

The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 111 No. 52

<https://carmelpinecone.com>

December 26, 2025-January 1, 2026

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

Cell phone ‘ban’ is more of a suggestion

GOV. GAVIN Newsom signed California’s Phone-Free Schools Act to much applause in 2024 as teachers, parents and even the media thought public schools across the state would soon be rid of smartphones — but one year later, not much has changed.

Despite the law’s name, the legislation does nothing to keep phones out of schools. It’s not a ban, as some have assumed. In fact, schools are still required to give kids access to their phones.

Early last year, the law’s bipartisan authors introduced a strong bill that would have allowed districts to go as far as

Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

prohibiting smartphones on campus. But the language was watered down in the legislative process, and what passed was a law that only requires districts to restrict phone use during class time — something you’d hope schools were already doing.

“Initially they were proposing a much stronger bill, but due to timing and legislators’ appetites, it wasn’t feasible to come out with a full bell-to-bell K-12 ban,” said policy advocate Jodie Carreon with Distraction-Free Schools California.

A bell-to-bell ban would require kids to stow phones for the entire school day.

20 states act

Twenty states, plus D.C.’s public schools and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have implemented that kind of ban on wireless communication devices. Exceptions are made for medical reasons and students with disabilities, but for the vast majority of kids in bell-to-bell ban states, phones have to be put away in lockers, lockable pouches or backpacks for the entire day.

Away-for-the-day policies are something California school districts can implement under the Phone-Free Schools Act, but they’re not required, and none of our local

See **CELL PHONES** page 31A

WORKSHOP ON OBJECTIVE DESIGN RULES SET

By MARY SCHLEY

THE FIRST community meeting on rules that will make granny units and other types of housing easier to build while still fitting with Carmel’s character will be held Jan. 14 at 4 p.m. in city hall.

The session will be hosted by city staff and



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

Tourists in the 1950s enjoying Carmel’s architecture. An effort is underway to write design standards that will protect the town’s charm while meeting state housing laws.

Big storm makes a mess out of Christmas

By PAUL MILLER

ALMOST FORTY-EIGHT frustrating hours after drenching rains and ferocious winds knocked out the power late Tuesday night, thousands of Monterey Peninsula residents and hundreds of businesses were counting up the losses of such an extended outage during the biggest holiday week of the year.

“The storm really ruined our Christmas,” said Lydia Lyons of Patisserie Boissiere on Mission Street. “We had almost 100 reservations for dinner Christmas Eve. We were devastated and sad beyond belief that we couldn’t serve them.”

She said the restaurant’s staff kept “hoping and praying that PG&E would come through” and get the power back

on Wednesday afternoon — as they had been predicting since a few hours after the outage began.

More days in the dark

But with the damage to the Carmel grid more severe than everyone hoped, and with another storm on the way overnight, PG&E was forced to take their crews off the streets late Wednesday — and suddenly, the time the power would come back on was pushed back two days — to 11 p.m. Friday.

“With the weather picking up, we’re pulling our crews and I’m sorry to report that we won’t be completing restorations tonight,” a PG&E spokesperson said Wednesday

See **BIG STORM** page 28A



Sunrise on Christmas morning featured a rainbow over Monterey Bay that heralded the end of a major two-day storm, but as the rain and winds moved on, they left behind widespread power outages and damage, including to this house on Mission Street in Carmel.



PHOTOS/(LEFT) PAUL MILLER, (RIGHT) CITY OF CARMEL

MPUSD teachers lament low pay, turnover

By LILY PATTERSON

IT’S BEEN an enlightening few weeks for local teachers, after union members discovered a waiver that exempts the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District from spending the state’s mandatory minimum on their salaries. Three years ago, MPUSD quietly joined a third of California’s unified school districts in using the loophole, but since the Monterey Bay Teachers Association caught on in

late October, they’re using it as a talking point.

“We are one of the lowest-paid districts in Monterey County. The last two years, we have not had an ongoing salary increase, and our teacher turnover is between 15 and 25 percent,” according to union President Rosalyn Book, a teacher at La Mesa Elementary School.

Dozens of teachers appeared before the school board at its Nov. 18 meeting and again on Dec. 9 ahead of negotiations between the union and the school district, which began discussing their 2025-2026 contract last week.

Most shared personal testimonials of financial hardship and the “revolving door,” as one Seaside High teacher referred to the classroom next to his, where three instructors have come and gone since he started working there less than two years ago.

Said Valerie Jean Rivera, an art teacher at Seaside Middle School and a 21-year veteran of MPUSD,

“I am only one of six national board-certified teachers in this district, and I stay because I own a house here,” she said. “People who have been here for 10 years are still struggling.”

‘Move in right direction’

“Many teachers go to neighboring districts that pay more and contribute more to benefits. Our students deserve high-quality educators who stay in our district and put roots in our community,” Book said in a statement to The Pine Cone.

Marci McFadden, chief of staff at MPUSD, gave other reasons why Monterey schools lose an average of 100 teachers per year — a 20 percent turnover rate, 5 percent higher than the average district in California, where staff shortages are one reason students are lagging

representatives from Opticos Design, the firm hired by the city council in October to develop “objective design and development standards” for accessory dwelling units, multifamily housing and mixed-use complexes.

State housing laws require cities and counties to approve ADUs over the counter — i.e., with no nitpicky public hearings — as long as they meet basic standards, giving local governments very little say in how they look and where they can be situated.

But they also allow jurisdictions to create standards that give them some control while not requiring applicants to comply with rules that are wide open to interpretation.

When she presented the proposed Opticos contract to the council, principal planner Marnie Waffle explained that objective design and development standards “are a different way of writing design guidelines that eliminate subjectivity and provide developers with more certainty in the design review process, and reduce the time required to review and process” development applications for certain types of housing, while maintaining community character.

‘Human scale’

For example, rather than referencing “human-scaled entries,” which is up to planners to define, an objective design standard might read, “A front entry shall consist of a single door that is no taller than 7 feet, 6 inches,” she

See **DESIGN RULES** page 13A

See **TEACHER PAY** page 16A

J. LAWRENCE
KHAKI'S
MEN'S CLOTHIER OF CARMEL
new holiday arrivals



Carmel Plaza

carmel-by-the-sea

Sandy Claws

By Lisa Crawford Watson

Why not Nashville

She actually had no idea she was getting a dog when she went to the SPCA – a common situation – but there was Bella, a baby Maltipoo – a mix of Maltese and poodle – and she couldn't resist.

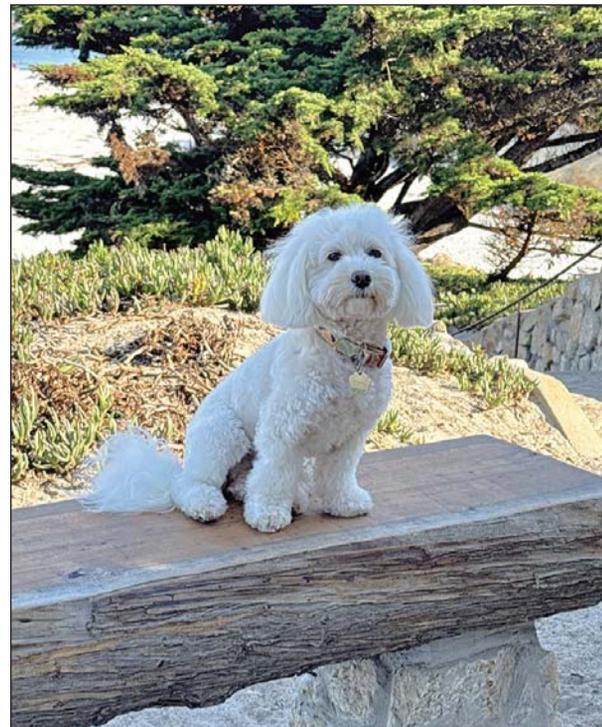
But she wasn't down with the name, having met "too many Bellas." In the midst of brainstorming new names, she traveled from her home at the northeast corner of Carmel to Nashville, where she had once lived, and thought, "Why not Nashville?"

Lots of people shorten it to "Nash," but she doesn't. Nashville had been surrendered to the SPCA by a family whose big dogs in the household weren't welcoming. Yet Nash, now 2 years, loves to race down the shoreline at Carmel Beach among all dogs, both big and small.

"These little dogs are amazingly athletic," her person said. "Down on the beach, she runs like a tiny greyhound and changes direction on a dime. For a puffy little thing, she's pretty graceful when up a full speed."

Some people buy their dog a ball or a bone to keep them entertained in the yard. Nashville's folks brought her two kittens, Leo and Bitty, from the SPCA.

"At first, Nashville was so curious, trying to figure out what the kittens were," her person said. "Now she tries so hard to get them to chase her, like she does



with dogs at the beach. But they don't. Mostly they cuddle up on the couch together. They're a funny little group."

Nashville has been provided beds all over the house, so she can pause for a nap wherever she is. She even has a bed in her other person's art studio, but she knows, once he stands up in the evening, it's time for bed.

The Carmel Pine Cone Help Wanted

The Carmel Pine Cone is looking for a full-time sales representative to help expand our business. Experience in print advertising, i.e., magazine or newsprint, is preferred.

A qualified candidate has:

- 2-5 years of experience developing and growing an advertising client base
- A proven record of successful business development
- Excellent communication skills, solid work ethic and a desire to be part of a team
- Familiarity with the business community on the Monterey Peninsula

Responsibilities include selling advertising, finding new clients, maintaining relationships, providing customer service, creating ad campaigns, and working with in-house production staff.

Excellent salary & benefits including medical, profit sharing and 401(k). Partial work from home is an option for a great performer.

Send resume to jackie@carmelpinecone.com
No phone calls



Rain Gauge

Last 7 days	Since Oct. 1	Since Oct. 1 avg.
5.45 in.	12.30 in.	6.60 in.

*Measured by MPWMD at Los Padres Dam
Average is for previous 5 years*

RHEIM DERMATOLOGY
COSMETIC LASER CENTER™
JOSEPH R. RHEIM, M.D.

New Beauty in the New Year

We would like to offer you:

BOTOX® at \$10.00 per unit

Vitamin B-12

Give your body the vitamins it deserves, ask about our Vitamin B-12 series of injections.

Gift Certificates are available!

*Cosmetic Laser Center Consultations available by appointment;
All treatments are scheduled with our licensed RN.
Please make your appointment by calling our office today.*

All offers expire January 31, 2026.

General Dermatology: 831.373.4404
Cosmetic Laser Center: 831.373.0441
757 Pacific Street, Suite A-1, Monterey

*Advanced Dermatology Medical Clinic
www.rheimdermatology.com*

COMPASSION
IN ACTION
HOME CARE



YOLANDA MOYA

Certified Nursing Assistant

Services Provided:

Transportation • Medication Reminders
Meal Preparations • Companionship
Light Housekeeping • Hospice Care
Personal Assistant Needs • and more

Over 31 Years of Experience
24/7 Care • Excellent References

831-247-9646

STORE CLOSING

**SOCKSHOP CARMEL
WICKS & WAX**

**SW Corner of Ocean and San Carlos
Inside the Doud Arcade**

40% OFF

ALL PRODUCTS

**SALES COUNTER,
FIXTURES & DISPLAY
ITEMS FOR SALE**

COME EARLY FOR BEST SELECTION



*Shell
Shades*
.com

831/747-7482

WEDDING & Special Occasions

It's the time of year Pine Cone readers are planning their weddings and special occasions for 2026...

Let us help you reach them in our **January 23**
Meena Lewellen meena@carmelpinecone.com (831) 274-8655

**BEST
House
Cleaning
6 Years!**

TWO GIRLS FROM CARMEL



- Experienced
 - Professional
- Offering a personal and friendly touch for 30 years

**BONDED HOUSECLEANING
SPECIALISTS**

*So Many Dust Bunnies,
So Little Time*

831-626-4426
TwoGirlsFromCarmel.com

Despite court fight, Barmel still open

By MARY SCHLEY

CONTRARY TO what some might think, Barmel restaurant and bar in downtown Carmel remains open for business, in spite of an ongoing legal battle between owner Gabe Georis and property owner Jo Jo White. Georis sued his landlord in July, accusing her of unlawfully terminating his leases, as well as interfering with his attempts to sell his business, letting the property fall into disrepair, depriving customers and staff of their use of restrooms, and numerous other allegations.

White, of course, has denied the allegations, and the two sides last month agreed to suspend litigation while they attempt to mediate a solution to their conflicts.

Georis, the longtime owner of the restaurant and bar on San Carlos north-east of Seventh, filed suit in Monterey County Superior Court July 8 alleging breach of contract, “intentional interference with economic relations” and other wrongs.

Lots of problems

He opened a Spanish restaurant, Mundaka, in the Carmel Square space in 2009 and took over the bar next door, then called Ody’s, in 2013, subsequently renaming it Barmel.

Mundaka has since morphed into the Barmel Supper Club, and it included 10 outdoor seats and an overflow spot in a unit that had previously been a sewing store. (It is now a gelato shop under another owner.)

While the lawsuit was apparently triggered by White’s issuance of a 60-day “notice of termination” of Georis’ lease in

June, he said she repeatedly violated the terms over the years by arbitrarily adjusting rents, making changes to the lease and shoddy accounting.

The complaint accused property manager Linda Persall of interfering with Barmel’s business and operations by bothering



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

Barmel continues to offer food and drinks six nights a week while its owner and his landlord fight in court.

guests and “appearing in the kitchen unannounced, insisting upon free food for herself and her husband, and issuing false or inaccurate reports about plaintiffs and their operations unless their personal demands for free food or favor were met.”

Further, she would enter without notice or permission to “steal food or drink” and use the kitchen.

When he complained, he said, White and Persall retaliated by refusing to keep the buildings clean, neglecting the bathrooms and then barring access to them, and shirking other maintenance and repair duties, including addressing problems with gas, water and electrical systems.

But the biggest issue, he said, has been

See **BARMEL** page 17A

RM RYAN MELCHER PROPERTIES

MERRY Christmas!



NEW PRICE - \$2,895,000

Santa Fe 4 SE of Ocean, Carmel-by-the-Sea
2 Bed | 2 Bath | 1,214 Sq. Ft. | 3,920 Sq. Ft. Lot



IN ESCROW - \$2,095,000

140 Terrace Way, Carmel Valley
4 Bed | 4.5 Bath | 2,786 Sq. Ft. | 29,621 Sq. Ft. Lot



#1 **SOTHEBY'S AGENT IN CARMEL**

Sold over **\$93 Million & 32 Transactions** YTD in 2025
The Peninsula's Trusted Name in Real Estate

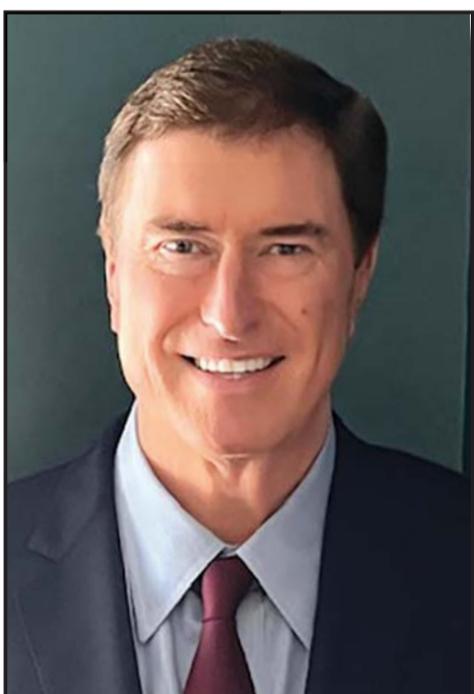
Ryan Melcher
831.521.5024
ryan@ryanmelcher.com
RyanMelcher.com
DRE: 01897036

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



Spiering Law

— Personal Injury —



LOCAL LAW FIRM

FREE SAME-DAY CONSULTATION
NO RECOVERY, NO FEE

Helping thousands of people injured in accidents receive successful settlements for over 40 years

Spiering Law wishes our past and present clients a happy holiday season

Happy New Year!

We look forward to serving you in 2026

SPIERING LAW

James Spiering & Donna DeMera

(831) 920-6000

2511 GARDEN ROAD, BUILDING C, SUITE 225
MONTEREY, CA 93940



With Great Pleasure,
Dr. Susan Kubica Welcomes

Kelly L. Reed, MD

Dr. Reed is a Board-Certified Internal Medicine Physician, who trained at UCSF, with professional experience in Radiation Oncology from the University of Washington.

She is **Accepting New Patients** into her
CONCIERGE MEDICINE PRACTICE.
Off Site & Home Visits • Meet & Greet Visits welcome

She has been recognized as an exceptional physician with the following **Awards and Acknowledgements:**

- **Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society**
- **Patients Top Choice**
Press Ganey Patient Satisfaction Scores (Florida)
- **Best Family Doctor**
The Lebanon Reporter, Boone County, Indiana 2016
- **Favorite Family Physician**
Sonoma Family Life Magazine, Sonoma County 2012

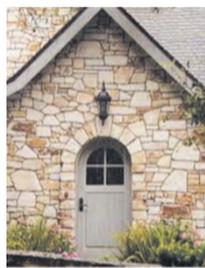
Contact the Office of
Susan M. Kubica, MD, P.C.,
Concierge Internal Medicine

1000 8th St, Suite 101,
Monterey, CA 93940

(831) 372-1188

Office@kubicamedicine.com
for an appointment

Clark's Carmel Stone



(831) 385-4000

**100 Airport Drive,
King City**

Delivery Available

www.clarktruckinginc.com

clarkscarmelstone@yahoo.com

HELP IS ON THE WAY!

AlphaAbacus Learning Center: Established 2003
Rachel Phillips M. A. Education
"Gracie"

YOUR LOCAL INDEPENDENT TUTORING CENTER
"Where Learning Is Fun"

**READING - MATH - WRITING - ACADEMIC SUBJECTS
STUDY SKILLS - HOMEWORK HELP - TEST PREP**

WWW.ALPHAABACUSLEARNINGCENTER.COM

831-596-9394 | 831-625-6053

200 Clock Tower Place, Suite A204, Carmel

Home Schooling Support AlphaAbacuslearningcenter@gmail.com



Need a Tech Pro? I Can Help!

Computer/Phone/TV/Printer troubleshooting & setup, subscription management, website development, negotiating & lowering internet & TV bills, anti-virus, password recovery & more!



- On-site
- References available

Contact Michael at **(831) 204-9812**



Personalized goal based advice to help you feel more confident about *your financial future.*

Call me today to get started
831.643.6364

Michael McCloud
Financial Advisor | Managing Director

1 Lower Ragsdale Dr, Bldg 1 Ste 100, Monterey, CA 93940
michael.mccloud@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/michael.mccloud



Not FDIC OR NCUA Insured | No Financial Institution Guarantee | May Lose Value

CA Insurance # 0C07268

Investment advisory products and services are made available through Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC, a registered investment adviser. Securities offered by Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. Member FINRA and SIPC.

© 2025 Ameriprise Financial, Inc. All rights reserved.



Police & Sheriff's Log

Firearms seized at elderly woman's home

HERE'S A look at some of the significant calls logged by the Carmel-by-the-Sea Police Department and the Monterey County Sheriff's Office last week. This week's log was compiled by Mary Schley.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Seaside: At around 1830 hours, multiple reports were received regarding a White male attempting to carjack motorists in the 1100 block of Kimball Avenue. Seaside P.D. responded promptly and apprehended a 22-year-old male in the roadway. He was detained and subsequently arrested on felony charges. Shortly after his arrest, reports were received from multiple residents near the area that he was reported to have shattered their home windows with large rocks. It was determined that he was responsible, and he will face additional charges. No weapon was used during the attempted carjackings. The suspect stated that he engaged in this violent

behavior due to a personal dispute earlier in the day.

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Vehicle vs. two parked vehicles on Fourth Avenue.

Carmel Valley: Deputies located a 64-year-old male burglary suspect on Laureles Grade for the Monterey Police Department.

Carmel area: Family quarrel at the Crossroads shopping center.

Seaside: After several complaints and efforts to work with involved parties, Seaside P.D. removed an RV that had been left near the entrance to a local business on Canyon del Rey.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Non-injury collision on Third Avenue.

See **POLICE LOG** page 4RE in the Real Estate Section



The gavel falls

Verdicts, pleas and sentencings announced by Monterey County District Attorney Jeannine Pacioni

Nov. 21 — Judge Jennifer J. O'Keefe sentenced Gabino Lopez, 31, a resident of Salinas, to 15 years in prison for committing one count of assault with the intent to commit rape, one count of kidnapping, and one count of assault by means likely to produce great bodily injury. Two of these offenses are serious and violent felonies and considered strikes under California's three strikes law. Lopez will also be required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.

Officers from the Salinas Police Department were dispatched to a report of a female yelling for help. The reporting party stated he saw a female in a church parking lot with her pants down, calling for help and observed a male (later identified as Lopez) running from the area. Neither Doe nor Lopez were on scene when officers arrived. But an officer

was able to obtain surveillance video which depicted the attack. On the video, Lopez is seen attempting to remove Doe's pants by force. Doe repeatedly tries to fight Lopez off her. At one point in the attack, Lopez places both of his hands around Doe's neck and attempts to strangle her for several seconds. During the attack, Doe was able to escape to the parking lot, but Lopez grabbed her and drug her back towards a more secluded area and continued trying take her pants off by force. When contacted by detectives Doe said she has no memory of the attack. Detectives were able to identify Lopez as the assailant after obtaining additional surveillance video depicting him running from the scene.

This case was investigated by Salinas Police Detective Ciro Barboza as well as other officers from the Salinas Police Department.

END OF YEAR SUPER SALE

WARM UP YOUR WINTER WITH HOT DEALS!

GET UP TO 50% OFF ON SELECT ITEMS

YOUR FAVORITE MANUFACTURERS

FLEXSTEEL, AMERICAN LEATHER, ROWE, STRESSLESS, LEE INDUSTRIES, JONATHAN LOUIS, & MORE!!

UNTIL 1/9/26



mum's place

246 Forest Ave., Pacific Grove | 831-372-6250
Mon-Sat 10am-5:30pm | www.mumsfurniture.com



Police arrest man for stalking

By MARY SCHLEY

A SEASIDE resident who became infatuated with a woman who lives in town was arrested Dec. 8 for stalking and several other charges after surveillance images helped police identify him, according to Carmel Police Sgt. Gerald Maldonado.

Between 3 and 5 a.m. Dec. 6, cameras caught the image of a trespasser, who was later identified as 27-year-old Alvaro Santiagolopez of Seaside, lurking in the area of Casanova and Ninth, Carmel P.D. said. After the victim reported it, CPD posted images of the man, along with the details, and asked for help identifying him.

Random target

“The victim reported several prowling, peeping and stalking incidents,” Maldonado said. Santiagolopez, who works in construction, according to his jail booking information, had selected the woman randomly after seeing her out in public.

“An obsession and then stalking developed,” he said.

Officer Tim Ament identified the man, while Maldonado and Sgt. Jacob Clifford tracked him down.

“The suspect was identified via video surveillance, located and subsequently arrested,” Maldonado said.

Santiagolopez was booked into Monterey County Jail on charges of loitering and peering into an occupied building — both misdemeanors — and felony stalking, as well as probation violation. The Monterey County District Attorney’s Office has not filed a criminal case against him, and he’s no longer in jail.

The arrest followed a similar series of incidents reported by another resident a week earlier.

On Dec. 1, a woman who lives in the area of Monte Verde and Ninth told police someone had been following her.

See **STALKER** page 17A



PHOTOS/CARMEL P.D.

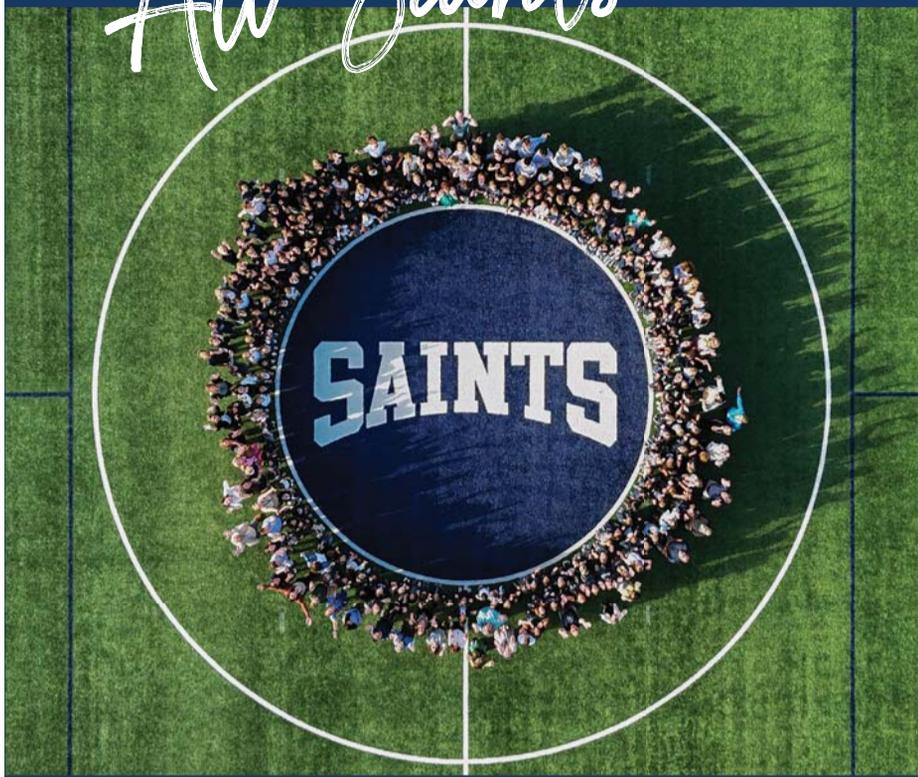
Carmel Police identified this alleged stalker via surveillance images and arrested him two days after his victim reported the crimes.





Preschool - Grade 8

Discover All Saints



Saturday, January 10 - 10 am

Join us for the All Saints Open House!
 Tour our beautiful campus, meet our community,
 and learn what makes an All Saints education exceptional.
 9:45 am -12:00 pm - Tours, speaker panel & *Science of Reading* presentation.
 Prospective families and children welcome!



RSVP @ ASDS.ORG/OPENHOUSE

8060 Carmel Valley Road | Carmel, CA 93923 | 831.624.9171 | www.asds.org



CARMEL VALLEY RANCH

YOUR RESOLUTION: PLAY MORE

CARMEL VALLEY
RANCH MEMBERSHIPS



MAKE 2026 YOUR MOST PLAYFUL YEAR YET.

Memberships at The Ranch allow you to build memories with your family, entertain clients, or simply savor an escape you can return to time and again. All options include resort discounts and other benefits as well!

- Golf Membership
- River Ranch Membership
- Spa Aiyana Membership



SCAN TO LEARN MORE

One Old Ranch Road · Carmel, CA 93923
 TEL 831.275.1532
 WEB carmelvalleyranch.com

Create Where *You* Belong™



CALL, VISIT A SHOWROOM, OR FIND US ONLINE TO SCHEDULE YOUR
 COMPLIMENTARY DESIGN CONSULTATION 408.392.0400

- Los Altos** 363 State St
- Los Gatos** 349 Santa Cruz Ave
- Carmel** 26366 Carmel Rancho Ln

CALIFORNIACLOSETS.COM

CALIFORNIA CLOSETS®

©2024 California Closet Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Each California Closets® franchised location is independently owned and operated. Local contractor licenses available at californiaclosets.com.



Rosie's sign stolen from C.V. museum

By MARY SCHLEY

SOMEONE STOLE a vintage sign off an exterior wall at the Carmel Valley Historical Society on Carmel Valley Road Dec. 14, and the small community organization is asking for its return.

"Can you believe someone did that?" asked co-president Jane Chaney.

The sign advertised "our specialty," a hot pork sandwich served with cole slaw, potatoes and coffee, that was offered for 50 cents at Rosie's Cracker Barrel in the

Robles del Rio neighborhood. The thief took not just the sign, but the caption below that explained its origins.

Chaney noted the signs had been affixed to the wall with particularly secure screws.

"It was not easy to get off," she said. "And they took the caption, too."

The theft occurred the day after the non-profit's Christmas party. "We were kind of surprised," Chaney said.

Rosie's

She is also not optimistic the sign will be returned, and Village residents are decrying the theft.

"Honestly, what is wrong with people?" asked one, while another recalled seeing the sign when it hung on the wall at Rosie's.

"Hope someone will return it," she said.

Others pledged to keep an eye out for it, and the historical society on Saturday filed a report with the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, Chaney said.

Rosie's Cracker Barrel — the property on Esquiline Road

See **SIGN** page 21A

PORCH PIRATES FACE TOUGHER PENALTIES

By KELLY NIX

THERE'S A new effort at the federal level to crack down on those heartless scoundrels known as porch pirates.

Democratic Rep. Jimmy Panetta and Republican Rep. Young Kim announced Monday they've introduced a bill that would require the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Postal Inspection Service to work with state and local law enforcement to better protect communities from mail theft.

Panetta said that too many packages and letters are being stolen from recipients' homes.

"The Mail Theft Act will help investigate and solve these types of crimes by ensuring that federal agencies are backing up our local law enforcement with a coordinated federal response," Panetta said. "As more and more people rely on mail-order delivery, Congress must play its part to ensure that delivered packages are protected."

While the bill would not affect stolen parcels delivered by FedEx, UPS and other private companies, Panetta co-leads another bill — the Porch Pirates Act — to address that problem.

According to the United States Postal

Service and its inspection service, arrests for robbing mail carriers went up 73 percent in 2024. Between 2019 and 2022, such robberies increased sixfold, and high-volume mailbox theft went up 87 percent.

Extra security

The bill follows a letter Panetta wrote to Postmaster Louis DeJoy and Chief Inspector Gary Barksdale asking for help in resolving a serious case of mail theft in Panetta's district. The congressman called on postal leaders to prioritize mail theft deterrence in South San Jose, including approving curbside mailboxes, physical security standards for cluster mailbox units, and "clarity on a nationwide strategy to address the epidemic."

He also cosponsored the Protect Our Letter Carriers Act which seeks to appoint an assistant U.S. attorney to prosecute postal crime, amend sentencing guidelines related to the assault of a postal employee, and replace old mail collection boxes with high-security models.

Kim, who represents three Southern California counties, including most of Orange County, said rising mail theft is hurting communities and putting postal workers at risk.

See **MAIL** page 21A



PHOTO/FACEBOOK

A thief took this sign from its permanent display at the Carmel Valley Historical Society. They would like it back, please.



THE
DEBBY BECK
GROUP

BROKER ASSOCIATE
831.915.9710
DEBBYBECKREALTOR@GMAIL.COM
DRE 01747647

COMPASS

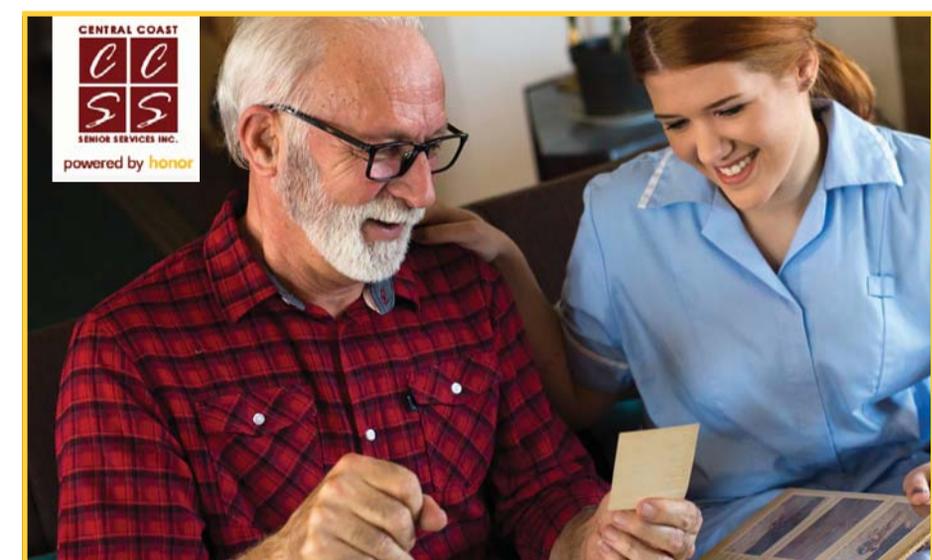


HAPPY NEW YEAR

With gratitude for our community
and best wishes for a wonderful 2026

FROM ALL OF US AT
 The Debby Beck Group

THEDEBBYBECKGROUP.COM



Central Coast Senior Services Inc.
powered by honor

Your goal is to stay at home. We can help.

Turn to us for more than caregiving.

- Transportation/Shopping Services
- Meal Preparation/Light Housekeeping'
- 24-Hour Care and Companionship
- Bathing/Dressing/Grooming Assistance
- Incontinence Care
- Assistance with Cognitive Changes
- Medication Reminders
- Geriatric Care Management
- Community Resources Assistance
- Pet Care Assistance, and much more...

Call us at 831 | 649-3363
www.centralcoastseniorservices.com

CA License #274700016



SPINDRIFT
DESIGN BUILD

ADU • KITCHEN • BATHROOM

SPECIALISTS IN HOME RENOVATIONS
in Carmel, Pebble Beach and Monterey

JAMES KAFANTARIS,
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
LICENSE #1088276

831.233.1465
JAMES@SPINDRIFTDB.COM
SPINDRIFTDESIGNBUILD.COM

State's lone nuclear plant to keep operating until at least 2030

By KELLY NIX

A NUCLEAR power plant in San Luis Obispo County operated by PG&E will be allowed to continue operating for the next five years in exchange for the utility company's conserving thousands of acres of land near the facility.

On Dec. 11, the California Coastal Commission voted 9-3 to OK a permit for PG&E to continue operating the Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the only nuclear power facility in the state, until 2030. The approval allows PG&E to use 2.5 billion gallons per day of seawater for cooling the

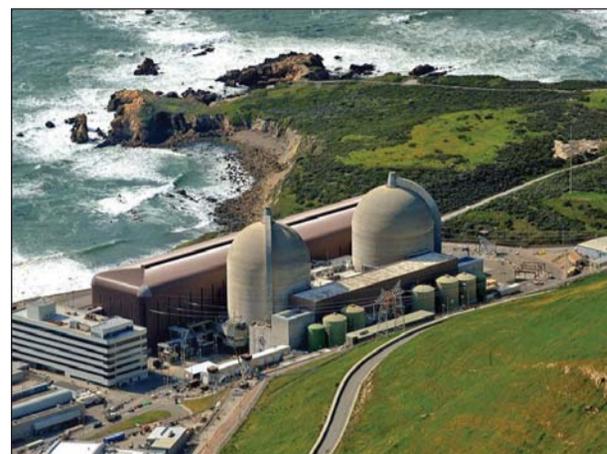
is a major victory for land conservation and public access, ensuring that future generations will benefit from the conservation of these special lands," Laird said after the meeting in Imperial Beach.

PG&E will also set aside more than double the number of dedicated trail easements near the power plant and pay

\$10 million, nearly twice its original offer, to fund trail maintenance and other costs.

The conservation elements "would provide a pathway to the permanent conservation of nearly all of the 12,000

See NUCLEAR page 30A



PHOTO/COURTESY PG&E

The Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant can continue to operate for at least another five years, a coastal panel decided.

nuclear reactor core.

The deal protects 4,500 acres of land north of the plant through conservation easements, dedicates 25 miles of new public trails, and offers \$10 million for trail development, maintenance and stewardship, and the potential to transfer some land to tribal or public entities. The plant is in San Luis Obispo County between Los Osos and Avila Beach.

The plan received praise from state Sen. John Laird, who pointed to roughly 7,000 acres of land surrounding the 40-year-old nuclear facility that will be conserved, compared to a mere 1,100 acres proposed by PG&E in November.

"The coastal commission's decision on Diablo Canyon



The district is guided by its mission: cultivating individual excellence through the power of every connection. For more information about the Carmel Unified School District, please visit www.carmelunified.org and follow CUSD on social media.

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOL FACILITIES!

CUSD FACILITIES MASTER PLAN UPDATE COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION

The Carmel Unified School District invites the community to a Facilities Master Plan Update on **January 6, 2026**, at 5:30 p.m. in the CUSD Professional Learning Center at 4380 Carmel Valley Rd., Carmel (below the District Office).

To help us plan, please **RSVP** by Monday January 5th by emailing fmpupdate@carmelunified.org.

Come hear what's ahead, share your ideas, and help prioritize spaces for students. Questions about this event? Email: fmpupdate@carmelunified.org.

HAPPY Holidays

To show our appreciation to our clients and the communities we serve, Pinnacle Bank is proud to support local nonprofit organizations and help spread holiday joy to those in need.

Serving Monterey, San Benito and Santa Clara Counties.

Member FDIC SBA Preferred Provider

PINNACLE BANK

PREMIER BUSINESS BANKING VALLEY TO VALLEY

(888) 485-7050 • www.pinnacle.bank



Marlow Motor-Werks

(831) 230-7822

Seaside's Premier European
Auto Service Experts and
Dealership Alternative

Proudly servicing
Mercedes, Sprinter, BMW, Audi
and Land Rover with precision
and passion!



684 Ponderosa St, Seaside, CA 93955
Monday – Friday 8:00am – 5:30pm

 www.MarlowMotorWerks.com

Diver turns toward missing woman

By CHRIS COUNTS

FOR FOUR weeks after the official search for the body of Amanpreet Thind was called off, volunteer diver Juan Heredia searched on his own for Thind. But this week, his attention turned to finding the remains of Erica Fox, who is believed to have died from a shark attack Sunday near Lovers Point in Pacific Grove. The official search for Fox has been called off.

"Is there anybody here who was swimming with Erica?" Heredia asked his 126,000 plus followers on Facebook. "Or knows where the shark attack occurred that can send me a pin for the area?"

Thind, a U.S. Army soldier and student at the Defense Language Institute, was swept off rocks by a wave near Soberanes

Point in Big Sur Nov. 22. Two others were also pulled into the water during the same incident but survived.

After the official search for Thind was suspended after a few days, Heredia said he would keep searching for the lost man.

"Some may say, 'There is nothing, he is gone,' but faith says — go again," said Heredia when he launched his search. "I'm still searching because a family needs their son home."

Big Sur's rugged coastline is famously deadly, and diving in its waters is challenging at best. When he launched his search for Thind, Heredia first tried diving without an oxygen tank, but it limited how deep he could go. But a standard oxygen tank was too heavy for him to get up and down Big Sur's steep cliffs.

Heredia, who lives in Stockton, improvised. "I bought a small tank that I could carry with me and use only when I couldn't reach the depth by freediving," he explained. "Lightweight, quick to grab, and perfect for that brutal Big Sur terrain."

\$\$ raised for search

Technology has aided Heredia's search. "Today I was able to cover more ground, faster and deeper, using an underwater scooter — basically a turbine that pulls me through the water," he said Dec. 1.

Heredia, who founded the Angels Recovery Dive Team, recovered the body of a 7-year-old girl Nov. 16 nearby at Garrapata Beach — two days after she and her father her were pulled into the ocean by heavy surf.

Thind's family continues its GoFundMe campaign to raise money for "ongoing rescue and

See **DIVER** page 12RE



PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Diver Juan Heredia is now looking for a woman reported missing after a possible shark attack Sunday near Lovers Point.



GALLERY MAR



| HEY, TIGER!

Celebrating the Season with Local, Regional and National Artists

FRESH ART. BOLD VISION.

Dolores between Ocean & 7th in Carmel-by-the-Sea | gallerymarcarmel.com | 831-624-2000

Hotel revenues continue to rise

■ Tax hike in the works?

By MARY SCHLEY

DRIVEN BY rising visitor numbers and room rates, hostelry taxes climbed in the summer and fall, according to financial reports released by the City of Carmel this month, with receipts in July and August seeing their third consecutive year of growth, and those in September and October rising for five years straight.

Hotel customers pay a 10 percent transient occupancy tax on their rooms, as well as a separate smaller fee that goes directly for tourism marketing, and TOT receipts for July and August in Carmel totaled \$2,393,432, indicating hoteliers brought in \$23,934,320 for the period. The

\$1,504,616.

Unlike sales and property taxes, portions of which are siphoned off to other government entities and agencies, all the TOT remains in the city's coffers. The tax accounts for a quarter of the \$34.9 million in revenues anticipated in the 2025-2026 budget and last year totaled \$9,339,961.

Occupancy recovering

Occupancy, which has yet to return to its July-August 2021 high of 85.9 percent or its September-October high of 79.41 percent that same year, has begun to climb again. After declining to 78.9 percent in July-August 2023, it rose to 81.65 percent in those months in 2024 and to just under 82.9 percent in 2025. For the September-October period, it continued to fall until this year's 76.76 percent rate, after hitting a low of 74.72 percent for those months in 2024.

Occupancy rates are somewhat affected by fluctuations in the number of rooms available. Svendsgaard Inn's on San Carlos Street closed for renovations after it changed hands last year, while the Stilwell Hotel and the Carmel Beach Hotel reopened in recent years after extensive upgrades.

The only figure that rose consistently over the past five years is the average daily room rate innkeepers charge. In July and August 2021, the rate was \$358. Four years later, it had climbed by nearly a third to just under \$477. In September and October, it was \$334 in 2021, compared with an average of \$416 for that period this year.

Over the decades, government officials and others have contemplated raising the TOT rate, which would require a public vote. Of the cities on the Monterey



A room in the Stilwell Hotel, which opened in May 2024 following a closure for an extensive remodel. The rejuvenated property's higher room rates help boost tax revenues.

total tax receipts marked a 4.51 percent increase from 2024's \$2,290,176 and were \$442,230 higher than the July-August 2023 hostelry-tax haul of \$1,951,202.

In September and October, TOT totaled \$1,854,054, which represented a 4.78 percent rise over that period during the previous year. It also marked the fifth straight year of increases. In September and October 2021, hotel tax receipts totaled

See RISE page 17A

NEW IS THE Year, NEW ARE THE Hopes, NEW ARE THE Spirits!



Our heartfelt wishes to you and yours for a promising and fulfilling New Year!

The Profeta Team JUDIE PROFETA ROB PROFETA JULIA HUMASON
DRE#00703550 DRE#01313907 DRE#01872599
MONTEREY COAST REALTY MONTEREY COAST REALTY



JUDIE PROFETA
Managing Director & Broker Associate | DRE#00703550
831.601.3207 ■ Judie@TheProfetaTeam.com ■ www.TheProfetaTeam.com

HELPING TO BUILD CARMEL SINCE 1904

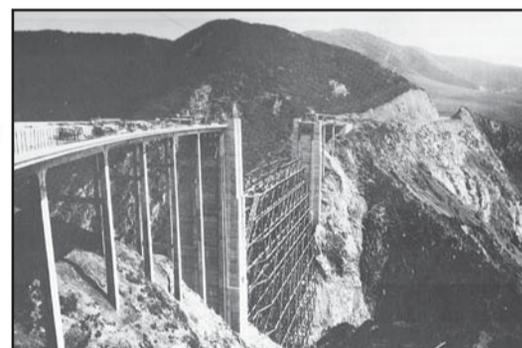


1904 M.J. Murphy and his wife Edna settled in Carmel. He built a one-room home which still stands today on Lincoln Street & 6th.

M.J. started as a carpenter but expanded his business to cover all aspects of his trade.

Today, M.J. Murphy Lumber & Hardware is still supplying you with everything you need to build a home.

Wishing everyone a Happy New Year!



In 1931 M.J. Murphy was one of the sub-contractors involved in the construction of the Bixby Bridge.



Murphy truck drivers made the dangerous trip many times supplying the materials needed.



La Playa Hotel

From 1904 to 1930's M.J. built many familiar structures around Carmel, Harrison Memorial Library, Pine Inn, La Playa Hotel, Old Carmel Hospital and much more.



831-659-2291

10 WEST CARMEL VALLEY ROAD,
IN THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE



MOPANE at the Crossroads



**THANK
YOU!**

*After 4 wonderful
years we are
closing.*

EVERYTHING MUST GO SALE

Friday, December 26th - Wednesday, December 31st
Open at 10 a.m

Here is a list of the local non-profit agencies you have helped us support.

Sea Star Horse Sanctuary

Casa of Monterey County

Surfrider Foundation
of Monterey County

Neema Foundation -Tanzania

Housing for School Kids

Wildlife Conservation Network

Carmel Highlands Association

Carmel River Watershed
Conservancy

Jane Goodall Institute

Meals on Wheels

Hope Horses and Kids

Rancho Cielo

The Village Project

Carmel Cares

Harmony at Home



Senegal Health Institute

AIM Youth Mental Health

Food Bank of Monterey County

Our Neighborhood Pet Project

Breast Cancer Assistance Group

of Monterey County

Carmel Public Library Foundation

Power Over Parkinsons

Junior League of
Monterey County

Maulana School for Orphans

Kuaba Foundation

Kamukama Foundation



We have donated over \$100k to these agencies since we opened in 2022. We have also facilitated the adoption of over 900 baby elephants and given an additional \$100k + to Elephant Havens Orphanage in Botswana.

THANKS!

Mopane.org

200 Crossroads Blvd, Carmel, CA



Coastal panel OKs city's historic docs

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CALIFORNIA Coastal Commissioner this month approved an overhaul of the document city officials use to determine whether a building is historically significant. The fifth edition of the "historic context statement" is part of Carmel's local coastal plan and covers the development and evolution of the town from the 1500s

to the late 1980s.

"The context statement is a component of the coastal plan that provides background information related to the city's unique history and character in terms of architecture, art and culture, economic development, and influential individuals," coastal staffers Kevin Kahn and Katie Butler said in their report for the commission's Dec. 11 meeting in Imperial Beach in San Diego County. "In other words, it serves as a repository of what makes the city a special place and why."

The document, which was developed by Pacific Grove-based PAST Consultants, underwent a significant overhaul and numerous hearings before it was adopted by the city council in January, and it garnered praise from various decision-makers who said anyone who's interested in Carmel's history should read it. Unlike previous versions, it divides the city's history



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

How can you tell this storybook cottage known as Hansel is historic? A recently updated city document will tell you.

See **HISTORIC** page 14A

WINTER CLEARANCE

SALE STARTS JANUARY 2ND

EVERY ITEMS IN STORE REDUCED



UP TO

70%

off including displayed
Baker/McGuire furniture



CUSTOM ORDERS 15% OFF

NEW SHIPMENTS ARRIVING DAILY

POPPLETON'S
HANDCRAFTED FURNITURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

16000 SQ FT MONTEREY SHOWROOM

VOLUNTEER CREWS KEEP BIG SUR'S WILDERNESS TRAILS SAFE, ACCESSIBLE

By CHRIS COUNTS

IF YOU'RE enjoying a hike on federal land in Big Sur this holiday season, there's a good chance a somewhat unheralded volunteer trail crew had a hand in making it easier.

The Ventana Wilderness Alliance trail crew had a busy 2025, and to illustrate the impact volunteers made, the Monterey-based group just released a year-end report card of the trail crew's efforts — just in time for fundraising season.

By the numbers

Over the past year, 91 different volunteers joined 56 different trail crew outings, where they contributed 5,277 hours of work — which the group valued at \$211,819. That's an estimate of roughly \$40 an hour for work that can easily be described as backbreaking. The volunteers routinely remove dirt, rocks, debris and fallen trees, using only hand tools and

physical effort.

The crews also reconstructed 1,310 yards of trail, did maintenance on 14,554 yards, trimmed back brush along 32,660 yards, and moved 326 fallen trees — all on steep terrain with dense vegetation.

Without those thousands of volunteer hours, Big Sur's 330 miles of trails wouldn't be nearly as safe and accessible. "From Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025, the VWA Trail Crew completed an impressive amount of work benefiting all who love the Ventana and Silver Peak wilderness areas," the Ventana Wilderness Alliance said. "Wilderness areas offer all of us an opportunity to better understand nature, build our confidence and self-reliance, and connect to something larger than ourselves."

Trips transform kids

Besides overseeing a volunteer trail crew, the group offers free, multi-day backpacking trips in the Big Sur backcountry for young people "from communities that face significant barriers to accessing public lands."

According to a volunteer who helps lead the trips, many of the kids have never set foot in a wilderness area — and without the VWA, likely never would. The outings give participants "a guided exploration" of Big Sur's interconnected forests, rivers and coastal ecosystems.

"I've seen them return from the backcountry with greater confidence, stronger leadership skills, and a deeper connection to

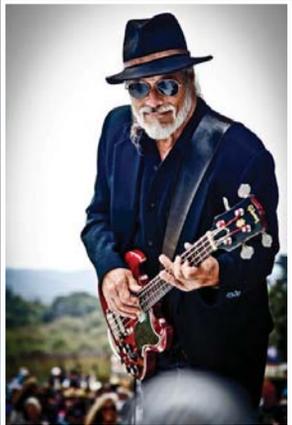


PHOTO/VENTANA WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

The Ventana Wilderness Alliance trail crew had a busy year keeping local trails safe and passable.

See **TRAILS** page 15A

The American Legion Auxiliary Presents



"CHICAGO" BILL & THE NEXT BLUES BAND

December

31

7:00 - 10:00 pm

\$20 donation

The American Legion Post 512
Dolores Street & 8th Ave | Carmel-by-the-Sea

www.alpost512carmel.org



Get your complete Pine Cone every Thursday night by email — Free and easy subscriptions at <https://carmelpinecone.com>



edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Take control: Why budgeting doesn't have to feel restrictive

Budgeting doesn't have to feel restrictive. In fact, it can be empowering. A budget simply helps you understand your money flow and align it with what matters most.

You might need a budget if you're starting out in life, spending more than you earn or working toward a big goal like buying a home or retiring. Major life changes — marriage, a new baby, job or retirement — are also great times to reassess.

Start small: track your income and expenses for 30 minutes

a week. Pair it with something enjoyable to make it easier. Use apps or spreadsheets to simplify the process.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach. Whether you prefer detailed categories or broad ones, find what works for you.

Review regularly and adjust as life changes. The goal isn't perfection — it's progress. A good budget frees you to spend wisely on what matters the most and save with confidence.

This content was provided by Edward Jones. Member SIPC

Call or visit your local financial advisor today.



Linda C Myrick,
AAMS™
Financial Advisor
126 Clock Tower Place
Suite 101
Carmel, CA 93923
831-625-5299



Javier K Bolante,
CFP®, CRPS™
Financial Advisor
126 Clock Tower Place
Suite 101
Carmel, CA 93923
831-647-9861



Christian Ekberg
Financial Advisor
126 Clock Tower Place
Suite 101
Carmel, CA 93923
831-238-9608



Thomas E Carter Jr
Financial Advisor
126 Clock Tower Place
Suite 101
Carmel, CA 93923
831-216-1104

Edward Jones is a licensed insurance producer in all states and Washington, D.C., through Edward D. Jones & Co., L.P. and in California, New Mexico and Massachusetts through Edward Jones Insurance Agency of California, L.L.C.; Edward Jones Insurance Agency of New Mexico, L.L.C.; and Edward Jones Insurance Agency of Massachusetts, L.L.C. California Insurance License OC24309
FDI-1867L-A © 2022 EDWARD D. JONES & CO., L.P. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.






Ocean Ave at Mission St
(located on 2 floors)

EUROPEAN STYLE SPECIALTY COFFEE BAR AND BIKE SHOP



world famous dog friendly sidecar experience- follow us
@maddogsbikeshop

Uptick in mountain lion attacks on pets in Carmel Valley puts locals on alert

By CHRIS COUNTS

THERE'S BEEN a rash of pet and livestock killings recently in upper Carmel Valley, with a mountain lion emerging as the likely culprit.

"Recently, we have had multiple killings of animals by some type of animal predator, including at least four goats — one was mine — a mini-horse, a dog off someone's porch, and today, my neighbor found both of her border collie dogs killed and her cat missing," Gwendolyn Ainsworth reported on Facebook Dec. 21. She lives a couple of miles north of Carmel Valley Village.

Just five days earlier, someone who lives near Sky Ranch speculated that a lion "killed our neighbor's animals through a series of attacks."

For now, Ainsworth is keeping her German shepherd inside her house, and she urged others to "keep your pets and livestock safe."

"I have lived here almost 11 years, and it has never been this bad," she said. "They are going after dogs now."

Another local responded that there have been many pets killed recently in the Sky Ranch neighborhood, and a mountain lion is being blamed.

While those who responded suggested the killings were the work of a single lion, others insisted more than one lion was involved. Another local suggested that coyotes could be responsible for the killing spree as well.

Others made comments about mountain lion sightings in their neighborhoods,

including one woman who shared a photo of a lion captured at night by her security camera Dec. 17 casually strolling through her property.

An old-timer, meanwhile, noted that bounties were paid for lions in the early 1960s to alleviate any threat they posed.

Can we all co-exist?

In less than 24 hours, Ainsworth's report received more than 160 comments, including one from Sue Mudge of Carmel Valley. "I'm saddened to hear this, but we live in a wild area, and animals eat other animals to survive," she said. Others agreed with her assessment that valley residents are in mountain lion country and not the other way around.

"I don't ever let my dog out without a leash or at least supervised," Mudge

added. "Perhaps carry an air horn to scare away anything that comes near? If the temptation is removed, the big cat might move on."

Several residents suggested that wildlife officials should be contacted and a depredation permit should be sought. "If nothing is done about this, it could be your child next," one man warned.

To address conflicts between people and mountain lions — as well as other wildlife — the California Department of Fish & Wildlife offers an online Human-Wildlife Conflicts Toolkit. Included are instructions on how to report an incident or concern to wildlife officials, what the state laws are regarding addressing conflicts, and advice for reducing such conflicts. To find the toolkit, visit wildlife.ca.gov and search for "human-wildlife conflicts."



MONTEREY COUNTY EXPRESS EMPLOYMENT

Finding the right talent shouldn't be a full-time job. Let us handle it while you focus on your business.

Paul Weyant | 831-920-1857
Paul.Weyant@ExpressPros.com
expresspros.com/montereycountyc



Express
EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS
Respecting People. Impacting Business.™



A mountain lion is captured at night by a wildlife camera at San Clemente Rancho in October.

PHOTO/SAN CLEMENTE RANCHO

The Pine Cone's email edition: Complete local news without pop-ups, click bait, pay walls or banner ads — and we don't even harvest your data.

Subscribe at <https://carmelpinecone.com/subscribe.html>

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM JUNIPER & ME




ALEX BRANT

831-264-3870 // alex@alexbrant.com
@alexbrantproperties // alexbrant.com
DRE 01900460

CARMEL NATIVE, LOCAL EXPERTISE



COMPASS Compass is a licensed real estate broker 01527235 in the State of California and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only.



Interfaith Outreach of Carmel is proud to announce its 2025 IOC Grant Recipients, with \$200,000 awarded through proceeds from Joining Hands Benefit Shop.

These grants support local organizations providing emergency, transitional, recovery, and long-term housing and services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Monterey County.

IOC GRANT RECIPIENTS – 2025

- The Bridge Restoration Ministry
- The Carmel Foundation
- Catholic Charities
- Community Homeless Solutions
- Community Human Services
- Franciscan Workers of Junipero Serra (dba Dorothy's Place)
- Housing Resource Center
- I-HELP
- Interim Inc.
- Monterey Sober Living for Women
- Salvation Army
- Set Free Monterey Bay
- Sun Street Centers
- Victory Mission Inc.
- YWCA Monterey County



Every dollar granted is made possible by the community support of Joining Hands Benefit Shop.

Learn more or support the mission: www.joininghandsbenefitshops.org

26358 Carmel Rancho Ln, Ste. 1, Carmel

Montage rebrands urgent care locations

By KELLY NIX

COMMUNITY HOSPITAL of the Monterey Peninsula's parent company is rebranding its small chain of urgent care clinics, which will grow next year with the opening of a facility in Salinas.

Montage Health said Monday that the name of its MoGo Urgent Care centers, which are in Carmel, Monterey and Marina, will be sacked in favor of new moniker Montage Urgent Care. The company also said that it expects to open a new facility at 1910 N. Davis Road in fall 2026.

The expansion "will now operate under the unified name Montage Urgent Care." The change is intended to "reflect the trusted Montage Health brand" and to ensure "clarity for patients," the company said.

"We're excited to bring our urgent care services closer to home for Salinas residents," Mark Carvalho, CEO of Montage Medical Group and president of MoGo Urgent Care, said. "This expansion and naming alignment are part of our ongoing commitment to meeting the needs of our community."

The name change, Montage spokeswoman Monica Sciuto told The Pine Cone, "will be a gradual transition and will happen over the next year."

The Salinas clinic, when it opens in 2026, will be located inside an existing Montage facility.

"Montage Wellness Center will continue operating in its current space, while the urgent care will occupy an area of the building not presently in use by" the center, Sciuto explained.

Increased demand

The decision to open in Salinas was apparently due to demand. In 2024, the three Monterey Peninsula offices had more than 47,000 visits, "with a growing number of patients" from Salinas.

"The new location will offer our community greater access to timely, convenient care — helping patients receive the right level of treatment without unnecessary visits to the emergency room," Montage said.

The new Salinas clinic will be steps away from Kaiser Permanente's medical offices, which opened in January.

The Montage office could give some competition to Doctors on Duty, a larger urgent care chain operated by Salinas Valley Health that has nine clinics.

DESIGN RULES

From page 1A

suggested.

"Just as standards related to building height, floor area and setbacks do not create identical building forms on every lot, objective design standards do not result in identical architectural design," she said.

The standards are essential to comply with several promises made in the city's housing element, which was adopted in April 2024 to facilitate the addition of 349 housing units in a range of affordability levels over an eight-year period, as required by the state.

For example, one of its policies is "to improve development review and approval processes," and a related program calls for creating objective design and development standards "to provide clarity and more objectivity" in the review of housing projects.

Opticos specializes in urban design, planning and architecture and has prepared downtown plans, revitalization

strategies, and other programs for 23 California communities seeking to comply with new pro-housing state laws. Among its many accomplishments during the past 25 years, the firm authored the Association of Bay Area Governments handbook on objective design standards.

When they OK'd the \$220,000 contract with the firm, councilmembers agreed that developing and implementing ADU standards is a high priority and supported increasing the dollar figure to allow for more public hearings: two within the first eight months to adopt ADU guidelines, and two later for multifamily and mixed-use guidelines.

The first of those workshops, set for next month, will "introduce the topic of objective design and development standards and how they apply to Carmel, and gather public input on exemplary accessory dwelling units, multifamily housing, and mixed-use residential projects to inform Carmel's rules," according to the Dec. 19 announcement from the planning department.

The meeting will take place in person in city hall on Monte Verde south of Ocean, with a Zoom option available, while those who want to watch but not participate can stream it via the city's YouTube channel.

Happy New Year

2026

A new year, a renewed commitment to your health and well-being at home. Cheers to a year filled with health, happiness, and healing.

CHOOSE VNA

831-372-6668

www.ccvna.com

Motorized/Bluetooth/Smart Home Options Available

★ Free In-Home Consultations ★

Monterey County's Premier In-House Manufacturer of Quality Blinds, Shades, Shutters and Window Coverings

Made Right. Made Right Here.

Over 25 years in business

Advanced Blind & Shade

SHOWROOM LOCATIONS Monterey & Soquel

(831) 372-1908 | AdvancedBlind.com

Visit our website for currently available *discounts on in-house manufactured products.

CA Lic # 866474

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES

CANNERY ROW ANTIQUE MALL

OVER 100 DEALERS
21,000 SQUARE FEET

The Largest Antiques and Collectibles Mall on the Central Coast

Antique Mall of the Year
Professional Antique Mall Magazine

471 WAVE STREET
MONTEREY

(831) 655-0264

Open Daily 11 AM to 6 PM

Instagram Facebook

canneryrowantiquemall.com

One voice can be the difference for a child or youth in foster care. Be that voice.

Over 50 local children are waiting.

Become a CASA volunteer.

30

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF MONTEREY COUNTY

casaofmonterey.org
831.222.3965

HISTORIC

From page 10A

into six themes “that are connected to discrete time periods that shaped the city’s architectural development.”

“Prehistory and Hispanic Settlement (1542-1848)” doesn’t touch on architectural styles but more on the origins and development of Carmel, including Native American villages, the founding and construction of the Carmel Mission in 1771, settlers and homesteaders.

It moves on to “Carmelo (1849-1901),” “Seacoast of Bohemia (1902-1921),” “Village in a Forest (1922-1945),” “Postwar Development (1946-1965)” and “The Carmel Dynamic Continues (1966-1986).”

Each theme’s chapter details the historical patterns, significant events, and social and political developments that affected the architecture and design of residential and commercial structures, as well civic and institutional buildings, cultural and religious institutions, and parks and open space. It also lists the “character-defining features”

of each notable architectural style and includes photos of examples, regardless of whether the buildings pictured are considered historic.

“Lastly, each thematic section presents the registration requirements for establishing whether a given property is historic or not,” including a “historic significance chart” that incorporates criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places, the California Register of Historical Resources and the Carmel Municipal Code. It also provides a list of considerations regarding a property’s integrity, such as having original windows and doors, the original roofline and other design and structural elements.

It’s minor

Coastal commission executive director Kate Huckelbridge decided the overhauled historic context statement, which was last updated in 2022, constitutes a minor change to the city’s local coastal program.

“The city’s context statement has developed through a series of editions that expand the document to include updates to time periods and address issues with determining historic themes and property types in accordance with the California Office of Historic Preservation standards,” Kahn and Butler explained in their report.

And while it “officially recognizes the various contributions made to the city’s well-known and distinct coastal village character primarily associated with the architectural design of new commercial and residential structures, as well as other social, economic, and political influences that shaped the city,” it is not a regulatory document.

Instead, it provides “the necessary background information to inform the implementation of other coastal plan provisions that ensure the protection and preservation of historic resources that contribute to the unique character of this popular Central Coast visitor-serving destination.”

Further, since it doesn’t alter the kind, location, intensity or density of use of land, they said, it qualifies as a minor coastal plan amendment.

As a result, the updated historic context statement was approved by the commission without discussion at its Dec. 11 meeting.

Alliance on Aging gets Archstone grant

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

AN ALLIANCE on Aging program set to launch in January received a significant boost from the Archstone Foundation, which awarded the nonprofit a \$50,000 grant this week.

The foundation aims to improve the health and well-being of older adults in California, and the Alliance on Aging’s new Aging & Disability Community Leadership Network is a “capacity-building initiative” to help older adults and people with disabilities have a stronger voice in the community and push for implementing recommendations developed by the Local Aging and Disability Action Planning project that was completed in June.

“The project will establish resident-led community action groups in Salinas, Soledad and Marina — creating new pathways for civic engagement among historically underrepresented older adults and people with disabilities,” according to the AOA.

The Archstone Foundation was formed in 1985 when FHP, Inc., a nonprofit HMO, became a for-profit corporation and was required by state law to convert the fair market value of its assets into a charitable foundation. It identified older Californians as a worthy focus.

“We are grateful to the Archstone Foundation for supporting this important work and for their commitment to advancing equity, inclusion and community leadership across California,” the Alliance on Aging said.



SPCA
Monterey County
Changing Lives



Angus
1 year old

Hello! Wanna be my new bestie! I’m waiting for you at the SPCA!



Mochi
3 years old

I’m a sweet, shy boy and I just want to be in your lap. Will you adopt me? Meet me at the SPCA!

SPCA for Monterey County Veterinary clinic is taking appointments for spay/neuter!

Go to www.spcamc.org to make an appointment online.

Call us at (831) 373-2631 for more information about adopting Angus & Mochi.

Sponsored by Friends of All Cats

www.SPCAMc.org



VICTORIUS
STYLE • CREATIVITY • COMMUNITY

Nic + Zoe Habitat
MARBLE JAG
HOBO Lysse
INSIGHT NYDJ

Jewelry, accessories, local artisans and more!

VICTORIUS offers a thoughtful, diverse selection of leading ladies fashions and accessories to enhance a woman’s unique style in a friendly, comfortable environment.

Come in and be delightfully surprised and receive 10% OFF your purchase by mentioning this ad!





211 Forest Ave. | Pacific Grove, CA 93950 | (831) 655-2422
www.victoriuspacificgrove.com

Give a Golden Gift 

Last Call for Donations!

Won't you support our life-saving work by donating to Golden Oldies Cat Rescue through Monterey County Gives!? The campaign ends at midnight December 31st, just **FIVE** days from now!

Donations can be made online at montereycountygives.com/cats through midnight Dec. 31st.



We are a rescue for Monterey County cats age 6 years and older who are at risk in local shelters or whose guardians can no longer care for them.

MONTEREY COUNTY GIVES!
Joining Together for Big Ideas

Golden Oldies
Older Cats
New Beginnings
www.gocatrescue.org
PO Box 683, Monterey, CA 93942




LEGAL SERVICES for Seniors

MONTEREY COUNTY GIVES!

DONATE TODAY!



Every senior deserves safety, stability, and peace of mind. Legal Services for Seniors provides quality legal counsel and representation at no charge to Monterey County residents 60 and older assisting with **housing, estate planning, elder abuse, and more.**

Your **Monterey County Gives!** donation empowers local seniors to stay independent, secure, and respected. **Our goal: \$100,000** to expand essential legal advocacy and outreach for older adults across Monterey County. Together we can ensure every senior has the support and protection they deserve.



(831) 899-0492
LSSMC.NET

PUBLIC NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 20252257

Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
BRIGHT LIGHTS, JELL'N, STREET ART, 100 Don Bates Way, King City, CA, 93930. County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: CAL GROW, LLC, 100 Don Bates Way, King City, CA, 93930.
This business is conducted by a limited liability company. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 1, 2025.
S/Leticia I. Rogers, CFO
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 19, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1235)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 20252251

Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
CDH PROPERTIES, 78 Malarin St., Salinas, CA, 93901. County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Ronald LeRoy Hall, Terry Arthur Dixon, & David T. Carriger
This business is conducted by a general partnership.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.
S/Ronald L. Hall
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 19, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1237)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 20252256

Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
BRIGHT LIGHTS, JELL'N, STREET ART, 100 Don Bates Way, King City, CA, 93930. County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: KC DBW D1, LLC, 100 Don Bates Way, King City, CA, 93930.
This business is conducted by a limited liability company. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 1, 2025.
S/Leticia I. Rogers, CFO
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 19, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1236)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 20252249

Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
FIESTA DE PINATAS, 646 San Luis Rey, Soledad, CA, 93960. County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of individual registrant: Irma Garcia Ibarra, P.O. Box 1128, Soledad, CA, 93960.
This business is conducted by an individual.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 1, 2020.
S/Irma Garcia Ibarra
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 19, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1238)

LEGALS DEADLINE: Tuesday 3:00 pm
legals@carmelpinecone.com
Se Habla Espanol

TRAILS

From page 11A

themselves and the natural world,” said Christian Lamonea, a teacher at La Paz Middle School in Salinas. “These aren’t just outdoor experiences — they’re turning points.”

In addition to trail work and youth backpacking trips, the VWA runs a volunteer wilderness ranger program to remove trash from the backcountry and educate visitors about camping responsibly, operates a volunteer trailhead ambassador provide to provide public information, monitors archaeological sites and rehabilitates land damaged by illegal marijuana growing operations. All these tasks are part of its mission to “protect, preserve and restore the wilderness qualities and biodiversity of the public lands within California’s northern Santa Lucia Mountains and Big Sur coast.”

New leader takes helm

Founded in 1998, the group recently named Carol Olson as its executive director. She replaces Mike Chamberlain, who has led the VWA since 2022. Most recently, Olson was interim executive director for MEarth in Carmel.

“Conservation of our environment is

an increasingly complex challenge that requires specialized tools of the trade,” the group announced. “It is extremely rare to find a leader who has the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and experience to match the task ahead.”

Olson told The Pine Cone she’s excited to step into her new role, and she’s gained a new appreciation for what goes into keeping trails open.

“I didn’t fully understand the complexities of trail network stewardship until joining the VWA,” Olson said. “Restoring and maintaining trails requires skill and technical abilities, extremely strong work and a quite a bit of coordination — and that all happens behind the scenes. We’re very grateful for our partnership with the United States Forest Service as well as our tremendous community of volunteers.”

While the group has accomplished a lot over the past three decades, “there’s so much more to do,” Olson added.

“Our vision moving forward is to make greater progress on the stewardship of those 330 miles of trails and do it in collaboration with the forest service,” she said.

“Our ultimate goal is for more people to safely access these wild places — and in a way that protects the environment.”

Like so many local groups, the VWA is raising money for its work this holiday season. If you’re interested in contributing, visit ventanawild.org.



WE PICKED THE WORST TIME OF YEAR TO HAVE A FLOORING SALE.

You’re welcome.

We know your mind is on turkey, tinsel, and travel plans — not new floors. But that’s exactly why we’re doing this now. Fewer crowds, better deals, and more one-on-one help from our flooring pros. Premium hardwood, carpet, vinyl, laminate, and more — all marked down for a limited time. It might not be the season for flooring, but it’s definitely the season for savings.

414 Adams Street | 831.394.2700

carpetcaravan
Flooring Monterey County Since 1986

VOTED BEST RESTAURANT IN MONTEREY COUNTY
BY MONTEREY COUNTY WEEKLY READERS

Celebrate THE NEW YEAR



SERVED BOTH NEW YEAR'S EVE AND NEW YEAR'S DAY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2025 & THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026
SERVING FROM 4:30 PM

Four-Course Prix Fixe

SOUP

LOBSTER BISQUE

cognac & sherry, crème fraîche, chives

SALAD

WINTER CAPRESE SALAD

golden beets, mozzarella di bufala, fresh basil leaves, Big Sur sea salt, cracked pepper, Tonda Iblea olive oil, white balsamic pearls

CHOICE OF ENTRÉE

14 OZ. ROASTED MAINE LOBSTER TAIL, CLARIFIED BUTTER
garlic-herb roasted Yukon Gold potatoes, sweet corn succotash (add 19)

GRILLED GULF PRAWNS, ARUGULA PESTO

wild mushrooms & tomatoes, garlic, smoked trout roe,
white wine butter sauce on capellini pasta

GREATER OMAHA 50-DAY AGED PRIME FILET MIGNON, DEMI SAUCE

truffle potato pavé, truffle pearls, asparagus, fried shallots,
red wine veal demi-glaze

CHOICE OF DESSERT

OUR FAMOUS CLASSIC CHERRIES JUBILEE

rich vanilla bean ice cream, flamed warm black cherries,
cinnamon, Kirshwasser

GODIVA CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE

layers of chocolate cream cheese, chocolate mousse, cocoa &
flourless chocolate crust

THE PHOENIX'S KISS

chocolate cake, raspberry mousse, white chocolate raspberry glaze, toasted
meringue, pistachio streusel, fresh berries, edible flowers

~ \$135 PER PERSON ~

WE WILL ALSO BE SERVING LIMITED A LA CARTE & CHILDREN'S MENUS
Reservations are recommended



THE SARDINE FACTORY | 701 WAVE STREET, MONTEREY
FREE PARKING | sardinefactory.com | 831.373.3775

TEACHER PAY

From page 1A

behind the national average in math and reading skills — but said MPUSD is aware of the outsized cost-of-living challenges Peninsula teachers face and is taking measures to turn the tide.

“We lose on average 100 educators a year for various reasons, including retirement, relocation, and individuals who choose to stay home with young children,” McFadden said. Last year, she noted, the district lost 65 of its approximately 500 teachers, “a move in the right direction based on all the work the district is doing — for example, workforce housing.”

Workforce housing

Following the lead of Salinas Union High School District and Soledad Unified, MPUSD opened its 2300 Garden Road complex in December as a low-cost housing solution exclusively for district employees and their families. The apartment complex — a converted office building purchased last year for \$35.2 million with taxpayer funds from a \$340 million school facilities bond — offers a fitness center, laundry, parking, and 64 one- and two-bedroom apartments below market

rate. Prioritizing existing employees but with five units open to new hires, the housing lottery closed in late November, and tenants began moving in this month.

Salaries, on the other hand, have stagnated since the 2023-2024 school year, when the district managed an unprecedented raise of 9 percent for teachers at all levels. The past two years, however, have seen a 0 percent increase, and the Monterey Bay Teachers Association is “fighting for stability and transparency,” in future contracts, Book said.

It was Book who alerted members of the teachers association to the contentious waiver. Though it was posted on MPUSD’s website — where all contracts and budget measures approved by the school board are made public — many were unaware that the Monterey County and state offices of education had granted the district the exemption since the 2022-2023 school year.

The waiver permits MPUSD to sidestep the California Education Code, which requires unified school districts to spend a minimum 55 percent of their annual budget on teacher salaries and benefits. Last year, MPUSD was deficient at 53.1 percent, at 50.2 percent in 2023-2024, and in 2022-2023, 52.2 percent. The total comes to a \$15.6 million difference, Book explained at the union’s Oct. 27 meeting, between the

55 percent mandate and what MPUSD has paid its teachers in those years.

She and other union members sent a letter to MPUSD in late October regarding the approval process and justification for the waiver. On Oct. 30, district Superintendent PK Diffenbaugh replied to the letter, citing “declining enrollment, which reduces state funding but does not proportionately reduce operating costs,” “significant investments to add staff in special education, mental health supports, and attendance intervention,” “challenges associated with Covid-19,” and “increased fixed costs, such as retirement contributions, healthcare premiums, utilities and insurance,” as reasons “MPUSD along with many school districts across the state, needed to apply for the waiver.”

\$118K for top earners

Moreover, the district overspent by approximately \$2,000,000 last school year, said Diffenbaugh, who has served as superintendent since 2014 and addressed the waiver as a “standard, state-approved accounting mechanism.”

Chief business officer Ryan Altemeyer explained that the waiver asks MPUSD to list its salaries and benefits against “at least three comparable school districts.” In the early fall, forms are submitted to the county and state offices of education — which then apply their own “internal criteria” to determine whether MPUSD gets its exemption, said Altemeyer.

On its 2024-2025 application, MPUSD compared itself to Soledad Unified and North Monterey County Unified and Alisal Union, an elementary school district in Salinas.

For entry-level positions, MPUSD paid \$60,002 annually, more than Alisal and Soledad but short of North Monterey County. Carmel Unified School District,

by contrast, offered a starting salary of \$78,959 last year.

For mid-career teachers, MPUSD paid \$88,095, more than Soledad’s \$86,824 but surpassed by Alisal’s \$95,953 and North Monterey County’s \$91,119. For senior teachers — the equivalent of 26 years of teaching experience — MPUSD offered the lowest salary of all, \$118,136 annually. At Carmel Unified, the same position paid \$156,218 last year.

For employee-plus-one and family plans, MPUSD’s health care contributions also fall short of the others, a fact underscored at the Dec. 9 board meeting by Marina High civics teacher Justin Collins. Collins said he gets his health insurance from the department of Veterans Affairs and pays out of pocket for his wife and two sons.

“If I was to choose the cheapest health care plan we have, I would only take home \$3,000 dollars a month,” Collins said. “I have a master’s degree, I almost have my Ph.D, I’m to the far right of the pay scale, and we still can barely afford to live.”

In his reply to the Monterey Bay Teachers Association, Diffenbaugh said, “While we have been fortunate to avoid large-scale layoffs up to this point, our ability to do so depends on maintaining a critically important financial balance.”

He also assured teachers that the district would “bargain in good faith and provide transparent financial information” ahead of this month’s contract negotiations.

“We continue to hear how hard it is to live on the Peninsula, and we will continue to work on improving salaries and benefits, as well as pursuing innovative approaches, such as reduced-cost housing,” the superintendent said, with a nod to the district’s big investment at 2300 Garden Road, where studio apartments will start at \$1,265, and two-bedroom apartments at \$1,628.



WE DO MORE THAN PUMP SEPTIC TANKS

- VIDEO INSPECTION OF SEWER LATERALS
- SEWER AND STORM DRAINS CLEARED
- HYDRO-JETTING SEWER, STORM & GREASE TRAP LINES
- PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS FOR REMODELS
- GREASE TRAP PUMPING & MAINTENANCE
- SEPTIC SYSTEMS PUMPED, SERVICED, INSPECTED, REPAIRED & INSTALLED
- SUMP PUMPS SERVICED AND REPAIRED
- EMERGENCY AFTER-HOUR SERVICES AVAILABLE 4:00-9:00 PM MONDAY-SATURDAY



Senior, military & 1st responder discounts available

MONTEREY PENINSULA
831-659-2465

73 W. Carmel Valley Rd. Unit #28
Carmel Valley, 93924

www.psts.net

St. Contr. Lic. # 494738



The Carmel Pine Cone

Press Release guidelines

Press releases about newsworthy events should go to the following Pine Cone reporters:

Mary Schley: Carmel-by-the-Sea, food & wine, police, fire, criminal courts and schools..... mary@carmelpinecone.com

Chris Counts: Carmel Valley, Big Sur, Arts & Entertainment and scholastic sports..... chris@carmelpinecone.com

Kelly Nix: Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach, Monterey, Seaside, state government, civil courts and water..... kelly@carmelpinecone.com

TOP 50 BEST COFFEE SHOPS IN AMERICA

MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN

RANKED #45 IN THE TOP 100 COFFEE SHOPS IN AMERICA

YELP, 2025

WE ARE DEEPLY HONORED TO BE RECOGNIZED AMONG THE NATION'S BEST.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY, OUR GUESTS, AND OUR STAFF FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE.

— CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA, CALIFORNIA



BARMEL

From page 3A

White's refusal to allow him to execute a five-year renewal option that would have extended the leases to Dec. 31, 2029, even though he followed the terms of their agreement. The problems came to a head when White told Georis she was terminating his lease for the café space — which is now the gelato shop owned by Danny Hala and his wife — and then “engaged in efforts to undermine plaintiff’s other leases.”

White issued several notices of default, according to Georis, all of which were “inaccurate, defective or pretextual,” and the notice of termination alleged he had not exercised the options to extend his leases. He accused White and Persall of doing so to undermine his efforts to sell Barmel, for which he was entertaining offers and had entered a contract in March.

In addition to monetary damages, fees and other compensation, Georis has asked the court for “a judicial order declaring performance obligations required of the defendants for the duration” of the leases through Dec. 31, 2029.

Defenses

In September, White, represented by San Rafael attorney Donald Drummond, denied the allegations, essentially blaming Georis for many of the problems he cited and accusing him of other failures.

For instance, she said, he “committed breaches” and “caused and/or contributed to the alleged injuries and to the losses and damages.” White also said Georis is barred from recovering anything due to his “bad faith,” and that he’s partially or fully culpable for the allegations outlined in the complaint.

She said he “failed to mitigate, minimize or avoid damages” allegedly caused by his landlord and perpetrated “fraudulent misconduct, including misrepresentation and concealment of material facts.”

In fact, White argued her consent to the lease terms “was not real, mutual or free in that it was obtained solely

through a material, mutual mistake of fact,” and said she was “induced” to sign the agreements based on a “mistaken belief in plaintiff’s representations concerning available assets.”

She is asking that the court award Georis nothing and dismiss the complaint.

At a Nov. 18 case management conference in Monterey County Superior Court Judge Carrie Panetta’s courtroom, Georis and White agreed “to stay litigation to allow mediation to occur,” according to court records, and the judge scheduled another case management conference for Feb. 24, 2026.

They also signed a confidentiality order approved by Panetta that acknowledges discovery and depositions in the case could include a wide range of sensitive information, such as confidential or private personnel records, financial documents, trade secrets and other proprietary or employment information, that should be kept private.

In the meantime, Barmel continues to offer cocktails, food and entertainment Sunday and Tuesday through Thursday from 2 p.m. to 1 a.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m.

STALKER

From page 5A

“A victim reported being followed on several occasions and cited other incidents that occurred in different jurisdictions,” Maldonado said.

The identity of her alleged stalker is known, he said, and police contacted him for a statement and then forwarded the case to the district attorney’s office for possible prosecution. Because he was not arrested, Carmel P.D. did not publicly identify him.

RISE

From page 9A

Peninsula, Marina’s rate is the highest, at 14 percent, while the cities of Pacific Grove, Monterey and Seaside charge 12 percent. TOT paid by visitors in unincorporated areas of the county is 10.5 percent, and three other cities in the county charge the same rate as Carmel, while two — Gonzales and Greenfield — levy an 8 percent hotel tax.

In April 2005, voters in the City of Carmel failed to approve a TOT increase that would have gone for specific uses rather than to the general fund — and therefore required a three-quarters majority to pass — with 54 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed.

At this month’s city council meeting, councilman Jeff Baron again raised the prospect of pursuing a higher rate.

“We’ve talked a lot about raising the TOT,” he said, before asking that information and figures be provided early next year, which should provide plenty of time to prepare a ballot initiative for the November 2026 general election.

“If we wait until June or May like we did two years ago, it will be too late,” he said.



Today is
National Make Your
Dreams Come True Day.
We have an idea.

THE Preferred Properties
GROUP

Carol Crandall Broker/Owner | 831.236.2712
carol@carolcrandall.com | CalDRE#: 01049139 | Licensed 1989

Whisky By The Fire

An Exclusive Event at Post Ranch Inn with The Macallan






Join us at Post Ranch Inn on **January 11 & 12** for an exclusive two-night celebration with The Macallan, one of the world’s most revered single malt Scotch whiskies. The Macallan’s Sam Gulley leads an intimate Scotch Whisky Masterclass with guided tastings and dinner by the fire. The following evening offers a multi-course brisket dinner paired with several Macallan whiskies. As an exclusive offer for our neighbors, take advantage of our **Getaway Rates offering 20% savings** in select room types. Space is limited.



Tickets & Getaway Rates
INFORMATION +1.800.527.2200



PLAN NOW FOR THE NEW YEAR

Valerie's

IN HOME DOG CARE



Excellent References
831-236-0868

Your Family
Becomes My Family



New Image by Hilary
Permanent Make-Up Artist

Need to freshen up your look?

BROWS, EYES & LIPS





Before After

If you don't look good, I don't look good.

Look 10 years younger in just a couple of hours using the application of Permanent Make Up.

(831) 484-5400 | NEWIMAGEBYHILARY.COM

THE BEST OF AUTO, HOME & GARDEN



**Ask about our
FREE limited
Termite inspections!**

Schedule Your Service Now!

- Rodent Control
- General Pest Control
- Rodent Clean Up Services
- Termite Inspections
- Fumigation
- Vapor Barrier Installation

ailinghouse.com

Call us at (831) 624-8211 or TEXT (831) 402-6113
Mission St. and 8th Ave, Carmel-by-the-Sea



Acme Awning

Lic. #1125642



- Awnings - Stationary/Retractable
- Recovers • Exterior Solar Screens
- Residential/Commercial
- Custom covers and shade tarps

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1933

831-372-3539

210 North Main St., Salinas www.acmeawning.us




WITH OVER 65 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
IN THE SEPTIC INDUSTRY

- Septic System Pumping, Maintenance, Service & Inspection
 - Sewer Drain Line Clearing & Hydro-Jetting
 - Grease Trap/Interceptor Service & Inspection
 - Storm Drain and Culvert Hydro-Jetting & Clearing
 - Fully Licensed, Bonded and Insured

We can take care of all your "dirty" work

www.tomsseptic.com
831-633-2321
Lic.# 406512



MOUNTAIN VALLEY TREE SERVICE

EXCELLING in Tree Services

in Monterey, Salinas and the Surrounding Area

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

ISA Certified Arborist WE-15210A

831-208-2371 | www.mountainvalleytreeservice.com

Mountain Valley Tree Service | P.O. Box 3288, Salinas CA, 93912
Lic#1050857



CATE ELECTRIC

License No. 218160



SERVICE • LANDSCAPE LIGHTING

REMODELS • COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL

ELECTRIC CAR CHARGERS

DESIGN & INSTALLATION

Sean Morgan
Family owned and in Carmel since 1961
(831) 624-5361
Dolores & 7th, Carmel-by-the-Sea



BEST
ELECTRICIAN
17 Years!

2025



The Quick, No Sanding Solution To Beautiful Wood Floors!

Serving: Monterey Bay to Silicon Valley

- Service is Clean, Efficient and contains no harmful chemicals
- Most jobs are completed in one day
- Significant savings over traditional sanding methods
- Details and more photos at: www.MrSandless.com






Jim Griffith - Owner
(831) 747-7476
gmb@mrsandless.com





RIVERA & SONS

• GENERAL CONSTRUCTION •



SERVICES

» Kitchen Remodels	» New Construction	» Fences
» Bathroom Remodels	» Roofing	» Decks
» Additions	» Driveways	» Painting
» ADU	» Electrical	» Much More

IF YOU VISUALIZE IT, WE CAN BUILD IT.

Contact us at: 831-272-1030 Daniel
See our work: riveraandsonsconstruction.com
RNSGCINC@GMAIL.COM

Lic. 1058834
Bonded and insured



HENNINGSEN

Machine Shop



IN NEED OF NEW UPHOLSTERY?

Is your favorite chair worn out?
Does your car seat have a rip?
Do you want to recover your family heirlooms with a material from this century?
Does your boat or motorcycle seat need to look a little better?

We Can Help!!



Call Scott Henningsen at 831-455-2377 • 12 Spreckels Lane, Salinas
AUTOMOBILES-TRUCKS-BOATS-CYCLES-FURNITURE

SWIMMERS DISAPPEARS IN APPARENT SHARK ATTACK

By KELLY NIX

RESCUE CREWS Monday stopped searching for the cofounder of an ocean swimming club who witnesses said was attacked by a shark near Lovers Point in Pacific Grove.

Just after noon on Sunday, Monterey Fire and Pacific Grove Police were notified of a missing swimmer. Two witnesses said that the swimmer, Erica Fox, 55, "may have encountered a shark," police said. The United States Coast Guard, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, California State Parks and other agencies searched for Fox,

who cofounded the Kelp Krawlers ocean swimming club.

Using boats, a helicopter and drones, emergency responders looked for the missing swimmer Sunday until the search was called off at about 8 p.m. It resumed Monday morning, with several Monterey County Sheriff Dive Team divers taking to the water, focusing on the area north of the pier. Seaside firefighters using drones focused on the rocky outcroppings to the north and west, while a Coast Guard helicopter and a small crew in a Coast Guard boat from Monterey also searched.

Suspended

Temporary "swim at your own risk" signs with a shark image were taped on folding barricades in spots around Lovers Point.

A spokesman for the Coast Guard told the San Francisco Chronicle that one of the witnesses claimed to have seen "a shark breaching the water with what appeared to be a human body in its mouth," petty officer Christopher Sappey said. "They then witnessed the shark submerge below the waterline without resurfacing."

After finding no trace of her, on Monday at about 5:30 p.m., authorities announced they'd ceased looking for Fox.

"The decision to suspend the search was made following a total of more than 15 hours of search operations covering an area of more than 84 square nautical miles," according to a joint statement by the Coast Guard and

See **SHARK ATTACK** page 20A



PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Erica Fox, left, went swimming Sunday when an eyewitness said she was the victim of a shark attack. She's not been found. This photo from 2016 shows her with fellow swimmer

Carmel Pine Cone's

WEDDING & Special Occasions

It's the time of year Pine Cone readers are planning their weddings and special occasions for 2026...

Let us help you reach them in our **January 23** Wedding & Special Occasion Section

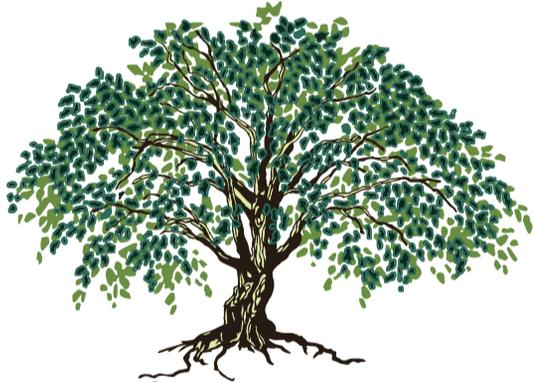


Jan. 23, 2026



Meena Lewellen meena@carmelpinecone.com (831) 274-8655
Jung Yi-Crabbe jung@carmelpinecone.com (831) 274-8646

THE BEST OF AUTO, HOME & GARDEN



DOWN TO EARTH GARDENS

DESIGN · INSTALLATION · CONSULTATION · CARE

Serving the Monterey Peninsula for over 25 years

GILLIAN BROWN 831-238-0446

LICENSE # 1051352 | WOMAN OWNED

SYNTHETIC TURF OF MONTEREY BAY

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS

ALL PRODUCTS MADE IN THE USA

Office Hours:
Mon-Fri
8:45-12:45
or by appt.



2056
Sunset Dr
Pacific Grove
93950

30 Years of Installations on the Monterey Peninsula
Landscaping • Synthetic Lawns • Custom Designed Putting Greens

SyntheticTurfOfMontereyBay.com (831) 641-9843
SynthTurfMontereyBay@gmail.com

WAVEFORM Electric

DELIVERING ENERGY SOLUTIONS ON THE MONTEREY PENINSULA

- Custom Lighting
- Generators
- Battery & Solar
- EV Chargers
- Service & Repair

Local Residential and Commercial Electrical Contractor

831-215-1653

License #1057135



www.waveformelectricinc.com



THE BEST OF AUTO, HOME & GARDEN

To advertise in this section please call

MONTEREY, PACIFIC GROVE, SEASIDE, SAND CITY
CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA, PEBBLE BEACH,
CARMEL VALLEY & MOUTH OF THE VALLEY
Meena Lewellen (831) 274-8655

REAL ESTATE, BIG SUR
Jung Yi Crabbe (831) 274-8646

SHARK ATTACK

From page 19A

Pacific Grove Police, which this time did not mention a shark attack, just that she was missing.

“The Coast Guard extends its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and loved ones affected by this tragic

incident,” said Capt. Jordan Balduenza, of Coast Guard Sector San Francisco.

The rescue effort involved numerous boat crews from the Monterey Coast Guard Station and air crews from Coast Guard in San Francisco.

A total of 21 Monterey Fire Department personnel responded to the incident, including a chief and a fire department boat.

As a precaution, McAbee and San Carlos beaches in Monterey were closed through Tuesday, while a beach advisory

was put in place for Asilomar State Beach, Monterey Beach, Del Monte Beach, and Monterey State Beach through Dec. 23.

The last shark encounter in Pacific Grove that caused injuries was June 22, 2022, when Monterey resident and then-Kelp Krawler member Steve Bruemmer was bitten while swimming. Bruemmer, who received massive blood transfusions and extensive surgery to save his life, has since recovered. He was at Lovers Point Monday morning looking on as first responders tried locating Fox.



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

A Seaside firefighter operates a drone in hopes of locating Erica Fox, who went missing at Lovers Point Sunday.

‘Inspiring’

Rebecca Lee, a Kelp Krawlers member and Fox’s friend, described her as a “vibrant, positive, encouraging and inspiring woman.”

“No matter what was going on, she would point out what you did well and how you were going toward your goals,” Lee said Monday. “She was healthy in body and mind and believed in everyone.”

“Her smile and laugh were so frequent that she could lift up the whole group with

her presence,” Lee added.

Pacific Grove resident Wendi Giles regularly swims at Lovers Point and was there Sunday before sunrise.

“I wore a new-ish wetsuit and could have stayed in longer, but the swell started to pick up so I got out,” Giles said.

After Bruemmer was nearly killed by a shark, Giles said she stopped going beyond the Lovers Point pier.



CAROLYN SNORF AKCAN

Oct. 11, 1961 – Nov. 18, 2025

Beloved wife, mother, daughter, sister, niece, aunt, cousin and friend, Carolyn Snorf Akcan passed away peacefully on Nov. 18, 2025, at home in Carmel, surrounded by her family. Carolyn will be remembered for her life of inspiration to others to travel, live creatively and kindly, and for her generous and loving spirit toward others. Her laughter, love of life and beauty were gifts to her family and friends. She always looked forward to time spent with family, especially on the Big Island of Hawaii, one of her happy places. As well as being an artist, Carolyn enjoyed finding art and treasures from local boutiques and second-hand shops. She faced her own challenges with an unwavering love of life and always had compassionate and encouraging words for friends and family members; nothing was too big or small to ask, and she would generously be there for them. Carolyn was grateful for a life full of wonderful experiences, and above all, loved her family dearly.

Carolyn was born in Chicago, Illinois, on Oct. 11, 1961, to Bertie and Charlie Snorf. The family moved to California in 1963, and Carolyn was raised in Pebble Beach and Carmel, along with her sisters Susan, Cynthia and Sally Jo. Carolyn attended Carmel River School, Carmel Middle School and graduated from Carmel High School in 1979, where Carolyn was a cheerleader and ran track. She loved spending time with friends, family ski trips and developing her artistic talents. Carolyn earned a B.A. in Fine Arts from UC Berkeley, where she was a member of the Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority and loved living in Berkeley — riding her bike around campus, going on long runs — a time of her life that she often recalled fondly. In her true adventure style, Carolyn attended the Semester at Sea University program while at Berkeley and the Brooks Institute for Photography in Santa Barbara.



Carolyn met the love of her life, Zekai Akcan of Turkey, in 1996 while he was attending the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. After a long-distance romance over the next four years, with daily phone calls despite the time difference between California and Turkey, they were married on July 3, 2001, at their home in Carmel. This began a new and profound journey for them in which their commitment and love for each other remained unrelenting. They have two adored children, Rose and Peter Akcan, and have been married for 24 years. Carolyn was a devoted mother to her children, keeping almost all of her children’s art and framing many of their paintings to hang around the house. She volunteered at Bay School and Carmel River School to be involved in their lives. She was so very proud of each of them, and they will never forget the unconditional love she brought to their lives.

Carolyn is survived by husband, Zekai Akcan; children, Rose and Peter; her mother, Bertie Bialek Elliott and sisters, Susan Snorf Lansbury (James) and Cynthia Snorf Livermore (Richard); one niece and nine nephews — Charles (Kat), Robert, Galen (Adrianna), William and Thomas Lansbury; Cadillac (Sanna), Berkshire, Everest (Trish) Zak, and Cascade (Zach) Dewitt; Taha Berk; four great-nieces and nephews; along with mother- and father-in-law Zeynep and Ali Akcan; and sisters-in-law, Zehra (Coşkun) Berk and Banu Akcan. Carolyn was predeceased by her father, Charles Snorf (1930-2020), and sister Sally Jo Snorf (1968-1975).

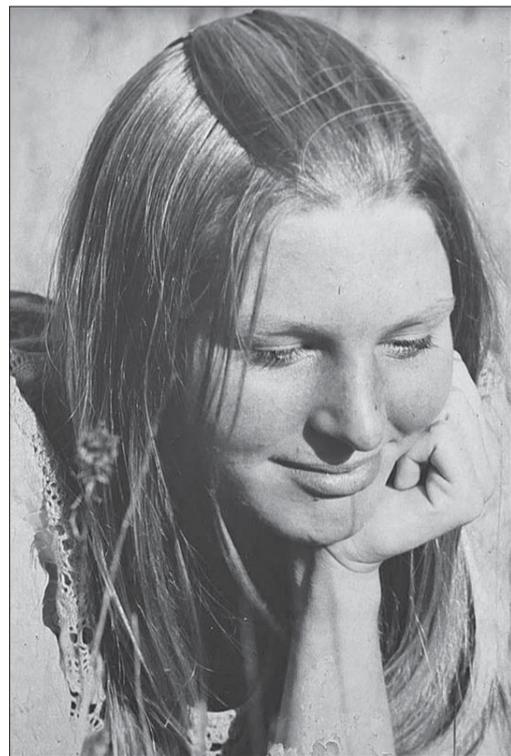
In her poem “The Summer Day,” Mary Oliver writes:

“Doesn’t everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?”

CAROL ANNE JENSEN ROOT

Sept. 22, 1951 - Oct. 14, 2025

Carol Anne Jensen Root passed away peacefully on Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2025, with her daughters, Jenne and Mary, by her side. A lifelong resident of Carmel Valley and proud Carmel native, Carol’s life was defined by a passionate love for learning, family and community.



Born to Neil and Maxine Jensen, Carol grew up in Carmel and graduated from Carmel High School in 1969. She was a dedicated student throughout her life. Carol earned her associate of arts degree from MPC, then went on to graduate from UCSB with a bachelor of arts in cultural anthropology, where she was a member of the swim team. Her passion for knowledge continued at the University of San Francisco, where she earned a master’s degree in legal research and analysis.

Carol worked in mortgage and real estate companies on the Monterey Peninsula, earning both her broker’s and real estate licenses, and ultimately founded her own business: Carmel Valley Home Loans.

In November 1979, Carol married Garry Root. The couple welcomed their first daughter, Jennefer, in June of 1980, followed by Mary in November 1981. Together, they designed and built two homes in Carmel Valley, where they raised their daughters. Carol and Garry’s marriage lasted more than two decades, and though they later divorced, their shared history and family remained a cornerstone of her life.

Carol lived a life full of activity and joy. She loved photography, swimming, golfing and walking. She played golf weekly with her Aunt Dorothy at Rancho Cañada Golf Club, where she was a member of the women’s golf club. She treasured her trips to Myrtle Beach to experience world-class golf courses, and she took pride in sharing her love of swimming with her daughters. Carol also participated in the Big Sur Marathon alongside her good friend.

Many of Carol’s most cherished moments centered around traditions she kept alive. Each holiday season, she baked rolls using a family recipe passed down from her mother — a tradition now carried on by her granddaughters. She loved yearly trips to Gizdich Ranch to pick olallie berries with her daughters and making homemade jam to accompany those beloved rolls. Carol’s gardening brought her great joy. Every summer, her garden overflowed with tomatoes, squash, zucchini and a variety of colorful roses.

Carol’s family was her greatest legacy. She is survived by her daughters, Jenne and Mary; her granddaughters, Rylee and Sommer; her brothers, John and Mark; and her sisters, Noel and Martha. She leaves behind memories of kindness, determination and an unquenchable curiosity.

Those who knew Carol will remember her for her intellect, her resilient spirit and her unwavering commitment to her children and grandchildren.

Although she is deeply missed, her legacy lives on through her daughters, granddaughters, siblings and all who were touched by her love.

A Celebration of Life in honor of Carol will take place from 3 to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Carmel Valley Community Center Hall, located at 25 Ford Road, Carmel Valley.

SIGN

From page 6A

now occupied by Carmel Valley Creamery — was significant not just to Carmel Valley residents who recall frequenting it over the years, but to the historical society itself. The group’s founding members held their first meeting at Rosie’s in January 1987 after Dick Heuer, then the publisher of the former Carmel Valley Sun newspaper, ran an editorial in which he stated the need for a local history society.

Info sought

The historical society became a registered nonprofit and in 1991 formed a board of directors to oversee it, after which it joined the Conference of California Historical Societies. Following a robust fundraising effort, members spent a few years building their history center on donated land at 77 W. Carmel Valley Road. The museum debuted on Dec. 7, 2013, and is open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Anyone who might have information on the sign’s thief or its whereabouts is asked to call the society at (831) 659-5715. For more information, go to carmelvalleyhistorical-society.org.

MAIL

From page 6A

“The Mail Theft Act strengthens coordination across all levels of law enforcement so we can stop these crimes, protect workers and restore peace of mind for families in California,” she said.

Illegal acquisition

If the bill passes, it calls on the head of the federal enforcement agencies to, among other things, “develop a strategy to identify how each such relevant agency can coordinate with other relevant agencies to improve information sharing and assist state and local law enforcement to prosecute organized postal crime.

Organized postal crime is defined as the “coordinated illegal acquisition of postal mail through theft, embezzlement, fraud or other means that are illegal under federal or state law for the purpose of selling or distributing such goods in interstate commerce.”

No later than one year after the bill is enacted, the U.S. Comptroller General must publish a report on coordination between the private sector and law enforcement to deter and investigate organized postal crime, according to the proposed legislation.

**Strong Foundations
Personal Connections**

Our local Relationship Managers provide personalized service and trusted guidance, building strong foundations for your future.

Visit us or reach out today to experience banking that’s truly personal.



Kathy Torres
SVP, SBA Manager
831-233-7013

Matt Brown
VP, Relationship Manager
831-233-7005

montereycountybank.com


DECEMBER 2025

NEW MEMBERS

BLU MERCURY
bluemercury.com

CARMEL BUSINESS SALES
carmelbusinesssales.com

GAR CONSTRUCTION
garconstructionco.com

HIDDEN GEM
carmelshiddengem.com

LUCY MICHEL
lucymichelpottery.com

PURE BARRE
purebarre.com/location/carmel-by-the-sea-ca

THE RAW CONNECTION
therawconnection.com

Yafa
yafarestaurant.com

SAVE THE DATES

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

Women’s Business Council
9:00am – 10:00am

Big Sur Marathon Foundation
26617 Carmel Center Place.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

Denny LeVett Celebration of Life
5:30pm

Golden Bough Playhouse
Monte Verde btwn 8th & 9th

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

Carmel Business Sales Ribbon Cutting
4:00pm - 6:00pm
26335 Carmel Rancho Blvd. Ste. 4

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

Putts for Paws Invitational
11:00am tee-off
Devendorf Park

CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PO Box 4444, Carmel, CA 93921 (831) 624-3877



CARMEL

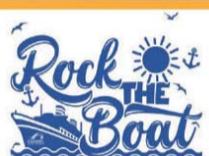
Chamber of Commerce



2025 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
PRESENTED BY


2025 WINNERS

Business of the Year
Mad Dogs & Englishmen



<p>Accommodations (Small) Pine Inn</p> <p>Accommodations (Large) Cypress Inn</p> <p>Art Monterey Museum of Art</p> <p>Beverages Folktale Winery & Vineyard</p> <p>Food (Small) Bruno’s Market and Deli</p> <p>Food (Large) Grasing’s</p> <p>Health & Wellness Carmel Valley Athletic Club</p> <p>Financial / Legal Monterey County Bank</p> <p>Music / Performance Sunset Cultural Center</p>	<p>Nonprofits The Carmel Foundation</p> <p>Professional Services (Small) KAZU NPR</p> <p>Professional Services (Large) Monterey County Weekly</p> <p>Real Estate / Property MGMT (Small) San Carlos Agency</p> <p>Real Estate / Property MGMT (Large) David Lyng Real Estate</p> <p>Retail (Small) Yellow Brick Road</p> <p>Retail (Large) The Crossroads Carmel</p> <p>Tourism (Small) Monterey Bay Whale Watch</p> <p>Tourism (Large) Carmel Mission Basilica</p>
--	--

JOIN US TO

Celebrate

THE LIFE OF DENNY LEVETT





Join Us as We Celebrate the Life and Legacy of our wonderful neighbor, business leader, and friend.

JANUARY | 15 | 5:30 PM
Golden Bough Playhouse
Monte Verde St. btwn 8th & 9th

Register to RSVP
www.carmelchamber.org

★ 2025 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

We Are Honored to be the recipients of the
CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S
2025 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
 Food / Market / Specialty (small)

THANK YOU!

Wishing Everyone a very Happy New Year



BRUNO'S
MARKET & DELI
PRIME & USDA CHOICE MEATS
GOURMET DELI - FARM FRESH PRODUCE

831-624-3821 Ample Free Parking 831-624-1805
 6th & Junipero, Carmel • Open Daily 6:30am - 8pm • Local Home & Hotel Delivery

EST. 1950
SURF N SAND
 FINE WINES - CRAFT BEERS - SPIRITS
 CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

MONTEREY BAY WHALE WATCH



We are so honored and excited to be this year's recipient of the
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
 FOR SMALL TOURISM

Thank You
 to the Carmel Chamber of Commerce and everyone that voted for us.

We look forward to continuing to provide exceptional whale watching trips to our community!

LOCATED AT 84 FISHERMAN'S WHARF, MONTEREY
 WWW.GOWHALES.COM | 831-375-4658



Thank You

Carmel Chamber of Commerce Community for honoring us with the
Non-Profit 2025 Award of Excellence

At The Carmel Foundation, aging is about living fully. For 75 years, we've proven that with the right support, adults 55 and better thrive.



Call to learn more or schedule a visit.
831-624-1588
 SE Corner of 8th & Lincoln, Carmel
carmelfoundation.org



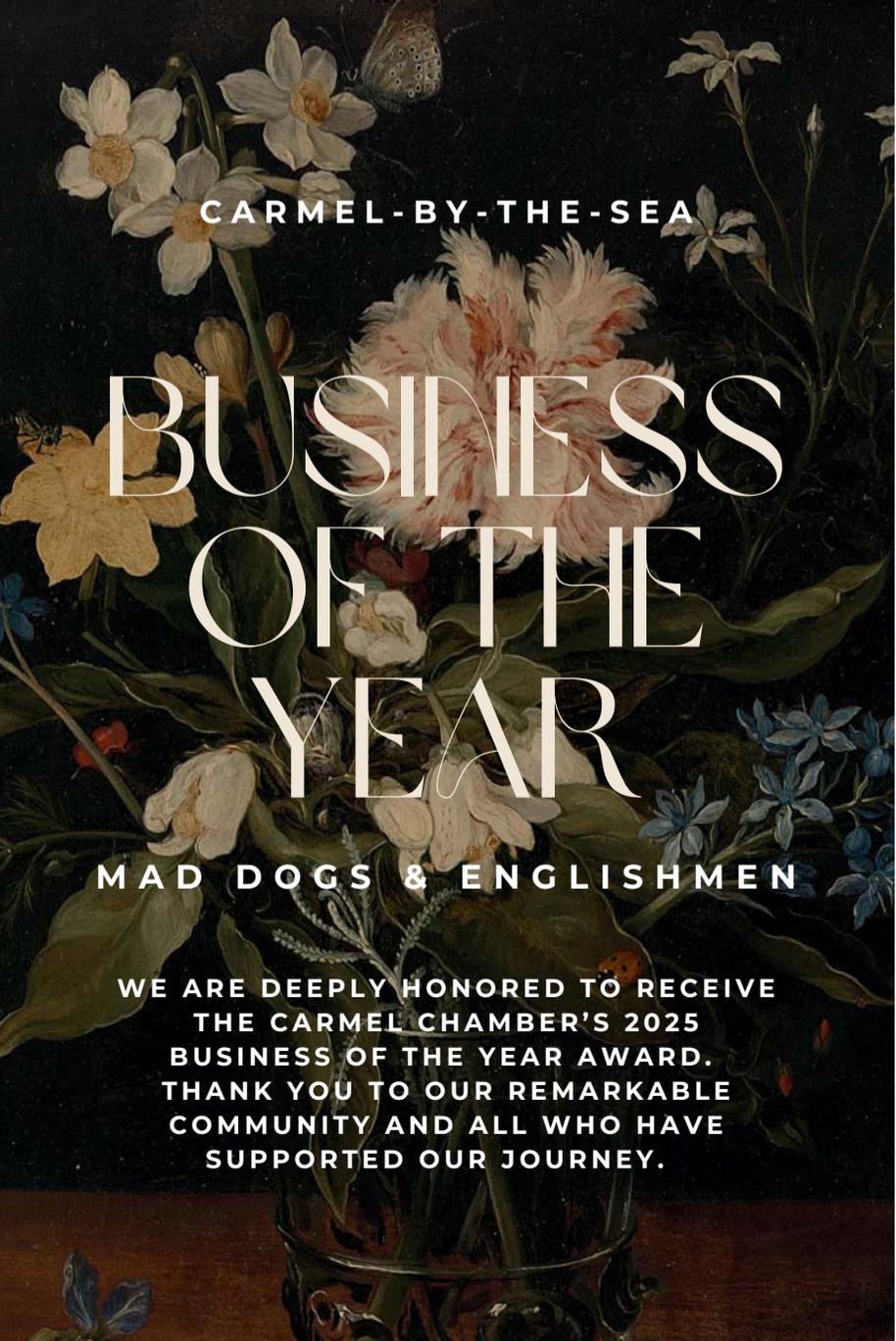
2025 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE — HEALTH & WELLNESS —

Carmel Chamber & Our Community

Thank You!



27300 RANCHO SAN CARLOS RD, CARMEL CVACLIFE.COM | (831) 620-7362



CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

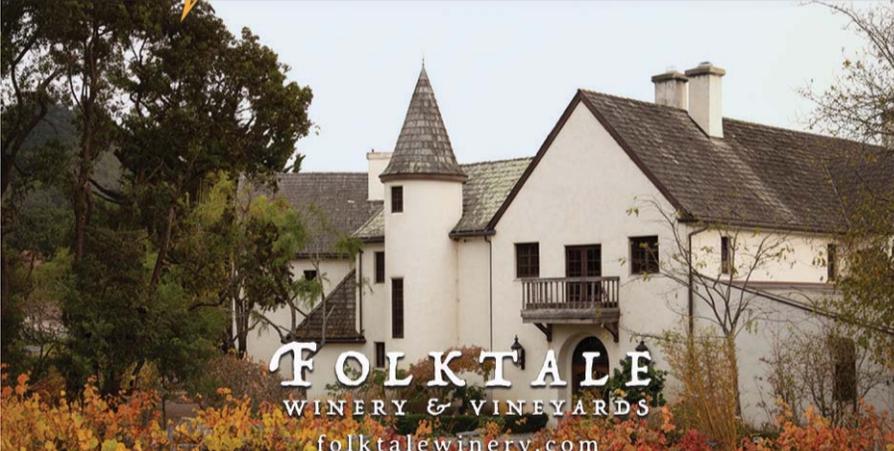
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

MAD DOGS & ENGLISHMEN

WE ARE DEEPLY HONORED TO RECEIVE THE CARMEL CHAMBER'S 2025 BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD. THANK YOU TO OUR REMARKABLE COMMUNITY AND ALL WHO HAVE SUPPORTED OUR JOURNEY.

THANK YOU

★ CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 2025 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE - BEVERAGES



FOLKTALE
 WINERY & VINEYARDS
folktalewinery.com

PINE INN
 CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA



To the Carmel Chamber and Our Community

Thank You

2025 Award of Excellence!
 -Accommodations Small-

★★★★★

www.PineInn.com | 831-624-3851

OCEAN AVENUE BETWEEN LINCOLN & MONTE VERDE, CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

Fly-by-night visitor and longtime philanthropist

By ELAINE HESSER

FOR MORE than a century, Santa Claus has been coming to town, and The Pine Cone has reported on his arrival since its beginnings.

He made his first appearance in the paper on Dec. 15, 1915, when the entrepreneurial Leidigs invited Santa and some of his employees to their stores, then put the word out to local children and their parents.

“Come, see Santa and his happy family of little folks. It’ll do your heart good,” read the notice, which also said the visitor would have “a present for every Little Tot in Carmel and the vicinity.”

In 1918, during American’s involvement in World War I, The Pine Cone reported that like many locals, Santa is a giver. “One of Santa Claus’ first stops on Christmas Eve will be at the American hospitals in France. In every ward there will be a tree and Red Cross workers to help him fill the sick soldiers’ and sailors’ socks,” The Pine Cone wrote on Dec. 5.

He didn’t stop with service members, but through the Red Cross in allied countries, Santa gave to nurses and other workers — perhaps those very people on the much disputed plaque for the World War I Memorial Arch at San Carlos and Ocean. “Cheer, candies, nuts, gifts and a fine spread will bring those who serve us ‘over there’ just a ‘Little Bit ’o Heaven’” said the paper.

A dog lover

On Dec. 18, 1919, The Pine Cone ran a syndicated column from the Western Newspaper Union. Written by Mary Graham Bonner, whose bona fides include a slew of children’s books, the piece suggested that Santa made toys and sent them to stores so that children would know what to ask for. Then, Bonner postulated, he retrieved and redistributed the toys based on children’s requests. How this happened, however, remains a mystery. Clearly, the town’s shopkeepers were in on it, though.

Bonner also wrote that Santa was a dog lover with a faithful companion named Boy of the North, who retrieved

and warmed his robe and slippers by the fire in anticipation of his return each year.

In 1921, a Pine Cone reporter wrote a summary of Santa’s history in the United States, noting that although the Puritans in Massachusetts wanted nothing to do with his shenanigans, New Yorkers and Virginians were quite happy to have him.

Junipero Serra doesn’t appear to have weighed in.

It was obvious some folks called Santa’s very existence into question, as a 1922 front-page headline asked, “Do You Believe in Santa Claus?” The Pine Cone quickly put the matter to rest. “Of course the people of Carmel believe



See SANTA page 31A

★ 2025 AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE WINNERS

On behalf of all our shops, restaurants and services,

THANK YOU!

We’re truly honored to be a part of the best community on the Monterey Peninsula and we are so grateful for everyone’s support over the last 57 years!

Happy Holidays and Cheers to a Prosperous 2026!

THECROSSROADSCARMEL.COM
HWY 1 @ RIO RD, CARMEL, CA 93923 831.625.4106

We are beyond thrilled & honored to be recognized by the Carmel Chamber with an Award of Excellence!

Thank You!

We strive to bring you finest & freshest, expertly prepared food, the world’s bounty of delectable wines & stellar service. We look forward to welcoming you again soon.

– Kurt & The Grasing’s Team

GRASING’S

Locally & Sustainably Sourced, California Coastal Cuisine

NW Corner of 6th and Mission, Carmel-by-the-Sea
(831) 624-6562 | grasings.com @ f

Proud to Be Your Award-Winning Local Bank.

Thank you to the Carmel Chamber and our community for the Award of Excellence in the Financial/Legal category.

Since 1977, we have proudly served Monterey County and look forward to continuing to do so. With new leadership, Monterey County Bank aims to strengthen partnerships that support local businesses, promote sustainable development, and enrich the overall quality of life in Monterey County.

Member FDIC | montereycountybank.com

THANK YOU!

2025 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE WINNER

Yellow Brick Road changes lives by operating charity retail outlets and donating the proceeds towards scholarships and grants, for organizations that support physical, social and other basic needs in Monterey County communities.

Since 1989 we have given over \$9 million and in 2025 over \$95,000 in scholarship to 43 students.

WWW.YELLOWBRICKROADBENEFITSHOP.ORG | (831) 626-8480

2025 Award of Excellence Winner

ACCOMMODATIONS

Thank you to the Carmel Chamber and our community for voting for us.

cypress-inn.com | @cypressinn | (831) 624-3871

Thank You!

KAZU is grateful to the Carmel Chamber of Commerce for recognizing our work with the Award of Excellence – Professional Services (Small).

Trustworthy Local, National & International News

Streaming at kazu.org

On-Air at 90.3 FM

90.3 kazu

for Monterey • Salinas • Santa Cruz

Teams' deep benches bring high hopes and strong playoff chances

CARMEL AND Stevenson have legitimate postseason aspirations as co-habitants of the same division this season, and Santa Catalina also has playoff hopes as a new member of the Pacific Coast Athletic League's small-school Santa Lucia Division.

After winning back-to-back division championships (Santa Lucia in 2023-2024, Cypress in 2024-2025), Stevenson moves up another rung to the Mission Division, where the Pirates and the Padres figure to contend.

Carmel won four of its first five games before the holiday break, with 17 returning letterwinners, including second-team All-Mission Division striker Eva Sedillos. All 13 starters for the Padres played on last year's squad.

Stevenson, by contrast, graduated 10 seniors from a 2024-2025 CCS qualifier that went 10-3-6 overall, including two first-team all-division picks, Macey Torres and Siena Bullock-Martinez, and two second-teamers, Ava Edwards and Katrina Bauer.

But the Pirates also return All-Cypress players Sarah Chabaane and Georgia Bonifas, the division's Defensive Player of the Year, and second-teamer Sydney Holland.

Sedillos tops PCAL scorers

Carmel's Eva Sedillos, a junior captain, leads all PCAL scorers with nine goals — four of them on Dec. 6 in a 6-0 victory at Riverbank High, a San Joaquin Valley opponent in Stanislaus County. She also has a pair of assists for the Padres.

"Eva has been on a tear for us," Carmel coach Steven Russell said of his striker. "She's a difference maker on the



PHOTOS/KERRY BELSER

Athletic junior Eva Sedillos (kicking ball at left) leads Carmel in scoring with 9 goals going into the holiday break — tops in the PCAL — and has 2 assists. Stevenson seniors Iris Burch, a defender, and Georgia Bonifas, the fourth-year goalkeeper (blue uniform) walk with versatile junior Charlotte Schipper, No. 17, a third-year varsity player.

Nine Padres have scored in the team's first five games, including Josie Hanson (3), who shares attacking center middle duties with co-captain Ryan Lott.

Ashley Graham leads the team with five assists from the center middle position she shares with Sam Enea, who is returning to speed after breaking a wrist in the fall while playing club soccer.

The Padres have recorded shutouts in three of their five games, thanks largely to a talented back row that includes senior Leah Sibley as the right-side defender, sophomore Storey Smith (2 goals, 2 assists) on the left, and junior Siena Schillinger and sophomore June Emerson in the middle.

The athletic goalkeeper, junior Anna Rasmussen, can also play in the field, in which case junior Hallie Crabbe steps between the posts.

Carmel's most impressive victory this year was a 4-2 conquest of Santa Cruz. The only blemish was a 1-0 loss at Greenfield, a game in which the Padres controlled the majority of the action and took more than 20 shots on goal without scoring.

"In my four years as head coach, I would have to say this is the best team I've had," Russell said. "I think we could make a playoff run this year, and I know the girls have high expectations."

After going 18-1, with 7 draws, against Cypress Division opponents over the past two years, the Stevenson Pirates can expect a tougher road in the Mission, where foes will include traditionally tough teams like Watsonville, Alisal, North County, Monte Vista Christian, and Carmel.

But opponents will have to score to beat the Pirates, and that's a problem.

Four shutouts

Bonifas, the senior, is a four-year starter in goal, where she already has 45 saves in Stevenson's first six games, during which she has recorded four shutout victories and surrendered just one goal in each of their two losses.

The Pirates' co-captain has also won three All-PCAL honors in field hockey, and neither of those sports is her best.

"She'll be playing college lacrosse next year," said coach Phillip Koshi. "She's just an amazing three-sport star, an incredible kid, and a great leader. I'd say she's the heart of our team."

Despite heavy graduation losses from last year's CCS team, the Pirates expect to be in the thick of the Mission

Continues next page

Peninsula Sports

By DENNIS TAYLOR

field, and she's kind of the train that's pulling everybody else, even though our opponents are sometimes double- or triple-teaming her."

But senior Ava Staehle, a state scoring leader in field hockey, is also quickly out of the gate with five goals and an assist. Staehle splits time at right wing with senior co-captain Zana Balaban (1 goal, 1 assist).

DR. ROBERT KELLER MD & ASSOCIATES



Your Cosmetic Doctor

**Serving the Monterey Peninsula
for over 40 years**

**950 Cass St, Suite A, Monterey CA 93940
831-373-1100 | robertkellermd.com**

**To my beloved patients,
friends and colleagues.**

It is with mixed feelings that I announce my forthcoming retirement at the end of December 2025. It has been my honor, joy and privilege to have served the Monterey Community for 46 years. I will miss you all and this beautiful community. I am looking forward to spending more time with my tribe of 6 children and 12 grandkids. We plan to visit Monterey in the future, so perhaps we will meet again. I wish you all good health, happiness and joy.

*Thank you,
Robert Keller MD*

From previous page

Division trophy chase this season, thanks to a roster stacked with multi-sport athletes, an influx of talented youngsters, and some international boarding students who have played the game before.

Strong defensive backfield

Others safeguarding the goal are defenders Iris Burch, a senior veteran, and sophomore Ella Bradford, who started every game last year, plus freshmen Gabriel Jackson and Vivi Mexico, a boarding student from Mexico.

International players in the midfield include:

■ defense-minded sophomore Jacqueline Alexander-son, who brought a strong soccer IQ and work ethic from Sweden,

■ Natalie Royal, a hard-working sophomore from Germany with good feet and a strong understanding of the game, and

■ fleet-footed Mike Ureta, a junior from Mexico who leads Stevenson's offense with 5 goals and 2 assists. "She's got a really good feet, a nose for the goal, and a competitive spirit that's contagious," Koshi said. "She keeps us fighting, and I think that's an identity of our team."

Brennicke Daley uses blazing speed to menace the right side, and Tatum Le Towt, another wing, brings "a bulldog attitude" onto the field, her coach said.

"She's a gutsy kid who never backs down from a challenge."

Both are juniors.

Deepening the midfield are sophomores Fiona Ums-tot, a year-round soccer player, and Emma Travis, who is expected to contribute after she returns in January from an early-season injury.

All-Cypress senior Sarah Chabaane, a fourth-year varsity player in her senior year, leads a front line that includes sophomore Sam Rianhard, whose lacrosse skills cross over well, and versatile juniors Charlotte Schipper, a co-captain, and Kate Venema.

"I feel like I can put either of those in the game at any position," Koshi said.

"These kids work hard — we're going to compete to the last whistle — and enjoy each other. We laugh a lot," the

coach said. "We lost 10 very good players from last year's championship team, but the three-sport culture at our school helps a lot. These girls love to wear that Stevenson jersey and represent our school."

Santa Catalina needs to win the Santa Lucia Division this year to assure itself of a CCS berth, but coach Julian Salas likes the attitude he's seen through the first five games.

"We're a very competitive team, and we've been able to get the ball up the field," said the fourth-year head coach. "We just need to capitalize on our scoring opportunity a little bit better."

The Cougars are led by talented twin sisters Delilah and Isabel Fujita, whose leadership on and off the field warranted co-captain status for a team with mixed levels of experience. Both are speedy seniors who play wing positions.

Twins are co-captains

"I'm expecting a big, big year out of Delilah, our leading scorer," Salas said. "And Isabel will help make our midfield stronger after being a defender for us for two years."

Catalina's midfield also features juniors Sofia Wiberg and Jessica Urtsuastegui in the middle. Wiberg is a defensive middle, while Urtsuastegui is a durable attacker who has played every minute of all five games this season.

The forward line is composed of juniors Barbara Castelo, a first-year Cougar with good technical skills and the ability to score from long distance, and Paloma Reyes, a three-year varsity player who brings defensive talents to the forward position.

"She's very good at using her body to shield the ball," Salas said of his striker, a Mexican boarding student with a club-soccer background.

The defense features junior Sophie Thompson as the first-year starter in goal, junior Annie Beasley as a second-year center-defender, sophomore letterwinner Kali Peck, senior soccer newcomer Emmy McHugh, and a strong freshman, Elena Salazar, who has previous experience with the game.

First-year players Ireland Harrington, a senior, and multi-sport athlete Hope Yoshiyama, a junior, can fill in at multiple positions.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Senior captain Delilah Fujita (dark blue uniform), Santa Catalina's top player, hopes to lead the Cougars into the CCS playoffs this season.

The Cougars beat King City, 3-1, in their season opener, and downed St. Francis, 2-1, just before the holiday break. In between, they lost 1-0 to Greenfield, and 4-1 to Palma and North Salinas.

"The score doesn't show it, but I think we played our best game against North Salinas," Salas said. "They were a very strong team, and we kept it close until the very end. We were tied for most of the game, but then they scored three late goals."

The Santa Lucia Division also includes Anzar, Ceiba, Marina, Pacific Grove, Seaside and York.

Catalina returns in January with consecutive road games against Anzar, Stevenson and Seaside. The Cougars' next home date is Jan. 16 against Oakwood (3:30 p.m.)

Stevenson makes its Mission Division debut at home on Jan. 6 against North County (3:30 p.m.)

Carmel has a road game Jan. 6 at Watsonville, then returns home on Jan. 8 to play Alisal (5:45 p.m.)

Dennis Taylor is a professional freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at scribelaureate@gmail.com.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Speedy senior Ava Staehle (chasing ball at right of center) is another big piece of Carmel's offense this season.



**HAUTE
SHELTER**

Celebrate Together



- Property Management
-
- Vacation Rental Management
-
- Small Event Properties
-
- Sales

Andy Nygard | 831-915-2863
hauteshelter.com
 Haute Shelter Property Management Inc.
 DRE # 02065719

Join Point Sur Volunteers!



Preserve history, guide tours, and make a difference.
 Class of 2026 is forming now!
 In-person training begins in February.
Email pointsturlisa@gmail.com

Viau Estate Jewelry

FINE ESTATE JEWELRY
BOUGHT AND SOLD

Serving Carmel Since 1982

831-624-5991

Mission St. Between Ocean and 7th
www.viauestatejewelry.com



Help us say YES to animals like Talbot! Your donation to AFRP provides medical care, compassion, and second chances. Give today for a brighter tomorrow!



Donate Today!



Learn more at animalfriendsrescue.org

Fall in Love with Snowflake



- Approx. 11 years old
- Female
- Chihuahua
- 8 pounds

Snowflake is a gentle, delicate soul who brings quiet magic to every moment. This sweet senior Chihuahua loves cozy naps, soft blankets, and peaceful companionship. With her heart condition well managed, she's simply seeking a calm, loving home where she can be cherished.

*Want to meet Snowflake?
Please fill out our online adoption questionnaire.*

Ad Sponsored by
Judy LeRoy in
memory of Lasso
(If you'd like to sponsor our next
ad, please give us a call.)



**Peace of Mind
DOG RESCUE**

831-718-9122
www.POMDR.org
 P.O. Box 51554, Pacific Grove, CA 93950

Editorial

Drowned out

ALMOST 30 years ago, we used this space to warn that the Monterey Peninsula's ardent no-growth agenda would shrink, if not eliminate, its political influence. Boy, were we right.

As the chart below shows, in 1970, Carmel-by-the-Sea had a population of 4,525. Fifty years later, in 2020, it had shrunk 29 percent, to just 3,220. But during that same time span, California grew 98 percent, from 20 million to 39.6 million, and the population of Monterey County rose almost as much, from 250,071 to 439,035.

Keep in mind that what was true in Carmel also applied in the rest of the Peninsula. Pacific Grove, for example, grew over the last half-century, but only by 11 percent, from 13,505 in 1970 to 15,090 in 2020, while the City of Monterey grew 14.9 percent between 1970 and 2020, from 26,302 residents to 30,218. Salinas, meanwhile, more than tripled its population, from 58,896 residents in 1970, to 163,542 in 2020.

Which means that while California, Monterey County and Salinas were booming, we were plodding along, using every trick in the book to fight development — from adopting highly restrictive general plans, to making the permit process impossible to navigate, to challenging all but the smallest new projects in court, to denying property owners access to essential infrastructure (water). Policy wonks call these methods “veto points,” and the

State and local populations 1970 - 2020

	California	Monterey County	Salinas	Carmel
1970	19,953,134	250,071	58,896	4,525
2020	39,538,223	439,035	163,542	3,220
50-year chg.	↑98%	↑76%	↑178%	↓29%

Peninsula's environmentalists, community activists and gadflies used all of them to great effect.

Their intentions may have been good. Save the planet, and all that. But the road they paved not only held the local population down by limiting the number of places to live, it drove the prices of existing homes into the stratosphere, making it next-to-impossible for young people — the people who have children — to buy homes and put down roots. So we were hit with a double-whammy when it came to keeping a lid on the Peninsula's population: No new housing was built, and families with children couldn't afford to buy what was here.

The result has been that Carmel's once powerful political voice has faded to insignificance. As recently as 1980, the Peninsula had two representatives on the county board of supervisors. Now, every supervisor represents at least part of Salinas or the Salinas Valley.

An even more profound effect is evident in Sacramento, where concepts that were formerly paramount have all but disappeared, as illustrated by the state housing mandates, which would have been unthinkable a decade ago but have been imposed without regard for what people in coastal towns like Carmel want.

In our representative democracy, “no growth” means “no influence,” and we have become isolated in a growth-oriented world. As this process accelerated, keeping things the same here at home became impossible.

BEST of BATES



“One bicycle, one robot ... SE corner of Torres and Fifth. Got it.”

Letters to the Editor

The Pine Cone encourages submission of letters which address issues of public importance. Letters cannot exceed 350 words, and must include the author's name and home town. We reserve the right to determine which letters are suitable for publication and to edit for length and clarity.

The Pine Cone only accepts letters to the editor by email. Please submit your letters to mail@carmelpinecone.com

Bike crash video

Dear Editor,

Thank goodness there was a security camera near where Seth Pollack was hit by a driver in Pebble Beach. Otherwise, we would only have the word of the driver that hit him and the erroneous report by the CHP officer. It is not uncommon for a cyclist to be blamed, especially when only one side of the incident is given.

Most cyclists can attest that every time they ride they experience a near hit. I frequently ride in Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove and often encounter drivers passing too close or passing on the left when I'm signaling to turn left, passing on a blind curves, parking in the bike lane, etc. Pedestrians walking in bike lanes, too. Cyclists should ride safe, as well.

If you're an impatient driver who speeds and makes unsafe passes, think how inconvenient it would be to hit a cyclist, pedestrian or another driver. All of

that paperwork, insurance, attorneys, lawsuits, judge and juries, maybe even prison. How about everyone be safe out there?

Mike Gunby, Pacific Grove

Appreciates coverage

Dear Editor,

As a local cyclist who often rides in Pebble Beach, either alone or with friends, I appreciate your paper for prominently setting the record straight regarding the death of Seth Pollack, who was struck by a car while legally riding on 17-Mile Drive. Imagine his wife and family suffering such a sudden loss and then to have his name maligned by the CHP.

Kudos to the folks who wrote you and obtained the video. Hopefully, your front-page coverage will nudge the CHP to complete an accurate final report.

In this age of constant cell phone tracking, you would think the CHP could easily obtain cell tower records showing the direction of Seth's travel. And many cyclists use apps or devices such as Strava or Garmin that record and map their ride. How ironic his obituary was adjacent to the article, and how sad that our community has needlessly lost such a great man.

Henrietta Stern, Pacific Grove

Housing mandates

Dear Editor,

On December 17 there was a special meeting of the Pacific Grove City Council. On the agenda was a proposal to rezone and develop a 3-parcel property near the

See LETTERS page 28A

- Publisher Paul Miller
- Production/Sales Manager Jackie Miller
- Office Manager Irma Garcia
- Reporters Mary Schley, Chris Counts
- Kelly Nix, Lily Patterson
- Features Editor Elaine Hesser
- Editorial Layout Emilie Ruiz
- Advertising Sales Real Estate, Big Sur - Jung Yi (274-8646)
- Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley, Carmel & Pebble Beach
- Meena Lewellen (274-8655)
- Monterey, Pacific Grove, Seaside, Sand City Jessica Caird (274-8590)
- Real estate classifieds Vanessa Jimenez (274-8652)
- Legal Notices Irma Garcia (274-8645)
- Ad Design Vanessa Jimenez (274-8652), Sharron Smith (274-2767)
- Ad Design & Obituaries Anne Papineau (274-8654)
- Office Assistant Alex Nicholson (274-8593)
- Circulation Manager Scott MacDonald (261-6110)
- For complete contact info: carmelpinecone.com/contact.html

The Carmel Pine Cone

<https://carmelpinecone.com>

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

Vol. 111 No. 52 • December 26, 2025

©Copyright 2025 by Carmel Communications, Inc.
A California Corporation

Address: 734 Lighthouse Ave.,
Pacific Grove CA 93950

Telephone: (831) 274-8593

Email: mail@carmelpinecone.com
or firstname@carmelpinecone.com

The Carmel Pine Cone was established in 1915 and is a legal newspaper for Carmel-by-the-Sea, Monterey County and the State of California, established by Superior Court Decree No. 35759, July 3, 1952

But, pray tell, what of the violin?

IT IS a conductor's lot to work with his back to the audience. In fact, the musical leader is a central character who might well be able to walk unnoticed through the lobby after a performance.

The Camerata Singers, however, could see Mark Purcell's face and expressions as they filled First Presbyterian Church of Monterey with four-part harmony during their recent annual Christmas concert.

The tones of more than 40 vocalists meshed beautifully as devoted choir members from various musical backgrounds leaned into the classic holiday songs, while Purcell directed the dynamics and emotion in a kind of choreography, with gestures both subtle and grand.

The audience could hear that.

'Complex sound'

Purcell, 57, earned his bachelor's degree in jazz and classical music from San Jose State and later returned to earn a Master of Arts in music performance.

However, his life in music began with the violin.

"I started violin in fourth grade, and I loved it," he said. "By fifth grade, I had



Conductor Mark Purcell took up the violin in the fourth grade and was a concertmaster in high school.

other stringed instruments, but I've always loved the rich, complex sound of the violin," he said.

Purcell's pursuit of that instrument led to singing. He said he was inspired by his teacher, who told him that being in a choir would help him develop his sense of pitch and ability to play with an ensemble.

"Key people told me I was a tenor — which is more rare in musical performance than violins — so if I wanted to make a career in music, I might

See **LIVES** page 47A

Great Lives

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

started entering music competitions, and by high school, I had become concertmaster of the Diablo Youth Symphony," in Walnut Creek.

"It was always a pleasure to try the

From the mayor's desk —

One resolution at a time

By DALE BYRNE

MOST PEOPLE experience the city council through the moments that generate headlines; a packed meeting, a contentious issue, a passionate debate. Those moments matter. But they are only a small part of how a city actually moves forward. Much of the real work of local government happens quietly, one resolution at a time. Those "whereas and therefore" statements memorialize decisions, big and small, that shape how our city functions.

What the numbers reveal

Since the start of this year, in 40 meetings totaling 180 hours, the city council has acted on more than 100 resolutions, with 85 formally adopted. Seventy-eight of those resolutions were adopted unanimously. That doesn't mean we always started in agreement. Often, we did not. It does reflect a process that gives space for thorough public input, council discussion, and refinement before a vote is taken.

Our meetings follow a clear and deliberate sequence. Staff presents an item. Councilmembers ask questions. The public weighs in. The council then discusses the issue openly, sometimes vigorously.

From there come a motion, a second, further discussion if needed, and finally a roll-call vote. That process, combined with focused special meetings, matters. It slows things down just enough to get it right and ensures decisions are informed, public voices are heard, and outcomes are shaped by dialogue rather than momentum.

Common ground

My role as meeting facilitator is to come with an open mind, make sure all sides are heard, and keep the discussion fair and focused. As debate unfolds, I listen for areas of common agreement. When we find them, we build on them.

When concerns surface, we work to address them. Sometimes that means fine-tuning. A change in language. A condition added to reflect neighborhood concerns. These refinements often turn disagreement into consensus while moving toward a decision.

Unanimity does not mean uniformity. Thoughtful dissent plays an important role. One example was the vote to install 16 new stop signs downtown. Councilmember Jeff Baron had concerns about congestion.

See **MAYOR** page 29A

Finding joy, purpose and camaraderie through a lens

'TALL COTTON' is more than a folksy homespun phrase to born-and-bred Texan Rupert Chambers, who has to stand on metaphorical tiptoes nowadays to believe the magic he sees through his camera lens on the Monterey Peninsula.

"I live 10 minutes from Point Lobos. I look out my kitchen window every morn-

among them," Chambers said with a laugh. "The photographers here really embrace you."

That soft landing might've turned out differently.

Chambers was born in Brownsville, Texas — "about 2 inches from the Mexican border," he said, but he was raised in Houston, where he struggled through childhood with undiagnosed ADHD.

"I was always kind of pushing the boundaries, getting into trouble here and there, so it wasn't an entirely happy childhood," he remembered.

Art wasn't much of a thing in the family.

"When my dad decided to try paint-by-the-numbers, we all got scolded because we couldn't stay inside the lines, and we weren't allowed to participate after that," Chambers recalled.

'Shipped off'

"My parents didn't exactly know what to do with me, so, from the time I was 8 until I was 16, they'd ship me off every summer to be with my grandfather."

He was 9 when his grandfather gave him an old-fashioned Brownie box camera, then 12 when he got another hand-me-down — a twin-lens reflex camera.

Chambers taught himself exposure fundamentals — aperture, shutter speed and film speed.

"So, I was always drawn to photography but never really found myself in a supportive environment," he said. "Half of that was my own fault, because I just kind of waited around. My thinking, I guess, was that if you take good pictures, somebody will discover you and tell you what to do next."

But he did well in high school, then enrolled at the University of Texas, and earned undergraduate degrees in Latin American studies and government, and a master's degree in Latin American studies.

Focused

In 1966, Chambers was given an honors-program grant for an historical research project in Guatemala, during a time of martial law and increasing state repression of leftist movements and supporters of reform. With a blossoming dream of shooting images for National Geographic, he neglected much of his research to focus on photography.

Chambers wed a studio-arts major that same year. "I nicknamed her Eve, because she was the beginning," he said of his first wife and the mother of his three sons.

"My wedding gift from her was some dark-room equipment that had

Carmel's Artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

ing at a sea of mountains. I get to watch the fog roll in around us. I'm in heaven — tall cotton," said Chambers, a Carmel-based fine-art photographer who, at 81, declares that he's never been happier.

He feels wonderstruck to be staring through his camera lens at landscapes and sea vistas that inspired the likes of Ansel Adams, Morley Baer, Wynn Bullock and the Westons, Brett and Edward.

"I am perhaps foremost indebted to Edward Weston, who, in 1930, on Point Lobos, sought 'to photograph a rock, have it look like a rock, but be more than a rock,'" Chambers wrote in his artist statement, quoting the Carmel legend.

Pushed boundaries

Since moving to the Peninsula in February 2024, he has also fallen in love with a robust community of fine-art photographers after becoming involved with Image Makers and the Center for Photographic Arts.

"I revere those people," he said. "They're nice, they're helpful, they're welcoming."

"In Taos, New Mexico, where we lived for 16 years, you'll run into some who turn up their noses, like you don't deserve to be



PHOTO/RUPERT CHAMBERS

Carmel resident Rupert Chambers, 81, has created an impressive and diverse portfolio as a fine-art photographer since retiring 11 years ago from careers in education and nonprofit fundraising.

See **ARTIST** page 45A

The Carmel Pine Cone Help Wanted

The Carmel Pine Cone is looking for a full-time sales representative to help expand our business. Experience in print advertising, i.e., magazine or newsprint, is preferred.

A qualified candidate has:

- 2-5 years of experience developing and growing an advertising client base
- A proven record of successful business development
- Excellent communication skills, solid work ethic and a desire to be part of a team
- Familiarity with the business community on the Monterey Peninsula

Responsibilities include selling advertising, finding new clients, maintaining relationships, providing customer service, creating ad campaigns, and working with in-house production staff.

Excellent salary & benefits including medical, profit sharing and 401(k). Partial work from home is an option for a great performer.

Send resume to jackie@carmelpinecone.com No phone calls

More than an agent...
Maximize your experience
with a partner, an advocate,
a trusted professional.

Lisa Barkalow

Realtor | DRE# 01491728

831.594.2155

lisa@lisabarkalow.com

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY



LETTERS

From page 26A

corner of Dennett and Sinex near Asilomar Conference Center. This is part of a California mandate that requires 1,125 new and affordable units to be built in the next 6 years or so.

The proposal calls for 29 affordable and low-income units on 3 parcels of land on the corner of Sinex and Dennett streets in Pacific Grove. At the city council meeting, many of the homeowners and renters in that neighborhood objected to this proposal based on a wide variety of issues.

People who were in favor of this proposal had other issues. These speakers described Pacific Grove residents as “old,” and the words “NIMBY” was often used.

At the conclusion of the public speaking, the council voted to proceed with plans to develop these 29 units. Yes, it is true that if the city does not proceed with some kind low-income housing project, the state of California will build it anywhere it wants based on the “builders remedy.”

My point in writing this letter? We are a blue state, living in a blue city, and these housing mandates were passed by a vast majority of Democratic Party legislators. Be careful who you vote for in the coming elections. The California housing mandates may be coming for you in the near future.

Carol Marquart,
Pacific Grove



ZOILA ONDINA PAYNE

Zoila Ondina Payne, née Izaguirre, passed away on Dec. 8, 2025, with her son and daughter at her side holding her hands.

She was 98, born on Aug. 19, 1927, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras. When she finished high school, she told her father that she wanted to go to school in the United States to learn English and return to Honduras to work as a bilingual secretary. She met her goal and went back to Honduras, eventually working as a bilingual secretary for United Fruit Company in La Lima. It was there that she met Putnam Payne of Maine, a young graduate of Yale University and University of New Hampshire, who worked for the same company. He was smitten as soon as he saw her. They were married on April 11, 1956.

Zoila and Putnam were transferred to Boston, Massachusetts by the company. They moved back to La Lima — by then with two children, then to the Dominican Republic, Salinas, back to La Lima, and finally retirement in Salinas.

Zoila was a wonderful and devoted mother and wife. She loved to read, play the piano, embroider, was a wonderful cook and always exercised. She was smart, wise, compassionate, generous, happy, funny, full of life and had a beautiful smile. It is hard to imagine a world without her.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Putnam Payne; her parents, Julia and Carlos Izaguirre; and her siblings, Carlos, Rolando, Ivan, René and Lourdes. She leaves behind her beloved children, Thomas Carlos Payne and Sharilyn Rose Payne; many nieces and nephews; the family dog — Chloe, and parakeets Bonita and Pío.

The family would like to thank caregivers Mariana (Marianita) Valdez and María Zapien Gonzalez who were just wonderful with Zoila. A small service was held at the Neptune Society in San Jose on Dec. 15, 2025. A gathering will be held at her home in Salinas at a later date.

Field's history

Dear Editor,

I was sad to read that the Carmel Mission is again increasing the rent for Larson Field to Carmel Youth Baseball, after kindly charging only \$1 a year for so many years. I'm sure many old timers will chuckle over the history given, however, or maybe scratch their heads like I did. I know for a fact that my late husband Ron played baseball on those fields in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and I believe it was Little League all through that time. The switch to Carmel Youth Baseball (part of PONY Baseball) came in the mid-1980s, I think. Little League remained in Carmel Valley, and the two combined some-time later (maybe early 2000s?). I'm sure there are others who know more of the history than I do, but those fields were certainly in use a lot longer than the article implies.

Mary Parsons, Carmel

Welcome improvements

Dear Editor,

How often does local government deliver improvements that residents can immediately see, feel, and use?

For many Carmel residents and visitors, that experience now begins on Ocean Avenue. Its recent repaving — from Highway 1 to the city limits — has made a noticeable difference. Smooth, safe, and thoughtfully completed, it has improved one of the main gateways into town and made everyday travel more pleasant for those of us who use it regularly. As a resident, it is also encouraging to know that much of the work was accomplished with county participation, easing the burden on our city resources.

Meaningful progress in Carmel does not happen by accident. It requires planning, fiscal care, and attention to process. During his first year as mayor, Dale Byrne has helped keep the focus on these fundamentals, with attention to infrastructure, responsible budgeting, and

BIG STORM

From page 1A

afternoon. “We are still finding new hazards and downed locations, but I assure you we are working tirelessly to restore everyone’s power.”

As skies finally cleared and repair work picked up Christmas Day, it became clearer just how much damage was done, with trees on power lines or blocking roads at dozens of locations around the Peninsula, including many in the City of Carmel.

“More trees are falling in every storm segment, and our forestry team and contractors are trying to keep up with them, focusing on the situations involving homes,” Carmel Mayor Dale Byrne reported on Christmas Day.

“City contractors are on duty clearing downed trees, but some trees are on power lines, and we need to wait for PG&E before we can clear them,” added acting assistant city administrator Marisa Bermudez. “We have no recent updates from PG&E about when the power will come back on, but based on the damage around town, it’s not looking very promising.”

At Mission and First, Bermudez said, a “large tree fell across three properties and onto a house, causing major damage.” Other trees fell on houses at San Antonio and 11th, and Torres and First, while a vehicle was damaged at Guadalupe and Third, she added.

In Pebble Beach, a home on Pelican Road was said to be “probably totaled,” because of damage from a falling tree, and a large tree karate-chopped a large Spanish-style home, seriously damaging it.

The City of Monterey said four trees had fallen with “multiple power lines broken and wires down.”

In Big Sur, Garrapata Canyon resident Bruce Merchant said there were redwoods down and large branches broken off, and a neighbor had windows blown out.

“We lost power Wednesday night during the worst of the high winds, and it’s still out,” Merchant said Christmas afternoon. “The community here is very helpful to each other. We feel for all those who are impacted by the loss of power and the serious weather problems we have had.”

Coping and hoping

As the magnitude of the storm became apparent, centers for local residents to warm up charge their electronics were set up at the Carmel Foundation and Carmel Youth Center, along with the Cal Fire station in the Highlands and at Scholze Park in Monterey.

“The Carmel Foundation, at Lincoln and Eighth, is planning to be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. as long as the power is out, and the Youth Center, Torres and Fourth, will be open from 5 to 10 p.m., to align with the foundation,” Bermudez said.

According to gauges maintained by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, more than 5 inches of rain fell in Upper Carmel Valley in the 48 hours beginning late Tuesday. Wind gusts Tuesday and Wednesday night reached 60 mph in parts of Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, the National Weather Service said. But while many homes suffered minor damage in the strong winds, and there was some minor localized flooding in low-lying areas, rivers in Big Sur, Carmel Valley and the Salinas Valley stayed well below flood stage because the deluge fell on unsaturated ground. Before this week, the Peninsula’s

collaboration with city staff and fellow council members.

Equally important is the tone of civic leadership. City council meetings have been conducted with civility and respect, and differing viewpoints are heard. In a time when agreement can be difficult, the number of unanimous council decisions reflects a genuine effort to work together thoughtfully and constructively.

From a resident’s perspective, leadership is not about rhetoric or ambition. It is about results, civility, and the confidence people feel in their local government. Safer sidewalks, smoother roads, and a cooperative council may not be dramatic headlines, but they matter in daily life.

As Carmel looks ahead, this first year offers an example of steady, practical leadership — one that many residents can appreciate in simple, tangible ways, including the roads we travel every day.

David O’Neil, Carmel

Utility’s cooperation

Dear Editor,

Mission Ranch would like to express its heartfelt appreciation to the Carmel Area Wastewater District Board of Directors and their staff for their willingness to align a portion of their Scenic Road Sewer Pipeline Replacement Project with our property’s facilities and landscaping facelift.

Throughout this process, the CAWD staff was committed to transparent and timely communication with our management team, beginning preliminary discussions as far back as August of 2024. When the concept of performing the district’s infrastructure replacement during our scheduled refreshment period was introduced, the CAWD team was extremely cooperative and made every effort to accommodate our requests.

See **MORE LETTERS** next page

last significant rain was in mid-November.

Some residents did their best to make a silk purse out of the dreadful experience, while others just picked up the pieces and hoped the electricity would come back on.

“It was obviously disappointing losing power on the evening of the 23rd continuing through Christmas Eve, changing our tradition of making a two-day holiday dinner on Christmas Eve, but Pangaea Grill saved the evening by being open with a generator, and it turned out to be quite festive for locals and tourists alike,” said Judy Tollner. “I trust PG&E is doing its best, and groceries just purchased for Christmas won’t have to be thrown away.”

Too few PG&E crews?

“There was no damage to our house, but there was wind-blown debris everywhere around town, and I am frankly amazed that there wasn’t more damage from the storm,” said a Carmel resident who wished to remain anonymous. “The town looked like a ghost town yesterday with all the businesses closed. We usually cook a nice meal for Christmas and my wife bakes bread, but we couldn’t do any of that, and the food will have to be thrown away.”

“We have our family visiting with two young children, and during the day with the sun out it’s fine, but at night it’s very dark and difficult,” reported Carmel resident Nancy Sparling.

“We are keeping our fire going for heat and are cooking on our barbecue and gas range which fortunately still works. We will be spending the afternoon going through our freezers and refrigerator and throwing food away. Not the Christmas we were hoping for,” she added.

Several Pine Cone readers contacted the newspaper to urge that power lines finally be moved underground, while Emaad Faorqui, who identified himself as a “new resident to the area” said he thought power outages and fire dangers could be minimized by relaxing laws that prohibit removal and pruning of trees.

“These multiple-day outages are preventable with proper tree control,” Farooqui said. “I’m not sure why this town is so content with weeks of no power, constant fire risks, and giant trees one windstorm away from causing significant home destruction and lethal harm to citizens. There should be less tree regulation and more protection for locals’ safety.”

As sunset approached on Christmas Day, Carmel City Councilman Hans Buder emailed his constituents with a frank email.

“According to PG&E, there are 29-30 work locations on power lines in the Carmel area,” Buder said. “Unfortunately, I was told that due to holiday-related staffing shortages, there are only 5 crews currently working on those 29-30 locations. On my calls with PG&E today, I was not given a specific estimated time for power to be restored, but PG&E intimated that it would be ‘into tomorrow’ given the holiday-related staffing shortages and the high number of identified work locations, and I’ve told my family to brace for another night without power.”

While Buder said he appreciated PG&E staying in contact with city officials throughout the outages, he also didn’t mince words about the lack of urgent repairs.

“Letting us sit for days without power because they don’t have enough of their internal people on the job over Christmas is not acceptable,” Buder said. “Bad storms are inevitable, but power outages should not extend for days on end due to lack of appropriate staffing or because we have not been prioritized.”

MORE LETTERS

From previous page

A special thanks is due to CAWD staff Patrick Treanor, Jeff Bandy and Daryl Lauer for all their help logistically and for creating project information and communications material that we then provided to our staff and guests.

I would also like to extend a thank you to Andrew Coffey and the crew from KJ Woods. They were clean, safe and communicative, answering our questions and working with our facilities team while we had guests and staff on property.

Public or private, construction projects of any type have always been difficult, especially in Carmel. However, when two organizations work together for the betterment of the community, great things can happen. Over the past two weeks, that spirit of cooperation was on full display as CAWD was able to complete its sewer replacement while Mission Ranch was able to refresh several of our buildings and landscaping.

**Sue Carota, general manager,
Mission Ranch**

Cabaret revitalization

Dear Editor,

At Cal State Monterey Bay, the arts have

always been more than performances on stage. The arts have created connections, sparked creativity and shaped generations of students. The university is entering an exciting new chapter thanks to the legacy gifts of two generous Carmel donors whose vision will transform the Black Box Cabaret into a state-of-the-art performance center for the campus and regional performing arts.

The late Robert Darwin, a longtime Carmel Valley resident, provided an estate gift to the university to support student scholarships and bequeathed his home to fund a new performing arts venue for the region. We have combined Darwin's gift with a generous donation from the late Bob Danziger, a musician and Carmel resident whose creativity and commitment to artistic innovation left a lasting mark on the Central Coast.

Together, these legacy gifts will allow us to revitalize the Black Box Cabaret, once the heartbeat of student life from the 1990s through the 2000s. Pending approval by the California State University Board of Trustees, the venue will be known as the Robert Darwin Black Box Cabaret, and we look forward to moving the project forward in 2026. The reimagined, technologically advanced venue will be available to the university as well as community arts groups.

Philanthropic giving has the power to transform lives, open doors and shape the future of both education and the arts. At

Cal State Monterey Bay, a new vision is becoming reality through a reinvigorated performing arts center that will inspire creativity, collaboration and community. Early designs include indoor and outdoor gathering spaces, a rooftop terrace and advanced acoustics that will welcome students, local residents and visiting artists for performances, workshops and shared cultural experiences. The center will serve as a dynamic hub where artistic expression and community connection thrive together.

The extraordinary generosity and vision of Darwin and Danziger exemplify how philanthropy extends far beyond the university. Their investment will shape the cultural landscape of the Central Coast for generations to come, fostering both economic vitality and artistic excellence throughout the region.

**Vanya Quiñones, President,
Cal State Monterey Bay**

Kudos to Daniels

Dear Editor,

I commend Kate Daniels for taking a stand against short-term rentals. The recent lawsuit has helped bring the issue forward for a more detailed study of the effects of STRs on the housing supply within Monterey County.

In my opinion, STRs have taken a significant bite out of our rental-housing market. The Carmel school district has been losing students annually due to the lack of residents within the city. To a lesser degree, this is also occurring in Pacific Grove, Monterey and Salinas.

The increase in value between a normal rental and an STR decreases affordability. Eliminating STRs can be an important step toward providing more affordable housing throughout the county.

**Frank H. Saunders,
Carmel Valley**

MAYOR

From page 27A

They were well founded and led to a more robust discussion. That tested assumptions, sharpened reasoning and improved support. Since then, the change has proved popular, but without that dissent, we would not have felt as confident in our decision to move forward.

Progress adds up

Resolutions may sound procedural, but they are where ideas turn into action. One accepts a budget checkpoint. Others authorize agreements, appointments, services and schedules that quietly keep the city running day to day. Taken together, they reflect steady progress.

When residents see decisions made in the open with a well-prepared council, respectful debate and clear votes, it builds confidence in the process, even when

people do not get everything they hoped for. Transparency, consistency and fairness matter as much as outcomes. This is also why things can sometimes appear to move slowly, and then suddenly move quickly. The groundwork is often laid quietly over many meetings through diligent staff work and council action.

A productive year

Effective local government does not have to be full of drama, although we had some this year. More often, it looked like good preparation, careful listening and thoughtful debate in full view of the public. As we close out 2025, I want to thank my fellow councilmembers, our dedicated city staff, commissioners and engaged residents for the care and energy they bring to our city government. One resolution at a time, that shared effort kept Carmel moving forward. To hear a podcast generated from this column go to cli.re/resolution.

Dale Byrne is mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea. His email is dbyrne@cbts.us.



MB | **MARY BELL**
BROKER ASSOCIATE

Wishing you all
health & happiness
in 2026!

Mary Bell 831.595.4999
MaryBellProperties.com
MaryBell@CarmelRealtyCompany.com
Broker Associate | DRE#00649274

CARMEL REALTY COMPANY
ESTABLISHED 1913

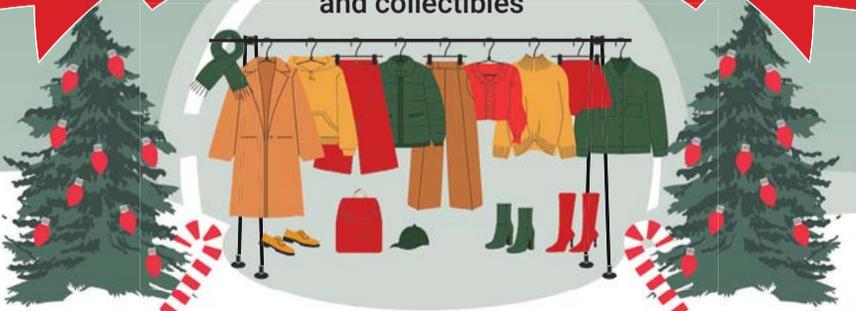
REGENTS
REALTY GROUP



**YELLOW BRICK ROAD
BENEFIT SHOP**

Thank you to our
customers and donors
for a wonderful
year.

End of the Year Sale
50% OFF EVERYTHING
including jewelry
and collectibles



MONDAY, DECEMBER 29TH TO WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31
10AM-4PM • NEW YEARS EVE 10AM-1PM
Closed Christmas, New Years Day, and January 2nd.

MAIN STORE AND BOOK STORE | 26388 CARMEL RANCHO LANE
OUR FURNITURE AND ART STORE | 26344 CARMEL RANCHO BLVD.

WWW.YELLOWBRICKROADBENEFITSHOP.ORG | (831) 626-8480

**VOLVO CARS
MONTEREY**



LEASE FOR
\$489 /MONTH FOR
36 MONTHS
Plus taxes
and license

**NEW 2026
VOLVO XC60
B5 PLUS AWD**




nelson
group automotive

1711 DEL MONTE BLVD SEASIDE, CA 93955
(831) 899-8800 VolvoCarsMonterey.com

Closed-end lease for 2026 VOLVO XC60 B5 PLUS AWD when financed through Volvo Car Financial Services. Not all lessees will qualify for lowest payment through Volvo Car Financial Services. On approval of credit for well-qualified buyers. Some payments may vary based on residency and other factors. \$48,553.07 lease price. \$8,990 total due at lease inception (\$5,990 Rebate + \$3,000 customer cash) plus tax and license, \$0 security deposit. Lessee responsible at lease end for mileage in excess of 7,500 miles per year at \$0.20 per mile. Must take new retail delivery from dealer stock by 1/2/2026. See Volvo Cars Monterey for details.
1 at this lease:VIN#T1317809

Pay for parking online

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

IN A step forward in the slog of progress, the Carmel Police Department will begin accepting online payment for residents' annual parking permits, police dispatch supervisor Melissa Webster said this week.

The permits, which cost \$35 and are good for a year, provide for three hours in two-hour zones and double time in 30-minute zones, and allow people to park in permit-only areas. Permit holders can also leave their cars on Scenic and in the Del Mar lot after midnight. Carmel P.D. specifically states the permit authorizes "you and ONLY you to park your vehicle" to receive those privileges.

Starting Jan. 1, residents interested in obtaining a parking permit can go to ci.carmel.ca.us/police-fire and click on the "residential parking permit" tab or navigate directly to tocite.net/carmelbythesea/portal/permit.

Users will be required to upload their proof of residency — such as a property tax bill, utility bill or lease agreement that includes a physical address — because, of course, P.O. boxes are not acceptable. They'll also be required to pay a \$3 fee for using the online service.

Once a permit has been approved, an email will be sent to the recipient, who can go to the police station at Junipero and Fourth to pick it up during regular business hours, which are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, call (831) 624-6403.

NUCLEAR

From page 7A

acres of the Diablo Canyon lands in order to offset the project's effects on marine life," deputy director Cassidy Teufel told commissioners at the hearing.

PG&E, under pressure from state regulators, announced a proposal in 2016 to shut down Diablo Canyon. But with California's electricity prices skyrocketing even as power shortages forced widespread blackouts, state legislators passed a bill in September 2022 to require the state Public Utilities Commission to consider keeping it running. Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, who had supported the closure, reversed course when he signed the bill to keep the power plant open.

A few months later the PUC invalidated PG&E's plans to retire the facility and ordered the company to take steps to keep it operating.

U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright maintains nuclear power must be a critical part of the nation's energy security, and said his department is accelerating plans for new nuclear power plants nationwide.

"As global energy demand continues to grow, the U.S. must lead the commercialization of affordable nuclear energy through the rapid deployment and export of

next-generation nuclear technology," Wright posted on X earlier this month.

Newsom views the nuclear plant as key to the state's power grid stability. Diablo Canyon, PG&E said, provides about 10 percent of California's electricity and nearly 20 percent of the state's "carbon-free energy."

'Barriers'

If Diablo Canyon's operations are allowed to continue after 2030, PG&E plans to expand conservation deeds south of the plant to about 2,500 acres, and offer nonprofits, government agencies and Native American tribes first chance at buying all 5,000 acres of that land.

District 3 Monterey County Supervisor and coastal commissioner Chris Lopez said he was proud to support the proposal, remarking "what we are doing is going to be something that changes lives on the Central Coast in perpetuity. This is important. This matters to generations that have yet to exist on this planet."

Before the vote, coastal commissioner Ann Notthoff, from Carmel Valley, said, "I frankly wish we were talking about decommissioning Diablo Canyon today."

While Notthoff voted to grant PG&E a development permit to keeping operating Diablo Canyon, in a separate vote she joined two other commissioners in opposing a federal consistency certificate, which PG&E needed for a 20-year operating license.

Everybody reads The Pine Cone

support local

Keep Your Mail & Packages Safe

PAKMAIL

Carmel by the Sea

100 New Mailboxes!



- ✓ Shipping
- ✓ Mailboxes
- ✓ Office Services
- ✓ Notary
- ✓ Printing



5th Street Between San Carlos and Dolores
(831) 626-8100 • Mon-Fri 10-6 & Sat 10-2

Branches
RESALE SHOPPE
Benefiting San Carlos School

Thank You

To our donors, volunteers and shoppers for helping us support San Carlos School and our community members!

We Graciously Accept:

- ✓ Household Items
- ✓ Clothing & Accessories
- ✓ Furniture
- ✓ Garden & Decor Items

Please call with any questions or pickup requests

Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 4pm
480 Webster St., Monterey
(831) 375-4780

With Heart Felt Gratitude — Branches and San Carlos School



501(c)(3) nonprofit

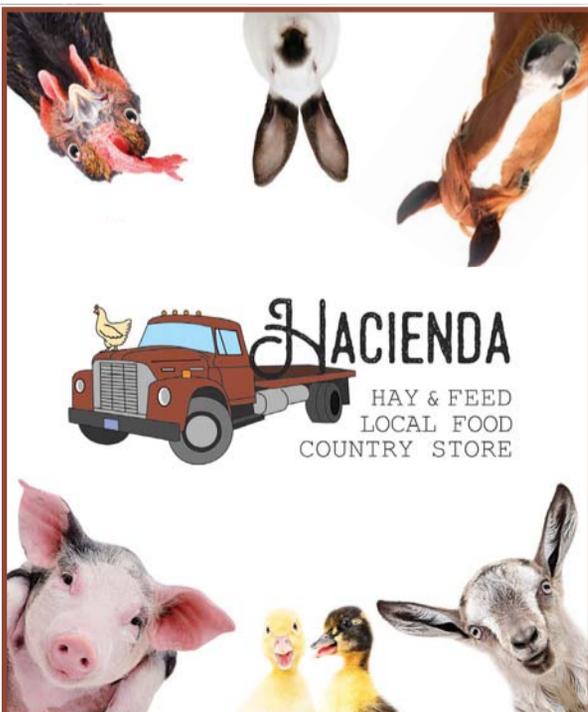


Guitar & Amplifier Repair

Vintage Guitars, Amplifiers, Pedals, Consignment Sales

"Where Every Note Resonates."

623b Lighthouse Ave., Monterey, CA 93940
Across From Hula's Island Grill



7180 Carmel Valley Rd. Carmel
Tue-Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm

Follow us online for Events, Workshops, Classes & more

Pet & Livestock, Feed & Supplies

Next publication date:

January 30, 2026

To advertise in this section & to receive The Pine Cone's special section calendar for 2026.

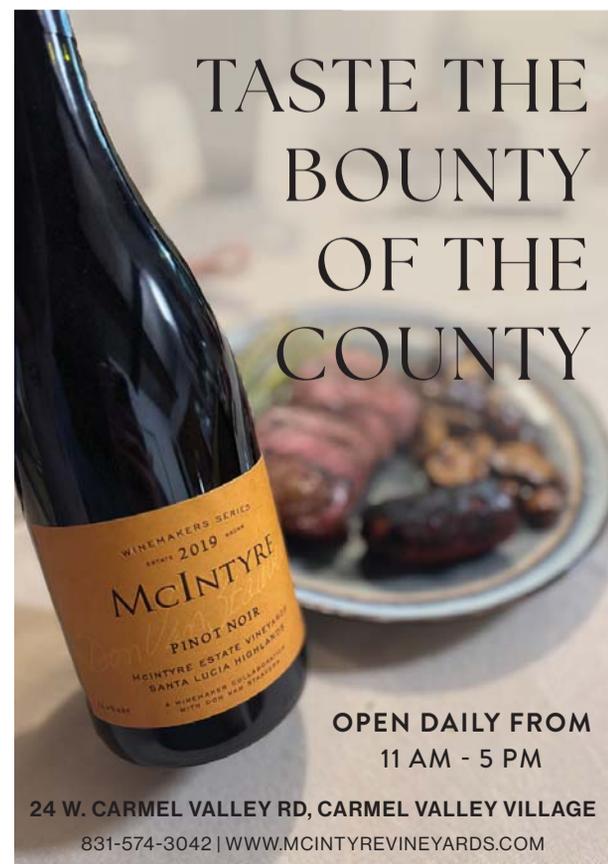
Please call or email

Meena Lewellen

(831) 274-8655

meena@carmelpinecone.com

The Carmel Pine Cone



TASTE THE BOUNTY OF THE COUNTY

OPEN DAILY FROM 11 AM - 5 PM

24 W. CARMEL VALLEY RD, CARMEL VALLEY VILLAGE
831-574-3042 | WWW.MCINTYREVINEYARDS.COM

CELL PHONES

From page 1A

school districts have one.

All three public school districts on the Monterey Peninsula allow high school students to use their phones during breaks. Teachers have been reduced to phone jailers, tasked with collecting phones at the beginning of each period and handing them back before the bell rings, wasting instruction time and leading to showdowns with uncooperative students.

Turns into a battle

“Teachers have the right to take their phones for the class, but it just turns into a battle, honestly, and with 30 kids per class, it’s really hard to manage,” said one high school math teacher in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District.

The same teacher said he has seen a marked decline in his students’ academic success since the advent of the smartphone, which he says has corrupted their ability to focus.

“I know for my math students, there is so much loss in learning, and I am not

after using their phones. So a kid scrolling TikTok in the hallway for a minute may not be ready for geometry until the lesson is halfway over.

A 2017 study of 800 smartphone users from the McCombs School of Business also found that the mere proximity of your phone, say, in a caddie on the teacher’s desk, can impact your cognitive capacity. Participants with their phones in another room scored significantly higher on the test than those with their phones on a nearby desk, and even outscored those with devices stored in a bag in the same room.

Researchers have pointed to lackadaisical phone policies and smartphones in general as culprits in sinking test scores over the last decade.

In a September flypaper, Fordham Institute President Michael J. Petrilli mused about the nation’s best readers and the worst readers, which happen to be the same generation of kids. In 2015, America’s fourth graders received the highest reading score ever on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, but fast forward to 2024, and twelfth-grade reading scores reached record lows.

Of course, the pandemic happened, and online learning through connected devices became ubiquitous but Petrilli notes the cohort’s reading scores first started dropping pre-Covid in 2019 when they were eighth graders.

“The obvious culprit is the rise of smartphones and social media during this period and its impacts on motivation, sleep and the time spent reading for fun,” writes Petrilli.

Worldwide, the Program for International Student Assessment, known as the gold standard of academic performance by country, has reported declining achievement since the early 2010s. The first iPhone was released in 2007.

Emergency debate

So how did the Golden State end up with a requirement that students have access to their phones at all times?

Under the 2024 law, schools must allow students to use their phones in the case of an emergency or in response to a perceived threat of danger. Phone Free Schools Act author Assemblymember Josh Hoover said those provisions came from a previous piece of legislation fellow lawmakers didn’t want negated.

“That didn’t come into law from my bill, that was in existing law,” said the Folson Republican.

Hoover’s fellow legislators were

knowledge, the coastal commission hasn’t objected to the flying reindeer. Perhaps they work with Santa to route his sleigh away from migrating whales and unsuspecting condors.

And yes, Santa uses a vintage flying sleigh that would be the envy of the vehicles at the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, but as far as we know, he’s never been invited to participate.

somewhat baffled by his original language allowing schools to eliminate phones on campus. Many lawmakers assumed parents would want to be able to reach their children at all times, either for scheduling purposes or in case of emergency.

While many parents want instant access to their children in an emergency, other parents and experts argue that phone use during an emergency poses dangers to students.

According to National School Safety and Security Services, the risks include being distracted during a crisis, failing to follow directions, receiving false information, control and having parents disrupt evacuations.

Workaround

As a work-around to the 2019 emergency access language, Hoover wrote yet another smartphone bill this year — however, it creates a lot of extra work for any district wishing to use the law.

AB 962 gives schools the power to prohibit smartphone use by students in an emergency, but a statewide bell-to-bell ban requiring kids to stow their devices for the entire day would be better.

“I think we want to see how this plays out, but I would say that the science and the research show that the less students have access to phones during the school day, the better,” said Hoover.

Under the Phone Free Schools Act, districts have until July 2026 to enact new policies, and further legislation on phones isn’t likely until the milestone passes, Lockable pouches or backpack storage would achieve the goals of emergency access while also creating an away-for-the-day policy.

A paper released in October confirms the hunch that if phones are stored away all day, student outcomes improve. The National Bureau of Economic Research studied phone bans in Florida and found student test scores went up and chronic absenteeism went down with phone bans. So kids were not only smarter, they thought school was more fun without phones?

Regardless of what California school districts decide, parents can play a role in managing smartphones. Schools can only give the gift of in-person connections from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It’s up to parents what happens after school, on the weekends and in the small hours of the night.



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

Research shows that students not only learn more poorly when they have cell phones in school, they also don’t socialize with classmates as much.

blaming it all on phones, but it is definitely part of it, where they are just barely getting by, some of the questions I hear in class are third- and fourth-grade stuff.”

He teaches juniors.

Even if kids are consistently turning in phones during class time, advocates like Carreon say it’s still problematic if they use them between periods and during lunch.

Today’s smartphone doesn’t just call and text, it’s designed to snag your attention for as long as possible, cutting down time for face-to-face socializing — and leaving cafeterias and corridors eerily quiet.

Time spent on devices during breaks makes it harder to focus once kids are back in class, too. According to a Global Education report from 2023, students can take up to 20 minutes to refocus on their lessons



After 45 Wonderful Years... I’m Retiring!

Serving the Monterey Bay community has been one of the greatest joys of my life. I’m deeply grateful for all the friendships, memories, and support over the years.

Come say hello and find hundreds of fine handmade rugs — new and antique, in every size and color — now offered at huge retirement discounts.

NOMADS RETIREMENT SALE
All Rugs
50% OFF

Nomads Fine Rugs
486 Alvarado St., Monterey, California
(831) 373 1009

SANTA

From page 23A

in Santa Claus, as all sensible people do.”

From then on, Santa’s visits and gift distributions were regular fodder for The Pine Cone, with more reported appearances than could be listed here. To our



FREEDOM MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION

Proudly providing exceptional service to Monterey County residents for 15 years!

We Offer Our Passengers:

- Through the Door Service
- Same Day Service Availability for Last-Minute Transportation Needs
- ADA-approved vehicles equipped with state-of-the-art wheelchair lifts

- Drivers trained and certified in CPR and First-Aid
- Gurney Access Available
- Aspire Health and CCAH accepted

Prompt, Courteous and Safe
Non-Emergency Medical Transportation



ASK US ABOUT OUR ROUND TRIP SPECIAL RATES TO LOCAL DOCTORS APPOINTMENTS AND TO AND FROM STANFORD AND UCSF

We Service Monterey, Santa Cruz, & San Benito Counties & also travel throughout CA, NV, AZ, and OR.
Open 24/7 - 365 days a year All drivers have had background checks

(831) 920-0687

www.freedommedicaltransportation.com



A Rare Coastal Legacy in the Heart of Pebble

1494Cypress.com
PEBBLE BEACH



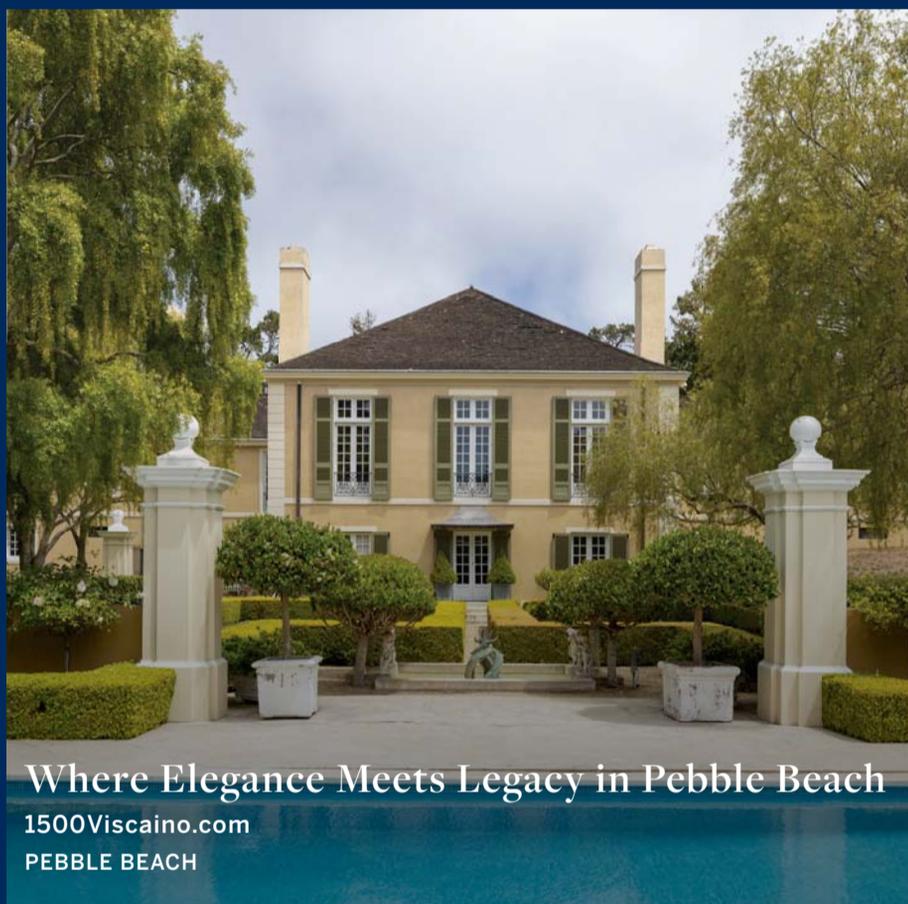
Golf Estate with Great Ocean Views

3426-17MileDrive.com
PEBBLE BEACH



Ocean View Near Carmel Beach

26167ValleyView.com
CARMEL



Where Elegance Meets Legacy in Pebble Beach

1500Viscaino.com
PEBBLE BEACH

Access the Unlisted

Some of the Peninsula's finest homes never hit the open market

Scan the QR code to sign up for access to upcoming and off-market listings



- 4 LISTINGS IN PEBBLE BEACH
- 9 LISTINGS IN CARMEL
- 4 LISTINGS IN CARMEL VALLEY
- 2 LISTINGS IN MONTEREY

MARKET SNAPSHOT

The Holiday Season Slowdown Has Begun

"The market continued at a slow and steady pace this week with 1 new listing and 4 listings that came back to the market. This slowdown, across all price points, is standard for this area. We did see 4 properties go into escrow, including 2 in Pebble listed above \$5M. There were also 6 closed escrows this month, mostly below \$2M. We did get a surge of showings over the past week with lots of people in town renewing their search that stalled earlier. This is a trend we anticipate increasing after the New Year. We'll be coming out with in-depth analysis for the full quarter the first week in January, so head to CanningProperties.com for more analysis."

JESSICA CANNING
CANNING PROPERTIES GROUP

The **#1 TEAM** in 2020, 2021, and 2022

TOP 10 TEAM for Sotheby's International Realty Nationwide for 9 years

Mike Canning | Jessica Canning | Nic Canning | Nancy Canning | Ellen Armstrong | Anita Jones | Caroline Garcia
team@canningproperties.com | 831.241.4458 | CanningProperties.com

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

HEALTHY

Lifestyles

Making friends with the fish and the East River

By DENNIS TAYLOR

A FEW weeks back, while he was waiting to get some teeth drilled, Byron Alvarez's resting heart rate tested at 42 beats per minute — a reading presumably similar to that of a hibernating bear.

A relaxed homo sapiens normally clocks in between 60 to 100 beats. But Alvarez is not normal.

The 72-year-old Pebble Beach resident is a veteran of more than 40 long-distance swims through strong currents, rowdy waves, frosty lakes, shark-infested bays, oceans and straits, crowded shipping lanes, and, believe it or not, New York City's East River (July 15, 2012) — an historically infamous waterway known for floating corpses, sunken vehicles, garbage, chemical dumps, and billions of gallons of raw sewage each year.

"That was a beautiful swim," chirped Alvarez, who offered nary a complaint about the smell, the taste, or the color of the saltwater strait between Brooklyn and Manhattan.

"You might come out of there with three eyeballs!" cautioned his wife, Christine Veziés, at the time.

"Just gotta do this stuff," Alvarez reminisces today with a matter-of-fact shrug. He didn't pass anyone who looked dead, and didn't even get sick.

Alvarez is not a worried man. He's done the ominously named Alcatraz SharkFest

swim — from The Rock to San Francisco — 13 times, dating to the first one, in 1993, when he was one of only 58 in the water. Nowadays, 800 enter.

Strong currents? Choppy conditions? Kelp? They're all challenges he enjoys.

And sharks? Pfft. Not really a thing for Alvarez or Carmel's Trevor Souza, 45, who made his open-water debut in the Messina Strait, from Sicily to Calabria, the "toe" of mainland Italy.

"People watch too many movies," said Souza, who swam with great whites and hammerheads — on purpose — last summer.

It's the jellies

"I love sharks," he said. "They'll usually just stare at you, like 'Why are you in my house? Go away,' then they leave you alone, unless you irritate them or they feel threatened."

Don't wear any shiny objects, Souza advised. Don't wear a white, yellow, or fluorescent pink wetsuit or swimwear. Don't look appetizing. Alvarez said he's never seen one in 40-plus open-water swims, nor has there been a shark attack in any of those events.

Worry instead about medusa jellyfish, Alvarez said of the umbrella-shaped inver-

SWIMMERS *con't.* page 36A



Byron Alvarez, left, who is not Australian was added to the Australian relay team at the 2018 Maui Channel Swim, where he fought through 3-to-4-foot waves during his leg of the race.

“My dad has Afib, mom has varicose veins,
and I’m worried about family history.”
Can you help us all?

YES.

Welcome Dr. Ilja Dejanovic,
Interventional Cardiology

We have experts in cardiovascular specialties from head to toe.

Golden State Heart & Vascular started with a simple but powerful idea: to provide our community with easy access to personalized, comprehensive, cardiovascular care. We offer a full range of heart and vascular services, and our patients count on us for the advanced care and services one might expect from a major medical center — close to home — without the red tape and long wait. Our patients look to us for:

- The gold standard in cardiovascular care
- Renowned experts at the top of their field
- Innovative treatments, some of which were pioneered by our physicians

Learn more at gshav.com or call for an appointment.



Golden State
HEART & VASCULAR

MONTEREY
831-717-4687
2 Lower Ragsdale Drive, Suite 160

SALINAS
831-646-8346
1260 S. Main Street, Suite 202

Additional offices in
BURLINGAME
LOS GATOS
MOUNTAIN VIEW
WATSONVILLE

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

When a walk is also a snack

By ELAINE HESSER

A RECENT study based on decades-long research has determined that not only is regular exercise associated with a lower risk of dementia, but it seems to be most effective for those who are in midlife or beyond.

Since so much lifestyle advice is oriented toward “starting young and building good habits” — from exercising to developing more bone density, to using sunscreen — it’s refreshing to hear about the possibility of redemption for those whose youths have already been misspent.

The recently released findings from the landmark Framingham Heart Study (see sidebar) highlight the effects of increased physical activity in midlife — ages 45 to 64 — and late life, defined as 65 to 88. It has long been established that exercise can help prevent or delay the onset of dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease,

but in this study, researchers found that people who had the highest levels of exercise during midlife and later had better than a 40 percent lower risk of dementia.

‘Really exciting’

Dr. Lisa Yang, clinical lead for lifestyle medicine for Kaiser Permanente’s greater San Jose area — including its Salinas office, opened earlier this year — called the

EXERCISE *con’t. page 37A*



Dr. Lisa Yang

What is the Framingham Heart Study?

In 1948, when cardiovascular disease had become a leading cause of death in Americans, Congress funded a long-term study to identify risk factors in apparently healthy people. In Framingham, Mass., researchers recruited more than 5,000 adults aged 30 to 62 and began tracking a wide variety of factors, including lifestyle, medical history, lab tests and more.

Although its 77-year history alone is striking, what makes the Framingham project even more remarkable is that in 1971, more than 5,000 adult children and spouses of the original participants were recruited to continue the study, and in 2002-2003, the next generation — about 4,000 grandchildren — joined the group. People from varied racial backgrounds were also added starting in 1994.

The study, with more than 15,000 participants, is ongoing and has been expanded to include genetics and brain health, and has been the basis of thousands of scientific papers.



Harnessing the power of exercise

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

WE CAN access all kinds of information and advice on how to best care for our pets, through online offerings, in books and magazines, from breeders, friends and neighbors and, perhaps most importantly, from trusted veterinarians.

After years of addressing the relationships between pets and their people, they also know it’s a relationship that can be mutually beneficial.

Known locally for taking care of pets “from their first to their last breath,” veterinarians Susanne Galin, Amanda Sharp and Heart Dominguez of Animal Hospital at Mid Valley took a moment to share insights on the health advantages that come

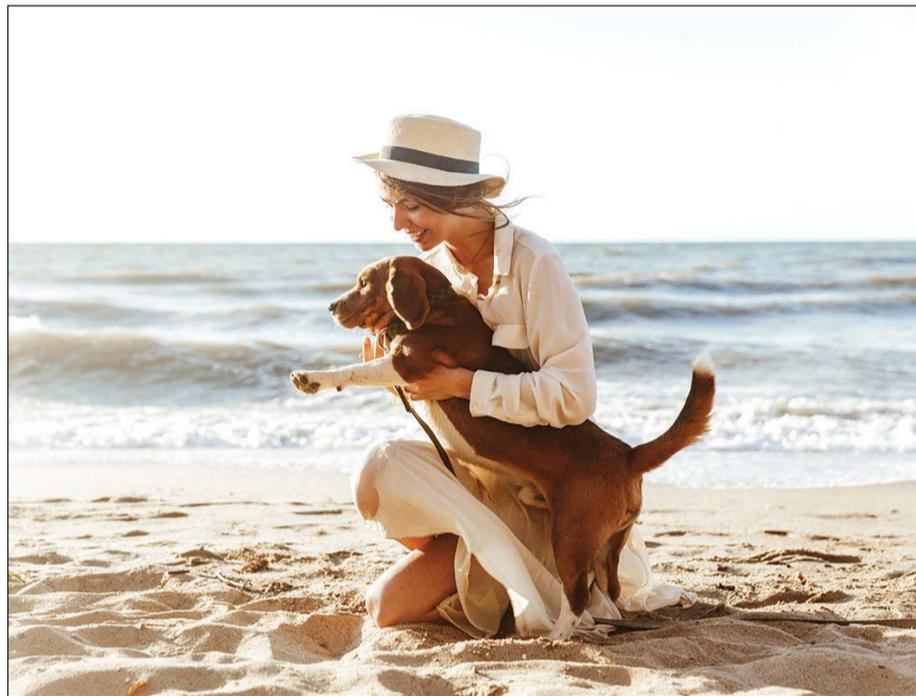
through the care and companionship of a pet.

Not alone

“Dogs need to be walked several times a day, which gets owners out walking, as well,” said Sharp. “We have some older clients who are getting in 5 miles a day through five, mile-long walks, which they wouldn’t do at all without a dog.”

Besides feeling good, she said, the psychological satisfaction of being outside with an animal’s companionship fosters the motivation to get out there.

PETS *con’t. page 36A*



Playing, walking or running with pets — at the beach or pretty much anywhere— is a fun way to stay fit.



Age Gracefully, Radiate Naturally

Do people often ask if you're tired—even when you feel well-rested?



Mazi Bidar, MD

When you look your best, you feel your best! Vantage is proud to introduce oculofacial plastic surgeon, Dr. Mazi Bidar, MD who can help you restore your youthful, confident vibrance. He is a board-certified Oculofacial plastic surgeon with elite training and over 20,000 eyelid and facial procedures performed. As one of only 700 specialists certified by the Oculofacial Society, he combines technical precision with artistic skill to deliver natural, refreshed results. **Trust your eyes to a true expert.**

Request a Cosmetic Consultation!



vantageeye.com

Ryan Ranch Location
2 Upper Ragsdale Dr #B130
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 205-4972

Cass Street Location
966 Cass Street Suite 100
Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 205-7179



BROW & EYELID LIFT | FACIAL REJUVENATION | BOTOX® | DERMAL FILLERS | LASER SKIN RESURFACING



Parkinson’s is now the fastest growing neurological disease

A wellness program designed to slow disease progression in an environment embracing empowerment, motivation & social interaction. Classes are tailored to serve a range of challenges and promote a higher quality of life.

MONTEREY COUNTY GIVES!

Power Over Parkinson’s is honored to participate in the 2025 campaign. Every donation received will be partially matched: making your gift go even further.

Monterey Bay Power Over Parkinson’s
2555 Garden Road, Suite B • Monterey, CA 93940
www.poweroverparkinsons.org
poweroverparkinsonsmonterey@gmail.com
831.920.1806

Power Over Parkinson’s is a 501(c)3 California nonprofit public charity, Tax ID 83-4429882



QUALITY CARE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

Country Meadows is a 6-bed Residential Care facility for the Elderly. We provide personalized care and support that enables each individual to thrive, maintain their dignity, and engage in meaningful activities.

Our Services

- Luxurious accommodations
- Exceptional amenities
- 24 Hour Care
- Social & Physical Activities
- Medication Management
- Delicious Meals
- Transportation



This paradise retreat offers resident's an enriched lifestyle surrounded by nature's beauty. The designed amenities and engaging activities promote resident's well-being and quality of life.

*Call today to
schedule a tour.*

COUNTRY  MEADOWS
RESIDENTIAL CARE

10746 Country Meadows Rd, Prunedale, CA | 831. 275. 5121

www.countrymeadowsresidentialcare.com

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

SWIMMERS from page 33A

tebrates whose dangling tentacles render a burning, prickling sting, leaving welts or nasty-looking tracks on the skin.

“A medusa sting feels like a million electric needles going into your skin. You’ll want to jump out of the water. And your colleagues just laugh and say, ‘Swim it off, Alvarez,’” he said.

“It’s tough and embarrassing, but they are used to it,” he added.

Souza frequently swims twice around Stillwater Cove (just off the 18th Hole at Pebble Beach) in 50-degree water, always without a wetsuit.

“I like cold water,” he said.

Vigorous introduction

Souza wasn’t introduced to the open-water long-distance world until Alvarez took him to Italy in September. They flew to Sicily and swam Stretto De Messina together.

“I asked where the finish line was, and they all said, ‘Just swim until you get to land — keep going until you can stand up,’” Souza remembered with a laugh. “I was probably in 200 feet of water when I saw the bottom again — the water was that clear. It was great.”

The two covered the 3.9-kilometer (about 2.4 miles) distance side by side in 44 minutes, 23 seconds.

“When I was done, I felt great — I wanted to swim back,” Souza said. “If I decide to do it again, I probably will.”

In 2018, Alvarez crossed the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul, Turkey — 6.5 kilometers (about 4 miles) from the Asian continent to the European continent.

“What’s interesting about that one is that the 80-degree water on top is from the Black Sea, and the water underneath is from the Mediterranean. The currents are going opposite directions,” he said.

Energized by a breakfast of baklava and Turkish tea, Alvarez’s time — 1 hour,

8 minutes — was fourth-best among more than 100 swimmers in his age division.

Despite San Francisco Bay’s reputation for wind and choppy waves, Alvarez doesn’t consider it a hard swim. He has also learned how to beat much faster swimmers to the other shore.

“The mistake people make is using the Transamerica Building as their landmark. That’s at least 2 miles in the wrong direction,” he said. “The trick is to swim toward the Ghirardelli Square sign.”

One of his toughest swims, he noted, was the Trans Tahoe Relay.

“I had the flu and a fever, but swam anyway because you can’t let your buddies down in a relay race,” he reflected. “It was so cold that morning that we had frost on our boat. It’s not a tough swim, but that water, which is 1,900 feet deep, was unbelievably cold.”

The choppiest water, Alvarez said, is at the Maui Channel Relay, a race he’s done 18 times since 1992.

“One year, I was in the boat, waiting to swim my leg of the relay. And I could see a black, pencil-thin squall line, coming up the channel from Molokai,” he said. “When it was my turn to swim, I was fighting through waves that were 4-feet high.

“In that situation, you learn to literally punch through the wave with a closed fist, then open your hand and pull through the wave.”

Another lesson from Maui’s rough waves — they can clobber you from either direction.

“Ninety-nine percent of swimmers only breathe on one side,” he said. “I had to teach myself how to breathe on either side from swimming in the Maui Channel.”

Alvarez is helping to assemble a team from the Beach and Tennis Club in Pebble Beach to compete in next year’s Maui Channel Relay.

Dennis Taylor is a professional freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at scribelaureate@gmail.com.

PETS from page 33A

“I think of how people may neglect their health because life gets in the way,” said Sharp.

“Then, around the new year, we start turning toward resolutions centering on ourselves. And we need to remind ourselves to make a resolution for the health and care of our animal as well.” It’s all about balance, she said, noting, “A lot of folks in our community take better care of their pets than they do themselves.”

Besides, the responsibility of caring for another creature keeps people engaged mentally and emotionally, with all synapses firing, noted Dominguez.

Sharp continued, “For older people or anyone who may be living alone, a pet offers companionship and a reason to get up in the morning, to care for the animal and benefit from the emotional connection.”

Should a spouse or other loved one pass away, the pet — seen as the remaining family member — may play a huge role in the mental health of the ones left behind.

“The psychosocial benefits of having pets are well documented,” said Sharp. “They foster empathy among all members of the household. That is particularly important for young children who are learning

about responsibility and compassion for their animals, which they can apply in their relationships with people.”

While pets don’t live as long as people, Sharp said an important part of caring for our friends is creating a plan, perhaps even a trust fund, for an animal should the owner become unable to provide care. That fosters peace of mind.

“And remember, whatever mood you’re

in,” added Dominguez, “that animal loves you and, unlike some people, is not judging your disappointments, your day, or your attitude.”

Mental health

Retired veterinarian Laura Pasten, who spent years governing the care of television celebrity Morris the Cat, has had a menagerie of dogs, cats, miniature horses and other animals — more than friends and family can count. She recognizes the importance of pets in our lives, particularly during the holidays.

“The most wonderful time of the year” can also be a time of sadness and loss. Yet petting an animal, Pasten said, generates changes in our circulation, increasing the production of dopamine and serotonin, the feel-good neurotransmitters that foster a sense of calm, well-being, and even happiness.

Said Pasten, who lives in Carmel with her dog, Millie, “So many times, the only source of love in a person’s life is their dog, cat or bird. Dogs are, by far, the animal we can bond with the most, but birds are considered support animals as well.”

In fact, she said, while dogs are not usually allowed in skilled nursing facilities, birds, confined to a cage, are often welcome.

Cats also add so much to a home through companionship, and their subtle energy helps decrease stress, Pasten said. Plus, they don’t tend to require entertainment or exercise but are happy just to be nearby.

“Whether you have a dog or cat, all pets have something to offer us,” she said, “even if it’s a goldfish in a bowl, as we have a responsibility to get outside our own needs and take care of someone else.”



Amanda Sharp



Laura Pasten



Heart Dominguez



Susanne Galin

GIVE Where You Live



MONTEREY COUNTY **GIVES!**

Joining Together for Big Ideas

Leverage your year-end giving to your favorite nonprofits 11/13/25-12/31/25 through

[MontereyCountyGives.com](https://www.montereycountygives.com)

Gifts of stock or IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions are tax-wise ways to benefit multiple nonprofits with a single gift.



Your Partner in Giving

Donor Advised Funds • Charitable Estate Planning • Charitable Gift Annuities and Charitable Remainder Trusts • IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions • Family Philanthropy • Scholarships & More

831.375.9712 | [cfmco.org](https://www.cfmco.org) | [f](https://www.facebook.com/cfmco) [@](https://www.instagram.com/cfmco) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cfmco)

MODERNEYES OPTOMETRY

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

At Modern Eyes Optometry,

Dr. Maureen Hong, O.D.

and her team is dedicated to providing high-quality eye care for the whole family. Personalized care with modern technology.

Proudly serving the Monterey Peninsula for 20 years

JANUARY SPECIAL
Discount on comprehensive eye exam \$140 (normally \$195) with mention of this ad

Private Pay Only
(cannot be combined with insurance)
OFFER EXPIRES 1/31/2026

550 Camino El Estero, Suite 205
Monterey, CA 93940
[moderneyesmonterey.com](https://www.moderneyesmonterey.com)

CONTACT US TODAY TO
SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
(831) 641-7848

www.moderneyesmonterey.com

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

EXERCISE from page 34A

report “really exciting.” Its findings suggest that being active earlier in adulthood is beneficial, but that continuing or starting physical activity in midlife appears to play a more important role in protecting brain health. Notably, she said, older adults benefited from exercise even if they carried the APOE4 gene, a genetic risk factor for Alzheimer’s disease.

The study’s authors noted that they re-

lied on participants’ self-reports of exercise, which means that there was no way to be sure about the level or intensity of their workouts. Yang said that the accepted recommendation is 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (or some combination of those options) each week. She described “moderate” as intense enough that someone could speak but not sing — as on a brisk walk — while doing something “vigorous,” like that same walk on a steep hill, makes it difficult to talk.

Since the object is to avoid being sedentary, she continued, people who spread their exercise throughout the week will generally benefit more than someone who goes for a six-hour hike on Saturday but sits around in front of a screen the rest of the week.

For the same reason, breaking a daily

30-minute session into “exercise snacks” of 10 or 15 minutes is more advantageous than knocking it out in the morning and then parking yourself behind a desk for the next eight hours. Yang said spreading out your exercise sessions is more useful for controlling blood sugar, as well.

Staying active can also help people avoid isolation, another factor implicated in dementia, so walking with a friend or group offers a two-for-one benefit.

Not a cliché

The takeaway is obvious: Get moving.

And, in a familiar refrain, it’s prudent to consult your doctor before launching a new routine. Yang explained that’s not just a cliché — your primary healthcare provider is the best person to assess your capabilities, including checking blood pressure

and heart rate. Depending on your history and physical condition, they may also order an EKG or other tests. In addition, they’ll consider whether there’s a risk of falling because of balance issues or neuropathy — nerve damage that often limits sensation in the feet — and give advice about medications that may affect exercise. Then, they can make recommendations to get you started safely.

Yang noted that if you distribute that 150 minutes of moderate movement throughout a week, it averages to about 21 minutes a day. Break that into 10-minute morning and afternoon walks, and you’re on your way to reaping multiple physical rewards, including better brain health. And, you can reassure your 23-year-old self that you can make up for at least one of their slacker ways.

The takeaway is obvious: Get moving.



Big Heart, Advanced Care — Small-Town Feel

Call to schedule your **FREE** first exam!

CALL NOW: 831-624-8509
<https://carmeldvm.com/>

ANIMAL HOSPITAL AT Mid Valley

312 Mid Valley Center, Carmel, CA, 93923, US
 Mon-Fri: 8 AM - 5 PM



Get extra care in surroundings that are extra special.

Don’t just recuperate, rejuvenate surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of Carmel. Our skilled nursing center - fully licensed and staffed with caring medical professionals - is the best place to start feeling better. Now accepting new patients. To learn more, contact Angie at amachado@cvmanor.com or call 831-624-1281.

CARMEL VALLEY MANOR

License #270700110. COA #082

T H E K I T C H E N

Vibrant garden veggie party platter

Courtesy Lisa Clark, Platter Perfection

AS NEW Year's Eve approaches — with the promise of New Year's Day football right behind — you might be planning to have some friends over. It's nice to offer something beautiful and appetizing for those who are watching one set or another of nutritional numbers, from calories, to sodium or cholesterol.

While those premade platters of carrots and celery with sealed tubs of ranch dip in the middle are convenient, they often look less than appetizing after a day or two on the shelf at the grocery store. They also take up a lot of space in the fridge, and those big plastic platters just end up in the recycling bin.

Instead, grab one of your beautiful serving platters or a nice wooden cutting board and assemble a genuinely attractive vegetable display with these instructions from Lisa Clark, the owner of Platter Perfection, a service that offers all sorts of beautiful food displays, like charcuterie boards, dessert assortments, and yes, vegetables.

Here, Clark has something reasonably sized for six to 10 people — so you're not spending too long at the cutting board — and the photo illustrates her directions on presentation. Halving the cherry tomatoes keeps them from squirting seeds across the table when you bite into them, not to mention rolling off your plate. She's also tucked some celery stalks with the leaves attached into the arrangement and opened up the snap peas to add variety to the dish's appearance. The carrots and celery are arranged in three alternating rows, but not too formally.

You should remove any tough strings from the celery and the snap peas. As for dips, make or buy whatever you like. It's nice to offer a spoon for the hummus or ranch along with some tongs, so your guests aren't handling the food on the platter or sneaking a dreaded double-dip. You can also cut up some additional celery and carrots and keep them in zip-top bags in the fridge to replenish the plate throughout your event.

This is one of those things you should make the day you're going to serve it. You know what can happen if you do it ahead — the celery dehydrates unattractively on the cut ends, and the carrots develop that white coating as the peeled exterior also dries out. Worst case, the celery turns brown and the carrots get a little woody.

Finally, if you've been asked to bring a dish to share at someone else's party, this is your chance to make sure you have something to munch on that won't derail your New Year's "eat better" resolution on Day 1.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 6–10)

Enough celery to make three cups of sticks, about 1 bunch

Enough rainbow carrots (orange, yellow, purple) to make three cups of sticks, about 1 bunch

1 cup snap peas

1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

Green leaf lettuce (for garnish, optional)

Your choice of dip: ranch, dill, hummus, or Greek yogurt

INSTRUCTIONS:

Wash and dry all the vegetables. Slice celery and carrots into even sticks. Halve cherry tomatoes and leave snap peas whole.

Arrange celery and carrot sticks in alternating colors across a large platter to

form a visually balanced base.

Open snap peas tuck into small groups throughout the board. Scatter halved cherry tomatoes across the top for vibrant pops of red. If desired, place small pieces of green leaf lettuce around the edges to frame the platter and add natural freshness.

Keep chilled until you're ready to serve with your preferred dip.



Peninsula Eye Care



**Complete Vision Care
for All Ages**

Peninsula Eye Care employs the most current technology for a comprehensive eye examination, and we carry a wide selection of fashionable frame styles. If you are looking for quality eye care with a personal touch, we would be delighted to have you as a patient.

We look forward to fulfilling all of your family's eyecare needs!

As dedicated eye care professionals, we recognize the trust our patients place in us and it is our mission to meet and exceed those expectations. We invite you to come to our practice and receive the quality attention that you deserve.

Accepting New Patients

Christian Flickner, O.D. | Jennell Bockenstedt, O.D.

James Flickner, O.D. | Shadi Salsabilian, O.D | Emmeline Jang, O.D

3 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

Monterey Optometric Center

700 Cass Street, Suite 101
Monterey, California 93940
831.641.7252 tel

Salinas Optometric Center

48 West Romie Lane
Salinas, California 93901
831.424.0834 tel

Marina Optometric Center

271 Reservation Road, Suite 202
Marina, California 93933
831.384.6800 tel

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM!

Chef Bio

LISA CLARK is the founder and creative force behind Platter Perfection, a source for elevated "grazing boards," custom charcuterie and more. With an eye for design and a passion for bringing people together around food, Clark said she is proud to have brought her company "from a local idea into a beloved brand known for its artistry, quality, and personal touch."

A longtime Salinas resident with deep ties to the community, she launched Platter Perfection with "the simple belief that food should be delicious and memorable." Her boards and tables celebrate the best of this area with "thoughtfully selected cheeses, artisanal meats, seasonal produce, and specialty accompaniments sourced from local purveyors whenever possible."

Whether she's designing an intimate board for a family gathering or a large grazing table for a corporate event or wedding, Clark focuses on "crafting an experience that feels inviting and abundant," and tailored to her clients' needs and wants. Her work reflects her commitment to detail, innovation and the joy of sharing.

Beyond her culinary artistry, Clark is known for her professionalism, warmth and dedication to supporting local businesses and community events, where you can offer find her showing off her eye-catching creations.

In her spare time, she enjoys exploring local markets and spending time with her family and friends — often over a beautiful spread, of course.



A TRUE CALIFORNIA OLIVE OIL EXPERIENCE



Great gift ideas

- Complimentary olive oil and vinegar tastings
- Large selection of specialty food products
- Kitchen accoutrements
- Skin care products
- Olive wood products
- Seasonal food & decor
- Cooking classes & demos**

(831) 659-4288 | QUAILANDOLIVE.COM | 14 DEL FINO PLACE, CARMEL VALLEY

Support Pine Cone advertisers — shop locally!

Food & Wine
Galleries and Art

This Week

Live Music,
Clubs and Events

The beat goes on at First Night Monterey, \$\$\$ Band celebrates yacht rock

MORE THAN a dozen musical acts come together Wednesday evening to celebrate the 33rd annual First Night Monterey celebration.

“That’s nine hours of art, music, dance and nonstop New Year’s fun,” organizers declared.

When the clock strikes midnight, the party will be split between two stages in downtown Monterey, with **Wrockinfoose** playing r&b and funk at Golden State Theatre, and **Everyday People** serving up “classic Latin rock with an old-school funk twist” in the Monterey Conference Center’s Serra Ballroom.

The lineup also includes **The Al James Band**, **The Ashe Ensemble**, **Bad Machine**, **Grumbling Ginger**, **The Singing Wood Marimba Band**, **Southbound 101**,

singer and guitarist **Zack Freitas**, **The Stu Reynolds Saxtet**, singer **Miranda Perl** and guitarist **Brice Albert**, **The Kevin O’Neal Group**, **Shinsho Mugen Daiko** and **The Black Irish Band**.

On a High Note

By CHRIS COUNTS

The music spans the genres from jazz and rock, to Celtic, country and bluegrass.

“First Night Monterey is the heartbeat of New Year’s Eve on the Central Coast,” executive director Ellen Martin

said. “This year’s theme, ‘We’ve Got the Beat,’ honors the rhythm of community, creativity and celebration. It’s a powerful reminder of how the arts bring us together.”

Besides live music, there will be an opening ceremony with the White Hawk Indian Council for Children, a family-friendly Twilight Procession through downtown Monterey at 5:30 p.m., and an assortment of fun and games for kids — including the irresistible Bubble Wrap Stomp.

All-access buttons are available for \$30 for adults and \$18 for children. For more details, visit firstnightmonterey.org.

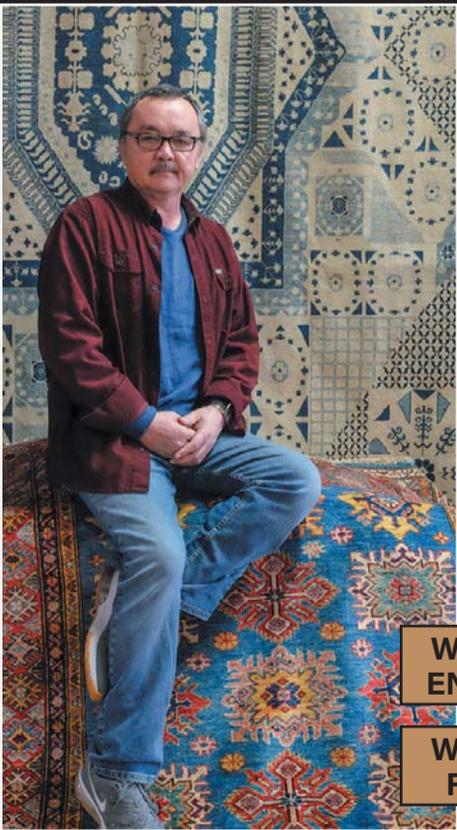
See MUSIC page 42A



The performers at Wednesday’s First Night Monterey celebration — which features nine hours of live music — include the Singing Wood Marimba Band (left), the Black Irish Band (center) and singer and guitarist Zack Freitas.



HAZARA
RUG CLEANING & REPAIR



THE MOST PROFESSIONAL AREA RUG CLEANER ON THE CENTRAL COAST

RUG PAD,
RUG APPRAISAL,
RUG REPAIR

FREE PICKUP AND DELIVERY

WE BUY SINGLE AND ENTIRE ESTATE RUGS

WE PAY TOP DOLLAR FOR NAVAJO RUGS

Monday to Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

831-324-0706

hazararugcleaning.com

214 Fountain Ave • Pacific Grove

Buy Your Tickets NOW!

PACREP PRESENTS

Jan 1 - Jan 11 2026

BRITISH INVASION

FOUNDERS THEATRE

TRIBUTE CONCERT

The music that changed rock forever comes alive in PacRep’s British Invasion Rock ‘n’ Roll Tribute Concert, a limited engagement at the Founders Theatre.

Relive the explosive energy of the 1960s British Invasion with live performances of 40 legendary songs by The Beatles, Elton John, The Rolling Stones, The Kinks, The Animals, Herman’s Hermits, Manfred Mann, and more—performed by PacRep’s acclaimed tribute artists.





WED	DEC 31	8:30P New Years Eve Party!
THU	JAN 1 - JAN 8	7:30P “Sweet” 2 for 1
FRI - SAT	JAN 2 - JAN 10	7:30P
SUN	JAN 4 - JAN 11	2:00P Matinees



PacRep.org

831-622-0100

FOOD & WINE

Don't drop the ball on New Year's Eve — leave that to the pros

SURE, IT'S fun to ring in the New Year. But for some of us, it doesn't hurt that West Coasters can watch the Times Square ball drop at 9 p.m.

We have lots of suggestions on where to welcome 2026, primarily centered around food and drink — go figure. If you don't fancy any of those notions, check out this week's entertainment column, On a High Note, (p. 39A) or head over to First Night in Monterey (firstnightmonterey.com), which tries to have a little something for everyone. It's also a relatively inexpensive and low-risk commitment — you can have dinner in town and stay until the midnight countdown in Custom House Plaza, or call it a night after the first round of musical acts. Oh, and the whole thing raises money to help children learn more about the arts.

Black & Gold

The Pacific's Edge restaurant at the Hyatt Carmel Highlands is planning to welcome 2026 with a swanky New Year's Eve celebration. The restaurant, perched above the Pacific Ocean, will serve a five-course prix fixe dinner led by executive chef Chris Welenc. Afterward, guests will move on to

Guests then move on to pan-seared scallops alongside poached white asparagus and caviar beurre blanc. Entrée options include beef Wellington with truffled Yukon potato purée and mushroom jus, butter-basted twin lobster tails with grilled corn polenta and broccolini, or vegetarian stuffed zucchini accompanied by sautéed farmers market vegetables. Dessert is a mille feuille — thin layers of pastry with raspberries, blueberries, vanilla bean crème fraîche, maple cream honey sauce and cinnamon ice cream.

The feast starts at 5 p.m. and is \$250 per person, tax included. Diners can add a premium wine pairing for \$115 more. Each dinner reservation includes access to the gala, which begins at 8 p.m.

The Black & Gold Gala will feature a live band and includes two beverages, a midnight Champagne toast, and a late-night bites-and-dessert station. Tickets for the gala alone are available at \$100 per person. The event ends at midnight.

Organizers encourage guests to dress in black and gold attire in honor of the theme. For more information or to reserve seats, visit Open Table.

New Year's 7D style

Seventh & Dolores Steakhouse in downtown Carmel is prepared to help



Ted Balestreri (left) and Burt Cutino are co-owners of Monterey's Sardine Factory — which some folks famously predicted would fail at its opening “on the wrong side of the tracks” in 1968 — and are celebrating yet another New Year's Eve by offering yet another conspicuously luxurious prix fixe menu, with options like lobster tail or 50-day aged filet mignon.

Soup to Nuts

the hotel's elegant Black & Gold Gala.

Welenc's menu highlights “refined coastal cuisine” and local, seasonal ingredients. The truly decadent-sounding dinner opens with oysters Rockefeller followed by a choice of farmers market salad — baby gem lettuce, heirloom carrots, citrus-braised beets, cashew “cheese” and a tarragon-infused citrus vinaigrette — or cream of truffle and mushroom soup.

revelers ring in the new year at the hottest party in town, with promises of “a night of unforgettable music, cocktails and celebration.”

Starting at 10 p.m. Dec. 31, 7D's New Year's Eve Celebration will feature DJ BADDJ, live performances by The Carmel Delights, and a midnight Champagne toast.

“Whether you want to dance the night away or sip in style, this is the place to ring in 2026,” organizers said, and a range of tickets and VIP table options are available.

At \$70 per person, general admission includes entertainment, popcorn and the aforementioned glass of bubbly, while the Grand Dom Pérignon Table, \$2,000 for eight guests, includes two bottles of Dom, 7D appetizers and small bites.

The \$1,600 Grand Veuve Clicquot Table also seats eight and includes two bottles of

Veuve, apps and small bites.

Four-guest tables with either of the above are priced accordingly at \$1,000 and \$800.

“Whether you're celebrating with friends, making memories with loved ones, or looking for the ultimate VIP experience, 7D promises a night full of music, laughter and luxury,” the restaurant says. For reservations, call (831)-293-7600 or visit 7dsteakhouse.com.

Caviar, truffles and bubbles

Lucia Restaurant & Bar in Bernardus Lodge (415 W. Carmel Valley Road) will host a New Year's Eve dinner from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., featuring a four-course tasting

See **DINNER** next page



Award Winning Market at the Best Corner in Carmel

Cheers
to a Happy & Healthy New Year
- Sanchez Family and Staff

Open New Years day

Top Shelf Spirits • Local Wines • Craft Beers • Fine Cigars

BRUNO'S
MARKET & DELI
PRIME & USDA CHOICE MEATS
GOURMET DELI
FARM FRESH PRODUCE

Since 1953



831-624-3821 Ample Free Parking 831-624-1805
6th & Junipero, Carmel • Open Daily 6:30am - 8pm • Local Home & Hotel Delivery



Begin the New Year with Intention.

January 2-4 invites a weekend devoted to intention—aligning body, mind, and spirit.

Immerse yourself in the Full Moon Workshop on **Saturday, January 3**—reset, release, and embrace intentional living. Indulge in Chef Gus' Moonlight Menu, with expanded vegan and vegetarian dishes — each thoughtfully crafted for wellness. Discover The Spa's personalized treatments and end each day by the fire with a calming herbal tea, a perfect moment to savor tranquility.

As a gesture of gratitude, local guests enjoy **10% off** all spa services daily with promo code **LOCAL** when booking online.

BERNARDUS THE SPA
LODGE & SPA AT BERNARDUS

415 West Carmel Valley Road • Carmel Valley
(831) 658-3400 • bernarduslodge.com



FOOD & WINE

DINNER

From previous page

menu for \$180 per person, plus tax and gratuity. A prix fixe menu for children 12 and under will be available for \$55. The evening includes live music, elegant and festive dishes such as oysters, caviar and truffles, as well as a selection of wines and champagne. Guests are invited to join a toast to 2026 as the Times Square ball drops at 9 p.m. local time. Reserve at ExploreTock.com or call the lodge at (831) 298-5389 for more information.

Land and sea

Quail Lodge's Covey Grill has two New Year's Eve specials in addition to its regular menu. The first, appropriately dubbed "Champagne & Oysters," is \$139 per person and features a bottle of Veuve Clicquot Champagne served alongside a dozen assorted oysters.

For \$64, "Terre et Mer" pairs espresso-rubbed filet mignon with orange butter-poached jumbo prawns, polenta made with creamy mascarpone cheese, charred broccolini and rosemary jus.

To reserve, visit OpenTable.com and search under "Covey," or call (831) 620-8860.

I, spy

Bond. James Bond. He's suave, he's well-dressed, and even though he's a little fussy about his martinis, he's a reliable constant in rapidly changing times. The Carmel Mission Inn (3665 Rio Road) evokes the spirit of 007 with its Bond Ball from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. Guests can come as their favorite Bond characters for a "best

dressed" contest, or just "dress to impress," organizers say. Although sliders and other food come with admission to the ball, guests are encouraged to visit the hotel's Shearwater Tavern, which will serve dinner until 10 p.m., with some new items like crispy Brussels sprouts, wild mushroom bisque, oysters on the half shell, prime rib, and wild mushroom ravioli.



Guests can attend Seventh & Dolores' Champagne-centric party to ring in 2026 by purchasing individual admission tickets or reserving entire tables — serving either Veuve Clicquot or Dom Perignon — for four or eight people. DJ BADDJ, live performances by The Carmel Delights, and a midnight Champagne toast are all part of the fun, which begins at 10 p.m.

The evening's festivities include live music by Scarlet, and the event is a fundraiser for the Henry Miller Memorial Library in Big Sur. Tickets are \$125 per person or \$50 for non-drinkers, plus a processing fee, and can be purchased at sheawatertavern.com.

Aging nicely

A restaurant that's seen more of these

See WINE next page

BENIHANA

STEAK · SEAFOOD · SUSHI

DAILY 12 NOON TO 10PM

EXPERIENCE THE ORIGINAL

Watch as your personal chef slices tender steak and juicy chicken. Take in the aroma of sizzling shrimp, lobster and savory vegetables. Or try our fresh nigiri, sashimi and specialty rolls, all prepared with the same flair that made Benihana a legend in Japanese cuisine.

136 Olivier St., Monterey
Near Old Fisherman's Wharf
(831) 644-9007 WWW.BENIHANA.COM



Shearwater
EST. TAVERN 2021

CARMEL
MISSION INN



NYE 2026

The Bond Ball

December 31 | 10pm - 1am

Join us for an exciting night

Dress to impress or as your favorite Bond character

(Best Dressed Contest)

Entertainment by



Themed Cocktails with Open Bar
(drinks included in price)

Casino Royale with Cheese Sliders and other delights, available all night

HENRY MILLER MEMORIAL LIBRARY FUNDRAISER

\$125 /PERSON FOR THE FIRST 150 | \$50 /NON-ALCOHOL
3665 RIO ROAD, CARMEL · SHEAWATERTAVERN.COM

NEW YEAR'S EVE 2026

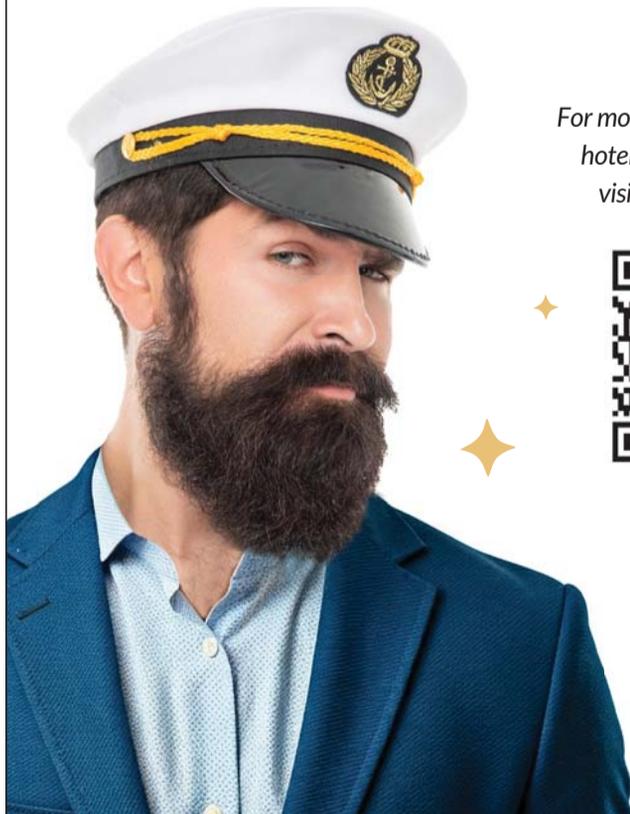
Yacht Rock



Open Bar
Buffet Dinner
Live Music
Photo Booths

Active military with a valid ID | \$220 per person
General Admission and at the door | \$250 per person

*Pricing is inclusive of taxes, gratuity and Eventbrite fees.



For more information and hotel accommodations, visit portolahotel.com



Learn More



PORTOLA HOTEL & SPA
AT MONTEREY BAY

Two Portola Plaza | Monterey, CA 93940
(831) 649-4511 | Portolahotel.com

FOOD & WINE

MUSIC

From page 39A

■ Petty forever

Paying tribute to the late great rocker Tom Petty, **Petty Theft** plays Saturday, 7:30 p.m., at Golden State Theatre in Monterey.

Based in Marin County, the six-piece band has been covering Petty's music for more than two decades. Led by singer **Dan Durkin**, Petty Theft plays classic rock hits like "American Girl," "Refugee," "Mary Jane's Last Dance," "Swingin'" and "Free Fallin'."

The evening will be a "post-Christmas, pre-New Year's Eve Tom Petty celebration at this beautiful venue in the heart of Monterey," the group said. "It's the perfect way to close out 2025 with friends, music and good vibes."

Tickets start at \$32. The theater is located at 417 Alvarado St. Call (831) 649-1070 or visit goldenstatetheatre.com.

■ Laid-back luxury

The **Money Band** dons navy blazers and white captain's hats for Wednesday's New Year's Eve party at Portola Hotel & Spa, which starts at 7 p.m. and will celebrate the funky grooviness of yacht rock during its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s.

The band will play in the in the De Anza Ballroom.

Partygoers will be able to "dance the night away to the laid-back luxury vibes of yacht rock. And when the clock strikes

12, they'll join the Money Band for an epic champagne toast and balloon drop to officially ring in 2026," the hotel said. Anybody interested in celebrating their "inner yacht club vibe" is invited and to "sail into the New Year in style."

Tickets start at \$220 and include a buffet dinner.

The hotel is located at 2 Portola Plaza. Visit portolahotel.com.

■ 'With or without a Bloody Mary'

Describing the event as a Hang-over Day Party, **Matt Axton & Bad Moon** and **River Voices** play Thursday, 2 p.m., at Pop & Hiss in Pacific Grove.

"The event blends roots-forward songwriting, Americana grit and harmony-driven folk rock into a laid-back but energizing start to 2026," said **Rory Glass**, the bass player for River Voices. "Designed as an antidote to the excess of the night before, the afternoon encourages people to reset, reconnect and start the year on a high note — with or without a Bloody Mary."

There's a \$10 cover. Pop & Hiss is located at 215 Forest Ave.

■ 'Shaken, not stirred'

Carmel Mission Inn's Shearwater Tavern celebrates New Year's Wednesday at 10 p.m. with **Scarlet**, along with a James Bond-themed party.

Attendees are invited to "dress to impress as their favorite Bond character," the inn suggested, promising "an exciting

See **LIVE** next page

WINE

From previous page

celebrations than most, the 57-year-old Sardine Factory (701 Wave St., Monterey) is welcoming 2026 with a special four-course prix fixe menu available New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Dinner begins with a lobster bisque finished with cognac, sherry and a touch of crème fraîche. The salad course features a winter caprese, pairing golden beets and mozzarella with fried basil leaves, Big Sur sea salt, cracked pepper, olive oil and white balsamic pearls.

Diners may choose among several entrée options, like grilled Gulf prawns with arugula pesto, wild mushrooms and tomatoes, finished with garlic, smoked trout roe and a white wine butter sauce over angel hair pasta, as well as a 50-day aged filet mignon accompanied by truffled potatoes, asparagus, fried shallots and a red wine sauce. A roasted Maine lobster tail, served with garlic-herb roasted Yukon Gold potatoes and sweet corn succotash, is available for an additional \$25.

Decadence

Dessert selections include the restaurant's classic cherries jubilee — a combination of warm, flamed black cherries and cinnamon served over vanilla bean ice cream. The Godiva chocolate cheesecake layers chocolate cream cheese and mousse atop a flourless chocolate crust, while the Phoenix's Kiss presents chocolate cake, raspberry mousse and white chocolate raspberry glaze, finished with toasted meringue, pistachio streusel, fresh berries and edible flowers.

The prix fixe menu is \$135 per person, and recommended wine pairings from Silvestri, Caymus and DAOU may also

be purchased. Limited a la carte and children's menus will be available. Make reservations at sardinefactory.com.

■ Ahoy, Skipper!

Portola Hotel at the foot of Alvarado Street in Monterey will hold its annual adults-only New Year's Eve celebration in the De Anza Ballroom, which organizers say will be transformed into a nautical-chic venue for the yacht-rock-themed bash.

The all-inclusive evening begins at 7



Although the Highlands Inn is well known for its spectacular Pacific Ocean views, the action on New Year's Eve will be focused indoors, where the Inn is hosting a Black and Gold Gala. Get tickets for the full evening — with a seriously upscale five-course prix fixe dinner — or just for the party.

p.m. and features an open bar, live yacht rock music from The Money Band, a buffet dinner, dancing, photo booth, and a Champagne toast with a balloon drop at midnight. Guests are encouraged to dress in yacht rock chic, which the hotel is describing as "retro coastal glam with '70s and '80s flair." (Your guess is as good as ours.)

What is yacht rock? Asking that question can stir a vociferous debate among fans, but think Christopher Cross' "Sailing" or The Doobie Brothers' "What a Fool Believes." Tickets range from \$220 to \$250 and can be purchased at tinyurl.com/r3pw-fxeh. There are discounts for members of the military on active duty, and overnight hotel packages are available, too.

Elaine Hesser and Mary Schley contributed to this week's column.



The Money Band plays a yacht rock-themed New Year's Eve party Wednesday at Portola Hotel & Spa's DeAnza Ballroom in Monterey.

To advertise in our Food & Wine section

Call Meena Lewellen 831-274-8655 meena@carmelpinecone.com



In Carmel Valley, Quail Lodge's Covey Grill will serve its regular menu on New Year's Eve, but with two special additions — a surf-and-turf, aka "Terre et Mar," with filet mignon and prawns, and a dozen oysters served with Veuve Cliquot.

Woody's

Spend the Holidays with Chef Tim
Christmas and New Years Seasonal Specials
See our website for more info
woodysmontereyairport.com

Make your reservations today!

Open Daily
831.373.1232
9:00a-9:00p

Wednesdays - Sundays
831.624.1854
Lunch & Dinner

Closed Wednesdays
831.620.7371
11:00a-3:00p

EST TAVERN 2021
at
CARMEL MISSION INN
presents

SHEARWATER SESSIONS

Singer-Songwriter Open Mic Night
EVERY WEDNESDAY • 6-9PM
Enjoy music from different artists.

Contact Doug Fearnside at dfearnside86@gmail.com if you'd like to perform.

Shearwater Tavern menu & full bar is available.

3665 RIO ROAD, CARMEL • SHEARWATER TAVERN.COM

LIVE

From previous page

night.”

While Scarlet gets the dance floor moving, the tavern will serve Bond-themed cocktails that will be “shaken, not stirred.”

Tickets start at \$125. The inn is located at 3665 Rio Road. For more details, visit shearwatertavern.com.

■ Golden age meets r&b

Deja Blue in Seaside celebrates the New Year Wednesday with a Jazz Age theme party starting at 7 p.m. — and a music by **The Joint Chiefs** at 9 p.m.

Led by singer and guitarist **Don Allen Caruth, Jr.**, the band brings together “classic R&B, funk and soul, creating a signature sound that keeps the dance floor alive and pulsating.”

Partygoers are encouraged to dress up like they’re visiting Jay Gatsby’s mansion back in 1926. “Put on your flapper dresses, fedoras and pearls — we’re turning back the clock for a night of glitz, glam and golden-age celebration,” said Deja Blue, which is located at 500 Broadway. Tickets start at \$71. For details, visit dejabluelive.com.



River Voices take the stage at a Hangover Party Thursday, 2 p.m., at Pop & Hiss in Pacific Grove. Also performing is Matt Axton & Bad Moon.

■ Early music, new year

Just as it does each New Year’s Day, the Cherry Center for the Arts hosts a concert by **The Cherry Trio** Thursday at 3 p.m.

The trio features **Elizabeth Gaver** on baroque violin, **Penny Hanna** on viola da gamba and **Michael Peterson** on harpsichord. “Ring in the New Year with music from 17th century France and Germany,” the Cherry Center’s **Robert Reese** said.

Tickets are \$40. A reception follows the concert. The Cherry Center is located at Fourth and Guadalupe.

Live music Dec. 26-Jan. 1

■ Big Sur

Big Sur River Inn — singer and guitarist **Rick Chelew** (folk, Saturday, 12:30 p.m.). 46800 Highway 1.

■ Carmel

Barmel — singer and guitarist **Kyle Kovalik** (Sunday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Tony Burciaga** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). Carmel Square on San Carlos north of Seventh.

Carmel Mission Inn — Open Mic Night (Wednesday at 6 p.m.). In the Shearwater Tavern, 3665 Rio Road.

Hyatt Carmel Highlands — singer and pianist **T.J. Kuenster** (jazz, Friday at 4:45 p.m.), singer **Dino Vera** (jazz, r&b and dance music, Saturday and Thursday at 6 p.m.). 120 Highlands Drive.

Cypress Inn — singer **Dino Vera** (jazz, r&b and dance music, Friday at 6:30 p.m.), pianist **Gennady Loktionov** and singer **Debbie Davis** (cabaret, Saturday at 6:30 p.m.), **The Andrea Carter Trio** (jazz and pop, Sunday at 11 a.m.), singer **Debbie Davis** and keyboardist **Eduardo Rodas** (cabaret, Wednesday at 8 p.m.), **The David Morwood Jazz Band** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). Lincoln and Seventh.

Links Club — The Vinyl Revival Trio (pop and rock, Friday at 7 p.m.), **Johnny Tsunami** (rock, Saturday at 7 p.m.). Carmel Plaza, Mission and Ocean.



Led by singer and guitarist Dan Durkin, Petty Theft pays tribute to the late Tom Petty Saturday in Monterey.

Mission Ranch — singer and pianist **Maddaline Edstrom** (jazz, Friday through Sunday at 5 p.m.), pianist **Gennady Loktionov** (jazz, Monday through Thursday at 5 p.m.). 26270 Dolores St.

■ Carmel Valley

Bernardus Lodge — pianist **Tom Gastineau** (jazz, Friday at 6 p.m.), **Andrea’s Fault** (jazz and pop, Saturday at noon), singer and pianist **T.J. Kuenster** (jazz, Saturday at 6 p.m.), guitarist **John Sherry** (rock and blues, Sunday at noon). 415 Carmel Valley Road.

Edgar’s Restaurant — singer and guitarist **Scott Slaughter** (Friday at 5:30 p.m.). At Quail Lodge, 8205 Valley Greens Drive.

Folktale Winery — singer and guitarist **Tim Brady** (Friday at 4 p.m.), **Two Rivers** (pop and rock, Saturday at 4 p.m.), **Jesse DeCarlo Funk Quartet** (Sunday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kito Rayburn** (Monday at 4 p.m.). 8940 Carmel Valley Road.

Trailside Cafe — Boscoe’s Brood (folk and rock, Saturday at 6 p.m.). 3 Del Fino Place.

■ Monterey

Albatross Ridge Winery — singer and guitarist **Rick**

See **TUNES** next page

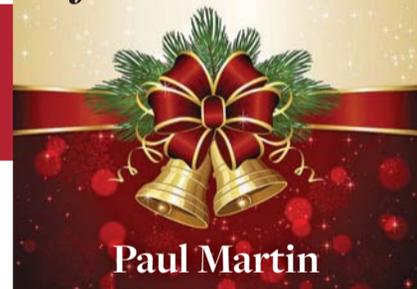
at the intersection of crisis and care.

Mental health, substance use, and homelessness often intersect. That’s why **Community Human Services** delivers flexible care tailored to each person’s unique journey.

Crisis doesn’t wait. Donate now to support those navigating life’s toughest crossroads.



I’m Going Home for Christmas



Paul Martin

Christmas day is coming, I am happy and I’m humming,
Merry Christmas songs.
Frosty snowflakes are falling, as I spend my time calling,
all my friends back home.

Christmas bells are ringing and the happy children singing,
takes me way back when,
I’d count the days to remind me,
that another day’s behind me,
‘til I’m home for Christmas once again.

I’m going home for Christmas,
I wish that I were there again.
On top of my Christmas wish list,
is my family and friends.

I know what I am missing, it’s the hugging and the kissing,
til I’m home again.
Anxiously I’m waiting, I can’t help anticipating,
being home for Christmas once again.

Christmas trees are decorated, I’m impatient and elated,
to be going home.
Frosty snowmen are appearing and I’m happy to be hearing,
Merry Christmas songs.

Christmas cheer is abounding and the carolers are sounding,
just like long lost friends.
I sing along to remind me, that another day’s behind me.
‘til I’m home for Christmas once again.

I’m going home for Christmas,
I wish that I were there again,
On top of my Christmas wish list,
is my family and friends.

Soon I will be sharing all the happiness and caring,
when I’m home again.
Anxiously I am waiting, I can’t help anticipating,
being home for Christmas once again.

By Paul Martin © 2012

I’m Going Home for Christmas www.MyPrayers.net

Music Credits

(P) 2012 Lyrics and music written and performed by Paul Martin.
Produced and arranged by Paul Martin and Daryl Kojak.

State Assembly recognizes painter, groups get generous holiday gifts

BIG SUR Fiddle Camp and the I Cantori di Carmel choral group are among more than two dozen local groups that received a total of \$130,000 from the Arts Council for Monterey County. The money comes from taxpayers grants and private donations and will support “a wide range of creative projects” throughout the county, “including visual arts training, museum exhibitions, community classes for all ages, music and dance instruction, and local theater performances.”

connectivity,” the arts council said. “This investment is made possible through dedicated funding from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors — alongside significant contributions from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Todd Lueders Fund of the Community Foundation for Monterey County.”

‘Richness and passion’

Executive director Jacquie Atchison said the grants illustrate “the richness and passion” for the arts in Monterey County. “By funding these art programs, we are fundamentally ensuring that vibrant, impactful arts programming is not just supported, but actively accessible and flourishing in every corner of our community,” Atchison said.

Big Sur Fiddle Camp pairs gifted students with professional musicians for a weeklong workshop at a local ranch, while I Cantori di Carmel presents “powerful choral performances” that inspire, uplift, and bring people together through innovative programs, educational outreach, and free community concerts.”

Other recipients include the Alisal Center for the Fine Arts, ARIEL Theatrical, First Night Monterey, the Monterey County Dance Foundation, the Salinas Valley Arts & Innovation Hub, Marina Youth Arts, New Canon Theatre Company, Monterey County Pops!, the Monterey Jazz



Artist Hanif Panni is shown here with his latest creation, a mural that was unveiled Dec. 18 in Seaside.

Art Roundup

By CHRIS COUNTS

“These critical grants — providing up to \$7,500 for each recipient — are designated to fuel public arts projects, cultural events and community-driven programs that foster creative expression and local



I Cantori di Carmel is one of more than two dozen local arts groups to receive recent grants from the Arts Council for Monterey County.

Festival, Monterey Symphony, Spector Dance and Youth Arts Collective. All were selected by a panel of 15 jurors who possess “artistic and cultural expertise.”

■ Mural artist honored

The same day a striking mural by artist Hanif Panni was unveiled on the Farmers Insurance building at 1350 Fremont Blvd. in Seaside, Assemblymember Dawn Addis honored him in the California State Assembly with a proclamation.

“On behalf of the State of California and the 30th District, we commend you for

your creative vision and dedication,” reads the certificate, which was signed by Addis Dec. 18. “Your work powerfully highlights the connection between art, regeneration and community, and we thank you for using your talent to inspire stewardship and collective action.”

The mural “celebrates how mindful actions, like properly sorting food scraps into your green cart, can give back to the earth and feed local farms and gardens for generations to come.”

The project received funding from the Arts Council for Monterey County and ReGen Monterey.

TUNES

From previous page

Chelew (Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **RJ DeMarco** (Saturday at 6 p.m.). 316 Alvarado St.

Bon Ton LeRoy’s Smokehouse — Open Mic (Thursday at 7 p.m.). 794 Lighthouse Ave.

Bulldog Sports Pub — Tribe in the Sky presents a weekly jam (Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.). 611 Lighthouse Ave.

Hyatt Regency Monterey — singer and guitarist **RJ DeMarco** (Friday at 7 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Scott Slaughter** (Saturday at 7 p.m.). 1 Old Golf Course Road.

InterContinental Hotel — guitarist **John Sherry** (rock and blues, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.), guitarist **Terrence Farrell** (Spanish, classical and jazz, Sunday at 9 a.m.), guitarist **Glenn Bell** (jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 750 Cannery Row.

Melville Tavern — The Chuck Brewer Duo with guitarist **Kyle Kovalik** (rock and blues, Tuesday at 6 p.m.). 484 Washington St.

Midici Pizza — Janice’s Jazz Jam keyboardist **Bill Spencer**, bassist **Billy Edwards** and drummer **Mike Shannon** (Sunday at 5 p.m.), singer **Miranda Perl** and guitarist **Adam Astrup** (jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 467 Alvarado St.

Monterey Plaza Hotel — pianist **Joe Indence** (jazz, Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and pianist **Scott Brown** (jazz and pop, Saturday at 6 p.m.), pianist **Steve Mann** (jazz, Sunday at 6 p.m.), singer and multi-instrumentalist **Alison Sharino** (Tuesday at 6 p.m.). 400 Cannery Row.

Pearl Hour — The Zach Westfall Quartet (jazz, Sunday at 8 p.m.), **The Ben Herod Trio** (jazz, Wednesday at 8 p.m.). 214 Lighthouse Ave.

Puma Road Winery at Portola Hotel — singer and multi-instrumentalist **Bronwyn Koryn** (Saturday at 6 p.m.), **The Landing Trio** (Americana, Sunday at 5 p.m.). 281 Alvarado St.

Sardine Factory — singer and guitarist **David Conley** (Tuesday through Thursday at 6:30 p.m., and Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.). 701 Wave St.

Sly McFly’s — Mad About You (New Year’s Eve 1980s dance party, Wednesday at 9 p.m.). 700 Cannery Row.

■ Pacific Grove

Il Vecchio Restaurant — The Cena Jazz Trio (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 110 Central Ave.

Julia’s Vegetarian Restaurant —

singer and guitarist **Rags Rosenberg** (Friday at 7 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kevin Smith** (Saturday at 6 p.m.), **Andrea’s Fault Duo** (jazz and pop, Monday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Holysea** (Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Rick Chelew** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 1180 Forest Ave.

PG’s Meetinghouse — Open Mic (Tuesday at 6 p.m., sign up by 5 p.m.). 599 Lighthouse Ave.

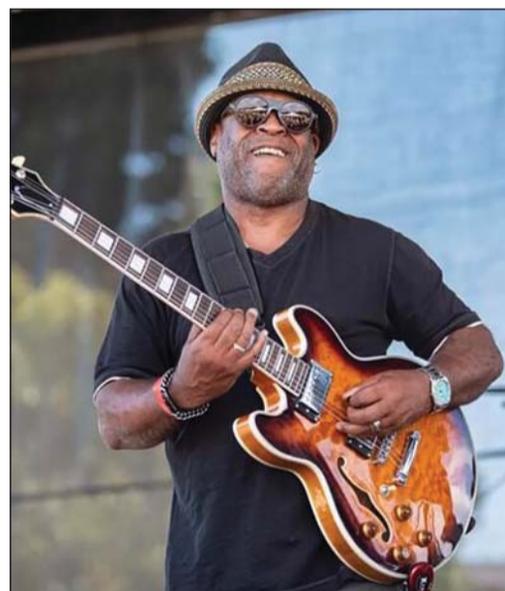
Pop & Hiss — The Chuck Brewer Band (rock and blues, Friday at 7 p.m.), **River Voices** and **Matt Axton & Bad Moon** (Americana, Thursday at 2 p.m.). 215 Forest Ave.

Wild Fish — The Lighthouse Jazz Quartet (Friday and Saturday at 6:30 p.m.). 545 Lighthouse Ave.

■ Pebble Beach

The Inn at Spanish Bay — The Andy Weis Trio (jazz, Friday, Saturday and Thursday at 7 p.m.). 2700 17 Mile Drive.

The Lodge at Pebble Beach — singer



Singer and guitarist Don Allen Caruth Jr. and the Joint Chiefs play Dec. 31 at Deja Blue in Seaside.

and multi-instrumentalist **Casey Wickstrom** (rock and blues, Friday at 5 p.m.), singer and multi-instrumentalist **Tamas Marius** (jazz, Saturday at 5 p.m.). In the Terrace Lounge at 1700 17 Mile Drive.

■ Seaside

Deja Blue — The MIXX (jazz and blues, Saturday at 3 p.m.), **The Joint Chiefs** (r&b and funk, Wednesday at 9 p.m.). 500 Broadway.

To update these listings, email chris@carmelpinecone.com.

13 WEEKS BEGINNING **JANUARY 25**

GriefShare
Grief Support Program at Shoreline Church

SPECIAL LOSS OF A SPOUSE SEMINAR 1:30-3:30 PM SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life’s most difficult experiences.

SUNDAYS 1:30-3:30 PM

Register at www.shoreline.church/griefshare

SHORELINE CHURCH 2500 Garden Road, Monterey

CALENDAR

Sundays – Jazz brunch with the Andrea Carter Trio, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Terry’s Restaurant + Lounge, inside Cypress Inn, Lincoln and Seventh, Carmel-by-the-Sea. For more information, please contact Cypress Inn, (831) 624-3871.

Sundays – Live music 5 to 7 p.m. at Woody’s at Del Mesa. Musical guests **Brice and Nina** deliver an eclectic mix of jazz, rock and reggae, 500 Del Mesa Carmel. (831) 624-1854

New Year’s Eve – Wednesday, Dec. 31 – Ring in 2026 with an unforgettable New Year’s Eve celebration at Terry’s. Final details are still to come, but guests can expect a night of festive dining, music and Carmel charm. Early reservations are highly encouraged.

New Year’s Eve – Wednesday, Dec. 31 – The American Legion Auxiliary presents “Chicago” Bill and the Next Blues Band, 7 to 10 p.m. at American Legion Post 512, Dolores and Eighth, Carmel-by-the-Sea. Donation: \$20. Details: www.alpost512carmel.org

Jan. 8, 2026 – Monterey Bay Property Management invites you to join us as we celebrate 40 years of serving the Monterey Peninsula. The event will recognize non-profit partners. A public press conference and ribbon cutting are set for 4 to 6 p.m. at 816 Wave St., Monterey. Enjoy wine, champagne and charcuterie as we unveil the 40th anniversary sweepstakes. RSVP by Jan. 2, 2026 to info@thebuzzpr.net

To advertise, email anne@carmelpinecone.com

\$0.50 per word (\$25 min. charge) • Add a photo for your event for only \$25

ARTIST

From page 27A

accumulated in somebody's attic, so suddenly I had an enlarger and the basic accoutrements of a fundamental darkroom, which I set up in a closet," he recollected.

In 1968, Chambers — by then a 24-year-old teacher — was on summer break in San Francisco when he received his draft notice.

The good news: While driving back to Fort Bliss, Texas, to report for basic training, he caught his first glimpse of the Monterey Peninsula and made mental notes.

The better news: With the Vietnam War at its ferocious peak, he was deployed instead to New Jersey and then Colorado Springs, where he served with the Army Air Defense — the service's missile command. He completed his stint as a company clerk in Germany, "fighting the war with a typewriter," joked Chambers, who was antiwar then and identifies as liberal.

After his time in the military, he returned to academia on the GI Bill, and he and his wife traveled extensively through Mexico. His fluency in Spanish helped him build a significant body of work, photographing poignant faces, colorful cultural images and festivals.

People photographs

The experience resulted in a love affair with "people photographs," which continued until 2020.

"That March, when Covid hit, I was in the Lacandon Jungle," he said. It's a rainforest that stretches from Chiapas, Mexico, into Guatemala. There, he said he photographed Lacandon Indians, "getting close to them. But then everybody went indoors and behind masks, and that was the end of it."

The desktop computer in his home studio contains about 16,000 digital images that he's shot since he retired 11 years ago from careers as an educator and a major-gift fundraiser for nonprofits.

Of the photos, he said — with a self-effacing drawl — "... and maybe 1,500 of them are pretty good."

His online portfolios reflect multiple phases of his artistic evolution — periods during which he trained his lens on expressive faces, interesting architecture, and stunning landscapes and seascapes in Latin America, the southwestern United States and the Pacific Coast.

While living in Taos, Chambers began photographing historic St. Francis Church, built between 1772 and 1815, and its parishioners.

"By virtue of living there, and because I spoke Spanish and loved to chat up the people, I got to know everybody very well," he said. "I attended Spanish Mass every Sunday, and I photographed their re-mudding process (restoration of 10,000 adobe bricks) that happens every June.

"So, they started referring to me as 'our photographer,' and a whole bunch of my photographs are stored there."

In 11 states

Since 2015, Chambers' work has been featured in more than 40 juried shows in 11 states and has won multiple awards. His photos have also been part of 14 exhibitions, including the 2025 "Biennial" at Monterey Museum of Art.

Despite his ADHD, Chambers has plenty of patience for photography.

"It's actually cathartic — photography is something that channels deep patience," he said.

"My first inkling of this was on a camping trip in Colorado, where I watched a chipmunk disappear into a hole. And I said, 'OK ... I'm just going to wait till you come out.' I laid there and waited for 35 minutes. He popped out, and I got the photo."

His firstborn son, Travis, is a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, became a Navy pilot, and is an artificial intelligence business development specialist. Twin brother Bryant, younger by four minutes, holds a Ph.D. in civil engineering and does computational research on antibiotic resistance. The youngest brother, Will, is a human rights and criminal law attorney in Austin.

Twenty-five years ago, in Austin, Rupert met Suzanne Covington, a Texas district court judge, through a mutual friend. It went well. They've been married for 23 years, and lived together in Taos, San Diego and Oceanside before coming to Carmel. They have three grandchildren.

Images of his portfolio can be viewed on Instagram @fotorupert, at fineartamerica.com/profiles/rupert-chambers, and other online locations.

Contact him at rupertchambers@yahoo.com.

Worship

CARMEL ~ CARMEL VALLEY ~ MONTEREY
PACIFIC GROVE ~ PEBBLE BEACH ~ SEASIDE

Journey to the heart of Carmel ...
where it all began

CARMEL MISSION BASILICA



SATURDAY VIGIL MASS
5:30 p.m.

SUNDAY MASSES
9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Our streamed Mass is also available.

www.carmelmission.org



Church in the Forest

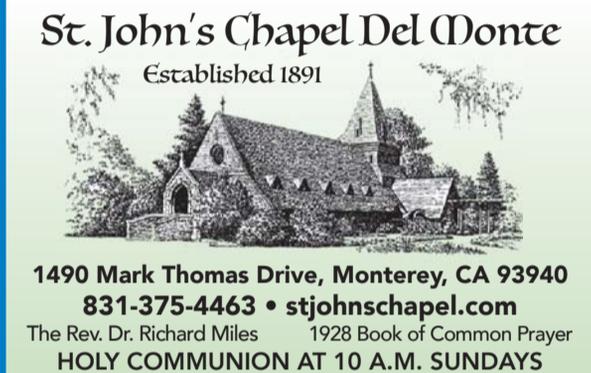
on the Stevenson School Campus

Preaching this Sunday
Rev. Dr. Mike Harbert
"The Lord's Blessing"

Special Music 9:45 am
Worship Service 10:00 am
Complimentary Pebble Beach Gate Entrance
3152 Forest Lake Road, Pebble Beach
churchintheforest.org

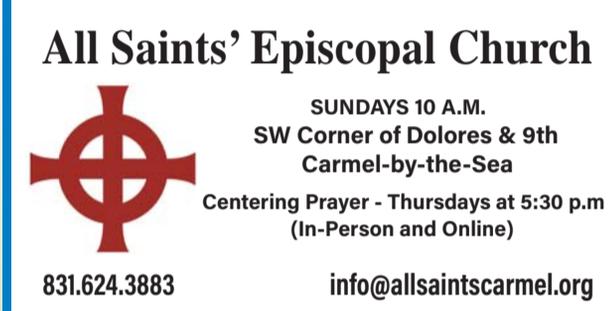
St. John's Chapel Del Monte

Established 1891



1490 Mark Thomas Drive, Monterey, CA 93940
831-375-4463 • stjohnschapel.com
The Rev. Dr. Richard Miles 1928 Book of Common Prayer
HOLY COMMUNION AT 10 A.M. SUNDAYS

All Saints' Episcopal Church

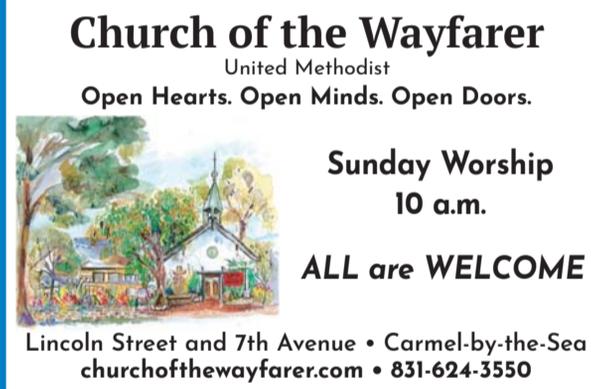


SUNDAYS 10 A.M.
SW Corner of Dolores & 9th
Carmel-by-the-Sea
Centering Prayer - Thursdays at 5:30 p.m.
(In-Person and Online)

831.624.3883 info@allsaintscarmel.org

Church of the Wayfarer

United Methodist
Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.



Sunday Worship
10 a.m.

ALL are WELCOME

Lincoln Street and 7th Avenue • Carmel-by-the-Sea
churchofthewayfarer.com • 831-624-3550



Carmel PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

9:30am TRADITIONAL

11:00am CONTEMPORARY

Corner of Ocean & Junipero and carmelpres.org



TO THOSE LEANING ON THE SUSTAINING INFINITE, TODAY IS BIG WITH BLESSINGS

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST

SUNDAY 10 AM
WEDNESDAY 7 PM
LINCOLN BET 5TH & 6TH

CHRISTIANSCECARMEL.ORG

Celebrate Jesus' Birth

Join us for a Christmas Church Service

SUNDAY, DEC. 21:
1 Skyline Forest Drive, Monterey
10 a.m. & 12:30 p.m. (single adults)

1024 Noche Buena St., Seaside
10:30 a.m. & 1 p.m. (Tongan)



QUESTIONS?
(408) 708-8800
www.lighththeworld.org

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS MONTEREY STAKE




St. Anselm's Anglican Church

SCRIPTURE-BASED WORSHIP
FELLOWSHIP HOUR

Worship Every Sunday 9:30 am

Meeting at:
Peninsula Baptist Church
1116 Funston Avenue | Pacific Grove, CA 93950
831-521-4267 | stanselmsanglican.org

Help protect The Pine Cone's future!
Subscribe • Read • Advertise



Email
Anne@carmelpinecone.com
to be included in this directory

PUBLIC NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252140
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
1. TOTEM
2. TOTEM HOLISTIC GROUP
3. ODE2BLUE
SW Corner Lincoln Ave. & 7th Ave., Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921.
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: PAWS AND PEDICURES LLC, P.O. Box

2102, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921.
 State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA
 This business is conducted by a limited liability company.
 Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.
 S/Heather McCandless, Manager
 Date: Nov. 25, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 25, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26, 2025. (PC 1201)

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF MONTEREY

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Case No. 25CV006210
 TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner, JASMINE NGWANYU PRINGLE, filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
A. Present name: JASMINE NGWANYU PRINGLE
Proposed name: JASMINE WANYU NG
 THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING:
 DATE: Feb. 3, 2026
 TIME: 11:00 a.m.
 DEPT: 13A
 The address of the court is 1200 Agujito Road, Monterey, CA 93940.
 (s) Hon. Thomas W. Wills
 Judge of the Superior Court
 Date filed: Dec. 3, 2025
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan 3, 2026. (PC 1205)

Date signed: Nov. 26, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 26, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1207)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252167
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **CALI MEATS ESTILO JALISCO, 2 Paloma Ave., Salinas, CA 93905.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): RAUL SANDOVAL CHAVEZ, 2 Paloma Ave., Salinas, CA 93905.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.
 S/Raul Sandoval
 Date signed: Dec. 2, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 2, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1208)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252168
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **WAG & WASH BY ANNIE, 7620 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA 93923.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): ANNIE ELIZABETH HUDDLESON, 7620 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA 93923.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Aug. 16, 2025.
 S/Annie Huddleson
 Date signed: Dec. 2, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 2, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1209)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252192
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **MINA'S CLEANING SERVICES, 516 Roosevelt St. #A, Salinas, CA 93905.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): GUILLERMINA SANCHEZ MORA.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on 2017.
 S/GUILLERMINA SANCHEZ MORA
 Date signed: Dec. 8, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 8, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1210)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252140
 Filing type: RENEWAL FILING - filed within 40 days of the expiration date and no CHANGES(S) from the previous filing
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

MONTEREY CHIROPRACTIC GROUP, 2511 Garden Rd., C-100, Monterey, CA 93940.

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: BRIAN PAUL RECTOR
 BRIAN PAUL RECTOR, CHIROPRACTIC, INC.
 State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA
 This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 18, 2015.
 S/Brian P. Rector, CEO
 Date: Oct. 6, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 8, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1212)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252198
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **CHRISTY ON THE VINE, 140 W. Franklin St., Ste 203 #117, Monterey, CA 93940.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): CHRISTINA NAKADA, 140 W. Franklin St., Ste 203 #117, Monterey, CA 93940.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 6, 2025.
 S/Christina Nakada
 Date signed: Dec. 9, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 9, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 12, 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC 1213)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252155
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **TMART 21, 50940 Mesa Verde Rd., King City, CA 93930.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: AIT VENTURE, INC., 904 Caroly, Tehachapi, CA 93561.
 State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA
 This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on June 1, 2016.
 S/Sherri Blanco, Secretary
 Date: Nov. 26, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 26, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 2026 (PC 1214)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252156
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **TMART 22, 2338 Del Monte Ave., Monterey, CA 93940.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: AIT VENTURE, INC., 904 Caroly, Tehachapi,

CA 93561.
 State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA
 This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on June 1, 2016.
 S/Sherri Blanco, Secretary
 Date: Nov. 26, 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 26, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 2026 (PC 1215)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252186
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **KOAM REALTY, 352 Greenwich Way, Salinas, CA 93907.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): DANIEL KIHONG KWON, 352 Greenwich Way, Salinas, CA 93907.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 5, 2025.
 S/Daniel Kwon
 Date signed: Dec. 5 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 5, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 2026 (PC 1216)

Lien Sale Auction Advertisement

Notice is hereby given that Pursuant to the California Self-Service Storage Facility Act, (B&P Code 21700 et. Seq.), the undersigned will sell at public auction; personal property including but not limited to furniture, tools, and /or other misc. items.
 Auction to be held at 4:00 pm on January 14th, 2026:
www.selfstorageauction.com
 The property is stored at:
 Coastal Storage
 575 California Ave,
 Sand City, Ca. 93955
Name of Tenants
 Perlecia Hunt
 12/26/25
CNS-3995245#
CARMEL PINE CONE
 Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025 (PC 1217)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252203
 Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING
 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **SECURE SEAL MOBILE NOTARY, 555 Iverson St. #B, Salinas, CA 93901.**
 County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
 Registered Owner(s): JACQUELINE F. LYNCH, 555 Iverson St. #B, Salinas, CA 93901.
 This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 9, 2025.
 S/Jacqueline Lynch
 Date signed: Dec. 9 2025
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 9, 2025.
 Publication Dates: Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 2026 (PC 1218)

**NOTICE TO BIDDERS
 BID NO. 25-04
 The Santa Lucia Preserve**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Board of Directors of the Santa Lucia Community Services District ("District") hereby calls for sealed bid proposals to be received by the Executive Assistant of the District, at the Gate House, One Rancho San Carlos Road, Carmel, California 93923 on or before **Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 4:00 pm** U.S. Pacific Time Zone, verified at www.time.gov.

All bids will include delivery to above address and all appropriate sales tax etc. for Monterey Co.

One (1) 2026 Model AWD pickup truck, 2.5L Hybrid engine, Exterior Color: Carbonized Gray, Interior Color: Navy Pier, Bucket Seats, Spray in Bedliner.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and any or all items of such bids and to waive any informality or irregularity in any bid but if the bids are accepted, the contract for the equipment will be let to the lowest responsible bidder.

At 4:00 pm January 14, 2026, the Bid Proposals will be taken by the Executive Assistant of the District and opened and publicly read by her or her authorized representative. All bids received after this time will be returned unopened. The bids, together with a report of the bidders and the respective amounts of the bids, will be presented to the Board of Directors of the Santa Lucia Community Services District on Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Please direct any questions to:

Executive Assistant Aimee Dahle
 Santa Lucia Community Service District
 One Rancho San Carlos Road
 Carmel, CA 93923
 831-620-6780
adahle@santaluciapreserve.com

Date of Publication:
December 19th & 26th, 2025 and January 2nd, 2026

By order of the Board of Directors of the Santa Lucia Community Service District.
 State of California
 Shaw Pick General Manager

Publication dates:
 Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 2026 (PC1228)

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AT A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING

Regarding: California American Water Company's (CalAm) General Rate Case Application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) A.25-07-003

January 6, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Citrus Heights City Council Chambers, 6360 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA 95621

January 13, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Sand City Council Chambers,
 1 Pendergrass Way, Sand City, CA 93955

January 20, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Camarillo City Council Chambers,
 601 Carmen Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

January 28, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

By Phone: 1-800-857-1917, Passcode 1673482#, * 1 to Speak
 Online (View Only): www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc

These events are an opportunity for you to share your thoughts regarding this application to an administrative law judge and/or commissioner overseeing the hearing.

If you need language interpretation or other reasonable accommodations, please contact the Public Advisor's Office below at least five days in advance.

What is Being Requested?

CalAm is requesting an increase in revenue of \$25,620,784 or 24.36% from 2027–2029 for the Central Division to upgrade and modernize the water system through proactive infrastructure improvements designed to keep water reliable for customers, make its communities safer, prevent small problems from getting bigger and more expensive to fix, increase sustainability, and provide high-quality service, both now and in the future. Some of the key projects CalAm proposes in this cycle are to: replace six miles of water mains per year, rehabilitate three water storage tanks per year, construct new backwash tanks at the Begonia Iron Removal Plant, and replace aging hydropneumatic tanks.

How Would This Impact the Average Residential Ratepayer?

If the requested amount is approved, the increase would be phased in over three years. The average residential ratepayer with a 5/8-inch meter in the following service areas would see a total monthly rate increase as follows. The actual increase will vary based on usage.

SERVICE AREA	Average Use (CGL*)	PROPOSED TOTAL INCREASE
Monterey	34.09	\$27.20
Central Satellites	74.41	\$10.91
Chualar	116.59	\$3.49
West San Martin	192.67	\$11.79

* 1 CGL = 100 gallons

Additional Information

An administrative law judge will hold hearings, consider evidence, testimony, and public comments before drafting a proposed decision on this application. CPUC commissioners will then vote on a final decision at a public meeting.

You can read more about the utility's request and make public comment by visiting apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/A2507003. For questions about participating in CPUC matters, you can contact the Public Advisor's Office at Public.Advisor@cpuc.ca.gov, 1-866-849-8390, or 505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102. Please reference A.25-07-003 in any communication with the CPUC.

Questions About the Request

For questions about this application, please contact CalAm at cawc.customeradvocacy@amwater.com, 619-446-5520, or by mail at Customer Advocacy, 655 W. Broadway, Suite 1410, San Diego, CA 92101.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AT A PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HEARING

Regarding: California American Water Company's (CalAm) General Rate Case Application to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) A.25-07-003

January 6, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Citrus Heights City Council Chambers, 6360 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, CA 95621

January 13, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Sand City Council Chambers, 1 Pendergrass Way, Sand City, CA 93955

January 20, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Camarillo City Council Chambers, 601 Carmen Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010

January 28, 2026 – 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

By Phone: 1-800-857-1917, Passcode 1673482#, * 1 to Speak
 Online (View Only): www.adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc

These events are an opportunity for you to share your thoughts regarding this application to an administrative law judge and/or commissioner overseeing the hearing

If you need language interpretation or other reasonable accommodations, please contact the Public Advisor's Office below at least five days in advance.

What is Being Requested?

CalAm is requesting an increase in revenue of \$1,068,638 or 24.58% from 2027–2029 for the Central Division to upgrade and modernize the water system through proactive infrastructure improvements designed to keep water reliable for customers, make its communities safer, prevent small problems from getting bigger and more expensive to fix, increase sustainability, and provide high-quality service, both now and in the future. Some of the key projects CalAm proposes in this cycle are to: replace a chlorine contact basin and off-specification tank installation at Indian Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant, headworks screen replacement at Las Palmas Wastewater Treatment Plant, chlorine contact basin baffle replacement at Carmel Valley Ranch, and headworks screen and pipe coating replacement at Carmel Valley Ranch.

How Would This Impact the Average Residential Ratepayer?

If the requested amount is approved, the increase would be phased in over three years. The average residential ratepayer in the following service areas would see a total monthly rate increase as follows. The actual increase will vary based on usage.

SERVICE AREA	PROPOSED TOTAL INCREASE
Monterey Wastewater Passive	\$29.90
Monterey Wastewater Active	\$32.75

Additional Information

An administrative law judge will hold hearings, consider evidence, testimony, and public comments before drafting a proposed decision on this application. CPUC commissioners will then vote on a final decision at a public meeting.

You can read more about the utility's request and make public comment by visiting apps.cpuc.ca.gov/c/A2507003. For questions about participating in CPUC matters, you can contact the Public Advisor's Office at Public.Advisor@cpuc.ca.gov, 1-866-849-8390, or 505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102. Please reference A.25-07-003 in any communication with the CPUC.

Questions About the Request

For questions about this application, please contact CalAm at cawc.customeradvocacy@amwater.com, 619-446-5520, or by mail at Customer Advocacy, 655 W. Broadway, Suite 1410, San Diego, CA 92101.

LIVES

From page 27A

want to focus on singing,” he explained. “So, I enrolled in Los Positas Junior College (formerly Chabot) to train vocally, and I later taught there.”

While at San Jose State, Purcell sang with the school’s Choraliers, an advanced chamber ensemble, in musical and opera productions, among them, “The Merry Widow,” “Little Shop of Horrors” and “City of Angels.” Meanwhile, his violin languished in his office.

“I like to sing with texture and harmony,” he said. “Part of that is my jazz experience. I sang with a jazz quartet in San Jose, as well as ‘Corner Pocket’ singers, named for the famous jazz standard sung by Count Basie, Manhattan Transfer, and Bobby McFerrin, among others, highlighting swing and fusion. Oh, how I love singing jazz.”

Purcell’s family did not believe he’d make anything of himself in music. “Friends said I’d never be anything but a burden on my family,” he recalled. But he chose to follow his passion and an increasingly emerging talent.

As a child, Purcell came with his family from Livermore to Monterey to visit, but he never imagined he’d be able to live

on the Peninsula until 20 years ago, when he accepted the position as music department chair at Santa Catalina School, with his colleague, pianist, piano instructor and accompanist Lucy Faridany, who also works with the Camerata Singers.

“I started conducting the Camerata Singers in January 2025, and Lucy was the one who confirmed they were looking for a director,” he said. “A year later, I’m still ‘the new guy,’ but I’m very much looking forward to seeing what we can do as we continue to sing beautiful music across the spectrum.”

Expertise, humor, kindness

In fall 2024, the search for the Camerata Singers’ fourth artistic director, wrote President Julia Turner, brought them Purcell.

“In the short time we have worked together, Mark’s musical expertise, humor and kind nature have confirmed our decision,” Turner said.

“Our spring 2025 concert, ‘Sing Me to Heaven,’ established that with Mark Purcell, Camerata Singers will continue our legacy and mission of presenting beautiful choral concerts to our Salinas- and Monterey-area audiences,” he added.

Purcell’s partner, Peter Hoffman, who owns Mole Hole collectibles and gifts in Carmel, is an accomplished flutist who sings tenor with the group. Meanwhile, Purcell’s violin sits in his office.

Said the Skyline Forest resident, “I miss playing my violin, but I’m still deeply involved in music and actually am still arranging music for strings on behalf of an ensemble or orchestra, which brings it back to me.”

Camerata Singers also supports its Futures Program in furtherance of its mis-

sion of teaching, singing and performing, by bringing high school students — who qualify via auditions — to rehearse and perform alongside the group during its annual spring concert.

When asked what he enjoys doing when not pursuing music, Purcell said, “Well, when is that?”



NEW YEAR'S EVE

DECEMBER 31 | 5:00PM - 9:00PM

CHAMPAGNE & OYSTERS \$139**

Veuve Clicquot Champagne (750mL)
One Dozen of Kusshi & Beausoleil Oysters
Chervil Mignonette, Lemon

SURF & TURF \$64**

Espresso-Rubbed Filet Mignon
Orange-Butter-Poached Jumbo Prawns
Mascarpone Polenta, Charred Broccolini, Rosemary Jus

East Coast New Year’s toast at 9:00pm.

Regular menu and vegetarian special options available.
Reservations are required.

Please visit quailodge.com or call 831.620.8860.

COVEY GRILL • 8205 VALLEY GREENS DRIVE CARMEL

DIVORCE Care

A 13-Week Divorce Recovery Program Offered by Shoreline Church

Hurting from the pain of separation or divorce? Come to DivorceCare to help in your recovery. Find help, discover hope, and experience healing in a safe group with others who are on the same journey.

6:00-7:30 PM Thursdays Beginning **January 8**

Sessions take place at
Building Bridges Counseling Center, 157 Sargent Court, Monterey

Register at www.shoreline.church/divorcecare
\$25 to cover cost of materials.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Lien Sale Auction Advertisement

Notice is hereby given that, Pursuant to the California Self-Service Storage Facility Act (B&P Code 21700 et seq.), the undersigned will sell at public auction personal property, including but not limited to furniture, clothing, tools, and/or other misc. items.

Auction to be held at 4:00 pm on January 14, 2026, at www.selfstorageauction.com

The property is stored at:
Leonard's Lockers Self Storage,
816 Elvee Drive, Salinas, CA 93901
Tenant Name:
Maria C Tovar Napoles
Caroline Kenney
Johnathan Soto
Adan Belman Gutierrez
Juan Manuel Zazueta
Gloria Figueroa

12/26/25
CNS-3995661#
CARMEL PINE CONE
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025 (PC 1222)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252195
Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

KAAN ROYAL MATCHA & CAFE, 1760 Fremont Blvd., Seaside, CA 93955.
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Registered Owner(s):
ANGELICA ANAIZ RUIZ, 3135 Seacrest Ave., Apt. D103, Marina, CA 93933.
This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 8, 2025.
S/Angelica A. Ruiz Leon
Date signed: Dec. 8 2025
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 8, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 19, 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 2026 (PC 1223)

Lien Sale Auction Advertisement

Notice is hereby given that, Pursuant to the California Self-Service Storage Facility Act (B&P Code 21700 et seq.), the undersigned will sell at public auction; personal property, including but not limited to furniture, clothing, tools, and/or other misc. items.

Auction to be held at 4:00 pm January 14th, 2026, at: www.selfstorageauction.com

The property is stored at:
Marina U-Store:
475 Reservation Rd, Marina, CA 93933
Name Of Tenants
Zack Durant
Rachel Buchanan
John Lane Jr.
Raymond Torres
Joshua Espinoza
California Sea Kings LLC – Wash StallWorth

12/26/25
CNS-3996029#
CARMEL PINE CONE
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025 (PC 1227)

www.selfstorageauction.com
The property is stored at:
Rossi Self Storage
10 Rossi Cir, Salinas, CA 93907

Name of Tenants
Richard Guerra
Tom Morrison
Cindy Rocha

12/26/25
CNS-3996944#
CARMEL PINE CONE
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025 (PC 1230)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252094
Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **SALINAS LLAVES CON CHIP, 614 Terrace St., Salinas, CA 93905.**
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Registered Owner(s):
JUAN JOSE LOPEZ, 610 Terrace St., Salinas, CA 93905
This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.
S/Juan J. Lopez
Date signed: Nov. 18, 2025
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 18, 2025.

Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1231)

Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1231)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252228
Filing type: NEW FILING - with CHANGE(S) from the previous filing.
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
1. DAYDREAM CELEBRATIONS & CO. 2. DAYDREAM PASTRY CREATIONS 17 Walker Lane, Greenfield, CA 93927.
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:
DAYDREAM PASTRY CREATIONS LLC, 455 Market St., Ste. 1940 #544245, San Francisco, CA 94105.
State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA
This business is conducted by a limited liability company.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.
S/Cinthia Karely Duarte, Managing Member
Date: Dec. 16, 2025
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 16, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1232)

AGEMENT, MONTEREY, CA. 2 SW Corner of Ocean Ave. & Mission St., Carmel, CA. 93921.
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of Individual Registrant: YESENIA SANCHEZ, P.O. Box 2100, Carmel, CA. 93921.
This business is conducted by an individual. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 1, 2018.
S/Yesenia Sanchez
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Nov. 21, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1233)

Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1233)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252258
Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
CARTE MANE SALON, 201 W. Franklin St., Monterey, CA. 93940. County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY
Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:
FRANKLIN STREET COLLABORATIVE INC., 201 W. Franklin St., Monterey, CA. 93940.
This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 17, 2025.
S/Stacia Sundahl, President
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 22, 2025.
Publication Dates: Dec. 26, 2025; Jan. 2, 9, 16, 2026 (PC 1234)

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20252120
Filing type: Original filing
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
H&J ACCOUNTING & BUSINESS MAN-



HIGHLANDS FORCE MAIN FLUSHING INLET REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Notice is hereby given that sealed proposals will be received by the District Board, Carmel Area Wastewater District, at the District office, 3945 Rio Road, Carmel, CA. 93923, until

10:00 A.M., Friday, January 2, 2026

at which time they will be publicly opened and read for performing the work as follows:

The results of the bidding will be reported to the District Board within thirty (30) days of the date of the bid opening at which time if bids are found to be acceptable by the District Board, written notice of award will be given to the lowest responsive and responsible Bidder. However, said District Board reserves its right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities of any bids or to re-advertise for all or any part of the work contemplated.

No bidder shall withdraw his bid for a period of thirty (30) calendar days after the date set by the Board for the opening thereof.

Specifications and proposal forms may be secured at no charge by emailing the District’s Principal Engineer at bandy@cawd.org and requesting the documents.

Posted on two dates:
December 19 and 26, 2025

Publication dates:
Dec. 19 & 26, 2025 (PC1220)

LIEN SALE AUCTION ADVERTISEMENT

LIEN SALE NOTICE: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Pacific Grove Self Storage at 2000 Sunset Drive, Pacific Grove CA 93950 will sell the contents of the storage unit listed below at a public auction to enforce a lien imposed on said property (pursuant to the California Self Storage Facilities Act Business and Professions Code 21700-21716). The sale will take place at the website www.StorageTreasures.com by competitive bidding and end on **January 2nd 2025 at 10am**. Unit will be available for viewing prior to the sale at www.StorageTreasures.com. Contents will be sold for cashier’s check or money order only. A 10-15% buyer’s premium will be charged and possibly a cleaning deposit per unit. All sales are final. Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property at any time before the sale or to refuse any bids. The property to be sold is described as “general household items” unless otherwise noted. **Eren Niazzi & Carina Carvahlo** Property to be sold includes: Exercise Equipment, Luggage, Plastic Storage Containers, Furniture, Storage Boxes. Furniture, Artwork, and Kitchen Items.

Publication date: Dec. 19 & 26, 2025 (PC1221)

Obituary Notices

Let us help you pay tribute to your loved one with an affordable obituary in The Carmel Pine Cone.

You’ll be surprised at how low our rates are.

Anne Papineau (831) 274-8654
anne@carmelpinecone.com



SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.



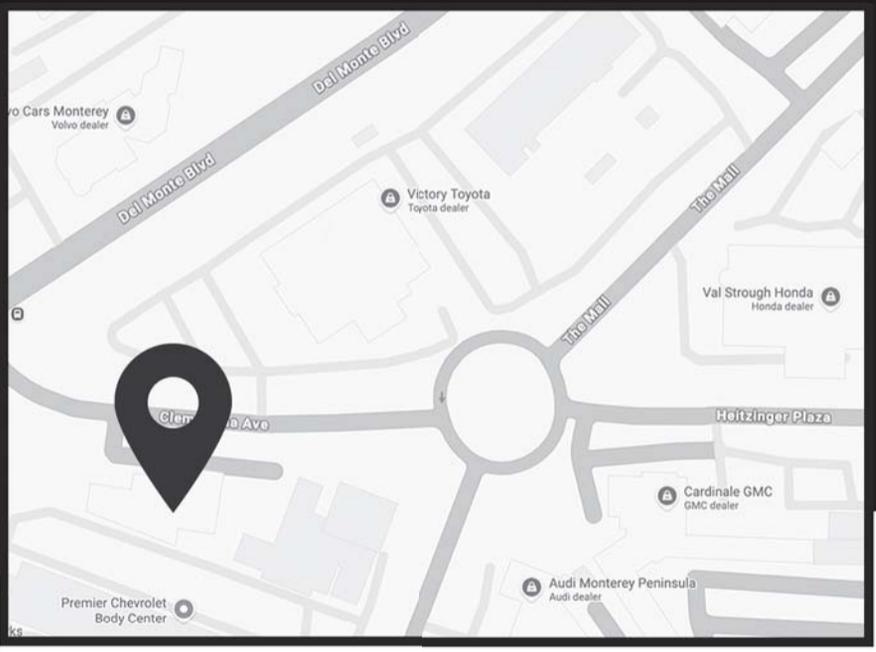
As we prepare for a major facility upgrade, Lexus Monterey Peninsula is making room for what's next—with exceptional values during our Construction Reduction Event.

Great things take shape with vision, craftsmanship, and time. While our future home is being transformed, we're pleased to offer exclusive opportunities on a carefully curated selection of new and pre-owned Lexus vehicles.

BEGINNING JANUARY 5, 2026, OUR SALES AND SERVICE DEPARTMENTS WILL TEMPORARILY RELOCATE TO 4A HEITZINGER - FORMERLY PREMIER HYUNDAI - ENSURING A SEAMLESS AND FULLY SUPPORTED EXPERIENCE THROUGHOUT CONSTRUCTION.

Our Parts Department will continue to operate at our current Lexus Monterey Peninsula location during this time.

Thank you for your continued trust and for allowing us to serve Carmel, Monterey, and the Peninsula with the hospitality you expect from Lexus. We look forward to unveiling a space worthy of this remarkable community.



TEMPORARY RELOCATION EFFECTIVE JANUARY 5, 2026

- Sales & Service: Moving to 4A Heitzinger Plaza (formerly Premier Hyundai)
- Parts: Remaining at Lexus Monterey Peninsula



THE FUTURE OF LUXURY IS UNDER WAY.



CALL. 831-661-9931 **TEXT.** 831-228-5534
CLICK. [LexusMontereyPeninsula.com](https://www.LexusMontereyPeninsula.com) 
COME ON BY. 1721 Del Monte Blvd.
 Seaside, CA 93955