

WINE COUNTRY FIRES

DANGER FAR FROM OVER



Peter DaSilva / Special to The Chronicle
Embers still glow at a burned house on Mount Veeder Road in Napa County after flames from the Nuns Fire scorched the area. The blaze joined the Norrbom Fire and combined consumed nearly 15,000 acres.

Death toll: Count hits 31, expected to jump with hundreds still missing
By Kimberly Veklerov, Jill Tucker, Melody Gutierrez and Peter Fimrite

The death toll from Northern California’s horrendous wildfires jumped to 31 on Thursday as the scorched ground began to finally cool and search-and-recovery teams with cadaver dogs headed into the burn zones of Santa Rosa to find the bodies buried under the ash and rubble.
Fires were still threatening residential areas and evacuations were still in effect on the southeast side of Santa Rosa Thursday, but farther north, the emergency response had turned into a grim search for what authorities fear could be dozens, even hundreds, more dead.
“We’re moving into a recovery phase,”
Fires continues on A10

Family’s tragedy: In pool to escape flames, wife dies in husband’s arms
By Erin Allday

As fire raged all around them and smoke choked their lungs, Carmen and Armando Berriz had no choice but to cling to one another while immersed in a swimming pool behind their rented house on the north edge of Santa Rosa.
They held on through the long hours of the night, until the flames that had destroyed the house on the forested cul-de-sac finally began to recede, until the heat was no longer unbearable. And just before daybreak, just as the worst of the inferno had passed, Carmen Berriz stopped breathing. She died in the
Couple continues on A9

Changes: Northern part of state becoming more like blaze-prone south
By Kurtis Alexander

The catastrophic fires that have ravaged Wine Country this week may be unprecedented in their toll, but they’re only the latest in a wave of infernos that have blasted through the hills and valleys north of San Francisco in recent years. And the trend is likely to worsen.
As temperatures climb across the West and as a sprawling Bay Area expands development into increasingly rural reaches, Northern California is becoming more akin to Southern California, where warm weather and people staking trophy homes along far-flung cliffs
Climate continues on A12

Pollution: Smoke spews dangerous toxins across the Bay Area, fouling air, creating health hazards

By Erin Allday

The air quality in much of the Bay Area this week has at times been comparable to — or even worse than — Beijing, one of the most notoriously polluted cities in the world, as smoke from the Wine Country wildfires drifts south and settles over the region.
Smoke-choked residents wore masks while biking or walking to work, and even on BART trains and inside offices. Schools kept restless

Riley Fones, 4, wears a mask to protect her from smoke engulfing Santa Rosa. Children are especially at risk because their lungs are still developing.

students indoors all day, or canceled classes altogether. A hundred miles from the fires, people showed up in emergency rooms saying they were having trouble breathing.
The brown-hued sunlight, ash falling like snow, and a persistent campfire smell are the obvious signs of heavy pollution. But more concerning are the invisible, noxious particulates carried in the smoke. These microscopic particles are easily inhaled and can make their
Smoke continues on A12



Gabrielle Lurie / The Chronicle

31

deaths from fires throughout Northern California

397

people still reported missing in Sonoma County

8,000

firefighters battling 21 active California wildfires

4,800

people staying at 42 emergency shelters statewide

2,834

homes destroyed in Santa Rosa