

Grizzlies stun Bears

Mariposa's Grizzlies shocked Summerville in both teams' season opener last Friday.

See Story on Page B-1



The Official Newspaper of Mariposa County

Mariposa Fair follies

A two-page photographic spread highlights the four days of the Mariposa County Fair & Homecoming.

See Photos on Pages A-7-8



Instruments revitalized

The Mariposa County High School Band Boosters urge anyone who has an old instrument to donate it to the group.

See Story on Page B-4



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WATER DEBATE

Hot-button issue sparks Merced River dispute



ERIK SKINDRUD | THE GAZETTE
Merced Irrigation District spokesman Mike Jensen tests the waters at Lake McClure's Bagby boat ramp last week.

By Erik Skindrud
GAZETTE REPORTER

California is thirsty. With water scarce, and perhaps getting scarcer, why not raise the capacity of Lake McClure by 10 vertical feet? That would capture up to 70,000 additional acre-feet of water in big precipitation years—water that could be used for irrigation and power generation. That's what the Merced Irrigation District, Rep. Jeff Denham and Sen. Diane Feinstein want to explore. "I support raising the New Exchequer Dam in an environmentally-responsible manner," Sen. Feinstein told THE GAZETTE this week. "I am review-

ing how this can be accomplished in a way all sides can support."

But not so fast, a number of pro-environment voices respond. Any step toward raising the dam would require tinkering with federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act protection for the Merced River.

Next Thursday, a community meeting at St. Joseph's Catholic Church will explore the implications of the proposal.

Rep. Denham (R-Atwater) has authored legislation that would remove Wild and Scenic protection for an approximately 1,800-foot section of river extending upstream from the current

protective boundary.

That would bring the maximum lake level to about half a mile from the falls and renowned fishing hole at the North Fork of the Merced River. The current high-water mark is about three-quarters of a mile from the North Fork.

If it passes in the House, and similar legislation passed in the Senate (and the President signed the bill) the new law would let the irrigation district "study the feasibility of the project," Merced Irrigation District (MID) spokesman Mike Jensen said.

SEE DAM ON PAGE A-10

Ceremony marks 9/11 anniversary

Mariposa's 9-11 Memorial Committee has announced a ceremony marking the tenth anniversary of 9-11. The Sept. 11 event will begin at 1 p.m. at the Mariposa Art Park on the corner of Fourth Street and Highway 140. Master of Ceremonies Les Marsden will coordinate the hour-long event to pay tribute to those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001 as well as dedicate the site of the regional 9-11 memorial to be built in the County-owned park over the coming year.

Preceding the ceremony on Sept. 10 the Mariposa American Legion Post will host a pancake breakfast from 8 to 11 a.m. with a portion of the proceeds benefiting the 9-11 Memorial.

The ceremony will also feature the unveiling of a sculpture of four World Trade Center I-

beams donated to the citizens of Mariposa County by the New York-New Jersey Port Authority. The future Memorial was designed by Merced artist Judith Burton.

With consultation of the artist, the artifacts were welded in a chaotic pattern by Mariposa Public Utility District Fire Captain Dennis Buck to simulate the randomness of the rubble pile at Ground Zero. However, the angles are anything but random. Each angle builds on the other at 9, 11, 20 and 01 degrees.

When viewed from above two of the artifacts are welded at 17 degrees to match the number of elapsed minutes between the airplane impacts on the twin towers. The balance of the arc is 343 degrees matching the number of FDNY firefighters to lose their lives on that historic day.

Each I-beam in the sculpture represents a group of people who suffered loss of life; fire

SEE 9/11 ON PAGE A-10

Tragedy recalled 10 years later

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

It was a Tuesday morning in 2001. Most people in Mariposa County were getting ready to start their day, preparing for school or work or household chores. It was sunny and warm, typical of early September.

Then, in a blink of an eye, the entire world changed. Everything the nation knew as normal was forever altered. The terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington DC created a new definition of the American way of life.

Everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they first heard the news. Many people watched the events unfold on live television. Others were away from the creature comforts of

SEE ANNIVERSARY ON PAGE A-10

Local schools test well, but get dinged by federal rules

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

Mariposa County Schools have consistently performed well above state and regional averages on standardized test scores, and this year is no exception. Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards, however, are pushing those schools into "failing" status.

The California Department of Education released the complicated set of data last week that shows how schools scored on the tests and how much they improved over last year's scores. Even though many Mariposa schools are well over the state

target of 800 and others are almost at that rate, the federal government is slapping Program Improvement (PI) status on three local schools.

Even the state's top education officials don't understand the discrepancy. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson said a record number of California schools met or exceeded the state's Academic Performance Index (API) target, which the NCLB labeled 913 newly-identified campuses as failing. "The failure here is our politics, not our public schools," Torlakson said.

NCLB requires schools and districts who don't

meet the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria for two consecutive years to be identified as PI. Schools in PI are subject to a five-year timeline of intervention activities.

All but one Mariposa County school met the state's API growth requirement. Only Sierra Home School did not reach its state growth target. Even though Mariposa Elementary and Mariposa County High School did meet the state requirements, they did not meet the federal requirements. They are now in PI year-one status.

SEE TESTS ON PAGE A-10

Hold on, it's going to be a bumpy ride



JILL BALLINGER | THE GAZETTE

Doug O'Bannon got the ride of his life when he reached for the ribbon on the calf he roped during the fair's local saddle roping competition last Sunday. For complete photo coverage of the fair, see pages A-7 and A-8.

Fair closes with high attendance, little trouble

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

When the ferris wheel stopped turning, and the last of the animals was trucked out, the 2011 Mariposa County Fair ended its run. And quite a run it was.

A very tired, but happy, Fair Manager Brian Bullis

said everything was up a bit from last year. "So we're very, very pleased," he said on Tuesday.

For some, the thought of this possibly being the last fair brought them out. For others, it was the fact that they had never, ever, missed a fair in their lives. "It was an outstanding fair," Bullis continued. "I think that everybody kind of savored it more now that it is threatened."

Mariposa's fair, and many others in the state, are under the gun after the state eliminated all fair funding earlier this year. A very active group, the Friends of the Fair Foundation, was out in force all weekend to drum up community support for the non-profit organization hoping to save the local fair. Business was brisk at its booth all weekend. The group was collecting memberships for \$20 for individuals and \$40 per

SEE FAIR ON PAGE A-10

Supervisors back sidewalk upgrades

By Jill Ballinger
GAZETTE EDITOR

Downtown Mariposa can be difficult to navigate on foot, even for the most able-bodied person. It can also be absolutely prohibitive to someone who has a disability.

Now, at least one downtown building owner wants to do something about that, and she appears to have the backing of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors. On Tuesday, the board discussed a request from Helen Kwalwasser that asked for its support in getting Caltrans to make downtown sidewalks compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

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First Baptist Church finally ready for use See Page A-3

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WEATHER

According to the National Weather Service, the weekend's weather will bring lowering, near normal temperatures.

FRIDAY



Partly sunny

94° 61°

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

What effect would raising Lake McClure's level have on Mariposa County? If you would like to share your opinion, please send a "letter to the editor." Instructions are on Page A-5.

