

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Landslide strands 1,600 tourists overnight, could isolate Big Sur

By CHRIS COUNTS

**STARKLY ILLUSTRATING** how precariously Highway 1 clings to the rugged Big Sur coastline, a rockslide Saturday afternoon beneath the pavement near Rocky Creek bridge is threatening to turn Big Sur into an island. The incident — which involved a large chunk of pavement suddenly disappearing down a cliff during a heavy rainstorm — stranded locals trying to get home to the

Monterey Peninsula, along with as many as 1,600 tourists in Big Sur for the day. Some were forced to sleep overnight at the Big Sur Lodge, which made its conference room available to them, while others reported that they slept in their vehicles. Many joined a caravan of cars that was led north past the damaged section of road Sunday morning, and the California Highway Patrol reported that more than 500 vehicles joined convoys on Monday. Kristin Morrison of Larkspur said on social media

Monday that she missed a “big family Easter gathering” when she was marooned down the coast Saturday. “We’re unable to get out of Big Sur due to a hole in the road on Highway 1,” she wrote on Facebook.

### Easter plans upended

Linda Molinari of Hollister told a television reporter that she spent the night in a van after a “last-minute decision” to have lunch in Big Sur turned into an unplanned camping trip. “Oh my gosh, are we going to be stuck here for a week?” asked the woman, who was able to return home — although she, too, missed a family Easter celebration.

While some needed to be patient to leave Big Sur, others had to do the same to get there.

Paul Lewellen of Carmel Valley told the newspaper he took the convoy down Highway 1 early this week to reach his construction job south of the closure.

Lewellen said he now has to start his day an hour later, but things have gone smoothly so far.

“They open it up at 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to the minute,” he explained. “If you time it right, you don’t have to wait long — it’s about as orderly as it could be.”

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PHOTOS/(LEFT) KODIAK GREENWOOD, (RIGHT) CHP

(Left) Visitors hear the bad news from a CHP officer late Saturday that they won’t be able to leave Big Sur because of a rockslide near Rocky Creek Bridge. (Right) Congressman Jimmy Panetta surveys the damage to the road on Easter Sunday.

## Station tours offer glimpse of life in Carmel P.D.

By MARY SCHLEY

**A FEW** dozen people have a far better understanding of the inadequacies of Carmel’s police station after taking a tour of it Friday, because, as Police Chief Paul Tomasi observed, it’s one thing to hear about something and another to experience it. The tours — three 45-minute sessions each hosting 12 to 14 people — focused on the aspects of the 57-year-old building that present logistical, legal, safety and other challenges to the officers who work there every day.

“I think they went really well,” Tomasi said. “There was a lot of really positive feedback afterward, with people realizing some of the shortcomings, and changes with policing and how we do things. I think it opened the eyes of people to what we’re asking for.”

For nearly a decade, city officials have been talking about what to do to update the station, which lacks a proper interview room for victims, ventilated spaces for processing evidence and hazardous materials like drugs, and a decent security system with doors that can only be opened with a key card. The Dutch door into the station from the lobby, for instance, is a hollow-core door with a simple locking mechanism that could be quickly done in with a swift kick.

“Those were the things we were pointing out,” he said.

### Only men’s lockers

The station is so old, it only has a men’s locker room, and when women joined the force, a segment was sectioned off for female officers. Their gear hangs on racks instead of in individual lockers.

Years ago, Carmel P.D. had a holding cell, but it was

See **POLICE** page 18A

## DON’T HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR TOTAL ECLIPSE HERE

By ELAINE HESSER

**A SHADOW** is a shadow, right? If you’re reading your Pine Cone on your deck and a cloud obscures the sun, you just accept the reality of summer in Carmel and go inside, where the light is better. Take away the cloud and insert the moon, however, and people just have to have a look, as many people will on Monday.

Many folks travel to be in “the path of totality,” as it’s called, which stretches from Texas to New England, but if you don’t mind settling for a partial eclipse, you can watch from the Monterey Peninsula starting at 10:11 a.m. (more on that in a minute).

However, if you want to see a total eclipse of the sun in your lifetime, at some point you’ll have to travel. According to Jean Perkins, Ph.D., an astronomer with MIRA

— the Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy — the last time anyone could see one from Carmel was in 1424, nearly 70 years before Columbus, and it won’t happen again until 2451.

### ‘Sometime after 3000’

She added, “That might be a long time for people to wait, so San Francisco gets one in 2252, Bakersfield can see one as early as 2106, and Redding will have a total solar eclipse in 2045. Downtown L.A. isn’t seeing one until sometime after 3000 — the database I search only goes up to the year 3000.”

Since the Earth, sun and moon are all hurtling about in space, calculating where total eclipses will be visible is

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## Coastal staff urges OK of hotel near Aquarium

By KELLY NIX

**PLANS** FOR a 206-room hotel proposed for the American Tin Cannery site in Pacific Grove did not properly address water supply, public views and access, and other issues but have been extensively revised and should be approved for a permit, according to a recommendation from the California Coastal Commission, which will hold a public hearing on the matter next week.

### Long time coming

On Jan. 22, 2022, the P.G. City Council OK’d the proposed hotel, which will also have restaurants, two swimming pools, a spa, fitness center, banquet and meeting rooms, and underground and surface parking for nearly 300 vehicles. Several residents, though, asked the coastal commission to overturn the city’s approval, and

commissioners will consider the request April 11 in Long Beach.

The coastal commission’s staff is recommending

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RENDERING/COMSTOCK DEVELOPMENT

A rendering depicts revised plans for an impressive hotel complex at the site of the American Tin Cannery outlet mall in Pacific Grove.