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City officials say PG&E staff shortages caused dark Christmas

By MARY SCHLEY

PROLONGED, WIDESPREAD power outages resulting from storms are not unfamiliar to Carmel residents, but the swift demands made of PG&E by elected officials were unusual, as downed trees left thousands of

people in the dark last week.

City councilmembers Hans Buder and Jeff Baron reported several calls with representatives and upper management of the utility company that started soon after the outage hit Tuesday night, impacting more than 4,700 customers served by the main circuit that enters the city at its

northeast corner. The storms, which carried torrential rains and high winds — including gusts recorded at more than 100 mph — wiped out power in much of Northern California, plunging nearly 811,000 customers into darkness, just in time for Christmas.

In advance of the storms, PG&E proclaimed it was ready. “PG&E is prepared for these storms with a full emergency response with all centers activated,” the company said.

“More than 5,500 PG&E front-line coworkers and contractors will be on storm duty,” PG&E said.

But that wasn’t enough, apparently.

Only five crews on duty to fix broken power lines

On holiday

On the afternoon of Dec. 24, Buder sent an email to constituents reporting a conversation with PG&E’s Central Coast government affairs representative, who speculated the lights would be back on in most of Carmel that night.

At 2 p.m., the company reported it had restored power to over 134,000 customers in other parts of the state.

Baron said the company advised the city that an inspection had identified four locations of power lines damaged by trees and that work would begin the afternoon of Dec. 24, but that a second inbound storm might undo those efforts.

“It appears that they will begin physically working on our outage, and it appears that their work may be completed by midnight, but that the repairs may not hold,” he wrote in an email.

“We don’t know why it has taken all day to get to this point, but we will have a conversation with them to determine where the process failed us after the event is over,” Buder added.

Worse than that, the predicted restoration of power failed to materialize as crews ceased working when more wind and rain swept through the area Wednesday night, making conditions too dangerous to remain in the field.

Buder provided an update on Christmas Day. “According to PG&E there are ‘29 to 30 work locations’ on the circuit impacting the bulk of Carmel,” he said. “I was told that due to holiday-related staffing shortages, there are only five crews” available.

To help, the company summoned contractors from



PHOTOS/(ABOVE) KERRY BELSER, (RIGHT) HANS BUDER

Thanks to two councilmembers’ intervention with the CEO of PG&E, utility crews were out in force the day after Christmas along Second Avenue (above, at Pescadero Street, and right, at Lincoln), where the town’s main distribution line runs.



Tree risk: balancing character and safety

By KELLY NIX

WITH GLOBAL warming causing more rain and storm events, more frequent lengthy power outages, and increasing threats of wildfires, should Carmel do more to minimize risks from falling trees?

After last week’s outages, which affected thousands of people on the Monterey Peninsula, The Pine Cone asked Mayor Dale Byrne whether Carmel should wage a more concerted effort to remove trees that are too close to power lines to reduce the risk of outages and wildfire.

‘Already engaged’

“The city is already engaged in a proactive, deliberate tree maintenance program,” he said this week. “We have completed a comprehensive audit of all city-owned trees, resulting in an extensive list targeted for trimming or removal.”

See TREES page 20A

Sacramento under pressure to strengthen DUI laws in 2026

CALIFORNIA’S FORMER reputation as a tough-on-drunk-driving state is poised to make a resurgence in 2026 — this after a year of criticism from major media outlets on its lax treatment of repeat offenders.

Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

Staffers with State Sen. Bob Archuleta’s office say a big announcement expected early in the New Year will include a comprehensive package of DUI legislation. Details on the effort are being kept under wraps, but one staffer said it has the support of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers and the district attorneys of two large counties.

In the 1980s, California led the crusade to change America’s attitude toward driving under the influence. Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, now based in Texas, started in Fair Oaks after founder Candace Lightner’s daughter was killed by a drunk driver. The organization led the crusade to establish the legal limit of .08 percent blood alcohol, increase

See DUIs page 12A

MORE THAN 13 INCHES OF RAIN IN BIG SUR

■ No major damage to Highway 1

By CHRIS COUNTS

A SOGGY end to 2025 continued this past week when another storm hit Monterey County, letting loose more than 13 inches of rain on one of Big Sur’s distant peaks over the span of just a few days.

According to National Weather Service meteorologist Nicole Sarment, 13.51 inches of moisture were recorded on Mining Ridge in Big Sur from Dec. 20 to 27. Just a month earlier, 11 inches of rain was measured during a week at the same site, which is 3,255 feet above sea level. Sarment said the new totals are just preliminary estimates

See HEAVY RAIN page 15A

P.G. grapples with state’s housing demands

By LILY PATTERSON

‘AMERICA’S LAST Hometown’ has officially redeemed itself in the eyes of California’s Department of Housing and Community Development, now that the Pacific Grove has submitted its plan to house tomorrow’s residents, and zoned enough land within the city’s 3 square miles to accommodate 1,125 new homes and apartments by 2031. The plan was approved Dec. 17 by the city council, which seems confident the housing department will do the same. The state expressed its support for the current draft in July, after an environmental review greenlit all sites named in the 441-page document, which was prepared by city staff and consultants under Community Development Director Jon Biggs.

Possible locations for new apartments or mixed residential-commercial buildings include several blocks downtown, on Sunset Drive between Asilomar and the high school, between Central and Eardley avenues, and in the upper Forest Avenue commercial district, “which has large parking areas and additional buildout potential.”

Significant rezoning

Other neighborhoods required significant rezoning to help the city meet the state’s housing target — most controversially, a 3-acre triangle bounded by Sinex, Dennett, and Grove Acre near Asilomar. There, the plan suggests a “conservative” 67 new homes could be built in the scenic neighborhood, as well as on 6 acres owned by the First United Methodist Church on Sunset Drive. Both sites were upzoned from a maximum buildout of nine units per acre to 29 units.

The hulking draft previously approved by the

planning commission Nov. 13, outlines goals including “housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income

See HOUSING page 16A

Is this the lion?



PHOTO/URBAN TRAPPING

A dead mountain lion was found along San Benancio Road Dec. 16, leading some to suspect it was responsible for a recent killing spree of pets. See page 6A.

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new arrivals



Sandy Claws

By Lisa Crawford Watson

Setting the standard

They were schnauzer people, starting with minia-
tures and graduating to Cooper, a standard schnauzer
in whom they invested their hearts — which went with
him when he succumbed, at only 3, to acute leukemia.

Seeking somewhere to place their grief, they de-
signed a fabricated-steel sculpture — a large, organic
hoop through which they imagined Cooper leaping to-
ward his heaven.

They christened it “Cooper’s Joy.”

Once they felt ready to fill the hole in their hearts
with someone else, maybe not a schnauzer, their vet-
erinarian suggested a standard poodle. They weren’t
sure. “You need to understand,” said the vet, “that
dogs are dogs, but poodles are people.”

Which was exactly what they realized the moment
they met Bixby. “Bixby was a soulful dog who could
look right through you,” his person said. “Every human
was quite taken with him, especially when he became
a therapy dog at the hospital.”

After Bixby crossed “the bridge,” they brought Bai-
ley to their Mid Carmel Valley home. She’s a black fe-
male they describe as a super-smart, super-friendly



lover and, at 10, she just wants to be with her people.

“Since she’s also in love with her ball, it’s hard to
tell where her biggest allegiance lies,” her person said.
“She would rather chase her ball than her next meal.”

Banjo, a cinnamon standard now 3, who followed
Bixby, is particularly attached to his girl. “Banjo’s a
little timid,” she said, “and very discerning about the
dogs and humans he’ll interact with. He has to think
about it. He’s quite smart and figures things out before
we do. But we all know he’s definitely bonded to me.”

Both dogs love the beach, a treat they get to enjoy
on “grooming day,” when they can run their hearts out
and get totally sandy and wet — and then come home
clean.

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By KELLY NIX

“Due to the broken coracoid and the possibility of an electrocution injury, the eagle has a very guarded prognosis right now,” SPCA spokeswoman Beth Brookhouser told The Pine Cone. “Electrocution is a slow-developing injury, and it can take several days before we are able to assess its full extent.”

"We are able to rescue eagles like this thanks to the support of our donors, and the outpouring of support has been incredible," she said about the facility off of

To give to the Wildlife Rescue Center, which relies on donations, go to spcamc.org.



SPCA wildlife technician Laura Lockwood cares for an injured bald eagle that may have been electrocuted.



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Police & Sheriff’s Log

Dogs are not great landscapers

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.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12

Carmel area: A shoe was found in the Garrapata river off Garrapatos Road.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Hit-and-run on Lincoln Street at 2003 hours. Vehicle had to be towed away.

Pebble Beach: Adult Protective Services report at a residence on Crespi Lane .

Pebble Beach: Deputies responded to a report of a disturbance on Cypress Drive. Incident was documented.

Carmel area: Sheriff’s deputies conducted a welfare check on a juvenile on Upper Trail.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Vehicle towed from Fourth and San Carlos for illegal parking.

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Lost Apple watch. Cracked face and skinny band.

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Theft from a residence at San Antonio and 11th.

Carmel area: Hit-and-run vs. a parked vehicle on Dolores Street. Vehicle was drivable.

Pacific Grove: Deputies received a report of fraud on 16th Street.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

Carmel Valley: Deputies responded to a request for a welfare check on Cachagua Road. Incident was documented and forwarded to Adult Protective Services.

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



The gavel falls

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

Dec. 4 — Pamela Ferreyra, 61, of Watsonville, pleaded guilty to one count of voluntary manslaughter and one count of felony child abuse for the December 1994 death of her infant son. Ferreyra admitted an allegation that she caused great bodily injury to baby John Doe during the crime. Both offenses are serious and violent felonies and considered strikes under California’s three strikes law. On Feb. 18, 2026, Judge Pamela L. Butler will sentence Ferreyra to 13 years and four months in state prison.

On Dec. 3, 1994, the partial remains of a 2- to 3-day-old baby boy were discovered off Garin Road in Prunedale. An autopsy confirmed that the child was born alive, outside of a hospital setting, and that he had not been fed for approximately 24 hours prior to his death. No missing person’s report was filed,

and a thorough investigation by Monterey County Sheriff’s Office resulted in no viable leads as to the identity of Baby Doe’s parents.

In July 2020, District Attorney Jeannine M. Pacioni created the district attorney’s office cold case task force, which represents the largest and most comprehensive county wide effort to investigate, solve and prosecute cold-case homicides in Monterey County. The cold case task force and the Monterey County Sheriff’s Office had DNA samples from Baby Doe’s remains submitted for further testing. In 2024, DNA analysis subsequently identified Ferreyra as the child’s mother.

When interviewed, Ferreyra told the investigators that she hid her pregnancy from

See **GAVEL** page 22A

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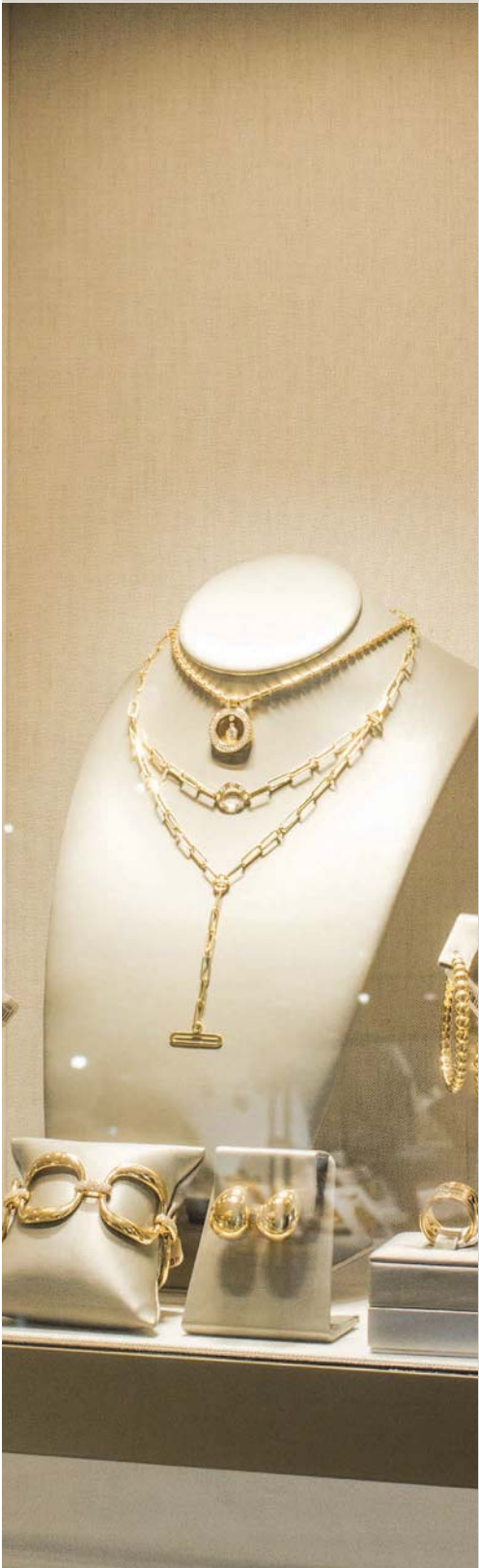
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Lion killed by vehicle in San Benancio

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER A vehicle hit a mountain lion along San Benancio Road Dec. 16, some residents speculated that it was the same one that’s been terrorizing pets in the Corral de Tierra area in recent weeks. But it appears the dead lion is a different animal.

According to Dan Burton of Urban Trapping — who retrieved the dead lion and transported it to state wildlife officials — another big cat has killed pets in the area since the collision. “There have definitely been more attacks,” Burton told The Pine Cone.

A Carmel Valley resident said she knew the driver who hit the lion. She, like others, had hoped that the one that was hunting in neighborhoods was the one killed.

“One of the guys who works for me gave me this picture,” said Carmel Valley resident Dawn Poston, who sent the photo to The Pine Cone. “He thought he hit a deer, but it was a lion.”

Burton described the lion he found as “a very large male cat.” It was later determined to be around 6 years old. “It was more than capable of taking down any prey it desired.”

Burton said the collision happened along the upper portion of San Benancio Road, closer to Corral de Tierra than Highway 68. He described the lion as massive.

“It was literally the width of the bed of my truck,” he said. “He probably weighed 130-150 pounds.”

To ascertain if the lion was the one that had been hunting, wildlife officials checked the contents of its stomach. A dog and three

goats had been lost just two nights earlier.

“A biologist performed a necropsy and checked the stomach for any unnatural meals, such as domestic animals,” he reported. “The stomach was empty at the time of death.”

Daytime sighting

Meanwhile, a woman reported on Facebook Dec. 29 that her husband saw a mountain lion along Ford Road in Carmel Valley around 2:30 p.m. — a rare event for an animal that’s famously nocturnal and secretive.

In last week’s Pine Cone, several residents described attacks in their neighborhoods that left numerous pets dead, including dogs, cats, goats and a miniature horse. It’s unknown if the killings were the work of a single predator. “I think the problematic mountain lion is still out there — or we have multiple problem mountain lions,” Burton speculated.

PHOTO/URBAN TRAPPING

A mountain lion killed Dec. 16 along San Benancio Road was massive, as the size of its paws shows.

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Shark victim’s body found near Santa Cruz

By KELLY NIX and CHRIS COUNTS

THE BODY of a missing swimmer that a witness said was attacked by a shark in Pacific Grove Dec. 21 was recovered near Santa Cruz last weekend.

Erica Fox, 55, was swimming near Lovers Point Dec. 21 when witnesses said a shark attacked her. She was with a group of other swimmers known as the Kelp Krawlers when she disappeared. On Dec. 27, CalFire and Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s deputies recovered a body from the ocean south of Davenport Beach in Santa Cruz County.

“This afternoon, the individual was positively identified as Erica Fox, 55, of Monterey County, who had been missing following a suspected shark attack near Lovers Point,” the Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office said Monday night. It did not report a cause of death.

Fox’s father identified her body, which was reportedly still clad in a wetsuit with a Garmin watch and a Sharkbanz, a roughly \$140 device the manufacturer says uses a magnetic field to deter some shark species but not great whites, which attack their prey with a high-speed ambush.



Erica Fox

Relocate?

Steve Bruemmer, a former member of the Kelp Krawlers who nearly died June 22, 2022, after being bitten by a great white in the same general area, said Fox’s husband, Jean-Francois Vanreusel, and other members of the Kelp Krawlers had been at Lovers Point daily since she disappeared.

“They were down there every day looking at the sea, hoping and waiting,” he said.

The Pine Cone asked Bruemmer if he had any advice for local ocean swimmers, including members of the Kelp Krawlers. He suggested that they find another place to swim.

“I would recommend people swim at Del Monte Beach” near Windows by the Bay, “where it’s shallower and they can stay closer to the shore,” Bruemmer said. “If you have a problem, you are just 20 yards from the shore. And it’s shallow enough so ambush attacks are not possible.”

During his recovery, Bruemmer told The Pine Cone he had no interest in doing any more ocean swimming, but he hangs out with members of the Kelp Krawlers now and then.

The size of the shark that bit Bruemmer was estimated by researchers at Cal State Long Beach — who measured gaps between the tooth marks on his body to determine its length — to be 14 to 15 feet.

A P.G. resident reported that on the day Fox disappeared he saw large groups of birds off Lovers Point on the water feeding on fish — activity that can attract sharks, though it’s not clear if that was a factor in Fox’s shark encounter.

‘One in a million’

After what happened to Fox, it’s fair to ask whether it is still worth the risk to swim in a place where people have been killed by sharks.

A member of the Kelp Krawlers, Peter Baird of Monterey, responded by saying “it’s a very personal decision” to take such a chance. He conceded the risks are very real.

“We all have to weigh the reality of what we’re doing,”

See **VICTIM** page 23A



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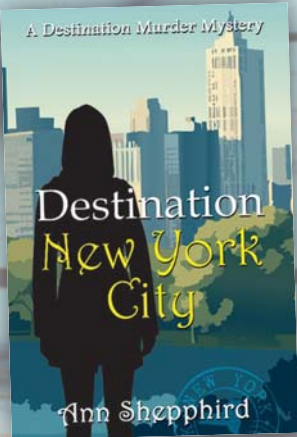
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Stevenson tiptoes around C-word

■ Other holidays featured

By KELLY NIX

A PRIVATE school in Pebble Beach has suggested that “inclusivity” is the reasons it avoided mentioning Christmas on its social media pages — but made a point of celebrating Kwanzaa and Hanukkah.

On Dec. 14, Stevenson School made a Happy Hanukkah post on its Instagram and Facebook accounts featuring Star of David and menorah graphics with the message, “May this Festival of Lights fill your heart and home with warmth and blessings.” And a post last week wished the community a “meaningful Kwanzaa filled with reflection, unity and joy,” which included imagery tied to the cultural holiday.

But on Christmas Day — the country’s most celebrated and historic religious observance — a social media post from the school offered a sole sentiment: “Joy.” No mention of Christmas. Instead, Stevenson included a generic and secular “Happy Holidays” in the caption.

The omission didn’t go unnoticed by a class of 2020 Stevenson alum, who questioned why the exclusive private school would specifically acknowledge the two other events while avoiding the one that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

Seeking an answer, the former student emailed Stevenson President Dan Griffiths. He didn’t reply but forwarded her message to school marketing director, Kelly Dalton, who offered a lengthy explanation.

“Our intention throughout the season was to be inclusive and thoughtful in how we acknowledge this time of year,” Dalton said, adding that the “Happy Holidays” messages leading up to Christmas were “meant to reflect the broader holiday period, including Advent, Christmas Eve,

and Christmas Day.” But the response, the alum said, seemed “inconsistent, particularly since Christmas is a single, specific holiday and those three events don’t make it multiple holidays.” She also suggested that omitting the religious holiday is the polar opposite of “inclusive.” “The decision to clearly name some religious holidays while avoiding Christmas raises questions about consistency, lack of inclusivity, cultural pressure, and whether certain traditions are being treated differently than others in our educational institutions,” the Stevenson alum, who wanted to remain anonymous, told The Pine Cone this week.

Are non-Christians offended by mentions of Christmas?

‘Traditional themes’

Dalton went on to tell the Stevenson grad that the social media messages “reflected traditional Christmas themes through both images and music.”

“We also shared separate posts recognizing Hanukkah and Kwanzaa, as those celebrations are meaningful to members of our community as well,” Dalton explained in the email message.

On Tuesday, Stevenson responded to questions from The Pine Cone, saying it celebrates “all holidays during this time of year, including Christmas.”

“The true measure of the season is not through social media snapshots, but rather through how our students engage, serve and celebrate, creating meaningful and lasting impacts on the community,” the school said, noting its student-led “Christmas tree committee” that dates to the 1950s.

The Stevenson grad, though, said the school’s omission reflects a broader “reluctance of schools and organizations to publicly acknowledge Christmas while openly celebrating other religious holidays.”

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Student wins award for animation, gallery kicks off New Year with ‘Winter Musings’

EVERY YEAR, thousands of teens enter a national art contest sponsored by the group Young Arts, and this year’s winners included Monterey High School senior Solomon Sloan, who earned an award in the Film/Animation category.

An animator, director and writer, Sloan is the creator of an animated YouTube series, “Wacky Creatures,” which “tells creative stories through colorful characters and clever satire.”

An animator since he was 11, Sloan shares his knowl- edge — and his passion for the art form — with middle and high schoolers at Monterey High.

According to Young Arts, Sloan “joins hundreds of

Art Roundup

By CHRIS COUNTS

the nation’s most accomplished young visual, literary, and performing artists from 39 states and the District of Columbia.” The awards have been handed out since 1981 — and this year, a record 13,000 applications were sub- mitted for awards in 10 categories.

“It’s the only award in the nation that recognizes excep- tional young talent across artistic disciplines and affirms their pursuit of a professional life in the arts,” the group said. “Recipients become part of a lifelong community of peers and mentors, with access to critical resources that help sustain their creative practices throughout their careers.”

The winners receive “cash prizes between \$250 and \$10,000,” plus “a lifetime of creative and professional support.” Past winners include Academy Award-nomi- nated actor Timothée Chalamet and singer and actor Jon Batiste, who has won Grammy and Academy awards.

To view his work, visit Sloan Presents on YouTube.

Wild weather, cozy moments

A new show opening Saturday at Venture gallery, “Winter Musings,” celebrates the many moods of the sea- son — and showcases new work by its members, who you can meet at 3 p.m. when the gallery hosts a reception.

“The artist-members of Venture Gallery will share their diverse and varied experiences and interpretations of the season of winter with a new group show,” said the gal- lery’s Edi Matsumoto, who added that the art explores “wild weather and cozy moments, bare trees, sun angles, stillness and quiet, birds, fruits and berries.”

The gallery represents more than two dozen local art- ists, including painters Cheryl Kampe, Gordon Mayfield, Christine Crozier and Maria Poroy, painter and jeweler Vanessa Martin, and jewelers Lily Campos and Patti Wells.

The show continues through the end of the month. The gallery is at 260 Alvarado St. in Monterey. Visit venture- gallery.com for more.

Roundabout traffic delays expected Jan. 9

By CHRIS COUNTS

MOTORISTS CAN expect lengthy delays when trav- eling along Carmel Valley Road Friday, Jan. 9 from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., due to construction on the roundabout at Laureles Grade.

“Please plan accordingly,” county officials urged. “Thirty-minute traffic delays or more are expected during the early commute hours.”

Jan. 9 marks the start of the project’s third phase — there are to be five in all.

“During this time, flaggers will be used to direct traf- fic,” according to the county, which said that it will make “every effort to minimize the traffic disturbance.”

Minimize interference

Work on the roundabout has periodically caused traffic delays since it began in June and, at times, delays have exceeded the 30-minute estimates. During the first week of December, some motorists reported getting stuck for up to 80 minutes, with westbound vehicles backed up to Carmel Valley Village.

Supervisor Kate Daniels reported Dec. 23 that “to min- imize interference with daily driving as much as possible,” county officials “have worked collaboratively” with resi- dents, businesses and Carmel Unified School District.

A study contends a roundabout will make the inter- section safer. The intersection has seen least two major accidents in recent years that involved large trucks losing control and crashing. Work on the roundabout is expected to be done by March 2026.

Happy New Year!



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Monterey, CA



Kailua-Kona, HI



Monterey, CA



Monterey, CA

From page 1A

The bill would have forced people required to use the devices to pay about \$100 a month to rent them. It also would have cost the Department of Motor Vehicles around \$15 million. But as those who have lost loved ones will tell you, the fiscal

In his eulogy (the funeral is available on YouTube), Villar's father addressed lawmakers, calling California's DUI laws a broken justice system. "Shame on you.

In 2019, California launched a pilot

Ochoa and other victim's families are hoping 2026 will be the year California reverses its deadly trend. She and others are calling on lawmakers to lengthen license suspensions, make a third DUI a felony, and increase sentencing for each offense. We'll see if it's all included in Archuleta's big announcement in the coming weeks.

Businesses, however, are not eligible. Customers qualify as long as their

In addition to commercial and agricultural customers, those who do not qualify for storm credits include residents in areas where access to PG&E electric facilities was blocked by mudslides, road closures or other issues, and those whose outages were prolonged by equipment failures on their properties, such as broken service drops or damaged weatherheads.



Lori Silver

A third-generation lawyer who has practiced law for over 40 years, has announced she will be retiring from estate planning and tax law at the end of 2025 but will continue her probate practice.

She wishes to express her gratitude to the many clients who have trusted her services for decades.

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BIG STORM

From page 1A

as far away as Ohio, according to Buder, but each crew had to have an onsite PG&E lineman or foreman, a dozen of whom were spread across the county.

Late on Wednesday, Carmel residents received calls and texts indicating power would be restored more than two days later — by Dec. 26 at 11 p.m.

“I’ve appreciated PG&E staying in contact with me and other city leaders throughout this episode, but letting us sit for days on end without power because they don’t have enough of their internal people on the job over Christmas is not acceptable,” Buder complained. “Bad storms are inevitable, but power outages should not extend for days due to lack of appropriate staffing or because we have not been prioritized.”

Meanwhile, as of 2 p.m. Dec. 25, power had been restored to more than 455,000 customers throughout Northern California, according to PG&E.

On Christmas night, Buder said he and Baron had a call with outgoing PG&E CEO Patti Poppe — set to be replaced by Sumeet Singh Jan. 1 — and other company officials to get an update on the situation and convey their grievances.

“Our Carmel team began by expressing

our dissatisfaction with the communication that we have received thus far from PG&E. I then raised my concerns about understaffing over the Christmas Eve and Christmas holidays,” Buder summarized. “We specifically noted the apparent absence of PG&E in Carmel during the day on Christmas Eve when there was an extended break in the weather. Finally, I pressed them on the number of PG&E personnel out on vacation and the reported lack of PG&E staff available to complement their contractor crews.”

Postmortem sought

Poppe confirmed the Dec. 26 11 p.m. target for restoring power and told them the utility was “surging resources to Carmel, that we should notice a visible difference in manpower by the morning, and that they hope to see power beginning to be restored to sections of the village by as early as noon tomorrow.”

“While I believe that PG&E’s performance during this storm has been unacceptable, I greatly appreciated the opportunity to speak with their senior leadership at length, particularly on Christmas,” Buder said. “At a minimum, we know that Carmel’s concerns are now being taken seriously by leadership within PG&E at the highest levels.”

The morning of Dec. 26, the utility reported having gotten the power back

on for approximately 654,000 customers since the first storm hit Dec. 23 and said it was working to restore the remaining 41,225 customers, including some 12,000 in Monterey County.

“In some instances, needed repairs are extensive. In Monterey County alone, crews identified dozens of snapped poles and trees on power lines — there were over 30 different hazards identified in the Carmel area,” the company said. “The storms had major impacts on the entire Central Coast, including Carmel. Top gusts were recorded at 69 mph on the coast at Pebble Beach and 44 mph inland on Dec. 24.”

By late Friday night, the lights were on again in most Carmel homes and businesses.

In response to an inquiry from Buder, Regan said he looks forward to meeting with city officials and the community to discuss how PG&E could improve.

“I asked Mr. Regan to come back after the storm with other PG&E executives to do a postmortem, to face our residents and answer our hard questions, and to discuss how we can enhance the reliability of our power grid,” Buder said.

Carmel residents experienced a similar situation when a series of storms hit in March 2023, toppling trees, destroying utility poles and power lines, and leaving people in the dark for several days. City leaders at that time did not engage with PG&E to the extent conveyed by Baron and Buder last week.

DAROLD ELLSWORTH SKERRITT

Darold Ellsworth Skerritt, 90, peacefully passed in his home on Nov. 2, 2025, surrounded by family, after a courageous journey with cancer.

Born on March 15, 1935, in Scobey, Montana, Darold was the eldest son of Elma and Harold Skerritt. He was raised on a farm in northeast Montana. He would share many rich stories of family life on the farm. He was known from an early age for his academic gifts, particularly in mathematics and science. Darold earned



both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in chemical engineering from Montana State University.

After graduating college in 1958, Darold moved to San Francisco to begin his professional career and soon after start a family. There he met and married his first wife, Anne Blume, and became proud father of two sons, Harry and Martin. The family moved from the East Bay to Salinas in 1966, when Darold joined the faculty at Hartnell Community College as a chemistry professor. He had chosen to leave research in favor of teaching. Over more than

three decades, until his retirement, he inspired countless students through his passion for science and his dedication to education.

In 1971, the family moved from Salinas to Pacific Grove. Darold later married his second wife, Joanna Bonnell, blending their families and welcoming three stepchildren alongside his two sons.

Darold embraced life with curiosity and joy. He loved travel, opera, cooking and winemaking — interests he shared with his beloved wife, Judy Lind, whom he married in 1996. With this union two stepchildren were added. Together, they traveled extensively and were active members of two wine tasting groups, as well as the Greek Village Dancers of the Monterey Peninsula. When the group’s dance instructor retired, Darold stepped in to teach Greek dance classes, a role he fulfilled with enthusiasm for many years.

Perhaps Darold’s greatest joy came from family connection, annual reunions with siblings, and many family celebrations.

A devoted longtime member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, Darold lived by the values of kindness, compassion, generosity and a deep respect for embracing diversity and protecting human rights. He will be remembered for his gentle nature, warm smile and sense of humor.

Darold is survived by his wife, Judy Lind; siblings, George Skerritt (Terry), Daniel Skerritt (Irina), Patricia Nixon (Lee) and Donna Boyer; his son, Martin Skerritt (Angela); stepchildren, Bryan Bailey (Roz), Karen Tucker (Rob), Laura Bailey-Sayre (Mark) and Briana Jors (Steve); grandchildren, Adam Skerritt, Colin Skerritt, Daniel Skerritt, Katie Tucker, Vendela Jors and Karsten Jors; and great-granddaughter, Freya Skerritt.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Elma and Harold Skerritt; his brother, Paul Skerritt; his son, Harry Skerritt; his stepson, Karl Lind; and his granddaughter, Veronica Hills-Skerritt.

A Celebration of Life will begin at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, at the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, 490 Aguajito Road.

May his memory bring comfort and inspiration to all who knew and loved him.

For those who wish to honor Darold’s memory, donations may be made to two of his favorite charities, UUCMP or Planned Parenthood Mar Monte.

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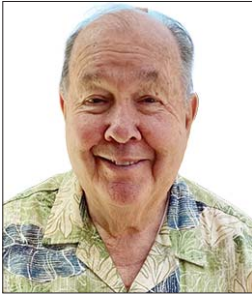
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ROBERT CLINTON ZOBEL

Memorial services will take place 1 to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, for Robert Clinton Zobel, who passed away Dec. 2. Services will be conducted at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 800 Cass St., in Monterey, California, followed by a celebration of life in the Fellowship Hall from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

A full obituary for Mr. Zobel will be published in the Jan. 9 issue of The Carmel Pine Cone.



THOMAS H. MCKINNEY

Feb. 2, 1945 ♦ Oct. 16, 2025
La Quinta, California

Thomas “Tom” McKinney passed away peacefully after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. Born in Independence, Missouri, Tom lived a life defined by service, friendship, family and a passion for golf and a good cigar.



After high school graduation, Tom joined the U.S. Navy, proudly serving aboard the USS Hornet during the Viet Nam War. Following his honorable service, he began his professional career in data processing for Alameda County Schools. A chance encounter with a State Farm Insurance manager set him on a new path. In 1978, he began a 47-year career with State Farm, quickly earning respect for his integrity and leadership.

After five years in management, he opened his office in Pacific Grove, a community he would come to love. Tom’s dedication to service extended beyond his clients. He was past president of Pacific Grove Rotary, Paul Harris Fellow, member of the Pacheco Club and a volunteer with Pacific Grove High School Breakers. He co-founded the Monterey Bay Golf Fellowship of Rotarians, combining his love for the game and his commitment to fellowship and community.

Tom found joy on the fairways, fulfilling a lifelong dream of playing courses from Cypress Point to the Old Course at St. Andrews, and an astonishing 672 courses in between. Tom will be remembered for his kind and loyal spirit, dry wit and ever present “Cheshire Cat” grin. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Janice McKinney; his son, Matthew McKinney; his sister, Phyllis Bailey; three brothers-in-law, David (wife Mary), Michael and Kenny Stewart, along with several beloved extended family members.

A Celebration of Life will begin at 1 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, 2026, at Laguna Seca Golf Ranch, 10520 York Road, Monterey, California.

HEAVY RAIN

From page 1A

and could be revised.

Also in Big Sur, 4.85 inches of rain was tallied during the same period at Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, which is only about 1,000 feet above sea level.

Waiting for Noah

Other impressive weeklong totals were recorded at Hacienda Carmel, which had 2.11 inches and Los Padres Dam, where 5.91 inches were measured. Meanwhile, according to one Carmel Valley local on Facebook, “it rained so much last night I half-expected Noah to knock on my door.”

According to Sarment, another storm is on the way, and it likely isn’t packing quite the same punch as the past two big weather events. However, she suggested it could still cause problems, especially for anyone who is still cleaning up from the last storm or hasn’t had their power restored. She also said leftover debris could clog culverts, leading to flooding. “This system doesn’t look too bad, but it could be worse than it seems due the impacts from last week,” she told The Pine Cone.

The storm wreaked havoc in unincorporated areas like Big Sur, Carmel Highlands and Carmel Valley. Public works was busy over the holidays removing fallen trees, according to a county roads report. County spokesperson Nick Pasculli reported that two fallen trees temporarily halted or slowed traffic Dec. 23 in Carmel Valley — one on Carmel Valley Road near Canada Way, and another at Tierra Grande Road and Carrol Place.

On Christmas Eve, more newly fallen trees were cut up and removed from various roads in the county’s unincorporated areas, including Oak Way and Fern Canyon Road in Carmel Highlands, and Rancho Fiesta Road and Calle de Los Agrinemsors in Carmel Valley.



PHOTO/SAN CLEMENTE RANCHO

Recent storms, which downed trees and power lines, also triggered landslides at San Clemente Rancho.

Also, rain and debris “came down” on the roundabout construction site at Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade. “The contractor was contacted to address the situation,” the county reported.

On Christmas Day, work continued as a crew dealt with downed power lines or fallen trees at numerous sites, including one at Miramonte and Los Robles in Carmel Valley, and another on Upper Walden Road in Carmel Highlands.

Parts of at least three roads in the Jacks Peak area remain closed due to fallen trees and power lines.

Let it flow

Despite the downed trees, Pasculli said the county’s roads fared pretty well, considering all the rain.

“We had some standing water, but it receded really quickly,” Pasculli said. “There was no significant damage to roads and no issues with bridges — some roads in low-lying areas got water on them, but we were fortunate.”

Pasculli also reported that Carmel River has been flowing out to sea since Dec. 25. He noted that a bulldozer was used help open the channel in early December, but sand built back up over the next couple weeks and blocked

its flow. Nevertheless the lagoon “breached naturally” on Christmas Day.

Due to the weather, Old Coast Road in Big Sur has been closed since Dec. 19, while Jacks Peak Park, which was preemptively closed Dec. 24 due to the weather, has been reopened.

In Big Sur, at the site of Regent’s Slide, work crews successfully completed paving efforts ahead of last week’s forecast rain.

“Once weather conditions allow, crews will begin installing safety barriers and rock fencing — critical steps toward reopening the roadway.” Caltrans reported.

Throughout many parts of California, record rainfall has been logged in recent weeks. An atmospheric river hit downtown Los Angeles Dec. 24-26, dumping more than 4 inches on the city — the most moisture it has received in one day since 1889.

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HOUSING

From page 1A

households,” reviews legal and environmental constraints, and inventories a total of 73 viable properties for new construction or conversion of “underutilized” buildings, some on city land.

While the plan predicts the population of Monterey County will grow 14.2 percent by 2045, from 430,310 in 2015, it says Pacific Grove won’t grow much at all. And like other historic towns in California, it’s famous for its resistance to change.

The state’s housing mandate, however, doesn’t much care for P.G.’s charming eccentricities nor its tardiness. The city is turning in its plan three years late.

‘Not in a position to say no’

“If we don’t do this, we’re going to get penalized, and it would be really, really draconian,” Mayor Nick Smith said before casting his vote in favor.

California has imposed housing mandates since 1969, but enforcement was nonexistent until Sacramento Democrats “discovered” the state’s dire housing shortage and started imposing mandates under Gov. Gavin Newsom and his party’s leadership, who want to see 2.5 million new

homes statewide between 2023 and 2030, half of them in the “affordable” category.

“We, as a city, are not in a position to say no,” councilmember Paul Walkingstick said, following a nearly two-hour public hearing, when people spilled from City Hall chambers into the vestibule and more joined via Zoom.

Two-thirds of commenters opposed specific sites in the plan — and complained the city didn’t involve them in the process of drawing it up — but most expressed support for more housing, in general.

Said the mayor, “Do we know it’s going to result in over 1,000 units? We don’t know that. But we’re taking our best shot.”

“We’ve spent the money on the experts, on our staff members, the time in meetings, and this is where we’re at. It has a positive chance to increase our housing,” he added.

P.G.’s supply has “only increased by 26 units between 2010 and 2022,” and the plan blames “vacation homes or short-term rentals, high housing costs and lack of diverse housing” — and, of course, the water moratorium that has effectively barred new construction since the 1990s.

But with a water reclamation project already supplying a big portion of the Peninsula’s supply, new water meters could start to be available “next spring, possibly early summer,” Monterey Peninsula Water Management District general manager

Dave Stoldt told The Pine Cone in October.

“If the housing element is not approved by the time they start releasing water, and some developer shows up and offers a big wad of cash, all of a sudden there’s a 10, 12, 14-story high rise right next to the high school,” councilmember Tina Rau warned.

“If we don’t approve this, we are abdicating our role to developers,” Walkingstick seconded.

Since the deadline passed in 2023, the state has increasingly relied on developers as muscle to provoke cities into submitting their housing plans — or else, under the harmless-sounding “builder’s remedy,” the state can OK whatever projects “meet certain affordability criteria but do not comply with the local General Plan or zoning,” according to the County of Monterey’s website. Other incentives include the “density bonus,” which allows developers to bypass height limits and other local constraints — and fast-track the approvals process — simply by including 10 percent of low-income units in their proposals.

According to its newly amended zoning code, P.G. “shall grant a density bonus and other incentives and concessions” to any projects the state considers eligible.

The housing plan and related amendments took three years, 19 meetings between city council and the planning commission, \$1.3 million in consulting costs — most recently an environmental impact report conducted by Rincon Consultants — and even greater sums in staff and attorney’s fees, Rau said.

“We’ve already spent about three times as much money as any of the other Peninsula cities,” said Rau, who was partly recused from the vote because she owns property on Forest Avenue being upzoned for more housing.

Dozens of residents at the Dec. 17 meeting felt more could have been done to solicit public input on what Smith called “the biggest project in the 10 years since

I’ve been on the council.” He corroborated the city’s efforts to work with the public.

“This was not even a close percentage of the input we’ve received from residents over the past three years,” the mayor said, referring to several rounds of public surveys since 2022, which were advertised on the city’s website and in the city manager’s newsletter. A final comment period took place between July 15-30, eliciting 11 responses to the environmental review of the housing plan.

Amid concerns that the plan will disfigure single-family neighborhoods, harm trees and wildlife, and make issues of traffic and parking, many complained that the city knowingly excluded them from the process of drawing it up.

The most controversial element of the plan rezones 3 acres bordered by Sinex, Grove Acre, and Dennett, raising the density from nine to 29 potential units per acre. P.G. resident Andrew Miller, who for 30 years has lived in the area and last month drew up a petition against the plan, said he supports more housing but has considerable doubts about the remapping of his neighborhood.

‘Mismanaged’

“The biggest reason is the density issue, but there’s no infrastructure, minimal parking and public transportation, and it borders on a wildlife corridor. It’s not close to schools, commercial businesses, or jobs,” Miller commented.

“Also, not everybody was informed about this project. There was notification to property owners within, but not around, those streets. They’re going to be impacted heavily by this,” he added.

Several of Miller’s neighbors piled on, including Dennett resident Douglas Philbrick.

“I think it’s fair to say the process of

See **MORE HOUSING** page 23A

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Editorial

The tree trap

HUMANS LOVE trees — there’s no doubt about that. Take the wildest, windswept and treeless spot in the Great Plains, or in the Scottish Highlands, or on the coast of California, and let humans live there, and before too long, their homes will be surrounded by large, healthy trees which they planted.

No more perfect expression of mankind’s tree-loving nature can be found than on Carmel Point, which today is home to hundreds of huge specimens, but, as Robinson Jeffers said in his poem named after the place he chose to live, was an “unbroken field of poppy and lupin walled with clean cliffs” when he first beheld it in 1914. Later, he built the iconic Tor House on the point — in a spot an official history of Jeffers’ life calls “a windswept, barren promontory.”

Today, after being transformed from that barren promontory into a thickly forested community, Carmel Point is a place where it is illegal to cut down a tree without a very-difficult-to-obtain permit. Across the city limits in Carmel-by-the-Sea, another place where large parts of town were devoid of trees until humans got there, the city fathers recently discussed the possibility of imposing fines of hundreds of thousands of dollars for illegal tree removals.

The benefits of having lots of trees around are well known, and not just because they are aesthetically pleasing. They also provide habitat for wild-life, absorb CO2, prevent erosion, reduce noise, and make everyone proud of their community. In Carmel, we even have a name for this: “Village in a forest.”

But trees also cause of a lot of trouble — especially the aging Monterey pines that are ubiquitous in the Monterey Peninsula. First and foremost is the possibility that one of these 30,000-pound monsters will fall on your living room, seriously damaging your home and maiming, or even killing, someone in your family.

Thickly forested towns are also at much higher risk of being destroyed in a wildfire. While foggy, cool Carmel may be less vulnerable than Pacific Palisades or Paradise, the danger of a fire is very real — so much so that 278 acres of the 1-square-mile city were recently classified by state officials as a “very-high fire hazard severity zone.” Under the right conditions, the whole of Carmel could be destroyed in just an hour or so.

Meanwhile, power outages are more than just an inconvenience — they’re also a major health risk to the elderly and infirm. Even if you just glanced at the outage maps published by PG&E last week during the Christmas storm, you could easily see that our outages are always worst in the places with the strictest tree-hugging policies.

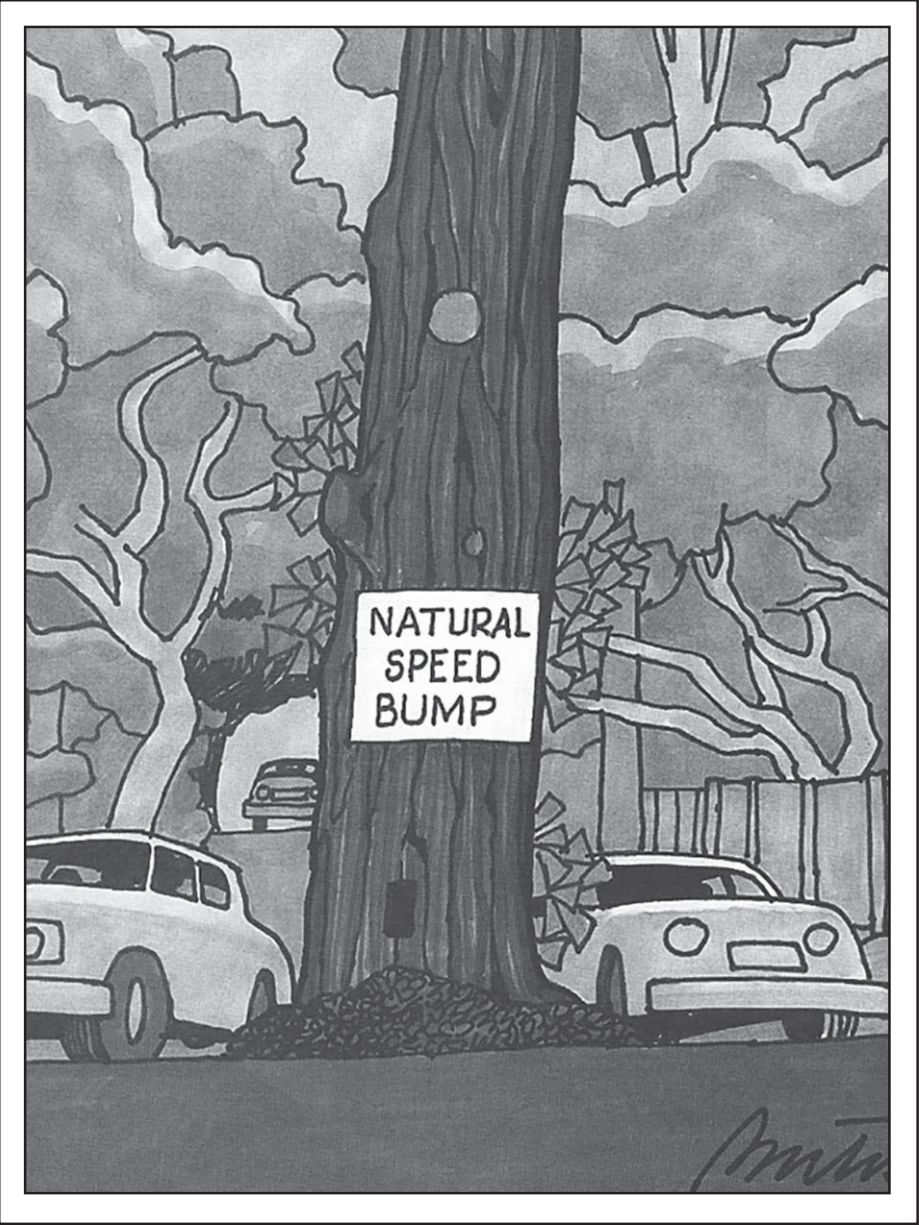
How does power get to your home? First, transmission lines bring high-voltage electricity to your community from the grid. These lines are carried on those giant towers you see high-stepping over the landscape — in our case, from Moss Landing, through Castroville, to Marina, to Monterey. From a major substation next door to the Jiffy Lube on Fremont, a distribution line brings power to another substation behind CHOMP, and from there it’s distributed via wires at the very tops of telephone poles into Carmel via Second Avenue, from which the lines fan out to every everybody’s homes and businesses.

Why does the Monterey Peninsula get so many power outages?

Take a look at the satellite images available on your phone and you can readily understand. If you trace the power network along the route we described above, you’ll see that for 90 percent of the way from Moss Landing to Carmel, the route is relatively free of trees. But once it gets to CHOMP, it’s suddenly surrounded by a thick forest of thousands of them, among which there are hundreds ready to fall on the lines at the slightest provocation. Sure, PG&E is pretty aggressive about keeping limbs from overhanging the wires, but they don’t engage in any wholesale cutting of trees that are 10 or 20 feet away — and that’s where the ones are that invariably crash onto the wires in dozens of places during major storms.

Yes, trees cause almost all of our regular power outages. Until the lines can be placed safely underground, the trees must be managed — with chain saws — to keep them off the wires. That is, if you want your power to stay on.

BEST of BATES



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

Humanity of neighbors

Dear Editor,

From December 24 to 27 we once again suffered lack of power to our home in Pebble Beach like thousands of other households on the Monterey Peninsula.

The cold, lack of power, no internet, tv, radio, phones, spoiled food, damages to our properties, in general lack of basic comforts of home reminded us of the movie Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome. Primitive, barbaric, other worldly. Thank God for the humanity of neighbors helping each other survive in our communities by sharing power generators, lanterns, water and food. We are generally well-off and know how to survive, but what about the elderly, homeless and very poor during these catastrophic events? No one seems to care or report on their modes of survival.

PG&E, Gavin Newsom and Jimmy Panetta bear accountability for not taking proactive action to prevent power outages from causing so much havoc during

storms. Like fire danger, storm danger is of equal concern.

Ray and Barbara Rasul,
Pebble Beach

Traffic jams

Dear Editor,

It is disappointing that neither the Carmel Police nor the CHP could spare a couple of officers to direct traffic at the Highway 1 intersections with Ocean Avenue and Carpenter Street while the traffic lights were out. Cars were backed up 100 deep in both directions.

Perhaps somebody should look into volunteers next time?

Scott Pope, *Carmel*

Thanks for pressure

Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank city council members Hans Buder and Jeff Baron for taking the lead in working with execs at PG&E to get our power restored.

As we know, our city’s budget relies heavily on tourism, which suffered a major blow due to the long outage over the Christmas holidays. This does not even cover the quality-of-life issues for our citizens. These two very concerned council members exemplified leadership.

Sharyn Siebert,
Jeff Johnson, *Carmel*

Tree priorities

Dear Editor,

My wife and I are Carmel residents, but

See LETTERS page 22A

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PICTURE PEBBLE IN ITS BEST LIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHER COLE Weston gave Christine Bush advice she'll never forget. At the time, Bush was working at the Weston Gallery downtown. She loved the job — “to hold a Karsh, a Weston, an Adams in your hands, to have it looking back at you” — and something the son and protégé of Edward Weston told her.

“Christine, film is cheap. Moments are not.”

A professional photographer, Bush's energy and snap-happy sessions are an old joke among her friends and clients. But

Great Lives

By LILY PATTERSON

Weston's advice made her stubborn, and nobody seems to mind once they see her pictures, which have framed professional golfers, housekeepers, billionaires, babies, and beloved dogs against her favorite backdrop in the world.

Primed for it

“I'm always trying to get my subjects at their best, but I'm compelled by what's behind the person. There is so much God-given beauty here, and when people get their photos, I hope it makes them want to come back to this place,” said Bush, who has called Monterey home for 40 of her 60 years.



Not one for self-exposure, Christine Bush has photographed golf and the people who love it for over 30 years.

She found photography at 21 and was primed for it. The youngest of five Lesniak kids growing up in a South Side Chicago suburb called Evergreen Park, Bush took to a piano in her family's basement at age 3.

“I started listening to my mom with her students upstairs, copying what they were playing,” she said. Her father Albert was a carpenter, and her mother, Donna Lesniak, a virtuoso. She taught piano, sang for a jazz band and a church choir, sewed her children's clothes, got her kids hooked on whatever crafts were popular at the time, and played a great round of golf.

“I was not my mom's best student,” demured Bush, who nevertheless graduated to the teaching piano, later accompanied her high school choir onstage at the Grand Old Opry and was enrolled in five music classes her senior year.

1984 was a La Niña year in California. Bush remembers it because she'd taken a two-week vacation from her job at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where at 17 she was hired as a runner, taking orders from phone clerks via hand signals and racing them from the desk to the trading floor.

So, she'd been busy. She'd never been to California, let alone the Monterey Peninsula. The rain had made everything impossibly green. She drove to Big Sur within a day of her arrival.

“I called my parents and asked, ‘Can you send a few things?’ And they did, because they really believed I would come home,” Bush recalled. They took comfort knowing she was there on the invitation of Mrs. Armstrong, the mother of a childhood friend, who had decided to retire to a home on Del Monte Beach, far from frigid Lake Michigan. Bush rented a room there, and got a job within walking distance at Kelly Morgan's sailing shop on Fisherman's Wharf No. 2. The next two years were a happy blur.

Christmas gift

In 1986, a 21-year-old Bush received a Pentax film camera as a Christmas gift from her parents.

“I had a deep desire to photograph, and I don't know what was driving it,” said Bush, whose first subjects were people — namely, her new boyfriend, Gregg, his family and the garden surrounding their home in Skyline Forest in

See LIVES page 22A

A pilgrimage of bohemians

SINCE A pilgrimage of talented bohemians to the Monterey Peninsula began after they lost their homes and studios in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, the area has been a mecca for creative people. Here are a few of the things we learned about some of the artists we featured in 2025.

Dates in parentheses indicate the edition of The Pine Cone in which the full profile of each artist was published.

Pacific Grove High School Class of 2003 product **Michelle Magdalena** (June 6, 2025), a fourth-generation artist, has

Carmel's Artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

carved her own path since age 17, when she moved solo to Santa Barbara to study photography at the famous Brooks Institute.

New starts

At 19, she began photographing the demise of her cancer-stricken dad, Tim Maddox, a collaboration that ended when he died the following year.

“I memorialized the most painful part of my father's life, and it was traumatizing,” she said. “In many ways, it made grieving him very difficult.” Emotional projects have been a significant part of her art ever since.

In 2011, she traveled to Fukushima, Japan, to photograph and ask locals how they felt about nuclear power in the wake of a meltdown that raised concerns about contaminated water and cancer. She feels camaraderie with Native Americans and joined the Oglala Lakota tribe in a ceremonial ride to memorialize legendary Sioux Nation chief Crazy Horse.

Other passions and causes impacting Magdalena's art include nature, spiritualism and environmentalism.

“My photography always has been geared toward fine art, but I've found myself shifting into documentary-style storytelling in recent years,” she said. Her self-portrait, “From Palestine,” was featured at Monterey Museum of Art's “Biennial” exhibition in 2025.

Oil painter and driftwood artist **Nicole Gillott** (Aug. 15, 2025) opened her Moss Landing gallery, lounge, and “supper club,” The Woodcarver's Daughter, in July 2024. The showcase is named in honor of her father, Tom Gillott, a prolific, self-taught woodcarver who had never exhibited his intricate artwork.

The space is the headquarters and gathering spot for her nonprofit — “Can't Stop. Won't Stop.” — which was inspired by her lengthy and ongoing recovery from a stroke she suffered in July 2015 as a 36-year-old single mom.

“I've found my superpower

— promoting positive change,” said Gillott, who, over the past three years, has dedicated herself to helping others with disabilities navigate their maze of challenges through her foundation.

Becky Brister (June 13, 2025) took an unconventional journey toward her new position as chair of the photography department at Monterey Peninsula College, beginning with a rebellious kind of childhood in a then undeveloped part of Ventura County, where she grew up on property that, according to family lore, was won in a poker game by her great-grandfather.

“Newbury Park, at that time, was like the Wild West, and we were basically feral children,” she recalled.

Brister saw herself as a square peg and struggled to assimilate into a world she saw as lacking in empathy, equity and inclusion.

“I got suspended a lot, going all the way back to kindergarten, for speaking my mind and standing up for people,” she said. The photos she creates frequently depict a dark and gritty side of life that many opt to ignore.

“Teaching is so much harder than creating, but it's also fantastic — especially here, where it's all about community and



Michelle Magdalena's self-portrait, “From Palestine,” was showcased in the Monterey Museum of Art's first “Biennial” exhibition in 2025.

hope and supporting each other,” Brister said. “The other day, I actually taught a student how to stitch up a rip in his pants, which made both of us feel pretty great.”

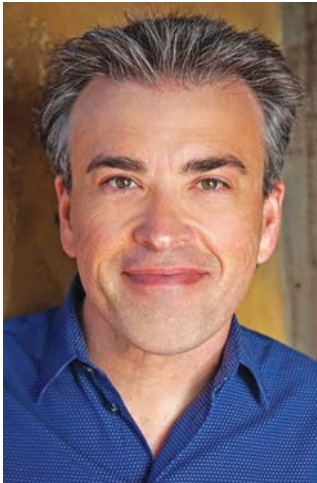
Beginning to set in

r. mike nichols (May 30, 2025) ascended an unexpected peak of his five-decade art career earlier this year when he learned he'd been accepted into the Carmel Art Association, whose membership roster includes many of the most celebrated California artists.

“That one is just beginning to set in,” said the Salinas resident, who creates Rockwell-esque Americana-style watercolors that remind him that “life is good.” Over the past 16 years, his paintings have won nearly 200 awards, including 10 Best of Show honors and 33 first-place trinkets.

“Painting is my anchor ... my guiding light,” said the artist.

See ARTISTS page 35A




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TREES

From page 1A

Risk, he said, isn’t always visible. But if the city hadn’t been budgeting for maintenance and “taking steady action,” the damage from last week’s storms would have been far worse.

“Could we do more? Yes, but it is a balancing act,” Byrne explained. “We must weigh these needs against our budget and the logistical constraints of simultaneous road, sewer and water projects, alongside numerous residential and commercial builds. Our goal is to keep the city resilient without leaving it gridlocked by construction.”

Carmel’s ongoing work to manage its forest (it has more than 13,000 trees on public property) runs parallel to the state’s own efforts to cut down on fire risks, following the devastating blazes in Pacific Palisades and Altadena in January 2025. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an executive order that will require property owners in the highest wildfire risk areas to create 5-foot “ember-resistant” buffers around their homes and buildings.

Once California’s so-called “Zone Zero” rules take effect, supposedly in the middle of the year, they’ll apply to new construction first while allowing other properties three years to comply. Carmel maintains nearly 280 acres of “very high fire-hazard” areas where the Zone Zero rules will apply.

Trees might have to be pruned so no

part comes within the 5-foot buffer, or they could be restricted only within 10 feet of chimneys, as already required.

No indiscriminate removal

Byrne said that while the city is doing a lot, last week’s storm was a humbling reminder.

“I personally saw a large limb from a healthy-looking tree come down across a power line while I was walking my dogs,” Byrne told The Pine Cone.

Carmel will continue to review trees that need maintenance “guided by professional arborists rather than indiscriminate removal.”

Byrne also suggested Carmel is considering reducing the cost of tree removal permits to help residents manage high-risk trees on their property.

“Our guiding principle remains protecting public safety while preserving Carmel’s iconic forested character,” he said.

The Carmel Residents Association was asked if it would support removing trees that are too close to power lines, as a means of reducing the possibility of power outages.

“What makes a healthy and thriving urbanized forest is up to experts to advise and define,” a member of the association said. “Even with more actions by our city with the supportive funding to address public trees, the responsibilities of property owners must be included regarding Mother Nature’s impacts. Whether public or private and despite the immense value of our trees, long-standing rules — like not planting tall trees under power

lines — have often been ignored.”

The CRA went on to say that there are no simple solutions, and that “and any new, more aggressive actions to protect both our power and our forest must be publicly reviewed for their short- and long-term impacts.”

Meanwhile, Byrne said the city acknowledges the hardship last week’s outage caused to residents and businesses.

“Being without power for days, especially during the Christmas holiday, is more than an inconvenience — it is a major source of stress for residents and a blow to our local economy,” he said.

Lydia Lyons, owner of Patisserie Boissiere Restaurant in Carmel Plaza, told The Pine Cone Christmas Day that the family-owned restaurant she acquired in 2019, just before the Covid pandemic, took big a hit the day before, when the power went out.

“We had quite a blow to our restaurant on Christmas Eve,” Lyons said. “We had planned a gorgeous prix fixe dinner for all our guests and had 93 reservations. We kept hoping that the power would come back on but finally had to call it around 4 p.m. and start calling our guests” to cancel.

The business community has been candid about the loss of power during Christmastime, the mayor said.

“While a few restaurants rented generators and saw record-breaking crowds, many retail shops had no practical way to operate during one of the most critical periods of the year,” he said. “It was a wake-up call to realize that major hubs like the Plaza have no existing backup power infrastructure.”

The most consistent feedback he received was the need for better information.

“Business owners need reliable restoration forecasts from PG&E to decide whether to invest in temporary power rentals or close their doors,” Byrne explained.

Solution: undergrounding

Councilman Hans Buder said he learned a lot from PG&E officials last week, including that the circuit Carmel is on is fed by a single main line, which drops in off Highway 1 and cuts east to west along Second Avenue. If the main line is impacted, the whole city loses power.

“In such situations PG&E will often try to feed our circuit from an adjacent circuit,” including from Pebble Beach, Buder said.

“But in a big storm, sometimes adjacent circuits are too heavily impacted” to allow for that, “which is what happened this time. If you look at that main line, the vulnerability is shocking,” he added.

That main line branches out into a series of secondary lines, which in turn supply power to residential lines.

“The solution is pretty clear: That main line and those secondary distribution lines need to be undergrounded,” Buder said.



PHOTO/CITY OF CARMEL

City councilman Hans Buder (right) meets with a PG&E supervisor during the Christmas Day power outage.

“And until that occurs, the city needs to work with PG&E to proactively prune branches and remove dead or dying trees that pose a material threat to the main line feeding our circuit.”

Buder also noted the “antiquated power grid,” and the need to look for technological upgrades. For example, he said that while most of Carmel had power restored by 6 p.m. Dec. 26, there were a few pockets, including a 110-home, multiblock area at Crespi, Vizcaino, Acacia Way, and parts of Guadalupe and Forest, that didn’t have power until Saturday afternoon or evening.

“It turned out that the outage for that whole area was caused by a single snagged wire at Mountain View and Eighth,” Buder said, adding that because the system is so old, PG&E only identifies the entire area as being without power.

“It doesn’t provide a specific location for where the line is down,” he said. “Shockingly, they had to put people on the ground to visually inspect the lines throughout that entire multi-block area to look for the source of the problem.”

CEO pressure

Buder took action on Christmas Eve when he didn’t see any PG&E trucks in town.

“I called PG&E’s government affairs team to express my frustration and to figure out what was going on,” he said. “We had a half-dozen conversations over the next 24 hours, which grew increasingly pointed.”

That led to Buder and councilman Jeff Baron holding an hourlong Christmas Day conversation with PG&E CEO Patti Poppe and other senior executives, during which they expressed their frustration with the lack of response during the holidays, especially Christmas Eve when there was a break in the bad weather.

“We saw a completely different response from PG&E after our call,” Buder said. “On Christmas afternoon there were still 30 known hazards, but only five crews in Carmel. By late morning the next day, there were 12 crews in Carmel working on 15 remaining hazards, and they had dispatched PG&E’s vice president, who manages their power grid statewide, to come to Carmel to oversee the response in person.”



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Lawmakers ask POTUS to help fulfill ceasefire

By KELLY NIX

A GROUP of congressional Democrats, including Carmel Valley Rep. Jimmy Panetta, are calling on President Donald Trump to help implement the Gaza peace plan, the agreement in October which led to the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

The Dec. 19 letter requests that the administration “dedicate the full weight” of American diplomacy to ensure that Hamas — the Islamist group that has governed Gaza since 2007 — is disarmed and that Gaza is rebuilt, as called for in the 20-point Peace Plan signed by Israel and Hamas.

“The Peace Plan represents the most viable opportunity for necessary security, immediate relief, and long-term stability,” Panetta, who represents California’s 19th Congressional District, and his colleagues said. “The plan rightly recognizes that Hamas must be fully disarmed and play no role in governing Gaza,” while calling for transitional governing authority.

Surge of aid

The plan also demands a “surge of humanitarian aid to Palestinians that will be shielded from Hamas; a phased withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from Gaza based on security conditions; and the deployment of an International Stabilization Force” proposed by the United Nations.

The letter was co-signed by Democratic congressmen Jared Golden of Maine, Greg Stanton of Arizona, Jim Costa, who represents the San Joaquin Valley, and Tom Suozzi of New York, and endorsed by advocacy group

Democratic Majority for Israel. It was sent to Trump in response to what the group said are reports of “serious obstacles” in implementing the plan’s security and reconstruction efforts.

Reconstruction

“A comprehensive enforcement framework would bolster Israel’s long-term security and reinforce U.S. coordination with regional partners such as Jordan, Egypt, and the Gulf states,” the lawmakers said, adding that the framework could also reduce the influence of Iran, which funds Hamas and other terror groups, and its proxies.

Ongoing reconstruction of Gaza would reduce dependence on international aid, enable local governance and private enterprise to take hold, and create pillars of long-term security and regional prosperity, the congressmen told Trump.

A prosperous Gaza would also reduce instability, help prevent extremism, and promote shared economic growth across the Eastern Mediterranean, they went on to say.

It’s not only Democrats who are concerned about Hamas fulfilling its end of the deal. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham last week told the press that Hamas is refusing to lay down its weapons.

Graham told NBC, “You can’t have a stabilizing force in Gaza until Hamas is disarmed,” and he urged Trump to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about disarmament.

After a meeting Monday, Trump and Netanyahu told the press they would increase pressure on Hamas to disarm and threatened to attack Iran if it builds up its ballistic missile inventory.

Event celebrates gifts to nonprofits

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

AMI CARMEL, the eclectic gift shop on Dolores near Fifth, will host a community celebration Monday from 5 to 7 p.m. to honor the work of 13 Monterey County nonprofits.

The gathering will bring together directors, staff and board members from groups including Leadership Carmel, Housing for School Kids, AFRP, Meals on Wheels, Carmel Cares, Peace of Mind Dog Rescue, Carmel Woman’s Club, the Monterey County Film Commission and others.

The first Monday of each month, Ami Carmel donates 10 percent of its sales to charity, and Monday evening’s festivities will include a 6 p.m. presentation of a check representing approximately \$750 for each organization being honored. There will also be refreshments and a group photo.

Post-holiday shopping

Incentives to do some post-holiday shopping — presumably for everything attendees wanted but didn’t get — will include a 20 percent discount on all purchases made at the event.

Nonprofit directors, staff and board members are encouraged to attend and bring colleagues, and of course, the public is welcome. RSVPs are requested by email at ami.carmel.amie@gmail.com. Questions may be directed to the same address.



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LETTERS

From page 18A

like so many, we spent decades somewhere else. In our case, it was Minnesota. Minnesota has sub-zero temperatures, tornadoes, thunderstorms with lightning, wind, and many lakes and rivers which flood. Yet, in some 60-plus years of living there, we lost power perhaps four or five times. With rare exceptions, no one has a generator, and our trees must be trimmed if they interfere with power lines.

Here in Carmel, we have lost power over the last 14 years more times that I remember, and we now have a generator. Why is this? It seems our city values trees and appearance more than safe living and commerce. And isn't it ironic that when the town was founded, in some parts of town there were virtually no trees? Robinson Jeffers helped create our urban forest within living memory. Could the powers-that-be rethink these priorities?

Mark Mammel, Carmel

'Longest outage'

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing your news updates during the power outage. Because I had no WiFi, I could not get your reports, but my daughter, who lives in Massachusetts, could and she sent me texts throughout summarizing the latest news. Unfortunately, the PG&E notification service went dark from moments after the power went out to shortly after it came on again — with one exception. They announced on Dec. 24 at 5:38 p.m., that our electric service would return by 11 p.m. on Dec. 26, more than two days later.

I am 90 years old. I do not drive, so I could not get to the warming centers and, actually, it was plenty warm in the daytime, when the warming centers were open. No problem during the two basically sunny afternoons when soft breezes, for the most part, made life endurable and neighbors strolled by walking their dogs and we could wave in the old Carmel fashion and assure each other that we were surviving.

Things were not so pleasant, however, once it got dark. The Carmel police, who my son in Colorado

contacted asking for a wellness check, and who were working even on Christmas Eve, were most helpful, finding me a cable so I could recharge my new phone from an older power pack I keep ready for just this sort of occasion. And the San Francisco Chronicle kept delivering my newspaper every morning, so I knew somewhere life was continuing as usual. I do find it remarkable that at 5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, PG&E knew exactly how long it would take to fix the outage.

I moved to Carmel some 25 years ago. This is the longest outage I've experienced in all that time. Before I moved west, I worked for 10 years at a Vermont ski resort. During the years in Vermont, I worked every single Christmas Day, and in fact, all staff and employees were required to put in extra hours between December 24 and the week after New Years Day. It was a ski resort. This was the busiest time of the year for the industry. I guess ski instructors are more vital to the well-being of their community than are the employees of a public utility, whose job it is to keep their community safe and healthy. What a disgrace.

Fran Vardamis, Carmel

Inherent bias?

Dear Editor,

I was dismayed, but not surprised, to read that the CHP provided incomplete or inaccurate information about the recent accident in Pebble Beach that caused the death of cyclist Seth Pollack. On Oct. 19, 2023, I was cycling with my husband in the bike lane on 17 Mile Drive near Spanish Bay when an elderly motorist suddenly turned right into me as she was attempting to enter a viewing area parking lot. The impact knocked me to the ground, but she drove right past me without stopping. My husband pursued her to explain what she had done, but she expressed total denial and drove away without giving us her driver's license or insurance information.

Fortunately, my injuries were minor, but I contacted CHP right away to report the accident and provide a photo of her car and license plate, because she was a hazard on the road, and I didn't want her to hit anyone else.

After placing several follow-up calls to the CHP to finalize the report with no response, and subsequently driving to the Salinas CHP office to seek assistance in person, I was told that someone would get back to me, but no one ever did. Does the CHP have an inherent bias against cyclists?

Lori Fowler, Monterey

LIVES

From page 19A

Monterey, where the Bushes still live.

Golf links were part of the deal, since Kregg had started a 27-year career as the greenskeeper at Poppy Hills just after the course was built.

"There and Pebble — as employees, we were given the honor of enjoying those properties, which naturally gave me a place to shoot," said Bush, who by then was working in reservations at the resort.

Bush doesn't have a website, and she's never advertised. Work still comes by word of mouth. She's held many part-time jobs and cherishes her years of nannying, caretaking a cottage in Pebble Beach, and her time at Weston Gallery. She names a dozen clients and many friends who gave her opportunities she "probably didn't deserve," starting out.

Bill Murray

In the early 1990s, she cut her teeth shooting family sessions for coworkers, who always knew somebody with a wedding, quinceañera or holiday party that needed documenting. Another gig, working for the editor of the Northern California Golf Association Magazine, sent Bush to photograph more than 100 courses in three years.

"I learned the golf course early on for that reason, where shots land, the best angle, seeing from a golfer's point of view. And it became important to me that I know these places like my backyard," said Bush.

She started landing bigger jobs — including the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, as an official photographer for more than 20 years — but never neglected the course regulars.

Her favorite photos from tournaments aren't the ones in commemorative frames, but instead feature a cast of others: egrets on the Dunes course, hawks and snakes at The Preserve, and the otters and harbor seals who make their home below the world's most iconic 7th Hole.

There were other characters, like in 1992, when Bush met Bill Murray. Not yet an official photographer for the AT&T, she was offered a press pass by a friend in the marketing department who had seen her work. At the tournament, Bush snapped Murray goofing off with "Caddy-shack" fans and they struck up a friendship. Murray asked if she and her camera would follow him on his rounds.

"He was on the road so much, he seemed to like having a familiar group around. We'd go to dinner, where everybody wanted an autograph, and he'd give these hysterical responses. The entire restaurant would laugh," Bush remembered.

She considers celebrity encounters a minor part of the magic of fundraisers like the Pro-Am.

"I've seen an amazing side of gracious giving on this Peninsula, considering I've seen a grain of sand of what goes on here," said Bush, who has donated her photography to the Boys & Girls Club, SPCA Monterey County, and the Naval Postgraduate School Foundation.

A new view

Bush bought her first digital camera in 2004, but she's always shot on the manual setting. That means she must keep one eye on the light sifting through the trees and the hair blowing across someone's face (before she jumps up to brush it out of the way) and the other in her viewfinder, adjusting shutter speed, exposure and aperture. She's a purist — swearing she learns something new every time she picks up her camera — who prefers to edit the moment rather than the photo.

"It just feels safer that way, trying to create the best possible image in the field," she said.

Paid or volunteered, she has a hard time turning down any opportunity to photograph Monterey County in its best light. Ten years ago, she zoomed out of the Peninsula when her husband, Kregg, surprised her by buying several acres in South Monterey County near Pinnacles National Park. A blessing at a time when her career and health were in flux — Bush suffers from intense migraines, one reason she never took to computer editing — it's become their escape.

"Our relationship started outdoors, and it's one of the greatest things he's ever done for us," said Bush, who champions her husband as a "renaissance man, an amazing mechanical brain and a deep thinker who doesn't get enough recognition."


GAVEL

From page 4A


everyone around her, including her husband and children. She admitted Baby Doe was born alive in her home. After he was born, Ferreyra said she dressed him, put him in her car, drove him to the remote Prunedale location, and left him there. She never returned to the location or investigated what happened to Baby Doe.

Ferreyra's guilty plea represents the 10th conviction for a cold-case homicide since the establishment of the cold case task force.

The case of Baby Doe was investigated by multiple current and retired investigators with the district attorney's office and the sheriff's office.



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VICTIM

From page 8A

Baird suggested. “People tend to say your chances being attacked by a shark are one in a million, but that’s across the entire population. We’re in the water twice a week, and we’ve had two incidents.”

With all the risks that come from swimming in the sea, why not just swim in a pool? “When you swim in the ocean, every time is like a new event,” he said. “It’s so

refreshing and invigorating.”

Like Baird, Bruemmer notes that shark encounters are rare. There were 28 attacks in the United States in 2024, with one fatality in Hawaii, while there were about 1,100 deaths from cycling the same year.

However, shark attacks in Pacific Grove are on the rise. The last documented one was in 1981, when surfer Lew Boren was killed at Asilomar. In 1952, a shark fatally injured a swimmer near Lovers Point. However, since Bruemmer’s encounter in 2022, there have been three other attacks, though Fox’s is the only other fatal one.

MORE HOUSING

From page 16A

“I think it’s fair to say the process of updating the general plan has been mismanaged. Inadequate public notice has made the process more chaotic and much less transparent,” said Philbrick.

“These changes, which account for only 67 of the 1,125 additional housing units and have elicited hundreds of petition signatures and the presence of many people you see here, are ill-conceived, ill-advised, and possibly illegal,” said Philbrick.

Speaking with The Pine Cone last week, Philbrick said that the only direct communication he and his Asilomar neighbors received from the city were notices in the mail “a week or two” before December’s city council meeting. They were also invited to the planning commission’s Nov. 13 meeting, when it approved the housing plan and related changes to P.G.’s zoning laws.

Addressing the council in December, Philbrick said he was echoing “questions raised on Nov. 13 by planning commissioner David Sweigert about the constitutionality of certain zoning law changes,

since they deny the public due process.”

P.G.’s housing plan suggests half of new builds could be used for affordable housing, and the city has updated its zoning code to expedite approval of those projects. A proposed apartment building that will offer four of its 20 units below market rate, for example, won’t have to suffer public hearings or appeals.

Such projects are “use-by-right” and “may be appealed to the Planning Commission only by the applicant or the owner of the subject property.”

“Yes, in my backyard”

“I think the staff and Rincon have done a wonderful job on the housing element and other changes. I have no problems with any of those. I do have a problem with provisions that reduce the public’s ability to look at projects,” Sweigert said at the planning commission meeting in November.

Commenting before the city council voted in December, Eugene Loh was the sole Asilomar resident to offer his “backyard” for more building.

“The only people who can afford these homes are wealthy people, who moved here years ago and like myself still pay low Prop. 13 taxes.

“We do need new housing for families. We need to retrieve P.G.’s hometown feel, so I welcome high-density zoning — yes, in my backyard,” Loh said.

Some have suggested that shark warning signs be placed in swimming areas around Pacific Grove — though that would likely not have deterred Fox and members of her swimming group.

Fully charged

On Dec. 28, members of the Kelp Krawlers met with Fox’s parents and others at Lovers Point.

“We met where we normally meet,” Baird said. “We walked back toward Otter Point on the recreation trail to commemorate the swim she took.”

Fox was “very down to earth and never

boastful,” despite her accomplishments in the water, explained to The Pine Cone this week.

“She was a very fast swimmer and natural athlete who completed many triathlons,” he explained. “She did the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon for 20 years and even took first place in her age group. She was a very special person.”

Baird said water was simply “in her DNA.”

“She came alive in that environment,” he added. “At the end of a swim, she’d be smiling with glee, like her battery was fully charged.”

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- 5473 Quail Meadows Drive, Carmel – \$5,750,000 (Seller)
- Carmel (off market) – \$5,400,000 (Buyer)
- Carmel (off market) – \$5,050,000 (Seller)

- Camino Real 3 NW of 10th, Carmel – \$4,700,000 (Seller)
- 1272 Cantera Court, Pebble Beach – \$4,600,000 (Seller)
- Carmel (off market) – \$3,950,000 (Seller)
- 2983 Cormorant Road, Pebble Beach – \$3,600,000 (Seller)
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From previous page

Sailing

Carmen Berg (Stevenson '22) competed in two fall events as a senior at Yale University. She crewed in the C Division at the Hatch Brown Trophy hosted by MIT on Sept. 14 and raced in the B division at Dartmouth's Mrs. Hurst Bowl on Sept. 21.

Stevie Thomsen (Stevenson '23) crewed for Connecticut College four times during the fall, with a season-best third-place finish out of 13 teams in the A division at Rhode Island's Salt Pond Saturday competition. Thomsen is a sophomore for the Camels.



PHOTO/VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

Stevenson grad Chiara Sistermann is a second-team All-America pole vaulter beginning her junior year at Virginia Tech.

Track and field

Juliette Kosmont (Santa Catalina '23) is the swiftest female sprinter ever at Yale University as she begins the indoor season as a junior.

She set an indoor school record in the 60-meter dash with a time of 7.43, breaking her own record four times, and anchored the second-fastest 4x100-meter in program history. Kosmont's 11.8-second clocking in the 100-meter dash as a freshman is one of the fastest-ever times at Yale.

Chiara Sistermann (Stevenson '22), earned second-team All-America honors and first-team All-Atlantic Coast Conference, as a junior pole vaulter at Virginia Tech. She won a bronze medal at the 2025 ACC championships and achieved a career-best height of 14-3 1/4 at Virginia Tech College.

Harrison Fung (Stevenson '23) earned 2025 All-West Region and All-Northwest Conference honors as the conference champion in the 400-meter hurdles.

Fung, a junior at Lewis & Clark College, has the second-fastest time in school history in the indoor 600-meter hurdles, and he's fifth all-time in the indoor 400 hurdles.

Women's volleyball

Two Carmel High alums played women's college volleyball this fall on the East Coast.

Caroline Byrne (Class of '24), a 5-11 outside hitter at Middlebury College, registered 149 kills (fourth on the team), 19 assists, and 36 service aces in 87 sets during her sophomore season with the Black Panthers, who were 13-12 overall.

She also played 87 sets in 2024, her freshman year, when she recorded seven kills and 16 assists.

Former Carmel High teammate **Riley Imamura** ('25), a 5-11 outside hitter, saw action in 21 sets as a freshman at Dartmouth College, recording one kill and four assists.

Sofia Luna (Santa Catalina '25), a setter and opposite-side hitter, played in 23 matches and 79 sets last fall for Hartnell College, recording 38 kills, 42 assists, 163 digs, 12 blocks and 24 service aces for the Panthers, who were 18-13 this season.

Men's volleyball

Sebastian Daste (Carmel '24) is a 6-4 freshman setter for the Princeton University Tigers, who open their 2026 season Saturday against Toronto Metropolitan University in Ontario, Canada.



PHOTO/MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE ATHLETICS

Former Carmel High standout Caroline Byrne saw significant action this season as a sophomore outside hitter at Middlebury College.

Men's soccer

Henry Blaxter (Stevenson '25), a freshman midfielder, scored a goal in his only appearance of the 2025 season as a true freshman at St. Lawrence University. Blaxter scored on Sept. 17 at the 66-minute mark of 8-1 victory over SUNY Potsdam.

Charles Elmore (Stevenson '25) played 22 total minutes in two games in his freshman year as a midfielder for Grinnell College. He had no statistics.

Men's water polo

Stevenson water polo brothers **Jasper Dale** ('22) and **Wiley Dale** ('23) helped UC Irvine to a 15-12 record this fall.

Jasper, a 6-6 senior utility player, scored 14 goals and dealt 19 assists, with 10 steals and 26 exclusions (fourth on the team) in 26 games.

Wyley, a 6-8 junior center, scored 39 goals (third on the team), with two assists, four steals, and 15 exclusions in 27 games.

Swimming and diving

Beckett Heywood (Stevenson '25), made his debut as a true freshman at Claremont-Mudd-Scripps College, placing second in the 1- and 3-meter diving events in a dual meet at Pomona-Pitzer College Dec. 5.

Augie Meier (Stevenson '23), a freshman at Willamette University, has competed this year in the 50-, 100-, and 200-freestyle events.

Note: Baseball, softball, golf, lacrosse, tennis, outdoor track and field, and women's water polo are spring sports at the college level.

Did we miss anybody?
Dennis Taylor is a professional freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at scribelaureate@gmail.com.

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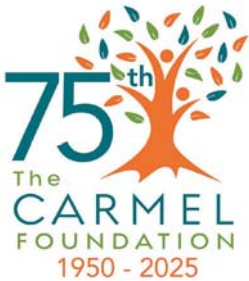
The NUCCA chiropractic care entails a 3- dimensional x-ray evaluation and analysis to determine specific spinal misalignment measurements, so that the proper gentle adjustment can be given.

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The Carmel Foundation Celebrates 75 Years of Community



This article is part of The Carmel Foundation's new monthly column in the Carmel Pine Cone, highlighting stories, resources, and reflections to support successful aging.

Neighbors Caring for Neighbors

Seventy-five years ago, The Carmel Foundation was created by neighbors who believed in caring for one another—especially as we age. That simple idea remains at the heart of our community.

During the holiday season, an extended power outage disrupted plans and created real concern for some about warmth, food, and connection.

Although we had planned to be closed, it quickly became clear that our community needed a place to go - a place to charge phones, connect to the internet, get warm, share a meal, see a familiar face, and feel the comfort of not being alone. What followed was not extraordinary—just people showing up for one another in a moment of uncertainty, sharing camaraderie and stories. It was a reminder of the spir-

it of Carmel-by-the-Sea and our surrounding communities: neighbors checking in, sharing what they could, and offering reassurance when it was needed most. These moments often happen quietly, without notice, but they are what community is built on.

As we mark our 75th year, we are grateful to those who had the foresight to create a place rooted in care (with a large generator and Starlink), and to the broader Carmel-by-the-Sea community and our extended neighbors who continue to look out for one another. We are also deeply grateful to all who worked tirelessly throughout the holidays—including City staff, elected officials, volunteers, and our own staff. When the unexpected happens, it is this shared sense of responsibility and connection that carries us through.

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Tribute show celebrates British Invasion, Bollywood meets blues

TURNING THE clock back to 1964 — when bands like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones crossed the Atlantic Ocean to inject new life into rock 'n' roll — the latest incarnation of PacRep's **British Invasion tribute concert**

On a High Note

By CHRIS COUNTS

is at the Golden Bough Playhouse through Jan. 11. The concert recreates performances by the Fab Four Rolling Stones, along with other acts from the U.K. that rocked the airwaves of the mid-1960s, such as the Kinks, the Animals, Herman's Hermits and Manfred Mann.



The Bubba Pickens Band plays bluegrass Friday, 6 p.m., at the Links Club in Carmel Plaza.

The shows offers audiences a chance to “relive the explosive energy of the 1960s British Invasion,” PacRep said. The concert continues Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, when performances start at 7:30 p.m., and Sundays, with matinees beginning at 2 p.m. Tickets start at \$11, and you can buy two for the price of one on Thursdays. The Golden Bough is located on Monte Verde between Eighth and Ninth. Call (831) 622-0100 or visit pacrep.org.

■ ‘Bombay’s Only Bluesman’

Bollywood meets the blues when singer and multi-instrumentalist **Aki Kumar** takes the stage at Deja Blue in Seaside Saturday at 3 p.m.

Born in India, Kumar left Mumbai for San Jose to be a software engineer. But along the way, he discovered American blues, which changed his life. Before long, he was playing at clubs throughout the region — and earning the title of “The Only Bombay Blues Man.”

Kumar credits the San Francisco area’s “rich and thriving blues jam scene” with nurturing his musical career and building his confidence. “I honed my band-leading, harmonica and vocals chops night after night by sitting in at several of the jams in the South Bay,” he explained.

Creating a hybrid of Chicago blues and his native Bollywood pop, Kumar has released 10 albums since his debut LP in 2009, including his most recent, “God Bless the USA,” which came out last year.

Tickets are \$5. The venue is located at 500 Broadway. For more details, visit dejabluelive.com.



Guitarist Bruce Forman accompanies the Cena Jazz Trio Thursday, 6 p.m., at Il Vecchio Italian Restaurant in Pacific Grove.

■ Guitarist backed by trio

Guitarist **Bruce Forman** joins **The Cena Jazz Trio** Thursday, 6 p.m., at Il Vecchio Italian restaurant in Pacific Grove.

Forman is a world-class jazz guitarist with deep local roots. A frequent performer at the Monterey Jazz Festival, he has played on several film scores written by Clint Eastwood, including “Million Dollar Baby.” He has also contributed to dozens of albums, including 17 of his own, and another four as leader of Cow Bop, a swing band formed

See **MUSIC** page 30A



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Unexpected finds, a new spot for lunch, and a batch of good treats

WELL, THE Monterey Peninsula’s winter weather was at it again, like the Grinch ransacking Whoville to steal everyone’s holiday joy. But we hope that, like those plucky Whos, you were still able to be “heart to heart and hand to hand” with family and friends to salvage some Christmas cheer. By the time you read this, may you be safe, warm and dry once more.

This week, we’ve got news of an upcoming event focused on the fungus among us, a look at Rosine’s new second location in Sand City, and the tale of a baker who’s been taking orders since she was a youngster. Let’s get to it.

■ Foragers Fest

Tickets for the Big Sur Foragers Festival Jan. 22-25 have been on sale since early November, but as local lovers of mushrooms and other goodies from the wild turn the calendar’s pages to January, you can bet they’ll be snapped up pretty quickly.

Last year’s festival “was jam-packed, sold out,” said Kathie Lester, executive director of the nonprofit Big Sur Health Center, which benefits from the annual event. Last year, Lester took over for physician assistant Sharen Carey, who has been



The Big Sur Foragers Festival welcomes connoisseurs of chanterelles, morel mavens, and people who just like mushrooms on a pizza. From Jan. 22-25, join local restaurateurs, foragers and winery reps to revel in all things wild and edible while raising money for the Big Sur Health Center.



engagement in local government and non-profit operations, not to mention her new workplace and its surroundings. She noted that the center handles approximately 3,000 appointments annually as it works to fulfill its mission “to provide quality comprehensive medical care to all in Big Sur regardless of ability to pay.”

This year’s rendition of the festival, which launched in 2013, will include four Wild Foraging Walk and Talk mushroom hikes — two of 30 people each on Saturday and Sunday, Jan. 24 and 25. Organizers said that the hikers “will meet at 9:30 a.m. at The Big Sur Lodge in Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park (subject to change pending road and weather conditions) for a talk and display of wild mushrooms, then set off on guided hikes.” Cost is \$75 per person.

The foraging forays will be led by mushroom experts Mark Gillespie, Anthony Gerbino, Todd Spanier and Phil Carpenter, and, says the festival’s website, “Lisa Haas, assisted by Maryia Crabbe,

will provide an incredible display of local wild mushrooms and discuss identification, medicinal and culinary use, and many other interesting facts.”

The popular Fungus Face-Off competition, priced at \$125 per person, takes place Saturday, Jan. 24, from noon to 3 p.m. at Big Sur Lodge, with mushroom-inspired dishes from local chefs paired with wines and beers from Monterey County producers.

Businesses slated to take part include Fernwood, Big Sur Lodge, The Pocket, Julia’s Vegetarian, Terry’s Restaurant + Lounge in the Cypress Inn, Post Ranch, Wrath, Morgan, El Vaquero, Flywheel, Scheid, Joyce Wine Company, Bitter Ginger and Martha’s Hopyard.

Additional events with local restaurants will be announced on the festival website. To purchase tickets or learn more, visit big-surforagersfestival.org.

■ Caffé by Rosine’s

You’d be hard pressed to find a great sandwich for less than \$10 anywhere in

California, but Rosine’s — the Monterey institution known for its impressive cakes and pies — is a fresh contender in the \$11 to \$15 range at its new outpost in Sand City. Caffé by Rosine’s is an unexpected place to linger in the Target shopping center (aka Edgewater Shopping Center) just off the Fremont Street/Del Monte Boulevard exit from Highway 1.

Breakfast is available from 6:30 a.m. on weekdays (7:30 on weekends) to noon daily, with deceptively basic options like a pair of egg rollups that don’t look like much at first. But they’re fluffy and baked with mild green chilis, cheese and a spicy crema, then rolled and crisped in a tortilla, and quite satisfying, even without the addition of meat. The bacon, egg, Swiss and cheddar sandwich on brioche, meanwhile, came out fast and flavorful enough to satisfy a former New Yorker. “Solid,” said the Northeastern ex-pat, but a little pricey at \$11.

For lunch, on the other hand, a \$15 sandwich hits the spot. Big enough for

*See **FOOD** next page*

Soup to Nuts

with the center since 1987 and remains on staff as executive director emerita and grant administrator.

“I had just gotten here,” said Lester of the 2025 fundraiser, adding, “I knew nothing of foraging. It was fascinating.” As she worked her way through her first year at the remote center and settled into her Carmel home, Lester — who moved here from Southern California — said she became impressed with the kindness of people she met and the high level of community

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The Turkey Cranberry Crunch is our pick from Caffé by Rosine’s, the Alvarado Street standby’s new sister restaurant in Sand City, open early ‘til 7p.m. for sandwiches, coffee and tea, take-and-bake items, and sweet treats.

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FOOD & WINE

FOOD

From previous page

two, options run from hearty meatball subs or Italian cold cuts on a roll, to the virtuous Garden Delight on whole grain with avocado, lettuce, tomato, Jack and cheddar. We recommend the Turkey Cranberry Crunch, a shredded roast turkey and Swiss situation with iceberg lettuce, mayo and cranberry sauce on a Dutch crunch roll.

All of the above, plus flatbreads and paninis, are available from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. With window-facing counter seats ideal for an introspective lunch break, Caffè by Rosine’s also offers a full espresso and tea menu, Italian sodas, seasonal drinks, and a grab-and-go fridge stocked with salads, soups and the restaurant’s signature lasagna.

Now, about those cakes. One bite of the masterfully spiced carrot cake with walnuts and raisins and a thick swipe of cream cheese frosting or the classic yellow cake glazed in fudge makes the case for sampling more curious items, like cookie butter, lemon blueberry, or mango key lime. At \$10 per mountainous individual slice, you might want to eat dessert first.

■ Not just pretend

Last month, pastry chef Natalia Kaufman was seated behind a table at a holiday craft bazaar where guests lined up to choose among six different flavors of her artisanal house-made cookies, including brown-butter chocolate chip. She quickly sold out.

Growing up in Pacific Grove, Kaufman, pretending she owned a bakery café, would take her parents’ and sister’s dessert orders after dinner, then disappear into the kitchen to bake and serve their chosen desserts.



Christmas may be over, but delicious treats know no season. Entrepreneur and pastry chef Natalia Kaufman turns out cookies and more for her business, which she named Sunday’s Batch. We’ve heard the brown-butter chocolate chip cookies are worth seeking out.



After graduating from Pacific Grove High School, Kaufman was determined to go to culinary school, but her parents wanted her to attend a traditional four-year college. So, she went off to Cal State San Marcos in North San Diego County, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology, followed by the pursuit of a master’s degree in education from Adler Graduate School of Education in Redwood City. She is one term shy of commencement.

Yet in and through it all, she never stopped baking — nearly every night.

Kaufman was already baking chocolate chip cookies for friends and family when she learned about a plethora of pop-up bakeries in San Diego. She got an idea.

“Determined to build this into a business, I started baking cookies with intention, tweaking my recipes and then posting pictures on Instagram,” she said. “I told friends and family about my cookies and shared them with coworkers.

People began to place orders.”

By 2025, she had established her company, Sunday’s Batch, inspired by cozy Sundays and the tradition of making and baking enough food for the week. She loves to experiment with new recipes inspired by other foods or desserts, like baklava or strawberry jam swirl cookies — all of which she rotates at various farmers markets and events throughout the community.

Kaufman also works for the Monterey location of Ad Astra Bread Co. — which she considers her dream job — turning out goodies like its popular seeded sourdough bread and oatmeal cookies.

For more information, find Kaufman @sundaysbatchco on Instagram.

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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

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

Thursdays – Live jazz with The David Morwood Jazz Band, 6 to 9 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.

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LIVE

From page 27A

by him and his wife, singer **Pamela Forman**.
“Bruce will backed by the trio — including guitarist **Adam Astrup** — weaving a brilliant tapestry of sound that moves effortlessly between lyrical melodies and cutting-edge modern improvisation,” according to the trio. “Enjoy the rhythmic precision and inventive solos of **Pete Lips** on bass and the relentless drive of **Rick Ciardella** on drums.”
The restaurant is located at 110 Central Ave., and its website is ilvecchiorestaurant.com.

Live music Jan. 2-8

■ Big Sur

Big Sur River Inn — singer and guitarist **Rick Chelew** (folk, Saturday, 12:30 p.m.). 46800 Highway 1.



Singer and multi-instrumentalist Aki Kumar — who left Mumbai for San Jose to be a software engineer — plays the blues Saturday, 3 p.m., at Deja Blue in Seaside.

■ Carmel

Barmel — singer and guitarist **Ryan Sesma** (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.
De Tierra Vineyards — singer and guitarist **Alex Lucero** (Sunday at 3 p.m.). Mission and Fifth.
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.), **The David Morwood Jazz Band** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). Lincoln and Seventh.
Links Club — **Bubba Pickens** (bluegrass, Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Katherine Lavin** (rock, Saturday at 6 p.m.). Carmel Plaza, Mission and Ocean.
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 — **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 W. Carmel Valley Road.
Folktales Winery — singer and guitarist **Tim Brady** (Friday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kito Rayburn** (Saturday at 4 p.m.), **The Paul Contos Trio** (jazz, Sunday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Peter Barnes Martin** (jazz, Monday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **RJ DeMarco** (Thursday at 4 p.m.). 8940 Carmel Valley Road.
Trailside Cafe — singer and guitarist **Brad Wilson** (acoustic rock and blues, Saturday at 6 p.m.). 3 Del Fino Place.

■ Monterey

Albatross Ridge Winery — singer and guitarist **Peter Barnes Martin** (jazz, 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.
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



Singer and guitarist Peter Barnes Martin Plays jazz Saturday in Monterey and Monday in Carmel Valley.

a.m.), guitarist **Glenn Bell** (jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 750 Cannery Row.
Midici Pizza — singer and bassist **Dennis Murphy** and guitarist **Paul Magpusao** (jazz, Sunday at 5 p.m.). 467 Alvarado St.
Monterey Plaza Hotel — singer and pianist **Scott Brown** (jazz and pop, Saturday 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 guitarist **Dan Frechette** (Saturday at 5 p.m.), **Peter Martin Duo** (jazz, 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 — **The Hackjammers** (rock, Friday at 9 p.m.), **The Money Band** (pop and rock, Saturday at 9 p.m.), **Sean & the Skinwalkers** (rock, blues and country, Tuesday at 8:30 p.m.). 700 Cannery Row.

■ Pacific Grove

Il Vecchio Restaurant — singer and guitarist **Dan Frechette** (Tuesday at 6 p.m.), **The Cena Jazz Trio** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 110 Central Ave.
Julia’s Vegetarian Restaurant — singer and guitarist

See TUNES next page



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TUNES

From previous page

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.
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.

■ Seaside

Deja Blue — singer and multi-instrumentalist **Aki Kumar** (blues, Saturday at 3 p.m.). 500 Broadway.

To update these listings, email chris@carmelpinecone.com.



Celebrating the music of the Beatles and others, PacRep’s British Invasion tribute concert plays at the Founders Theatre (top) through Jan. 11. Sean & the Skinwalkers (above) rock Sly McFly’s in Monterey Tuesday.

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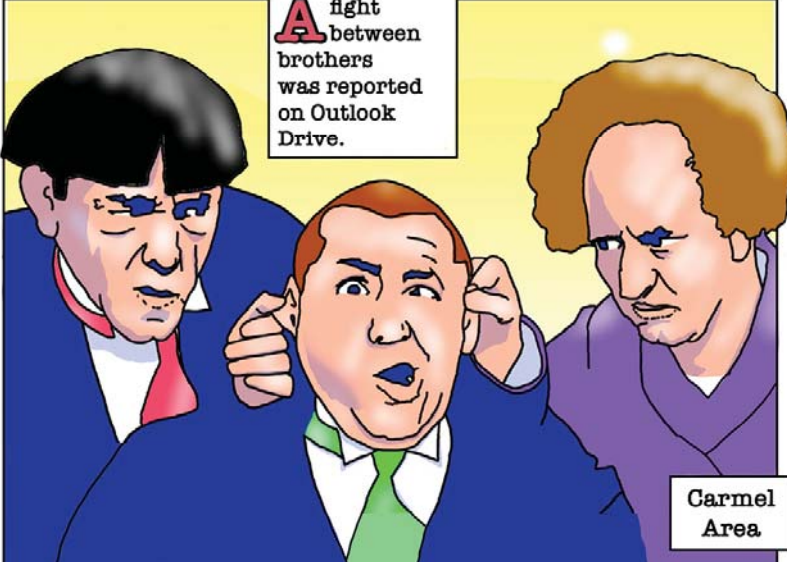
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Carmel-by-the-Sea

A fight between brothers was reported on Outlook Drive.



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ARTISTS

From page 19A

“When I’m not doing it, I don’t feel that fulfillment and joy,” she said.

Another highlight of nichols’ lengthy curriculum vitae came earlier this year, when a piece entitled “Watching TV” was juried into the 158th annual International American Watercolor Society Exhibition. It won an award and was selected for the society’s national tour.

“I’ve been entering that show every year, and finally got in on my 13th try,” he said.

Changing paths

Matt Connors (June 20, 2025) dabbled only briefly in fine-art photography in New York City in the 1970s, right after graduating from Dartmouth College, then ran out of time for artistic expression during a 30-year career as a software developer.

“I always had this feeling that I’d get back into photography one day, but never did,” he said.

In 2012, he and his wife, Elneda, moved to the Monterey Peninsula. Two years later, when he retired at 62, Connors engaged in a stern conversation — with himself.

“Stop pretending. Either do it or shut up.”

In 2025, his 16-by-20 toned cyanotype of a dark corridor in a Roman amphitheater with daylight glowing from the opposite end was juried into the “Biennial” show at the Monterey Museum of Art.

Ginger Espinoza (July 25, 2025), an educator and artist, believes in the “golden thread,” which theorizes that all creative people borrow and steal from others.

In 2024, the fine-art photographer and painter traveled to Italy to investigate the theory, specifically studying the work of 16th-century realist Caravaggio, whose art was heavily influenced by the paintings of Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Peterzano, and who subsequently impacted Rubens, Rembrandt, Delacroix and others.

“The golden thread is woven through all of us and influences our style,” explained Espinoza, who taught art at Monterey High in 2023 and 2024. “Nothing on this planet is original — we all take ideas from others, and others are taking from us.

“Teachers implant little seeds,” she said. “They might not sprout right away, but when you’re 35, looking for something that makes you happy, one of them might start to grow.”

Carmel Point resident Dennis Segers (June 27, 2025), who spent four-and-a-half decades as a digital pioneer in the semiconductor industry, made a surprising detour into the analogue world when retirement heightened his focus as a fine-art photographer.

Digital photos and computer editing are still part of his craft, but Segers has become enraptured with old-school darkroom chemistry to broaden the artistry of his images.

Permission, he said, came from none other than Ansel Adams, who bent an old-school rule in 1927 when he printed his iconic photo, “Monolith: The Face of Half Dome,” using significant darkroom manipulation to darken the image’s sky.

“I saw it as license to take some liberties and bring

some artistic expression into an image,” said Segers, who uses a platinum/palladium mixture in his darkroom to create whiter whites and darker darks, resulting in stunning contrast in his landscapes.

Rock stars

One of the Peninsula’s best-known gallery owners, Nancy Dodds (Aug. 9, 2025), was working as a cocktail waitress 30-plus years ago when she got hired at Carmel gallery despite having no art knowledge and no gallery experience. Less than five years later, in 1996, she bought the space from owner Bob Haeger and changed its name to the Nancy Dodds Gallery.

“I fly by seat of my pants,” said Dodds, whose business showcases 38 contemporary and plein air artist after 30 years of business, surviving three financial downturns that closed many other galleries.

Fifteen years ago, Dodds became an artist, mostly specializing in commissioned pet portraits.

Oliver Fredericksen, a product of Carmel High School and Monterey’s Youth Arts Collective, is a quirky animator who pairs his hand-drawn cartoon characters with whimsical, 3D digitally animated backgrounds.

Fredericksen, 24, is a freelance contractor whose cartoons and backgrounds have been part of videos for Coldplay and the American rapper, Smino. He originally pursued a job as a Pixar animator, but ultimately decided it wasn’t a good fit for his creative process.

“I slowly realized that working with teams at a major studio wasn’t what I wanted,” he said. “A Pixar production is a huge thing with so many animators that you’re really only assigned to do one little thing.

“When that many people are involved, I feel like there’s something missing ... some human element.”

SERVICE DIRECTORY

Continues from previous page

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SECTION RE ■ January 2-8, 2026

The Carmel Pine Cone

Real Estate

Open Houses on page 10RE



■ This week's cover property, located in Pacific Grove, is presented by Peggy Jones of The Jones Group. (See Page 2RE)



About the Cover

The Carmel Pine Cone

Real Estate

January 2-8, 2026



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859 Balboa Ave, Pacific Grove
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2RE The Carmel Pine Cone January 2, 2026

Real Estate Sales Dec. 21 - 27

Escrows closed: 28
Total value: \$49,192,182

Carmel

San Carlos Street, NE corner of Eighth Avenue — \$1,600,000

Adam Brodsley to Barbara Britton
APN: 010-351-001

26267 Hilltop Place — \$3,000,000

Ocean Cottage Properties LLC to Ryan Melcher
APN: 009-451-009

Carmel Valley

139 Hacienda Carmel — \$700,000

Joane Bettosini to Susan Bluford
APN: 015-342-022

24520 Outlook Drive unit 8 — \$1,100,000

Joan and James Hendrickson to Dana Beebe and Christopher Day
APN: 015-551-008

Canada Este — \$1,551,500

Zachary and Amelia Erickson to Andrew and Jane Lanza
APN: 169-421-068

See HOME SALES page 14RE



2900 Oak Knoll Road, Pebble Beach — \$3,400,000

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POLICE LOG

From page 4A

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Adult Protective Services informational report at Dolores and Fifth.

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Suspect entered an unlocked vehicle at Monterey and First. Nothing appeared to have been taken.

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Found laptop at Del Mar.

Pebble Beach: Deputies responded to

a domestic incident on 17 Mile Drive. A 32-year-old female was arrested.

Carmel area: Deputies received a report of theft of a jewelry bag from a Yankee Point residence.

Pacific Grove: Found property was turned in to the police department.

Carmel Valley: Deputies responded to a report of an assault at a Via del Zorro Road residence of a 75-year-old female. A 63-year-old female was arrested and transported to the Monterey County Jail for booking and lodging.

Carmel Valley: Second-hand information about suspicious circumstances on East Carmel Valley Road.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Verbal domestic dispute at Ocean and San Carlos.

Pacific Grove: Report of a missing juvenile from a residence on Forest Avenue.

Pacific Grove: An employee of a hotel on Lighthouse Avenue requested a welfare check of a subject that appeared confused when they walked into their lobby. A family member was contacted and picked them up.

Pacific Grove: Report of a dog bite on Lincoln Avenue resulting in injury.

Pacific Grove: Property found at the 900 block of Sunset Drive.

Carmel Valley: Runaway juvenile locat-

ed and returned to family on Asoleado Road.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17

Carmel-by-the-Sea: Report of suspicious circumstances at Santa Fe and Fifth involving possible missing money.

Pacific Grove: A domestic incident was investigated on Laurel Avenue.

Carmel Valley: Adult Protective Services report alleging abuse at a Laureles Grade residence.

Pebble Beach: Deputies responded to a

See **SHERIFF** page 12RE

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The midnight bells welcome the future and toll those left behind

THE MEANING of John Donne’s iconic admonition, “Send not to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee,” is that no one is an island unto himself. Every person is part of a larger group, and we are all affected by the death of any member of that community. Here’s a short list of people who died in 2025, who in some way had an

impact on my life.
Jimmy Carter — The former president didn’t quite make it to 2025, having died on Dec. 29, 2024 at age 100. He was a good man whose presidency (1979-1981) was undone by high inflation, unemployment, an oil embargo, and the Iran hostage crisis. He was better known for his

accomplishments after leaving the White House, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his decades of advocacy for peaceful resolutions to conflicts, and promoting democracy, and human rights.
I admired his post-presidency endeavors. He significantly shaped his legacy, transforming himself from a



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Scenic Views

By JERRY GERVASE

politician into a global humanitarian icon, dedicated to service and compassion. His life and work continue to inspire many.

Rob Reiner — I wasn’t a huge Reiner fan, but because he directed some of my favorite movies, including “When Harry Met Sally,” he is someone I’ll miss.

As Harry, Billy Crystal delivers one of my all-time favorite Hollywood movie lines: “When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.” Reiner said Crystal came up with that line. As director, he had the good sense to keep it in the movie. Reiner’s final, “That’s a wrap,” was in December.

See GERVASE page 8RE

Robert Redford

Judy Gaugh

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GERVASE

From page 6RE

Robert Redford — My doppelganger. I often saw myself as Redford. Oh, I don’t mean that I looked like him, but I always believed I had some Roy Hobbs, Jeremiah Johnson, Sundance Kid and Denys Finch Hatton

elements to my life. I may not be able to whisper to horses, but my ability to coax candy bars out of resistant vending machines borders on the supernatural. Redford’s final fade out was in July.

Chuck Mangione — The acclaimed American flugelhorn player and composer was best known for his smooth jazz style. The hit song, “Feels So Good,” become synonymous with his name and significantly impacted contemporary music. I first heard it in 1977. It was difficult

to find it on radio because it is almost eight minutes long. It has an infectious horn line and a memorable flugelhorn solo. I bought the album and discovered it wasn’t a one-hit compilation.

“The Land of Make Believe” is almost 12 minutes long and is the only recording I’ve ever found that features jazz singer Esther Satterfield, whom I personally place right up there with Ella Fitzgerald for vocal talent and interpretive skills.

Chuck joined the heavenly brass section in July.

Sir Tom Stoppard — One of the most celebrated playwrights of his generation, his work was known for its intellectual depth, verbal brilliance and playfulness with language and ideas, which were fully on display in his 1998 Academy Award-winning screenplay, “Shakespeare in Love.” His breakthrough came with “Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead” (1966), which reimagines two minor characters from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Tom exited upstage in November.

Roberta Flack — The legendary R&B singer best known for hits such as “Killing Me Softly with His Song” and “The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face,” left a profound impact on the music world. The first time “ever I heard her voice” I thought she was, “singing my life with her words.”

Flack faced challenges in her career, particularly after being diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 2022, but she remained a steadfast influence in the music community.

She was a symbol of artistry that transcended generations, leaving behind a rich tapestry of work that continues to resonate with listeners around the world. She left us softly in February.

Judy Gaughf — As dean of students at Chartwell School in Seaside, sweet Judy introduced me to the wonderful work the school does in educating children with dyslexia and related language learning disabilities, providing them with the skills and self-esteem necessary to return to mainstream education. Judy reeled me in by naming me a designated grandfather at the school’s annual Grandparents’ Day.

Relationships were the core of Judy’s soul, and we became good friends. Time flew by when I ran into her at a supermarket or on the street, inevitably making both of us late for wherever we were going. She graduated to the Upper School in October.

My condolences to you if you lost someone this year. They’re a precious part of your story now, as these people are part of mine.

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31475 Highway 1, Carmel Highlands
6 Acres | \$9,000,000 | 31475HighwayOne.com



31453 Highway 1, Carmel Highlands
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Spacious English Country Estate with Ocean Views
Pebble Beach ♦ \$6,980,000 ♦ 3937RondaRoad.com



Golden Rectangle Home on an Oversized Lot
Carmel-by-the-Sea ♦ \$4,250,000 ♦ 3SWMonteVerdeAnd13th.com



A Single-Level Mid-Century Modern with Views
Pebble Beach ♦ \$2,995,000 ♦ 4171SunsetLane.com



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JAMAL NOORZOY 831.277.5544
REALTOR® | DRE#01119622

KIM BARTHOLOMAY
REALTOR®
Monterey Coast Realty | DRE#02145274

ROBERT NOORZOY
Team Member

SHARMAINE TORREY
Broker Associate
Monterey Coast Realty | DRE#02071666



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CARMEL

\$1,029,000

2bd 2.5ba

Fr 2-4 Sa 2:30-4:30

3850 Rio Road #7

Sotheby's Int'l RE

917-9886

\$1,895,000

3bd 3.5ba

Su 1-3

28095 Barn Way

Carmel Realty Company

915-8010

\$2,995,000

4bd 3ba

Sa 11-3 Su 1-3

24587 Castro

Compass

236-5290

\$3,250,000

3bd 2.5ba

Sa 11:30-2

24817 Santa Fe St

Sotheby's Int'l RE

917-9886

\$3,490,000

3bd 3ba

Sa 2-4

2830 14th Ave

Compass

238-1380

\$4,295,000

4bd 3.5ba

Sa Su 12-2

Mission 4 NE of 10th Ave

Coldwell Banker Realty

356-8123

\$4,695,000

4bd 3.5ba

Sa Su 11-3

Santa Fe 7 SW of 8th Avenue

Sotheby's Int'l RE

915-6391 / 277-7600

CARMEL VALLEY

\$995,000

2bd 1.5ba

Sa 1-4

18 Camino De Travesia

Sotheby's Int'l RE

297-9805

\$1,795,000

3bd 2.5+ba

Sa Su 12-3

5 Boronda Road

Sotheby's Int'l RE

402-4394

DEL REY OAKS

\$1,100,000

4bd 2ba

Su 1-3

831 Arlington PL

Sotheby's Int'l RE

277-3371

MARINA

\$1,015,000

4bd 3ba

Sa Su 1-3

3218 Tallmon Street

Sotheby's Int'l RE

521-0680

MONTEREY

\$849,000

2bd 1.5ba

Sa Su 12-4

164 Mar Vista Dr

Coldwell Banker Realty

884-3919 / 717-7815

\$950,000

2bd 1ba

Sa 11-1

642 Cypress St

Sotheby's Int'l RE

238-8029

\$1,235,000

3bd 3.5ba

Fr Sa Su 11-1

1166 Josselyn Canyon Rd

The Ruiz Group, Keller Williams

869-3992

\$1,696,000

4bd 2.5ba

Sa 2-4

1100 Castro Rd

Compass

238-2022

\$1,795,000

3bd 1ba

Su 12-2

272 Clay Street

Sotheby's Int'l RE

925-216-0647

\$2,299,000

4bd 2.5ba

Su 2-4

35 Deer Forest Drive

Carmel Realty Company

915-8010

\$3,500,000

3bd 2ba

Sa 1:30-3:30 Su 12-2

502 Pierce Street

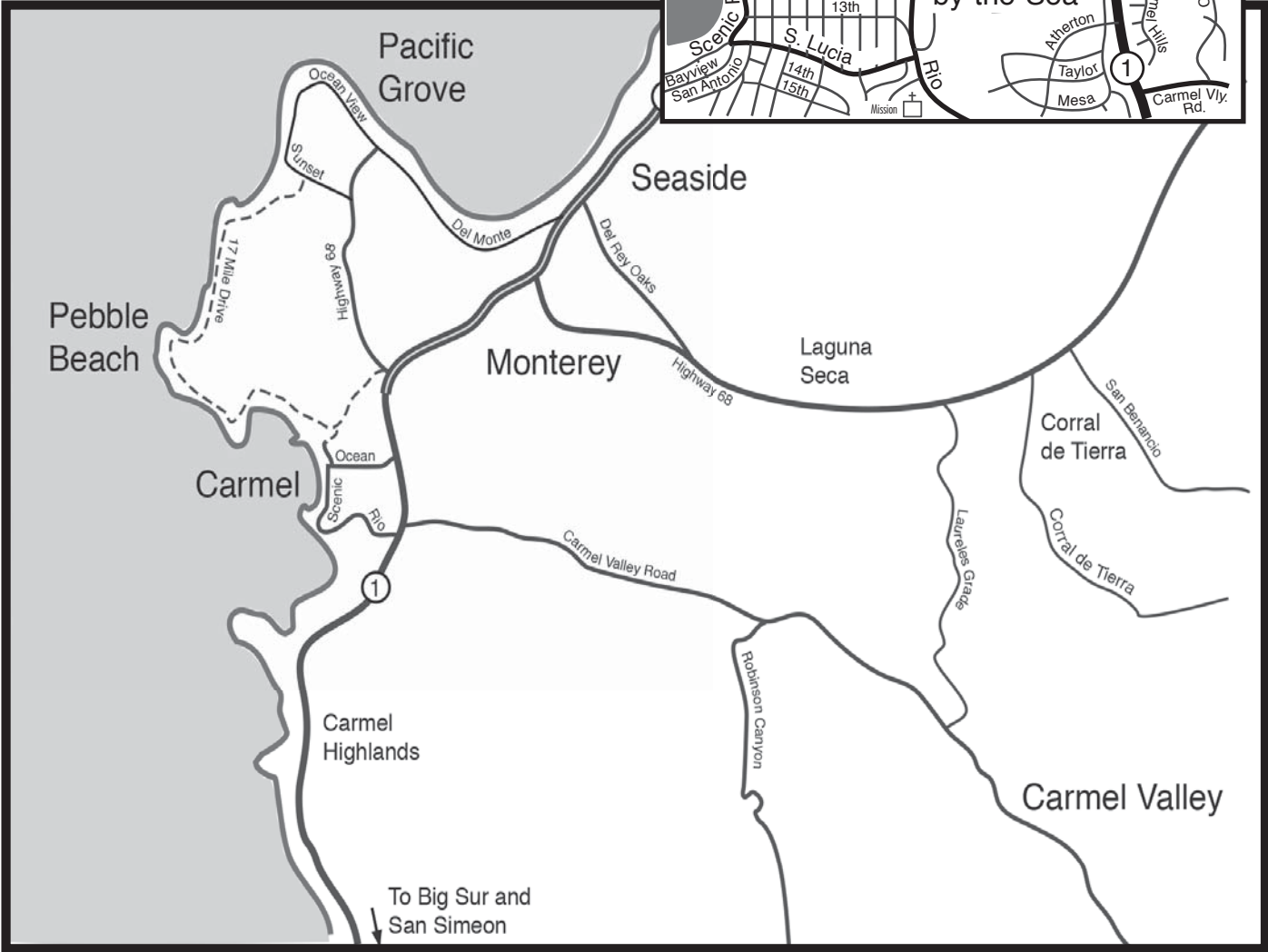
Compass

236-5290

This Weekend’s

OPEN HOUSES

January 2 - 4



Pebble Beach reads The Pine Cone

PACIFIC GROVE

\$965,000

2bd 1ba

Sa 12-2 Su 1-3

132 6th St

The Jones Group

917-4534

\$995,000

2bd 2ba

Sa Su 1-3

700 Briggs Avenue #83

Sotheby's Int'l RE

318-3808

\$1,198,000

3bd 2ba

Fr 12-2 Sa 1-3

1321 David Avenue

Sotheby's Int'l RE

915-6391 / 277-3371

\$1,598,000

3bd 2ba

Su 1-4

311 Walnut Street

Sotheby's Int'l RE

510-589-6892

\$3,199,000

3bd 4ba

Su 1-3

127 16th Street

Sotheby's Int'l RE

318-3808

\$3,275,000

3bd 2ba

Sa Su 1-3

859 Balboa Ave

The Jones Group

917-4534

PEBBLE BEACH

\$2,850,000

4bd 2.5ba

Su 1-3

1043 Mission Rd

Sotheby's Int'l RE

320-1109

\$895,000

4bd 2ba

Fr 12-2 Su 1-3

1809 Soto St

The Ruiz Group, Keller Williams

837-5437

\$897,500

3bd 2ba

Sa 1-3

1232 Vallejo St

The Jones Group

599-6299

The Carmel Pine Cone has been a member of the Carmel Chamber of Commerce for more than 100 years

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REALTOR®

831-220-5186

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DRE 02202708

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Contact Jung Yi-Crabbe jung@carmelpinecone.com (831) 274-8646



HEALTH, HAPPINESS & PEACE IN THE NEW YEAR!



43 Rancho San Carlos Road - Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel
4 BD 4 Full & 1 Half BA 2 Studies 4577 SF 2 Car Garage
Designed by Hart | Howerton Architects - Completed in 2006



43 Rancho San Carlos Road at The Preserve
Perfectly Sited to Capture Breathtaking Views to the South
Ideally situated just 10 minutes from the Front Gate and The Hacienda



3 Refugio Trace - Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel
4 BD 2 Full & 1 Half BA 2926 SF 2 Car Garage
Designed by Cathy Schwabe Architects - Completed in 2004



3 Refugio Trace at The Preserve
A Fusion of Craftsman & Modernist Design on 30 Stunning Acres
Minutes from the Club Amenities · Steps to Hiking Trails from Your Door



37 East Pronghorn Run - Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel
10.4 Acres 1.4 Acre Building Envelope \$850,000
The Premier Preserve Golf Parcel Featuring Striking South-Facing Views



57 Chamisal Pass - Santa Lucia Preserve, Carmel
9.9 Acres 2.3 Acre Building Envelope \$1,950,000
A Prime Location Above The Hacienda with Stunning Panoramic Views



Lisa Guthrie
Broker Associate
DRE 01250803
831.238.5725
lisa.guthrie@compass.com
LaTierraCarmel.com



Alan Drew
Broker Associate
DRE 02029344
831.920.7103
alan.drew@compass.com
LaTierraCarmel.com





From our family to yours, Happy New Year! May 2026 bring you peace, joy, and many wonderful memories



OPEN SUNDAY 1-3
1043 MISSION RD, PEBBLE BEACH
View of 8th hole of MPCC
Cape Cod-style home
4-Bed, 2.5-Bath
Tesla solar & Powerwall battery
\$2,850,000



1043missionroad.com

Carmel-by-the-Sea
Real Estate Activity This Week:

Status	Address	List Price	Sale Price	DOM
Contingent	SW Corner Camino Real & 4th	\$2,695,000	---	122
Your Neighborhood. Your Realtor. Please reach out for a Comparative Market Anaylsis. <small>(Data from MLSListings Inc)</small>				



DAVID M. CRABBE
DavidCrabbeRealEstate.com
831.320.1109
David.Crabbe@sir.com
DRE# 01306450

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY

SHERIFF

From page 4A

verbal altercation on Hermitage Road.

Carmel Valley: Individual on East Carme Valley Road reported a dispute with their significant other.

Carmel area: Deputies took a report for a possible fraud on Crossroads Boulevard involving a 70-year-old female victim.

Carmel area: Deputies responded to a welfare check on Rio Road.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

Carmel-by-the-Sea: No calls to report.

Pacific Grove: Subject on Junipero Avenue was placed on a mental health detention hold.

Pacific Grove: Found license plate on Second Street. Owner was contacted and the

license plate returned.

Pacific Grove: Vandalism to landscaping on Fountain Avenue resulting from a dog at large.

Pacific Grove: Vehicles on 18th Street and on 19th Street marked for 72-hour parking.

Carmel Valley: Domestic dispute on Carmel Valley Road three years prior.

Carmel Valley: Theft from a vehicle on Carmel Valley Road.

Carmel Valley: Verbal domestic incident on Carmel Valley Road.

Carmel Valley: Alleged burglary at Hacienda Carmel.

Pebble Beach: Adult Protective Services report on Crespi Lane alleging financial abuse.

Big Sur: Highway 1 resident reported a theft via text.

Carmel area: Adult Protective Services report at a Highway 1 residence alleging financial abuse.

February 12-15, 2026

AT&T PEBBLE BEACH

PRO-AM

PUBLICATION DATES: FEB. 6 & 13

Contact your rep today to reserve space in our AT&T Pebble Beach special sections!!

Jung Yi-Crabbe - (831) 274-8646 - jung@carmelpinecone.com

Meena Lewellen - (831) 274-8655 - meena@carmelpinecone.com

The Carmel Pine Cone

OPEN THIS WEEKEND

Bay views in the Beach Tract

859 Balboa Ave
Pacific Grove

Open SAT 1/3,
SUN 1/4
1:00 - 3:00

Fabulous location • 3 bed, 2 bath • 1869 SF with additional living areas -- front and back • big garage • fenced back yard with BBQ built in & hot tub!

\$3,275,000

Enjoy the View!

1232 Vallejo St
Seaside

Call for a showing

Enjoy Bay views, sunsets, city lights in Upper Seaside stylishly updated 3bd/2ba • elevated front and back decks natural light • open floor plan • 1 car garage

\$897,500

OPEN SATURDAY!

Take a Look!

1713 Goodwin St Seaside

Open SAT 1/3 1:00 - 3:00

Charming, spacious 3 bedrms, 2 baths updated • single level vaulted ceiling new roof, skylights in 2025 • rare attached 1.5 car garage with 2 off-street parking spaces

\$765,000

FIRST TIME OPEN

PG Charm and Style

132 6th St, Pacific Grove

Open SAT 1/3 12:00 - 2:00 & SUN 1/4 1:00 - 3:00

2bd/1ba • recent remodel • off-street parking • fenced backyard • listen to waves crash

\$965,000

SOLD!

In the Heart of Pacific Grove

142 11th St

In Escrow in 1 Day

SOLD at \$1,570,000

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HIGHEST PRICED HOME SALE IN MONTEREA

8220 Manjares, Monterey ♦ SP: \$6,450,000 ♦ Represented Seller




JUST SOLD

29 Spanish Bay Circle, Pebble Beach ♦ SP: \$5,200,000 ♦ Represented Seller



BEN ZOLLER 831.595.0676

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Ben@CarmelRealtyCompany.com
REALTOR* | DRE#01967810



To publish a legal notice in The Carmel Pine Cone
contact irma@carmelpinecone.com
831-274-8645 (*Se habla Español*)

JUST LISTED!

1029 BRONCHO ROAD, PEBBLE BEACH

3 Beds, 2 Baths ■ 1,344 Sq. Ft. ■ \$2,750,000 ■ www.1029Broncho.com
Charming cottage in highly desired Country Club West with double fairway views.



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For Your Trust & Partnership in 2025

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HOME SALES

From page 2RE

Highway 68

8220 Manjares — \$6,450,000
Anderson Homes to Carol Reiche
APN: 259-191-008

Marina

600 Santa Lucia Way unit B — \$380,000
The Sea Haven LLC to Kate Hwang
APN: 031-294-030

3006 Minaret Way unit F — \$437,000
The Sea Haven LLC to William Tonga
APN: 031-293-041

469 Weldon Way unit A — \$438,000
The Sea Haven LLC to Kameil Rancifer
APN: 031-293-015



735 Bayview Avenue, Pacific Grove — \$3,200,000

189 San Pablo Court unit 13 — \$589,000
Toan Tran and Judy Lee to Sarah Smith
APN: 033-162-013

141 8th Street — \$1,176,182
Shea Homes LP to John Kinsey and Kimberly Patterson
APN: 031-286-003



3020 Sloat Road, Pacific Grove — \$2,550,000

275 Skyview Drive — \$1,285,000
Ariel Cohen to Kenneth and Linda Devore
APN: 031-258-033

Monterey

821 Dry Creek Road — \$350,000
Tyler Adams to Andrea Eisinger and Lorenz Bohn
APN: 014-031-020

2074 Marsala Circle — \$1,055,000
Gina Baroni to Robert Bless and Joanna Misunas
APN: 013-292-032

981 Harrison Street — \$1,462,500
Dory and Christine Ford to Alexander and Elena Shur
APN: 001-346-003

15 Pinehill Way — \$1,500,000
Joel Quaid to Csaba and Imola Mekeres
APN: 014-091-015

981 Monterey Circle — \$1,600,000
Mary Valenzuela to John Markiton and Ermila Feliciano
APN: 001-474-017

Pacific Grove

977 Ransford Avenue — \$809,000
Betty Arcoleo to Christina Goebelsmann
APN: 007-623-007

616 Sage Court — \$900,000
Liza Horvath and John Jenkins Trust to Myra Fernando
APN: 007-701-030

4 Country Club Gate — \$1,050,000
Jane Sullivan to Jennifer Dolan
APN: 007-671-002

See **ESCROWS** next page



Happy New Year!
What a fulfilling and meaningful 2025!
Sending all my love and gratitude to
my amazing clients, friends, and family.
Cheers!
Love, Stacey
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www.ScherlingProperties.com
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SOLD IN 2025**

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CARMEL POINT - \$7.25M



QUAIL LODGE - \$3.95M



PEBBLE BEACH - \$2.80M



PEBBLE BEACH - \$2.795M



PASADERA - \$2.62M



MONTEREY - \$2.20M



CARMEL VALLEY - \$1.275M



MONTEREY - \$1.125M

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* There is a 10-word minimum on all classified ads.

DEADLINE: TUESDAY 3 P.M.

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ESCROWS

From previous page

Pacific Grove (con't.)

735 Bayview Avenue — \$3,200,000

Paul and Susan Martin to Alicia Maitland
APN: 006-142-045

Pebble Beach

3020 Sloat Road — \$2,550,000

Paul Christopher to Yika Van Bommel and Gunter Reiss
APN: 007-472-005

2900 Oak Knoll Road — \$3,400,000

John and Anke Kanalakis to Ajanta De and Mickael Forsman
APN: 007-201-027

29 Spanish Bay Circle — \$5,200,000

Patrick and Helen Norton to John Smith
APN: 007-092-029

Seaside

367 Shasta Street — \$480,000

Concepcion Blas to Alberto Jimenez and Yennifer Loya
APN: 011-243-008

1524 Luxton Street — \$699,000

Ellen Miller to Leopoldo Acevedo and Rosa Mendoza



8220 Manjares, Highway 68 — \$6,450,000

APN: 012-204-013

700 Elm Avenue — \$730,000

Chong Pak to Meera Sreenivasan and Ketya Ouk
APN: 011-322-001

2049 Fremont Blvd. — \$5,500,000

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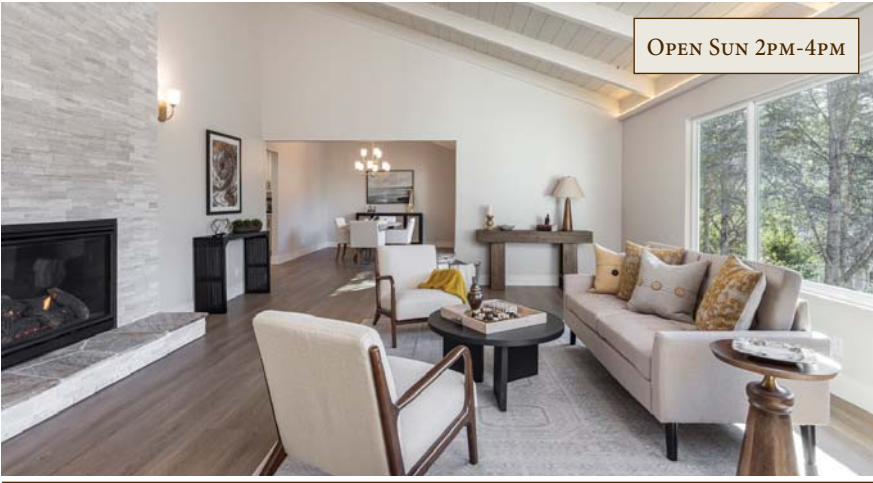
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Kim Family Partners LP to BB2049 LLC
APN: 011-026-015

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Single Story in Sunny Deer Flats

4 beds, 2.5 baths ■ 2,667 sq. ft. ■ \$2,299,000 ■ 35DeerForest.com



OPEN SUN 2PM-4PM

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3 beds, 3.5 baths ■ 2,348 sq. ft. ■ \$1,895,000 ■ 28095BarnWay.com



OPEN SUN 1PM-3PM



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2721 Parkview Way, Marina

4 beds, 2.5 baths • \$1,199,000 • www.2721ParkviewWay.com



3049 Sunrise Circle, Marina

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300 Glenwood Circle #265, Monterey

2 beds, 1 bath • \$665,000 • www.300GlenwoodCircle265.com



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\$14,950,000

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MONTEREY

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\$2,425,000

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