

## NETTING INDICATES NOTHING AT JEFFERS CABIN

By MARY SCHLEY

EAGLE-EYED LOCALS who have spotted the orange netting and staking at the site of the crumbling Monte Verde Street cabin Robinson Jeffers lived in for a



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

The Jeffers cabin on Monte Verde is slated to be rebuilt, according to a decision by the historic resources board several years ago.

short time can rest assured that — as has been the case for the past several decades — nothing will be happening there anytime soon.

Other than clearing overgrown plants and vines and shoring up the building so it didn’t fall on the neighbors, activity on the property has basically been dormant since 2018, when Matt and Stacey Roy — who bought it in May of that year for \$425,000 — tried unsuccessfully to get the cabin removed from the city’s historic inventory.

The little house had been added to the list of significant properties in 2002 and condemned as unsafe the following year, and in 2018, the city’s building official declared it a hazard that should be demolished.

### Working on it

But the historic resources board decided the cabin is so important that the Roys could only build a replica of it, not a new house in its place. The couple then asked the city council to support their efforts to get it taken off the list so they could demolish it and build a home there, but the council never rendered a final ruling on their request.

After trying unsuccessfully in 2019 to find a

See **JEFFERS** page 19A

## California gives another ‘Yes’ to higher gas prices

By CAITLIN CONRAD

GASOLINE PRICES below \$5 a gallon will soon be a thing of the past in California, in spite of any plans by the incoming Trump administration to lower energy costs for Americans nationwide. Just days after the election, the California Air Resources Board voted to toughen the state’s low-carbon fuel standard, even though its own analysis showed it could raise retail prices by 47 cents in 2025.

Independent predictions show the price impacts might be even higher. In the lead-up to the vote, the University of Pennsylvania’s Kleinman Center for Energy Policy forecasted retail gas prices could go up as much as 65 cents a gallon in the near term and as much as \$1.50 by 2035.

### The ‘right’ companies

California’s low-carbon fuel standard is complicated but essentially functions as a credit program that taxes fossil fuel producers and benefits companies generating renewable energy.

### Carbon credits mean higher prices for drivers

The state hands out low carbon fuel credits to a variety of businesses, including electric utilities, biofuel producers, and hydrogen and electric vehicle charging companies. Those entities then sell the credits to oil refiners. To maintain compliance under state law, the bulk fuel sellers must either reduce their emissions or buy credits, and the cost is inevitably passed down to drivers.

Last Friday’s 12-2 vote requires a 30 percent reduction in the low-carbon fuel standard by 2030. Starting next year, refiners will have to further reduce the “carbon intensity” of doing business, a move that will boost credit prices for renewable companies.

Predictions of higher prices created controversy in the

lead up to the decision, and the board quickly walked back its initial 47 cent price hike prediction from earlier this year in response to public outcry. Hours before the vote, air resources board members admitted they still lacked a model to show pass-through costs to drivers as a result of raising credit prices.

Still, they voted yes on the grounds it will help California reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

“We have to keep in mind transportation is by far the most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions,” said board member Cliff Rechtschaffen, in support of the change.

Fears over rising gas prices have fueled much of the public debate surrounding changes to the low-carbon fuel

See **GAS** page 24A

## Highlands landowner seeks help from Supreme Court

By CHRIS COUNTS

TURNED DOWN two years ago by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, a Carmel Highlands property owner still wants to build a house on his land — and now he’s trying to take his fight to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Gary Collins, the owner of a 21-acre property at 83 Mount Devin Road, wants to construct a single-family home on the site. But in 1967 — 27 years before Collins bought the land in 1994 for \$129,000 — its previous owner, the Monterey County Foundation, created a scenic easement over it.

The same year, a plaque was placed on the land honoring the late Maj. Charles F. De Amaral Jr., a one-time resident who was killed in Vietnam in 1965 while piloting a helicopter. Over time, the property became known as the De Amaral Preserve.

Nearly two decades after buying the land, Collins began pursuing permits to develop it, according to the lawsuit. But to do so, the property needed to be rezoned. When the

## Council OKs plan to underground power lines near beach

By MARY SCHLEY

A HANDFUL of homeowners at the foot of Ocean Avenue near the beach could be on the hook for \$20,000 to \$30,000 apiece to put their utility lines underground, according to a decision made by the Carmel City Council last week.

In order to use its \$667,639 in PG&E ratepayer funds to put power lines and other utilities below ground before the energy company reassigns the money to similar projects elsewhere, the city has to establish an underground utility district, and councilmembers Alissandra Dramov and Jeff Baron recommended focusing on the Del Mar area. The



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Power poles and lines that interfere with beautiful views, like those at Carmel Beach, are eligible for undergrounding using PG&E customers’ money.

concept already has approval from PG&E, according to the public works department.

In 2021, the city had nearly \$1 million in Rule 20A funds — collected from ratepayers and then made

See **POWER** page 24A

supervisors weighed in on his request to change the zoning in 2022, three of the five — Mary Adams, Wendy Root Askew and Luis Alejo — voted against it.

### Alleges ‘taking’ of land

In the petition for review by the Supreme Court that he filed Oct. 28, Collins argues that there is no justification for not allowing the zoning change. Collins also notes that a 2021 court decision confirmed the conservation easement had been terminated before he bought the land.

“There has been no claim that the property contains wetlands, has any landmarks, or endangered plant or animal species,” the appellant contends. “In short, the Collins property has no unique characteristics when compared to the contiguous properties to justify a different zoning.”

Collins contends the county’s stance deprives him of any “economically beneficial or productive use” of his land and represents an “unconstitutional taking” of his

See **COURT** page 19A

## Iconic Big Sur property offered for \$100M

By CHRIS COUNTS

WITH THE news this week that a large portion of an extraordinary property known as Rancho Rico is on the market for \$100 million, Monterey County could see its first nine-digit home sale.

“It’s such a special and iconic property,” realtor Tim Allen, whose company is listing the estate, told The Pine Cone.

Located on the west side of Highway 1 just north of the Post Ranch Inn, the property — which is owned by members of the well-known Chappellet family — includes 150 acres and features a pristine beach that will be shared with the family members who are holding onto their parcels. It also boasts three homes, along with

manicured gardens and fruit orchards.

The 3,750-square-foot main house was built in the 1940s and has four bedrooms, four-and-a-half baths, three fireplaces and a two-car garage. Another home on the property, the Garden House (1,960 square feet, built in 2001) has three bedrooms and two baths, while the Ranch House (2,500 square feet, built in 1995) contains four bedrooms and two bathrooms.

### Views, privacy and nature

Previously owned by Big Sur’s homesteading Pfeiffer family, the property was bought in 1965 by Cyril Chappellet, a former Lockheed executive, and is

See **\$100M** page 24A



PHOTO/TIM ALLEN PROPERTIES

One-hundred-fifty acres of Big Sur’s spectacular Rancho Rico is now on the market for \$100 million. The property has three homes, along with dizzying views up and down the coastline.