

# THE UNION



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Bezanson, known as  
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**LOCAL | A3**

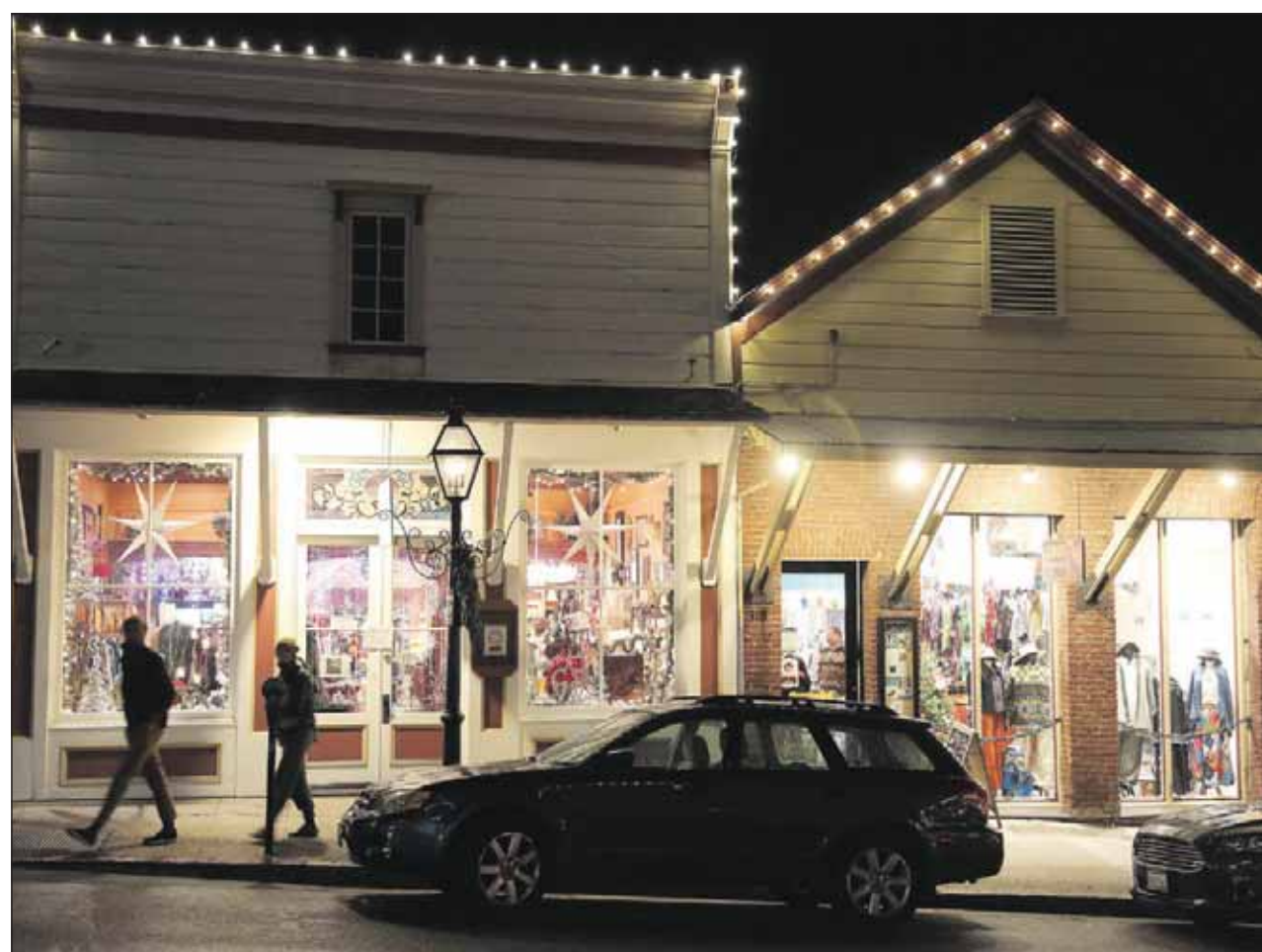
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Wednesday, December 16, 2020

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PHOTOS BY ELIAS FUNEZ/ELIAS FUNEZ@THEUNION.COM

A couple gets some evening shopping done along Broad Street in Nevada City over the weekend.

## Hometown holiday shopping

### Victorian Holiday promotes Nevada City retailers

Elias Funez  
Multimedia Reporter

Nevada City and Grass Valley are having to forego their annual holiday markets — Victorian Christmas and Cornish Christmas — due to COVID-19 this year, but local merchants want the community to know that their businesses are still open to shop in both in person and online.

In Nevada City the Hometown Victorian Holiday is taking the place of the annual winter street fair.

"It's an emphasis on the shops and the retail folks," said Jesse Locks, a member of the Nevada City Chamber of Commerce board of directors. "It's an opportunity for people to check out the many new retailers in Nevada City."

"It's nice to have these new shops next to the older ones that have been here, like Novaks and JJ Jacksons," Locks said.

"For instance, there's a chocolate shop at the top of Broad Street. It's like going into that movie 'Chocolat.'" Locks said of Choquero Chocolate & Gifts at 419 Broad St.

"Then there's another shop right next door, Earth Central Artisans Hub, woman owned, with art that is local and from all over the world."

"It's neat to see the variety," Locks said of the Nevada City merchants.

Though indoor dining is currently not allowed, almost all food and drink establishments are offering some sort of to-go or curbside pickup option.

A list of all the Nevada City Holiday Gift Guide merchants can be found at [www.nvadacitychamber.com/holiday-gift-guide](http://www.nvadacitychamber.com/holiday-gift-guide).



The window display of Abstrakt in Nevada City can be seen at 228 Broad St.

Shoppers can check the Gift Guide with links to online shopping options for certain merchants.

"You can search by category, and hopefully discover others," Locks said of the merchants. "Really part of the whole idea of supporting the retailers this year."

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Novaks Menswear in Nevada City has been a downtown staple for decades.

## Broad Street undergrounding gets funding

John Orona  
Staff Writer

A Nevada City utility undergrounding project nearly a decade in the making can now move forward with funding from the county.

Nevada County supervisors on Tuesday voted to transfer \$500,000 in Rule 20A credits to Nevada City, allowing the \$1.2 million project to proceed after two previous attempts lacked capital.

Under the California Public Utility Commission's Rule 20A program, utility companies set aside \$1 per month charged to customers to help fund a portion of undergrounding projects that reduce fire danger and service interruptions.

Nevada City will borrow from five years of future Rule 20A credits to complete the project. According to a PG&E report, over the last 14 years Grass Valley, Nevada City and Nevada County have averaged \$60,493, \$26,106 and \$466,141, respectively, in annual funds.

According to Nevada City Engineer Bryan

McAlister, with plans already designed from previous attempts, the project could be put to bid in February and completed within the year.

"Nevada City has definitely had issues on East Broad and West Broad and requested undergrounding for years, and we just haven't been able to move forward," Nevada City Mayor Erin Minnett told the board. "It's a benefit to the city, it's a benefit to the (county) government building, and to the surrounding residents."

The lack of underground power lines in Nevada City led PG&E this year to cut more than 250 trees in order to safely re-energize parts of downtown during a Public Safety Power Shut-off. The large-scale mitigation effort provoked protests, tree sittings and arrests before a compromise was reached with activists.

But just as wildfire risk and possible PSPS spells have increased the need for undergrounding, the costs, too, have grown.

According to County

**DOWNTOWN, A5**

## County small businesses can apply for Relief Fund grants

John Orona  
Staff Writer

Nevada County small businesses most impacted by the state stay-at-home order and the county's move into the purple tier will be able to apply for \$5,000 micro-loans starting today through Jan. 6.

Nevada County supervisors approved a \$100,000 challenge grant to the Nevada County Relief Fund Tuesday that they are hoping will be matched by the community.

People can apply or donate at [www.nevcorelief.org](http://www.nevcorelief.org).

Previous rounds have raised nearly \$800,000 in funding, including \$100,000 from the

supervisors opening grant and \$250,000 directed from state Coronavirus Relief Funds.

"The county's contribution to the Nevada County Relief Fund has really helped us tremendously with our fundraising efforts in our community," Co-chair Leo Granucci told the board. "What we've learned from the first three rounds, is that as we approach a potential donor and they find out that the county and community is working as one team on this project, that really encourages their donations."

While previous fundraising rounds were split between nonprofits and

**RELIEF FUND, A5**

### OBITUARIES

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### WEATHER



**H: 52° L: 39°**  
See full forecast,  
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Few Showers

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### County hits 2,123 COVID-19 cases

Nevada County's coronavirus case total reached 2,123 on Tuesday, a rise of 56 from the day before.

Western county had 1,401 cases, and eastern county had 722. There were 530 active cases on Tuesday, a drop of four from the prior day. There have been 1,561

people released from isolation. Thirty-two people have died from COVID-19 in the county, a rise of two from Monday.

Cases have continued to climb in the county, and have undergone a sharp rise recently. There were 929 cases on Nov. 17. That reached 1,163 on Nov. 24, and 1,414 on Dec. 1. There

were 1,811 on Dec. 8.

Nineteen people were hospitalized locally Tuesday with COVID-19.

Of the 31,800 tests performed locally, 6.7% of people have tested positive.

Nationwide, there were 16,317,892 total cases, and 300,032 deaths, the CDC states.

— The Union staff

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NATION & FROM PAGE ONE



AP PHOTO/ANDREW HARNIK

Surrounded by Army cadets, President Donald Trump watches the first half of the 121st Army-Navy Football Game in Michie Stadium at the United States Military Academy, Saturday, in West Point, N.Y.

# Trump asking about special prosecutor for Hunter Biden

Michael Balsamo & Jonathan Lemire  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is considering pushing to have a special counsel appointed to advance a federal tax investigation into the son of President-elect Joe Biden, setting up a potential showdown with incoming acting attorney general Jeffrey Rosen.

Trump — angry that out-going Attorney General William Barr didn't publicly announce the ongoing, two-year investigation into Hunter Biden — has consulted on the matter with White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, White House counsel Pat Cipollone and outside allies.

That's according to several Trump administration officials and Republicans close to the White House who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss private matters.

Beyond appointing a special prosecutor to investigate the younger Biden, the sources said Trump is interested in having another special counsel appointed to look into his own baseless claims of election fraud. But if he's expecting his newly named acting attorney general to go further than Barr on either matter, he could end up quickly disappointed.

Barr on Monday evening announced he will resign effective next week, revealing his plans about a week after Hunter Biden publicly disclosed that he was under investigation related to his finances. It is generally Justice Department policy not to disclose investigations that are in progress, though the subjects of those investigations can.

Rosen, the deputy attorney general, will step into the Justice Department's top job in an acting role. A longtime litigator, he has served as Barr's top deputy since May 2019 but

largely shies away from the spotlight. He said in a statement Tuesday he was "honored" to serve and "will continue to focus on the implementation of the Department's key priorities."

Trump is still weighing his options, considering whether to pressure Rosen to make the special counsel appointment or, if needed, to replace the acting attorney general with someone more likely to carry out his wishes. He has even asked his team of lawyers, including personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, to look into whether the president has the power to appoint a special counsel himself.

A key question will be whether Rosen can stand up to presidential pressure — and potentially withering attacks — in the waning weeks of the Trump administration. If not, Rosen could be cast aside in favor of others more willing to do Trump's bidding.

Believing that a special counsel probe could wound a Biden administration before it even begins, Trump aides have urged the president to push for one, which would make it so the investigation can't be easily stopped by the incoming president. No firm decision has been made.

Trump announced that Barr would be stepping down from his position on Dec. 23, amid lingering tension between the president and the attorney general over the Hunter Biden investigation. Trump was angry for days after learning that Barr knew of the Hunter Biden tax investigation before the election but did not disclose it.

He also was unhappy that Barr said in a widely reported interview with the AP that the Justice Department had not uncovered widespread election fraud that would have affected the results of the election.

## DOWNTOWN

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Public Works Director Trisha Tillotson, the county's most recent undergrounding project at Combie and Magnolia roads cost the county more than \$5 million per mile. The project was completed in September 2019 (beginning in the 1990s) but the county had to send a letter of complaint to the utilities commission before PG&E eventually paid its share

of the costs.

PG&E representatives have said increased costs are why undergrounding in Nevada City has been delayed, and the more time has gone by, the higher costs have grown.

An audit last year found the company diverted more than \$120 million away from the program, which increased wait times and costs.

Tillotson said changes to the program planned for next year could also

phase out funding for jurisdictions without active projects. That would eliminate about \$10 million in funding from Nevada County over the next decade, which currently has no projects planned.

The county will meet with PG&E officials to find and prioritize undergrounding opportunities, Tillotson said.

Councilman Doug Fleming last week floated the idea of a bond issuance to the City Council

to help pay for future undergrounding projects encompassing all of downtown.

"I know that's a big lift in these days and ages," Fleming said. "But once we get through this project and see that it's successful, we can look at something like that to do the rest of downtown."

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## RELIEF FUND

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small businesses, this time local businesses most in need will be the sole focus. That includes restaurants, wineries, retailers and other industries directly impacted by the most recent COVID-19 restrictions.

The county also provided \$1.5 million in grants to seven "anchor institutions" from its \$10 million in state coronavirus relief funds in September.

This round will also have a streamlined application process, aided by software meant to distribute grants equitably across industries and throughout the county, Sierra Business Council Executive Director Kristin

York said.

"Once we have the results of those applications, we will run the list through the oversight committee for approval at the community level and through community development at Nevada County to ensure compliance with regulations," York told the board.

Businesses must be in compliance with public health guidelines to be eligible for the grants, which can be used for rent relief or other critical business expenses to keep them operating.

"It is our hope that this 'challenge grant' will spur renewed giving to help those businesses who are not only struggling to survive but who have demonstrated their commitment

to implementing the necessary public health guidelines to protect their customers, staff, and the larger community," said

board Chair Heidi Hall.

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

## Neil Peterson

July 7, 1939 - November 16, 2020

Neil was born and raised in Nevada City, CA and graduated From Nevada Union High School in 1958. As a teenager he started dismantling cars in his Mom's back yard. Later he started an auto and truck dismantling business in Nevada City. He also worked in construction on Donner Summit with his Father, building Pla-Vada Woodlands subdivision and Pla-Vada ski hill. Neil worked in the logging industry with his own trucks and equipment and also worked for Graham Bros., Robinson Timber and Siller Bros.

Neil was predeceased by his parents, Chester R. Peterson and Barbara (Dolly) Jefferson Peterson. He is survived by his brother Lerry (Sue) and his sons, Richard and James and their families.

Neil spent the last 5 years in an assisted care facility in Auburn due to spinal problems and passed away of natural causes. Per his wishes there will be no services.

## IN BRIEF

### US regulators OK genetically modified pig for food, drugs

NEW YORK — U.S. regulators have approved a genetically modified pig for food and medical products, making it the second such animal to get the green light for human consumption. But the company behind it says there are no imminent plans to sell it for meat.

The pig is genetically engineered to eliminate the presence of alpha-gal, a type of sugar found in many mammals. The sugar makes its way into many products — including medications, cosmetics and food — and can cause allergic reactions in some people.

The main goal of the company behind the pig, United Therapeutics Corp., is to develop medical products, such as blood thinners, that won't set off such reactions, said its spokesman Dewey Steadman. Eventually, the Silver Spring, Maryland-based firm hopes to develop a way for the pig's organs to be transplanted into people.

The pig, called GalSafe, also has commercial potential as food, but Steadman said the company doesn't know when it might be able to secure an agreement with a meat producer to process and sell it.

— Associated Press

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## Donation Day— Help During Christmas

A parade of local school children has brightened the streets of downtown Grass Valley on the Friday before Christmas school break since 1883.

The parade won't take place this year, but the need that inspired Donation Day so many years ago—to help families at Christmas time—remains in our community today.

Monetary donations may be sent to Grass Valley Ladies Relief Society at P.O. Box 1132, Cedar Ridge, CA 95924 so that they may purchase food donations for Interfaith Food Ministry which serves our local community. Hooper & Weaver is proud to support the Grass Valley Ladies Relief Society and we encourage you to support them and our community again this year. Thank you!

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