



# HEALTHY Lifestyles

What do a retired pastor, two pools and a bunch of dogs have in common? They'll get you moving ... Inside this week!



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## They're beautiful, make cool sounds — and eat rats

By MARY SCHLEY

RESIDENTS AND businesses might not want to talk about it, but Carmel has rats. All the shrubbery, vines, wood stacks, sheds and other hiding spots provide ideal rat habitat, and most people have spotted the rodents on more than one occasion. And while cats are good hunters, they might not be the best option for rat control. Neither is poison. But you know what is? Owls.

That's what Carmel resident Paul Falworth says, and he and a group of fellow volunteers are building platforms suitable for nesting great horned owls and are scouting out ideal places to install them. On Saturday, they put them up on a half-dozen trees in town.

"Remember, a nesting pair of great horned owls with fledglings typically eat seven rats or rodents every night," he said.

### Owl hug

Falworth, the instigator of the effort, came up with the idea after participating in demonstrations by master falconer Antonio Balestreri and learning about the four owls he has rescued.

"He brought some great horned owls, and I had one nestled against my cheek," Falworth said.

In subsequent conversations with a few friends, he discovered they, too, love owls and loathe vermin, and they devised a means of boosting the owl population in town.

"Everyone hates rats. And everyone has rats," Falworth said, adding that some residents are paying \$150 per week

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PHOTO/CARMELOWLS.ORG

What kind of home would a great horned owl like? Paul Falworth knows. He designed platforms to attract the beautiful raptors and is in search of the right trees for them.

## Monte Verde shooting case settled for \$2M

By MARY SCHLEY

ELLEN BARRETT, the mother of the 27-year-old Monte Verde Street resident who was fatally shot during an altercation with police in October 2024, received a \$2 million taxpayer-funded settlement to resolve her lawsuit against the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea and the officers who confronted him.

Barrett's complaint, filed last July in the U.S. District Court's Northern District, alleged police officers, including former Chief Paul Tomasi, violated state and federal laws by using "excessive and unreasonable force" in the shooting of James Marshall near the Golden Bough Theater. She accused the city and officers of negligence,

personal injuries and civil rights violations for their handling of the incident with Marshall, who was seen carrying an assault-rifle-style BB gun and a crowbar, and reportedly threatened people before retreating to the backyard of the home he shared with his mother, where he faced off with police and was eventually shot.

The case went to mediation, and a resolution was reached last December, after which it was dismissed earlier this month. Public officials received the terms of the deal late last week, and city attorney Brian Pierik made the

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## FIRST THE COMMONERS, THEN THE BILLIONAIRES

CALIFORNIA'S UBER-ELITE are threatening to follow their less-well-heeled brethren and exit the state, citing the same basic reason: It's just getting too expensive.

For the sixth year in a row, California was in last place on U-Haul's 2025 growth index, meaning the state had more people moving out than moving in. Many point to

### Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

the high cost of living as their primary reason, but it's not just the middle class making the move.

Over the last half-decade, hundreds of companies, including major Fortune 500s and their wealthy leaders, have also left — think Oracle, Tesla and Chevron — citing taxes, strict regulations and the high cost of living for employees.

Now, California's remaining billionaire class is

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## Fox with painful necklace tricked with sweet bread

By KELLY NIX

A GRAY fox that spent weeks with a corrugated plastic pipe stuck around its neck is now receiving care at the SPCA Monterey County Wildlife Center, thanks to a concerned citizen in the Corral de Tierra area who safely trapped the animal via a tasty treat.

Residents first spotted the fox Jan. 11 and quickly set traps while posting alerts on social media. On Monday, in the early morning hours, it walked into a humane trap baited with syrup-soaked bread on Mesa del Toro Road. The trap had been set by Claire Pendleton.

"I've been working with neighbors every day to catch him and have lost a lot of sleep worrying about him," Pendleton said. After successfully trapping the fox, she immediately transported it to the SPCA Wildlife Center.

### Grateful to neighbors

SPCA wildlife rescuers sedated the young male fox and carefully removed the rugged pipe from his neck, according to spokeswoman Beth Brookhouser.

"We don't know how this little fox ended up with the pipe stuck around his neck, but we are incredibly grateful to caring neighbors like Claire who kept watch over him, worked so diligently to trap him, and brought him to us," Brookhouser told The Pine Cone. "The moment we cut the pipe

away, we knew he would need to stay with us for several weeks to recover."

Although he sustained serious injuries — including

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PHOTO/SPCA MONTEREY COUNTY

This gray fox somehow managed to get a piece of a corrugated plastic pipe stuck around its neck. The pipe was so tight that it caused several deep wounds. A human came to the rescue by safely trapping the animal and taking it to SPCA Monterey County, where it's being treated.