

15 MINUTES

PHOTO BY ANDRE BYIK



Returning in style

Frank Nunes evacuated Paradise the morning of Nov. 8, 2018. It was raining fire outside his barbershop and Nunes—aka Frank the Barber—told his wife, Nilene, it was time to close up and get out. The shop at 468 Pearson Road—formerly Delbert's Barber Shop—was spared by the Camp Fire, but the road to recovery has been a “long, hard process,” Nunes said, explaining that the burned-out lots surrounding the business had to be cleaned up before he reopened. Earlier this month, the duo reestablished under a new name: The Outpost Barber & Beauty Shop. The Nuneses met in beauty school, and they have more than 70 years of combined experience cutting hair. On a recent morning, customers streamed in at a steady pace, and a California Highway Patrol officer stopped in to say hello. Nunes said he cuts the officer's hair, which is worn in a slicked back pompadour with short sides, a style that resembles Brad Pitt's in the movie *Fury*. The officer, he said, is “kind of a star in the CHP realm because of that haircut,” adding that even motorists who get pulled over compliment him. The Outpost is open 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesday–Friday, and 9 a.m.–3 p.m. on Saturday. Walk-ins are welcome. Nunes sat down with the CN&R in between cuts to talk about how business is going.

How have customers welcomed the reopening?

Oh, they love it. We have gotten such a good reply. There have been people that I haven't seen since the fire, and now they are actually coming in here. That's been really heartwarming for me. They were waiting for us to

open up. ... We have people from Chico coming in. People coming down from Magalia. Yankee Hill. Concow. As far away as Weaverville. It's really awesome.

Have they been opening up about the fire?

Oh, yes. Now, of course, all talk is Camp Fire and the loss. I feel like I've been there for the people that tell their stories, and that's been comforting because we have all gone through the same experience. But, of course, some people have had it a lot worse. It's very humbling for us.

What draws you to the profession?

The people. Being able to take care of people. I haven't been able to travel, but if you listen to people's stories, they take you everywhere. It's the people and the craft.

What makes a good haircut?

Understanding where the person's really coming from. Knowing that everyone wears a different style. ... You're just there to enhance. Like, even somebody that doesn't have any hair, you can still make them feel good. It's creating a feeling. That's the last thing I ask everyone: “Do you feel better?” Even if you thought you looked better, it's, “Do you feel better?”

What's the answer?

They usually say yes. Always happy. Never a bad thing. So, I think I do make people feel better, and that's what I'm trying to do.

—ANDRE BYIK

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