



**Lake Berryessa From Space
Before and After the LNU Lightning Complex Fire
August-September 2020**

Sorry, Here's What You Get When You Have Space Left Over in a Newspaper!

He who laughs last thinks slowest
The main thing I want this 2020
summer season is for someone to
wake me when it's over.

I renamed my iPod "The Titanic", so
when I plug it in, it says "The Titanic
is syncing."

When life gives you melons, you're
dyslexic

I lost my job at the bank on my very
first day. A woman asked me to check
her balance, so I pushed her over

Hear about the new restaurant called
Karma? There's no menu - you get
what you deserve

When the past, present, and future go
camping they always argue. It's
intense tense in tents

A mean crook going down stairs = A
condescending con, descending

My dad, unfortunately, passed away
when we couldn't remember his blood
type... His last words to us were,
"Be positive!"

What do you call the wife of a hippie?
A Mississippi

There was a kidnapping at school
yesterday. Don't worry, though - he
woke up

What do you get when you mix
alcohol and literature?
Tequila mockingbird

My ex-wife still misses me. But her
aim is starting to improve

What washes up on tiny beaches?
Microwaves

FUN FACT: cats are made of iron,
lithium, and neon. FeLiNe

What do you call a super articulate
dinosaur? A Thesaurus

Police were called to a daycare center
where a three-year-old was resisting a
rest

I don't suffer from insanity. I enjoy
every minute of it



The Lake Berryessa News

Without *THE LAKE BERRYESSA NEWS* there would be no Lake Berryessa news!



September 2020

Opportunity, Irony, Tragedy, Recovery - The Lake Berryessa Business Cycle?

Opportunity

On August 4, 2020 the North Bay Business Journal published a story titled, "Napa County's hidden destination: Will Lake Berryessa's future shine again?" by Gary Quackenbush. It was a very positive review of the potential revitalization of the Lake Berryessa recreational community under the new Managing Partner Agreement between Napa County and the Bureau of Reclamation scheduled to take effect on November 1.

The story was filled with optimistic interviews with various business owners at the lake. Marcia Ritz, proprietor of the Spanish Flat General Store, said that people tired of sheltering in place have been coming to the lake in great numbers since March. She said it has been her best year so far in over a decade.

Many of us remember the lake's better times. Motels, cabins, several restaurants, marinas with boat slips and other amenities dotted the 28-mile long, three-mile wide lake in Napa County. We all hope the new County-Reclamation partnership will result in positive change and growth.

"Now that the agreement is final, we are moving forward with the county process," said Molly Rattigan, deputy Napa executive officer who has been managing Napa County-bureau agreement negotiations for several years. "We plan to send out bidding packages by September.

"It has been too long since we experienced a thriving Lake Berryessa," said Supervisor Diane Dillon, chair of the Napa County Board of Supervisors. "We want to work

with the community to restore economic vitality to the region surrounding one of Napa County's most important recreational areas. We thank the Bureau of Reclamation for working with us and for providing the county the opportunity to bring back vibrant concessions at Lake Berryessa."



Irony

Exactly two weeks later, on August 18, an unprecedented lightning storm caused fires to break out all over the tinder dry region. Rainfall in the 2019-2020 season was the lowest it had been in more than 22 years. Within one day the fire raged up and over the hills around Lake Berryessa and destroyed large parts of the community. Positivity was no match for reality.

Heartbreaking stories filled the news media. Most of the Spanish Flat neighborhood burned to the dirt. Although Marcia Ritz's Spanish Flat Country Store survived, the Spanish Flat Mobile Villa next door was destroyed - including Marcia's home.

"I'm an artist. I lost all of my artwork. I lost

all of my friend's original art that I had, and everything I owned," Ritz said. Now, Ritz thinks she'll have to close her business. "There is no customer base. There are maybe two houses remaining on the hill," she said, waving her hand to gesture down Berryessa Knoxville Road.

Tragedy

The Spanish Flat residential community had become an inferno of burning rubble. The fire soon raced around the lower part of the lake, sped up Steele Canyon Road and burned down about 100 of the 300 homes in the Berryessa Highlands. Everyone interviewed for the original Business Journal upbeat article was now being interviewed in news stories about the tragedy that had struck them so quickly. Breathtakingly sad stories of loss filled the news media.

The biggest tragedy this time compared to the last two times the lake was threatened by wildfire, was the lack of fire suppression support from the air. The huge numbers of fires started at the same time by thousands of lightning strikes simply overwhelmed the available capacity to fight them. Although fire fighters with trucks and bulldozers on the ground did what they could, the fires were often simply allowed to burn.

Recovery - Short Term

A week after they began the wildfires were extinguished or contained. The region had no electricity due to hundreds of wooden power poles being burned and wires melted.

Roads in and out of the region were closed for a week after that to allow Napa County, PG&E, AT&T, and others to clear the roads of downed trees and debris. PG&E crews swarmed the area installing hundreds of new power poles in less than a week.

Power was finally restored to the Berryessa Highland residential area on September 2, about two weeks after it was lost in the original lightning storm, but other areas may yet take weeks to be restored. The official PG&E estimate is that all power should be restored to the region by September 20.

Continued on Page 2.

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Napa County stepped up to provide immediate support with Local Assistance Centers in the Berryessa Highlands and at the County's Health & Human Services campus. The state was declared a federal disaster area and FEMA is on site to provide emergency resources and long-term financial aid. Thirty year fixed loans at 1.5% are available to fire victims.

As with the last fires here in Napa County, the big issue will be the response of insurance companies to the challenges of helping their clients as quickly as possible. And as last time, people are finding out that many insurance companies are not particularly responsive. As most North Bay Business Journal readers are aware, one of the largest segments of the American economy is, ironically again, FIRE - Finance, Insurance, Real Estate. Since the present economic system, is predatory capitalism, FIRE is in the business of making money - not helping people.

Some of my neighbors are receiving excellent customer service from reputable insurance companies - but some are not. Unfortunately, some companies first give folks a paperwork runaround and then dispute a claim looking for any technicality to deny paying their rightful amount. This is an unconscionable business practice.

Recovery - Long Term

In the aftermath of this disaster there a several business questions to be addressed. For example, will private insurance companies be able to continue to offer fire insurance coverage. Even after the fires two years ago most companies either cancelled homeowner's insurance coverage or more than doubled their homeowner policy premiums in the Lake Berryessa region.

In response Napa county built two local fire stations in the Berryessa Highlands and Berryessa Estates. Companies then lowered their premiums. But with the extent of the present California

disaster, will they cancel all fire coverage as happened many years ago with earthquake insurance. The state had to step in with the California Earthquake Authority. Will a similar agency be created for fire coverage?

A more important question to many of us who have worked long and hard on the revitalization of Lake Berryessa is whether the fire will have any impact on Napa County's willingness to continue with the signed Managing Partner Agreement and get the bids out soon.

For rational business people who understand the future recreational value of the lake as described in detail in the Ragatz report: Lake Berryessa: An Untapped Resort Development Opportunity the results of the fire should not make an impact on their decision. The resorts will be built on the lakeshore and made as fire safe as modern technology and the latest safety codes can make them - virtually bulletproof to wildfires.

This view was validated recently by the Napa County supervisors. The supervisors interviewed for the original North Bay Business Journal article were positive in

their outlook for the future of Lake Berryessa. They apparently still are.

On Aug. 18, (ironically, the day the fires began) the Board of Supervisors agreed to create a Lake Berryessa concessions manager position to oversee the resort sites.

The next steps were to be filling that position and inviting proposals from potential private sector concessionaires to both redevelop and operate the resorts. How quickly the county seeks bids is up to the Board of Supervisors.

County Board of Supervisors Chair Diane Dillon in a recent interview said that she doesn't think the Hennessey Fire will keep the county from reaching this goal.

"I think there are still more positives than otherwise in terms of why people would come to Lake Berryessa," she said. "That landscape does look different," Dillon said. "But when you look at other places where fire has occurred, in 2017, 2018 or even 2019, it springs back pretty readily."



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Dillon said that optimally, renovation work at the resorts could still begin next spring. There wouldn't have been any construction this year even without the fire, she said.

Opportunity, Irony, Tragedy, Recovery: The Lake Berryessa business cycle appears to be returning to the opportunity phase - hopefully a long-lived one.

Opportunity: a situation or condition favorable for attainment of a goal.

Irony: the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect.

Situational irony involves a striking reversal of what is expected or intended.

Tragedy: an event causing great suffering, destruction, and distress, such as a serious accident, crime, or natural catastrophe.

Recovery: regaining of or possibility of regaining something lost or taken away.

September 2020 Horoscopes

Aquarius (1/20-2/18): You'll suffer from a continuing inability to enjoy anything but the company of friends and family, the satisfaction of a job well done, and the knowledge that you have lived a life of dignity and irony.

Pisces (2/19-3/20): Love means different things to different people, but you'll have a hard time finding someone to whom it means "a profound degree of affection."

Aries (3/21-4/19): You'll be taken aback by the news that your life story has been changed from a lightweight romantic comedy to a lengthy and detailed police procedural.

Taurus (4/20 – 5/20): You have evidently failed to learn the lessons of history, as you begin next week by attempting to find the Northwest Passage, unite Britain and Ireland, and get your family to stop exchanging Christmas gifts.

Gemini (5/21 – 6/21): You'll be bitten by a vampire and become one of the Immortal Sanguinary Children Of The Night just when the whole fad is about to blow over.

Cancer (6/22-7/22): The parandrus, an antlered, hairy, cloven-hoofed beast the size of an ox and notable for its ill temper and foul breath, was thought to be mythical until people got a load of you.

Leo (7/23-8/22): Your future has yet to be determined due to a malevolent online community's massive denial-of-service attack on the relevant zodiacal elements.

Virgo (8/23-9/22): Pluto rising in your sign indicates trouble in your romantic life, which is problematic because, well, for astronomical reasons, Pluto's going to be rising in your sign for the next 87 years.

Libra (9/23-10/22): You'll resolve not to fall for the same old tricks just as your shoelace goes untied, a menacing figure looms up right behind you, and you finally find true love.

Scorpio (10/23-11/21): The rescue workers won't need to knock down an entire wall of your house to get you out, but they want to make you feel extra fat.

Sagittarius (11/22-12/21): You never thought you'd get tired of the endless parade of deep-fried food that is your life, and sure enough, it hasn't happened yet.

Capricorn (12/22-1/19): Only one major thing will happen to you this week. After that, however, it won't really be possible for anything to ever happen to you again.

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Amidst all the chaos, Lake Berryessa lost another long-time friend.

Rosemarie Wilson passed away at 84 on July 30, 2020.

Born in San Francisco she raised her family in Pacifica then moved to the Berryessa Pines. She was a Real Estate Broker and very involved in the Lake Berryessa Senior Center with her husband.

She had 8 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren whom she adored. She moved to American Canyon and helped form their Senior Center and was involved greatly in the community. She was loved and will be missed. We will miss our mom greatly. Cori Badertscher

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Onion Headlines

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Years Of Therapy Give Girlfriend Unfair Advantage In Fight

Dog Hopes He Doesn't Get Stuck With Chatty Groomer Again

End Of An Ear: Autocorrect Begins Treating Our Tweet's Likely If Knowing Whatever Were Going To Say, Dies It Completely Wronged

13-Year-Old Mourns Loss Of Youth Upon Realizing He No Longer Feels Anything About Monster Trucks

Steam in hot water.

Some cliches are just too true. In 2017 Evan Kilkus, Associate Editor of the Lake Berryessa News, made the national news for his real time reporting on the fire approaching Lake Berryessa and the Berryessa Highlands.

As the Los Angeles Times wrote, "He wouldn't evacuate, then used Facebook Live to broadcast firestorm in his hometown. While many heeded the evacuation order as the Atlas Peak fire swept through, Kilkus, 34, refused to leave. Instead, he turned into a one-man news team for his neighbors."

Using Facebook Live, he streamed real-time video of the flames from atop a ridgeline accessible from his father's property. For seven days, he narrated and posted videos, providing context and updates to residents on edge about the fate of their homes. While newspapers and TV stations documented the unfolding disaster across Napa and Sonoma counties, the 34-year-old resident of Berryessa Highlands became a one-man breaking-news operation.

Kilkus and his father, Peter Kilkus, run the Lake Berryessa News, which describes itself as the only news source covering the tiny communities along the lake. "Without **The Lake Berryessa News** there would be no Lake Berryessa news!" is the news outlet's mantra.

For Kilkus, it's a simple but vital mission: "At the Lake Berryessa News, this is what we do. We get all the

important information and we provide it," he said.

Fast forward three years later, the stories in the 2017 news media could simply be copied and pasted into stories for 2020. The stories were the same, only the outcomes changed.

He wouldn't evacuate, then used Facebook Live to broadcast firestorm in his hometown. While many heeded the evacuation order as the Hennessey fire swept through, Kilkus, now 37, refused to leave. Instead, he again turned into a one-man news team for his neighbors.

Staying put despite an evacuation order, Kilkus, associate editor of the Lake Berryessa News, turned his smartphone into a source of live pictures, videos and updates for residents to keep in touch with the lakeside communities they had been forced to leave behind. For two weeks this time, the Lake Berryessa News' Facebook page was again almost the only source of images and reports from around Lake Berryessa, starting with dramatic nighttime footage of flames along a ridgeline and later documenting the closing-off - and eventual reopening - of roads and neighborhoods.

Tragically, unlike the miraculous result from 2017 when the lake communities and the Berryessa Highlands were saved due to the massive air support of supertankers and a slew of water-dropping helicopters, 2020 brought unmitigated disaster.

After saving the Lake Berryessa News headquarters (the Kilkus home) above the Berryessa Highlands with his

amazingly-engineered wildfire fire sprinkler system, he reported live several times each day.

But rather than reporting the good news of all houses saved as last time, Kilkus had to broadcast the bad news of massive destruction. Watching some of your best friends' houses being burned to the ground would take an emotional toll on anyone, even someone nicknamed "Mr. Positivity".

Kilkus worked with the firefighters every day and was able to save the house of a Rimrock friend - one "bright" spot in the gloom. Now that the recovery phase of this

disaster is moving forward, the Lake Berryessa News will continue to bring you the latest information.



Exterior Wildfire Sprinklers
by Evan Kilkus

I installed 16 sprayers around the house plus 4 around the perimeter. The system includes two 5,000 gallon water tanks, two 4" draft hydrants, three pressurized 1.5" hydrants, a pump and lots of valves.

It works amazingly well, and the firefighters I have shown it to wish every home had something similar. Our home has new concrete siding, ember resistant vents, and fantastic defensible space, so the next logical thing was add water!



Frontline Fire Protection, LLC is a commercial company that does similar fire protection installations. <https://frontlinefireprotectionllc.com/> Systems start at about \$15,000 with more thorough coverage to \$35,000.

"2020 Can Go to Hell"

In the sprawling destruction of California's wildfires, **one photo became an instant icon** for 2020's miseries: On a hillside roaring with flames stood a sign that asked visitors to a senior center to wear masks, wash their hands and be safe. "Come Join Us," it beckoned creepily. The virus. Lost jobs. A world aflame.

Yep, said Judi Vollmer, whose trailer home down the road from the iconic sign that pretty much sums up life right now. Ms. Vollmer, 65, was succinct: "2020 can go to hell. This has been the worst year of my life."

Somehow, that welcome sign outside the Lake Berryessa senior center was still standing on Tuesday as residents trickled back through police barricades and road closures to check out what little had survived. Much of the lakefront community of retirees and young families who commute to landscaping, winery and service jobs in wealthier corners of Napa County had been reduced to a thicket of tangled steel and ash.

"We've lost so many people who won't be back," said Jerry Rehmke, 80, who runs the country store with his wife, Marcia Ritz, 77. Her trailer home, with all of the drawings and paintings she had made, burned in the Spanish Flat Villa mobile home park, along with Ms. Vollmer's trailer and about 50 others.

Ms. Ritz moved to Lake Berryessa 13 years ago and took over running the country store (which survived, as did some marinas and campgrounds). Their store actually boomed during the pandemic as stir-crazy boaters and anglers flooded the area and snapped up orders of chicken sandwiches and meatloaf. That is over now, and faced with years of rebuilding and a bleak economic future, Ms. Ritz said she was ready to quit altogether. "Our customers have gone," Ms. Ritz said on Tuesday morning, a few minutes after she woke up from another night sleeping outside on an air mattress beside the country store.

For the past four years, people around the lake said they watched fires march toward their homes, only to be beaten back. The fire, like the pandemic, has hit California's poorest residents hardest. Homeowners able to keep up with the complications and rising costs of insuring property in a fire zone had a safety net. But Ms. Vollmer said her carrier dropped her after a wildfire a few years ago. The trailer was her life's investment and her retirement plan, and it burned alongside the \$3,000 in cash she had tucked away inside.

Excerpted from "2020 Can Go to Hell": The Story Behind the Viral Fire Photo That Said It All, By Jack Healy, New York Times, Published Aug. 26, 2020



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I've appreciated your continued support over the years, so I wanted to reach out to let you know of some exciting news! The Terra Firma Global Partners signs you've become accustomed to in the neighborhood will soon look very different. The company I love so much and you've learned to trust has partnered with Corcoran Global Living. We will have a new name and sign but the heart of the company is still the same. Our leadership, agents and commitment to the community remain. Feel free to reach out, I'd love to chat about this transition and how I can help you with your real estate needs.

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My condolences to the entire Lake Berryessa community!

I sell HOMES for a living. I help people's homeownership goals come true. I've been a resident of the community, own property in the area and have friends, family and dear clients that are part of the community!

Our homes are supposed to be a safe haven and our comfort zones. A place to live with our families, pets and enjoy with friends. For many that reality has changed. My wish for the community is to build new memories and make the community a place where you can enjoy HOME again.

It's too soon to tell how this will change the real estate landscape of Lake Berryessa, but I know this community is resilient and the market will come back robust as ever!

This is still a destination location and has become an attraction to locals and visitors due to COVID.

I look forward to continuing to work alongside you to bring back the community stronger than ever!

4 **Turtle Rock Bar and Cafe Survives Another Wildfire**

As flames spread around the intersection of Highway 128 at Knoxville Road, it didn't look good for the Turtle Rock Bar and Cafe. By around 2:30 p.m., the longtime rural hangout was in the cross-hairs of the fire which eventually surrounded Lake Berryessa and destroyed much of nearby Spanish Flat.

There were no fire crews or helicopters on site yet, and the winds were blowing about 40 mph. "The wind and smoke was coming right at the bar/cafe.

The Turtle Rock motel (across the street) looked like it was catching on fire. If that went up in flames, Leung was worried that his bar would be next.

He had one big advantage: his own 2,600-gallon water tank, pump and fire hoses. The equipment was installed after the 2017 wildfires hit the area. Friends and neighbors jumped in to help. Then, a fire strike crew arrived and they started hammering away at the fire. Their job was likely made easier because Leung had also cleared more defensible space around his property, located at 2000 Capell Valley Road.

"It works," Leung said about the fire prevention strategy of clearing brush and trees from around buildings and structures. "And it saved us. The flames blew over us".

"We made it through," he said. "We were very fortunate." In the moment of the firefight, there's a lot of anxiety and adrenaline, he said. There's no time to think. "We've been through it before — three years ago," he said. "You just do what you gotta do and hope for the best."

When asked about remaining in an area that seems to be prone to wildfires, Leung didn't hesitate. His family has lived in the area for 40 years. His home — also safe — is just minutes away.

"The cafe is my livelihood.. And if that goes then my livelihood is gone," he said. "I don't think the county would let me replace that building" where it is now, he said. "If that goes, Turtle Rock is gone forever."



Spanish Flat Country Store Survives Store Owner, Marcia Ritz, Loses Home

Marcia Ritz is lucky. Or at least half lucky. The Hennesey Fire, part of the LNU Lightning Complex Fire, tore through the area on Aug. 18. Ritz and her husband Jerry Rehmke, 80, rode out the fire with nine other people aboard a pontoon boat as flames surrounded Lake Berryessa.

Her general store, Spanish Flat Country Store & Deli in the Lake Berryessa community of Spanish Flat, was left standing after the Hennesey Fire swept through her neighborhood on the western shore of Lake Berryessa. But almost everything else in the neighborhood - including the mobile home park where Ritz lived - was destroyed. Also badly damaged were the small hillside communities off Berryessa Knoxville Road.



"I'm an artist, I lost all of my artwork, I lost all of my friend's original art that I had, and everything I owned," Ritz said. Now, Ritz thinks she'll have to close her business. "There is no customer base. There are maybe two houses remaining on the hill," she said, waving her hand to gesture down Berryessa Knoxville Road.

Ironically, Ritz was interviewed by the North Bay Business Journal only weeks ago and said at the time that since March it has been her best year so far in over a decade.

Still, Ritz is glad to have her life, and the lives of her friends, after a close call with the fire that had her fleeing - in a group of about 10 people - in a pontoon boat to the middle of the lake the evening of Aug. 18. As the fire surrounded them, they got into the boat and set off, watching the hills around them burn. They stayed on the water — staring in awe and terror — for four or five hours. "We drove out and you could see the devastation," she said. "Trees were smoldering."

Don't cheat and open up a dictionary.

Did you know....Nothing starts with the letter "N" and ends with the letter "G".

Not even a niggling doubt about this?

Too Much Space to Leave Empty

Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon?

There's great food, but no atmosphere.

What do you call a fake noodle?

An impasta.

What do you call cheese that isn't yours?

Nacho cheese.

Q: Why should you never laugh at your spouse's choices?
A: Because you're one of them.

I was a bookkeeper for 10 years. The local library wasn't too happy about it.

What do you get if you apply enough heat and pressure to Pringles?
Fission chips

I was in the middle of a heated conversation when I said "Mark my words!!"

It's nice to have a guy called Mark bringing my dictionary to me whenever I need it.

New study shows bodies found from the Bermuda Triangle all died from heat exhaustion. Everyone knows its 180 degrees inside a triangle, I don't know why people even bother traveling through it.

Today I learned that heat makes things expand.

My girlfriend is REALLY hot.

Will Darwin's Bison Become A Symbol For Lake Berryessa's Recovery?

