



The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 110 No. 10

<https://carmelpinecone.com>

March 8-14, 2024

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Daniels easily wins race for county supervisor

By CHRIS COUNTS

COLLECTING NEARLY 60 percent of the vote in a three-way race, Kate Daniels cruised to a win on Election Day Tuesday, becoming the next supervisor of Monterey County's 5th District and replacing two-term supervisor and her former boss, Mary Adams.



PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Kate Daniels celebrates her election win Tuesday night with supporters Lorraine Yglesias (left) and Jim Rice (right). A Carmel Valley resident, Daniels received nearly 60 percent of the vote.

Because Daniels collected more than 50 percent of the vote, there won't be a runoff in November and she'll take office in January 2025. She was running against Monterey City Councilman Alan Haffa, who tallied 24 percent of the vote, and Salinas businessman Bill Lipe, whose name was checked on 16 percent of the ballots.

'It feels a bit surreal'

Daniels told The Pine Cone her victory hasn't quite sunk in yet.

"It feels a bit surreal," said the supervisor-elect, who lives in Carmel Valley with her husband Dan and their sons Daniel and Nicolas. "But it's really exciting when a culmination of hard work ends up this way — it's a good feeling."

So what will be Daniels' highest priority on Day One? "Listening to the other supervisors, really trying to hear what their concerns are and really getting to know them," she explained.

A Carmel High School graduate who served as her class president, Daniels is a county planning commissioner who represents unincorporated areas of the 5th District — which includes Carmel Highlands, Carmel Valley and Big Sur. She's also a policy advisor for State Sen. John Laird, who was reelected Tuesday, and is a trustee for the Monterey College of Law and a former president of the Democratic Women of Monterey County.

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C.V. gun expert testifies at 'Rust' shooting trial

By CHRIS COUNTS

AS THE armorer for the movie "Rust" stood trial in Santa Fe, N.M., this week and was found guilty on charges of involuntary manslaughter in the Alec Baldwin shooting case, Carmel Valley resident Frank Koucky was on hand to testify as an unpaid firearms expert.

While Baldwin is set to go to court to fight involuntary manslaughter charges in July, this week's trial focused on the second person arrested in the shooting, movie armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed. Prosecutors contended that Gutierrez-Reed bears blame for the shooting because she brought live ammunition onto the set, handed Baldwin a loaded gun instead of a prop, and ignored basic safety protocols for firearms. The jury agreed Wednesday and found her guilty. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 18 months in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Firearm safety

While much of Koucky's testimony delved into the technical details of guns and bullets, several exchanges stood out.

Koucky was called as a defense witness, and Gutierrez-Reed's attorney, Jason Bowles, sought to use his testimony to establish that Baldwin

was to blame for not taking basic firearm precautions on the film's set.

"Did you see evidence that Mr. Baldwin was not safe with firearms when there was a yell of 'cut' in a particular scene and he shot a blank after that scene?" Bowles asked.

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PHOTO/JIM WEBER

Carmel Valley firearms expert Frank Koucky demonstrates gun safety at a trial in New Mexico this week in the Alec Baldwin shooting case.

HORSE ENTHUSIASTS DISMAYED BY DECISION TO CLOSE EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Petition launched to save it

By KELLY NIX

A PROFESSIONAL horse trainer and an assortment of horse owners and enthusiasts said this week they were stunned and dismayed to hear that the Pebble Beach Equestrian Center would be closing in June after 100 years of offering riders a local place to train and board their animals.

The Pebble Beach Company said Monday that it has decided to close the business near the Lodge because it is no longer financially viable. The center offers trail rides and boarding facilities, along with areas for riding and training horses.

P.B. Co. CEO David Stivers called the decision to

shutter the equestrian center "very difficult" but said the facility needs more than \$15 million in renovations and has been operating at a "substantial loss for many years."

Company officials said that, while the equestrian center buildings will probably be removed, it has not been decided what will be done with the property. The 15 employees who work there will be transferred to other jobs with the company, according to a statement.

Operating at loss

Locals who have used the center for years were surprised and disappointed to learn it would close. Stephen Pellett, who has run his business as a horse trainer at the equestrian center since 2020, said he's not

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Pastor gets Mills Act OK for Wright house

Property tax cut for preservation

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER SEVERAL delays and a lot of debate over the past several months, the Carmel City Council on Tuesday narrowly approved a Mills Act contract for the famous Frank Lloyd Wright House on Scenic Road.

Such contracts can provide significant discounts in property taxes for owners who commit to the long-term rehabilitation and preservation of their historic homes and other buildings.

For months, council members and others have clashed over whether to approve a Mills Act contract for Patrice Pastor, the Monaco businessman who purchased the home, formally known as Cabin on the Rocks, for \$22 million in 2022 from the family that had it built 70 years ago.

For the first time at any of the public hearings on his many projects, Pastor spoke to the council and the public. Phoning in from Monaco at around 7:15 a.m. his time after waiting more than five hours for his item to come up, Pastor said he was "glad to have the chance to speak in order to make my position clear to you."

'Unpolluted mind'

Describing the proposed Mills Act status for his house as "not a technical subject," Pastor said he was sure he would win "unanimous support among those with an unpolluted mind." He also derided what he implied were the efforts of some council members to manipulate him

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City officials dial back urgency for CPD remodel

By MARY SCHLEY

ATA "listening session" Wednesday night on the Carmel Police Department's long-planned overhaul, several residents complained that it appears the city council has already decided to build a new station at Vista Lobos, as was suggested at a January hearing in which Mayor Dave Potter and councilman Jeff Baron recommended researching the concept, given the myriad problems at the existing station on Junipero Street.

Four options

At that Jan. 25 hearing, the council's ad hoc committee described four options developed by a specialized architectural firm, Indigo, which was hired last June for \$300,000 to assess the shortcomings of the station and

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PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

A young girl looks over some of the horses available for trail rides at the Pebble Beach Equestrian Center