

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

Man is rescued, arrested after driving off wharf

By KELLY NIX

A FRESNO man fleeing from the police early Sunday drove his pickup truck off Municipal Wharf 2 in Monterey and into the Pacific Ocean before emergency responders rescued three passengers and the driver, who was arrested on suspicion of drunken driving and other charges and taken to the hospital for treatment of his injuries.

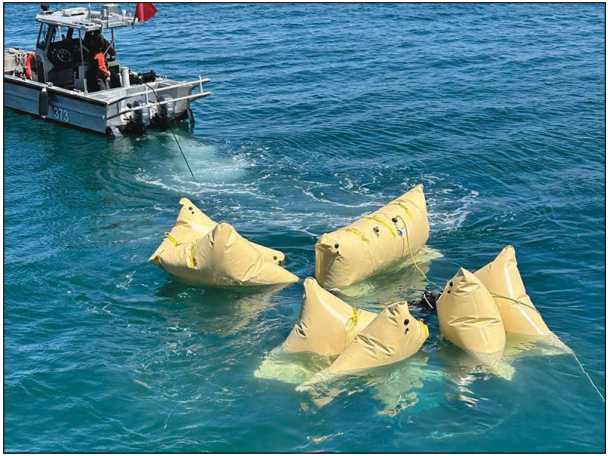
On April 7 at about 1:25 a.m., Monterey Police officers on foot spotted Martin Urroz, 21, in a Chevrolet Silverado truck turning right from Alvarado onto Del Monte, which

is one-way at that point, and driving the wrong direction. Shortly thereafter, an officer in a patrol vehicle spotted Urroz on Del Monte in the left-turn lane to the wharf and tried pulling him over.

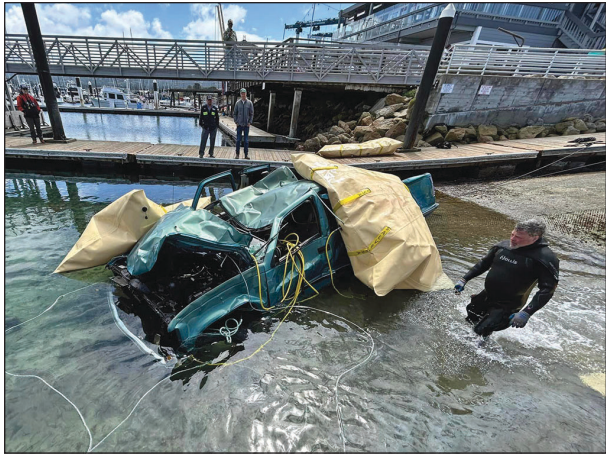
“The driver pulled to the right of the wharf and stopped,” Monterey Police said. “As the police officer approached the vehicle on foot, the truck fled northbound toward the end of the wharf at a high rate of speed.”

After requesting backup, the officer called others for

See WHARF page 17A



Flotation devices are used to help bring a Chevy truck to the surface after a drunk man drove it off the wharf. A diver (right) inspects the wreckage after it was hauled from the ocean.



PHOTO/BILLY SNOOK

Council approves state-mandated housing plan

■ Sunset parking lots, Vista Lobos designated for low-income

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CITY of Carmel on Monday became the first city on the Monterey Peninsula and the third in a 16-city region to approve its affordable housing program in time to send it to the California Department of Housing and Community Development for certification by the April 15 deadline. The plan, known as the “housing element” gives the city some control over new housing in the city while complying with state mandates for 349 new residences by the end of 2031.

At special meetings April 8, the planning commission and the city council — neither with unanimity — approved the plan.

Work on the updated housing element, which is part of the general plan, has been underway for the past year-and-a-half, with more than a dozen meetings, an ad hoc committee of council members Bobby Richards and Karen Ferlito, and consultants. After several revisions, on Friday, the city received a letter from the state declaring the document “in substantial compliance” with state law — a major milestone.

What was once unthinkable becomes the city’s new reality

Petition signed by 275

But the plan’s inclusion of three large city-owned properties — the north and south parking lots at Sunset Center and the lot at Vista Lobos — as potential housing sites drew objections from several residents. Michael Noakes called in to say a petition objecting to the plan had been signed by 275 people, though many of them live outside city limits, according to their reported zip codes. He asked the planning commission and city council to remove the lots from the housing plan.

But those properties are critical for meeting the numbers required by the state, according to planners. The three sites could accommodate 149 affordable units — 65 percent of the 231 required — but there’s no requirement or guarantee that any of those properties will be developed.

“They’re just identified in the plan as having potential,

See HOUSING page 20A

Convoys continue, viaduct planned at Highway 1 slide

■ Road could be open during repairs

By CHRIS COUNTS

NEARLY TWO weeks after a rock slide undermined a critical section of Highway 1 just south of the Rocky Creek Bridge, a strategy is taking shape to stabilize the road and install a one-way traffic signal at the site while a contractor builds a viaduct.

Only locals and essential workers are permitted to join convoys past a roadblock where Highway 1 meets Palo Colorado Road. But if Caltrans is successful with installing the signal and stabilizing the road, officials are hopeful

that tourists will be able to visit Big Sur while the aqueduct is under construction.

“Once the roadway’s edge is stabilized and we install a signal, we can open Highway 1 to one-way traffic,” Kevin Drabinski of Caltrans reported.

In the coming days, Caltrans plans to provide an estimate of how long it will take to complete the work along the edge.

Locals and workers can join convoys daily at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., although Caltrans reported that Saturday’s convoys will be canceled due to a forecast of rain.

To make the convoys safer, the northbound lane has been widened, and a concrete barrier has been placed along the road’s centerline.

\$25 million cost

Speaking for Caltrans, Zeke Dellamas reported that construction could put a temporary pause on convoys at some point.

See HIGHWAY page 11A

WHEREFORE ART THOU, STREET VENDORS?

By MARY SCHLEY

WHEN IT comes to much ado about nothing, it’s hard to beat the brief panic of the local citizenry following the state’s passage of a law in 2018 requiring cities to allow street vending. The Carmel City Council moved swiftly to pass a wide range of rules restricting the carts and capped the number of permits at 10 for the street and three in Devendorf Park. But other than an artist who briefly sold her wares from a cart downtown, no street vendors have darkened the city’s sidewalks since the council passed its ordinance in early 2019, and today, only one of those 13 permits is active, according to associate planner Evan Kort.

Sally Larsen, doing business as Bowdee’s Shave Ice, holds a vending permit that expires March 22, 2025.

Of 13 original permits, only one is still active

Health and safety

The law signed in 2018 by then-Gov. Jerry Brown, Senate Bill 946, imposes limits on how local authorities, including cities, may control sidewalk vending. But the law allows cities to regulate them based on health, safety and welfare, so the city council adopted a temporary law in early 2019 and passed a permanent ordinance in 2021

See VENDORS page 15A

Commission, public embrace plans for new hotel

By MARY SCHLEY

FOLLOWING A hearing in which all but one of 19 speakers supported innkeeper Carrie Theis’ proposal to demolish her family’s Hofsas House on San Carlos Street and replace it with a new hotel designed by architect Eric Miller, the Carmel Planning Commission on Wednesday unanimously approved the project.

Theis, a former member of the city council, and her family have owned the hotel since its opening some 77 years ago, and she and architect Eric Miller initially explored the idea of remodeling but concluded the only feasible option is demolition and new construction. The buildings, one of which is four stories tall, sit on a steeply sloped property, and they don’t have elevators. The construction materials are outdated, it’s impossible to soundproof the rooms, much of the hotel doesn’t comply with current codes, and the driveway is very steep, among other problems, they have said.

Craftsman-inspired

Miller’s design features lower, more contemporary, craftsman-inspired buildings of stone, wood and glass and holds the number of rooms at 38. The historic house on the Dolores Street will be remodeled into two apartments and will continue to house an onsite manager. An underground parking

garage will contain 68 parking spaces to accommodate hotel guests — who will be required to valet park — and employees. A restaurant, bakery/café, spa, fitness center, pool and lounge will serve only hotel guests due to the residential-commercial zoning on the property.

Theis and Miller held several community meetings

See HOFAS page 14A



RENDERING/ERIC MILLER ARCHITECTS

In response to comments from the planning commission and the public, the architect reduced the height of the lobby of the proposed hotel by 3 feet.