

15 MINUTES

## Treasure trove

One of the few businesses in Paradise to survive the Camp Fire was Mary Nieland's Attic Treasures Antique Mall. It was also fortunate for many other local entrepreneurs, as her two-story complex on the Skyway houses wares from dozens of dealers, each in their own booth. Nieland, 68, was born and raised in Paradise, and opened Attic Treasures 23 years ago. She says since reopening after the fire, many customers have visited her store as a kind of therapy to reassure themselves that at least parts of what they remember of Paradise remain. Visit Attic Treasures at 7409 Skyway, Wednesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. You can also find it on Facebook or call 876-1541 for more info.

### How has business been since the Camp Fire?

It's been very good. About half of our large clientele live in Paradise, and half come from surrounding towns to make sure we're OK and support a Paradise business. Many locals say walking around inside here helps their mental health and has a healing effect on them.

### How did Attic Treasures escape destruction?

Well, our patio and a corner of the roof caught fire, but otherwise we did good. Mostly because there were two fire trucks parked right next door at the Paradise Skilled Nursing Home during the fire. It's a convalescent home that I think the fire department really wanted to save, but unfortunately it burned down.

### What kind of things are people buying most?

Mostly household items, since we are one of the only places in town to sell them. Things like dishes, cooking utensils and small furniture. Also many people want arts and crafts supplies for something healing to do while they sit in their trailers, often with no TV or internet.

### Did your home survive?

Yes, because three days before the fire, I felt an internal warning that a fire was coming, so I

PHOTO BY VIC CANTU



soaked my grounds those three days with sprinklers and a garden hose. The morning of the fire, I saw it in the distance and placed my sprinklers on the roof, full blast. Mine was one of only three homes in my 22-house neighborhood to survive. Afterward, I heard from several people that they also felt something inexplicable was coming which they needed to prepare for. The difference is, I listened and acted on it. If you get messages out of the blue persistently, you need to listen.

### How did you escape the fire?

It was harrowing. My dog and I were stuck in my truck in Skyway traffic for 2 1/2 hours before Cal Fire officials told us to get out and run to where a bus was waiting at Walgreens. We were picked up by a random Filipino family and made it to Chico OK.

### Did you lose many dealers because of the fire?

Seven had to move, but we still have 30, and will add four more soon. We are one of the only antique stores left in Paradise, but I'd rather have my town back.

—VIC CANTU

THE GOODS

## Dressed to impress



by  
Meredith J. Cooper

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Chico may have bid farewell to most of its department stores over the past decade, and it's a bummer that we've never been able to attract a big name like Macy's, but I've honestly never known this town to be overly concerned with brand names.

That's a good thing. Chico has always felt more individual than the larger metropolises I've called home. That's because we have variety—we do have **Old Navy** and **American Eagle Outfitters** but also a bunch of cool locally owned shops with hand-picked threads. And we're soon to have a cool new chain store: **Tilly's**.

When **Aaron Brothers** closed its Chico store last summer, it left a void in the shopping center anchored by **Best Buy**. It will be vacant no more. I was admittedly unfamiliar with Tilly's when a co-worker alerted me to its impending arrival. But upon a little research, I understood her excitement. Tilly's focuses on California style, mostly for younger people—teenagers and young adults—and features brands like **O'Neill**, **Rip Curl**, and **Roxy**. I look forward to checking it out.

**MORE CLOTHING** Chico isn't the only one preparing for a new clothing store in town. Oroville's **Ross Dress For Less** is poised to open any day. I drove by earlier this week and saw the huge "opening soon" sign above the door, and the internet tells me they're hiring. Good stuff!

**FOOD NEWS** For anyone living in east Oroville or the foothills of Concow and Yankee Hill—or anyone who likes a good motorcycle ride—**Scoters Cafe** is a household name. It's been a local favorite for decades, a fun place to gather over a good burger and pint of beer. The cafe survived the fire, owner **Dan Salmon** recently finished treatment for prostate cancer (congrats!), and he and wife **Bonnie** are ready to reopen.

The Salmons recently announced on KRCR—and subsequently on the Scooters Facebook page—that they're scaling back a bit, going back to a mom-and-pop operation. They expect to be open by Feb. 27, but are awaiting their alcohol license and a new phone hookup from AT&T before doing so. Scooter's is located at 11975 State Highway 70; find it on Facebook for updates.

**NEW DRINKIN' SPOT** Chico certainly isn't hurting for places to throw one back, but maybe that's why the newest spots offer a little *je ne sais quoi*, a little something extra. Leave it to the **James family** to do it right. I actually haven't made it over to **Strong Water** just yet and they're keeping pretty mum on details, other than it focuses on "hand-crafted classic cocktails," but I hear it's pretty rad. Nestled in among the family's **Wine Time** and **Lost Dutchman Taproom** drinking spots, I can't imagine it's not. Expect an update soon!

**HAPPY V-DAY!** I would be remiss to overlook the fact that this issue comes out on Valentine's Day. Last week's cover story, featuring sexy local dishes, was so much fun it really got me excited about food (but when am I not, really?). If you missed it, check out "Passion plates," Feb. 7. It's worth it, I swear.

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## Disability Support Group

Are you interested in joining a support group for people living with disabilities?

Please come check out our new disability support group!

WHEN: 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month, 2:30pm-4pm, 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month, 10:30am-12pm

WHERE: Disability Action Center office,  
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