email.

Osypowski said while the list of trees the group protects is slowly dwindling, they are still committed to physically protecting about 10 trees total on private property and at the Pioneer Cemetery.

While the mood around Bella has been festive the last few weeks, Osypowski said activists at the cemetery have been anxious as they expect a more direct confrontation from police next week.

"We're headed for a much more aggressive confrontation here... There's a lot of anxiety about what that is going

to look like," he said. "The mood is more anxious and angry."

According to Osypowski, activists have built a 35-foot high platform in a central tree at the cemetery that has been occupied 24 hours a day in preparation for the police to forcibly remove people. He said the group remains committed to its nonviolent approach.

"There's a sense that this is a space that belongs to the community... we're committed to nonviolence and committed to claiming the space and we're not going to leave it easily."

To contact Staff Writer John Orona, email [jorona@theunion.com](mailto:jorona@theunion.com) or call 530-477-4229.

## Distance Learning Center to open Monday

By Victoria Penate  
Staff Writer

Through a partnership between Nevada County and the Nevada County Fairgrounds, Bright Futures for Youth will open the Distance Learning Center and Youth Hub Monday at the Nevada County Fairgrounds' Main Street Service Center.

At the center, Bright Futures for Youth — the nonprofit merger of local youth-serving organizations The Friendship Club and NEO Youth Center — will provide local students a safe, supervised place to get internet access and use distanced work stations.

The center will be open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday, and can accommodate up to 40 students at a time.

The fairgrounds also will open to walkers, joggers and others.

According to a release by Bright Futures for Youth, students in fourth grade or higher may be dropped off at the center to be supervised by staff and volunteers, while parents or guardians must accompany students in lower grades.

Bright Futures for Youth Executive Director Jennifer Singer said student supervision will be a collaborative effort on the part of staff, a Nevada County probation officer who has been assigned to the center, and volunteers.

"We will be looking for approximately three to four volunteers per day," said Singer, adding that the six-hour days at the center are

LEARNING, A6

## 1849 Brewery ponders alcohol sales suspension

By John Orona  
Staff Writer

Employees for 1849 Brewery Company said Wednesday they've yet to reach a decision on whether to accept an offer from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to suspend alcohol sales for 45 days in lieu of a hearing in which their license could be revoked.

According to 1849 brewmaster Jennifer Telley, before making a decision — required by next week — the business was waiting on the outcome of Tuesday's Grass Valley Planning Commission meeting, which denied its request to extend evening hours to 2 a.m. seven days a week.

Instead the commission in a 3-to-1 vote, with one abstention, extended the brewery's morning hours, allowing it to open at 6 a.m.; placed additional conditions on its permit meant to help clear patrons of the general area upon closing; and directed staff to schedule a February hearing, in which the commission will either reconsider the proposal or hold a hearing to

revoke its license.

Commissioner Tom Ivy recused himself, stating he had done prior business with the company.

Commissioner Terry McAteer voted against, stating the restrictions on the brewery should be tougher following claims that the Grass Valley Police Department had to respond to the Sutton Way business more than 70 times in one year. According to Grass Valley Police Lt. Joe Matteoni, the department has seen calls to similar establishments six or seven times during the same period.

At the commission meeting Matteoni claimed fights at the 1849 parking lot are so common they are called on nearly a "nightly basis," and the business operates past its 10 p.m. closing time, sometimes staying open as late as 2 a.m.

"In addition to that, the cooperation we've received from these other businesses far exceeds any cooperation that we've received from 1849," Matteoni said. "They just haven't cooperated with us at all."

1849, A6

### OBITUARIES

Melinda Solis-Day  
Susan Manley

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### WEATHER



H: 74° L: 48°  
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Mostly Cloudy

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### COVID-19 case count tops 600

The county's coronavirus case count reached 601 on Wednesday, a rise of three from the prior day.

Western county had 376 cases, and eastern county had 225. There were 42 active cases on Wednesday, an increase of two from the

day before. There have been 551 people released from isolation, and eight deaths.

Cases have continued to climb in the county, though they've slowed in recent weeks. There were 525 on Sept. 22. That rose to 541 on Sept. 29, and 553 on Oct. 6. There were 573 cases on Oct. 13.

One person was hospitalized locally Wednesday with COVID-19.

Of the 22,188 tests performed locally, 2.7% of people have tested positive. Nationwide, there were 8,249,011 total cases, and 220,362 deaths, the CDC states.

— The Union staff

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