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Fire destroys Big Sur Bakery, threatens gas pumps

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE BIG Sur Bakery and Restaurant suffered severe damage when a kitchen fire broke out Friday just before 4 p.m. The blaze started in an oven, and an attempt to douse it with a fire extinguisher was unsuccessful, according to KSBW and KION. The smoke could be seen throughout the Big Sur Valley.

Volunteers from Big Sur Fire, whose station is just uphill from the restaurant, responded to the incident. When they arrived on scene, however, the building was fully engulfed in flames.

“Prior to arrival, crews saw a large column of black smoke and immediately requested additional personnel to

respond as well as the local U.S. Forest Service engine crew in case the fire spread to the vegetation,” Big Sur Fire reported. “The building was well involved and threatened two nearby galleries, an event space and several homes.”

Owners thank firefighters

Firefighters were able to contain the blaze, which not only destroyed the restaurant, but burned down a gardening shed. The fire erupted dangerously close to gas pumps, and other shops are close by, too. All are located on a property that’s known as Loma Vista, which is about a mile north of Nepenthe restaurant along Highway 1.

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PHOTO/(LEFT) IVY JAYNE LAVELLE, (ABOVE) BIG SUR FIRE

A fire that broke out Friday afternoon burned down a local landmark, the Big Sur Bakery and Restaurant. Thankfully, firefighters were able to keep the blaze from spreading to other buildings nearby, including a gas station.

First mention — It started with a filming permit

By ELAINE HESSER

DORIS DAY would have been 102 last month. Around here, she was more than a movie star, Grammy Lifetime Achievement winner and animal rights activist. She was a neighbor who worked tirelessly for local philanthropies, lending her name, her time and her considerable energy to make a difference in her community.

Born April 3, 1922, Day became a singer with the Les Brown band and on Bob Hope’s weekly radio show before finding her way to the big screen and into the hearts of fans. Although The Pine Cone ran many ads for her movies, it first mentioned her in a story on March 15, 1956.

The city council “granted Guy Curtis, representing a moving picture company, permission to film

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PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

In 1989, Clint Eastwood presented Doris Day with a Golden Globe for her contributions to the film industry.

MISSING OWNER PAID HIS PROPERTY TAXES IN APRIL

By MARY SCHLEY

THE MYSTERY man who owns a corner lot at Casanova and 11th containing a 75-foot-tall and very dead Monterey pine paid his property taxes by personal check April 10, according to the Monterey County tax collector, but the city can’t find him to pass on the costs of removing the tree, which the Carmel City Council has declared a public nuisance.

Late Tuesday night, a divided city council decided a tree service will cut down the dead pine, which is located on a lot that was the scene of a deadly house fire in 2002, and taxpayers will foot the bill.

The property has been the source of city officials’ consternation for decades, and at the May 7 meeting, city for-ester Justin Ono asked the council to take the final steps so

County considers TOT increase

■ P.B. guests paid 41 percent of total

By CHRIS COUNTS

MONTEREY COUNTY needs more money to cover its growing expenses, so to address the budget shortfall, the board of supervisors is considering six options for boosting revenue, with an increase in the county’s 10.5 percent transient occupancy tax at the top of the list.

But pushback against raising the tax was swift when the topic came up at Tuesday’s supervisors meeting.

“Do you want to kill the goose that’s laying the golden egg?” 5th District Supervisor Mary Adams asked her colleagues.

The supervisor said she’s particularly concerned about the impact a tax increase would have on group tourism. “We’re finally getting our small business associations and conferences back,” she noted.

Adams — who represents the Monterey Peninsula and Big Sur, where most of the county’s TOT is paid — suggested there are better ways to raise the revenue, or reduce expenses.

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Big changes coming to home sales process

■ Buyers will negotiate commissions

By MARY SCHLEY

BEFORE SETTING foot in a home for sale, a potential buyer who wants a real estate agent’s help will soon be required to sit down and negotiate a separate contract with the agent, according to the terms of a settlement agreement negotiated by the National Association of Realtors and tentatively approved by a federal judge last month.

In an effort to resolve antitrust claims filed against the 1.5 million-member realtors group by Missouri home sellers and other similar groups, as well as by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Chicago-based NAR agreed to pay a \$418 million settlement and change the way sellers advertise their properties — as well as how commissions to agents on both sides of a deal are negotiated and paid.

Advertising

Fees, usually around 6 percent, have historically been split between buyers’ and sellers’ agents but paid entirely via the sellers’ closing costs. Buyers weren’t involved in negotiating those fees, which selling agents advertised alongside the properties they were marketing on the realtors association’s multiple listing service database in order to entice agents to bring them prospective buyers.

“What a buyer’s agent was paid had been negotiated between the seller and the listing agent when the listing agreement was signed,” Carmel Realty Co. associate broker Malone Hodges explained.

The settlement will put an end to all that, since buyers will be required to negotiate commissions with their own

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the towering dead pine, which is dangerous and at risk of falling, can be cut down.

Following on the council’s decision last month to declare the tree a nuisance, Ono posted notices that the pine would be removed, so that anyone with objections would have the opportunity to air them. He also recommended recouping the costs by placing a lien on the lot because the public works department has been unable to reach its owner, William Stoesser.

Stoesser inherited the property after the fire badly damaged the house and killed his grandfather, Eric Stoesser, more than two decades ago. At the time, the fire department concluded the blaze was started by clothes hung over the floor furnace.

Long a problem

The large pine has been dead for more than six months, according to Ono, and it’s leaning toward the street and over power lines. Using information from the Monterey County Assessor’s Office and city files, public works employee Tom Ford sent letters to “the Estate of Eric

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Sick pelicans getting care



PHOTO/SPCA MONTEREY COUNTY

This group of pelicans is among more than 80 that SPCA Monterey County has rescued and treated since April. The birds, which eat 25 to 50 pounds of fish per day, were found thin or emaciated and unable to fly.