



# AT&T Pebble Beach PRO-AM 2026

A Special Section  
inside today's  
Carmel Pine Cone —  
The pros and celebrities  
schedules, ticket info,  
how to get there & more ...



# The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 112 No. 6

<https://carmelpinecone.com>

February 6-12, 2026

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## Airport developer unveils 90-unit housing plan

■ Orosco: 'I care what the CVA thinks'

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE MAN behind the housing project proposed for the former Carmel Valley Airport has been revealed to be Patrick Orosco, son of late Sand City shopping center developer Don Orosco. He is in escrow to buy the airport property from Ken Griggs, who is not involved in the development plan.

Orosco says his objective is to develop the airport's 29.5 acres with 90 single-family homes, each with three bedrooms and two baths. No apartments are proposed. Of the homes, 70 will be market-rate stand-alone units, while 20 will be built in 10 duplexes and sold at "affordable" prices. The new lots will each measure between 10,000 and 12,000 square feet.

### Blending in

While most new projects in Monterey County emphasize density and at least some height, Orosco has taken a different approach, seeking to design homes that look similar to those on neighboring streets.

"Our goal is to blend in," said Orosco, whose family's business, the Orosco Group, has completed extensive local projects, including the Ryan Ranch business park. "I know how to do this project well. The only difference between our homes

and the ones surrounding us is that they will be new."

The builder knows he will face opposition to his plans to develop the former airfield, but he insists his project is both needed and reasonable, and unlike many would-be developers, he says he is truly invested in the community where it will be built. Many of his friends and family live nearby.

See VILLAGE page 12A



RENDERING/CV PROPCO LLC, COLORIZED WITH GROK

A rendering shows what one home might look like in a subdivision that Patrick Orosco wants to build at the former Carmel Valley Airport. The property has long been eyed for development, but opposition to it has been vocal.

## Street addresses almost ready for close-up

By MARY SCHLEY

SINCE THE City of Carmel released a map last month showing what everybody's street address would be under a system approved by the city council last year, most of the feedback from residents and others has been positive, according to acting city administrator Brandon Swanson, and some of the information they've provided has helped identify bugs in the system.

The map was created as part of the effort to implement a numbering system that will be recognized by the U.S. Postal Services, utility companies and other entities — ending the city's century-plus-old tradition of using cute, directional addresses — and is based on a pattern developed principally by resident Kevin Ruess. Ruess is a member of the city's committee on street addresses alongside councilman Bob Delves, administrative analyst Emily Garay and residents Nancy Twomey and Paula Hazdovac.

### 605 Santa Fe St.

The proposed numbers run from north to south and from west to east, increasing by increments of 100 on the longer north-south blocks and by 50 on the shorter west-east blocks. They are assigned based on assessor's parcel numbers, and addresses for corner properties are the direction their front doors face. The U.S. Postal Service,

See ADDRESSES page 17A



PHOTO/READER SUBMITTED

Even when your house gets an official number, it can keep its special name. Some who oppose a standardized address system predict it will destroy Carmel's character. What do you think?

## Council seeks boost in tax on hotels and their guests

By MARY SCHLEY

OVER THE objections of hotel owners who feel they already pay more than their share of taxes, the Carmel City Council voted 4-1 Tuesday in favor of asking voters to approve a 2-percentage-point increase in the transient occupancy tax rate to raise it to 12 percent.

The tax was last increased in 1998, though hoteliers in 2013 created a hospitality improvement district to self-fund destination-marketing efforts by assessing customers a 2 percent fee, and guests also pay a Monterey County Tourism Improvement District fee ranging from \$1.50 to \$7 per room per night, depending on the luxury level of their accommodations.

Assistant city administrator Marisa Bermudez said the push for boosting the TOT comes amid a broader council discussion of revenue shortfalls and long-term fiscal sustainability. She noted that while TOT is 10.5 percent

in unincorporated areas of the county, the cities of Pacific Grove, Monterey, Del Rey Oaks, Seaside and Sand City charge 12 percent, and Marina levies 14 percent, putting Carmel at the low end of the scale.

Other coastal cities like Santa Barbara, Sausalito and Half Moon Bay charge between 12 percent and 15 percent, she said.

### More visitors = more money

In Carmel, hostelry taxes for the 2024-2025 fiscal year totaled \$9,339,961 — coming in nearly \$2 million, or 24 percent, higher than the conservative budget estimate of \$7,543,234 — due to increased visitor numbers and higher average daily room rates driven in part by recent remodels and renovations. The new Stilwell Hotel, for instance, opened in May 2024, shortly before the start of that fiscal year, after operating as a lower-budget hotel and then being closed for major renovations.

The city, of course, adjusted its spending accordingly over the course of the year, and the city council formed a financial stewardship committee with a goal, among others, of calculating more realistic estimates of revenues and spending

See TOT page 18A

## Um, you can't park there



PHOTO/MONTEREY POLICE DEPARTMENT

How this sedan ended up on its roof in the water at the Breakwater Cove boat ramp remains a mystery days after it occurred. Or if Monterey P.D. knows what happened, it's not sharing. See story page 13A.

## TRUMP, NEWSOM ALIGN ON CORPORATE BUYING

DONALD TRUMP and Gavin Newsom have found something they can agree on, a possible ice-breaker if they ever meet again: Neither wants corporate investors gobbling up single-family homes.

On Jan. 7, Trump posted on Truth Social that the

it," wrote the president. "People live in homes, not corporations."

The very next day, California's governor went after the same investors in his State of the State address, calling on lawmakers to limit what they can buy.

"These investors are crushing the dream of homeownership and forcing rents too high for everybody else," said Newsom.

The double messaging on the single issue was music to the ears of San Jose Assemblymember Josh Lee.

"I'm very surprised in all the great ways, and I think it shows how salient this issue is for all Americans," said Lee on KCRA's "California Politics 360."

The progressive Democrat has been trying to pass corporate investment reforms for years. In 2025, Lee

See CORPORATE page 20A

## Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

American dream of buying a home has become out of reach for hardworking families, and Wall Street is partially to blame.

"I am immediately taking steps to ban large institutional investors from buying more single-family homes, and I will be calling on Congress to codify



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# Sandy Claws

By Lisa Crawford Watson

## Meant to be

Oliver and Twinkle each have their own poignant history, but more compelling is the story they have created together.

Oliver is a purebred AKC Standard Poodle his people adopted through NorCal Poodle Rescue seven years ago, when he was just 7 months old.

Apparently his family could no longer care for him, so they had relinquished the pup to the rescue organization.

"Eight months had passed since our dog died, and my wife felt we needed a dog to help me maintain my exercise routine," his person said. "Having a dog and keeping me around are both important to her."

The Del Mesa Carmel couple met Oliver and knew instantly he was meant to be theirs.

"The first time I took him to the beach, we encountered two 160-pound Great Danes," his person said. "Oliver ran down the shoreline to play with them and had a wonderful time. With that kind of energy and moxie, I knew he was the right dog for me."

Twinkle's story is more daunting. At age 1, she was recovered from a hoarder in Southern California, who had some 100 dogs in his home. Twinkle, a Yorkshire terrier mix, was by herself in a cage, with no indication she'd ever been let out.



At first, she wouldn't let anyone touch her, including her forever family, whose daughter thought she looked like Toto, from "The Wizard of Oz."

"It dawned on me, that my daughter seemed very much taken with Oliver," her dad said. "When I would take him out on a leash, she would stay by his side."

Today, the pair sleep on their people's bed, Twinkle curled up against Oliver.

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# Verizon tower decision delayed again

By MARY SCHLEY

A HEARING on Verizon Wireless' effort to install a cell tower on top of a power pole in a residential area was delayed again Wednesday following a continuance last month. The reason? Too much information received too late, according to planning director Anna Ginette.

But because the planning commission is under pressure to vote on the project before it trips a federal cutoff that would lead to automatic approval, commissioners rescheduled the hearing to Feb. 10 — the day before their regular monthly meeting and a week before another special hearing on residential design guidelines that were kicked back to them by the Carmel City Council last month.

The wireless company's application for the construction of a small cell site and equipment on a PG&E pole in front of a home on Carmelo southeast of 10th was set to be reviewed at the planning commission's Jan. 21 meeting. Assistant planner Jacob Olander reviewed the application for compliance with the city's ordinances and standards for the installation of wireless facilities — the first test of the documents since they were adopted in 2023 and approved by the California Coastal Commission last year — and recommended approval.

### Many letters

Soon after the application and plans were posted on the city's website last fall, Olander noted, residents peppered the planning department with questions, and in the run-up to last month's meeting, dozens of people sent letters demanding that the application be denied. Lawyers representing opponents sent lengthy objections, as

well.

"The reasons for denial cited are that the project does not meet the Carmel Municipal Code, the facility is not aesthetically pleasing nor aligned with Carmel-by-the-Sea's character, lack of demonstration of a significant coverage gap, and loss to property values," Olander summarized. "Additionally, residents raised concerns about the proliferation of similar facilities if this site is approved. The residents stated that the project does not meet the Carmel Municipal Code because the small wireless facility is proposed for the residential zone, in the public right of way and in the centerline of a window of an adjacent

### A lot of information and a lot of time pressure

home."

The home in question, Stonewall Cottage, is historic, and its owner, Ned Spieker, is among the many who object to Verizon's proposal.

"It was established as a historic home shortly after our purchase. I supported the historic designation," he said. "Clearly, having a cell tower approximately 15 feet from my living room is not complementary to this home and its historic designation."

### 'Permanent harm'

Spieker said he understands the city's legal obligations where wireless facilities are concerned but said putting the equipment so close to his home "would cause immediate, permanent and disproportionate harm to a historic home and its residential setting — harm that the city's planning standards were expressly adopted to prevent."

Several opponents suggested other tower locations, such as the roof of the Golden Bough, would be more appropriate. The company's engineers and lawyers

See VERIZON page 26A



RYAN MELCHER  
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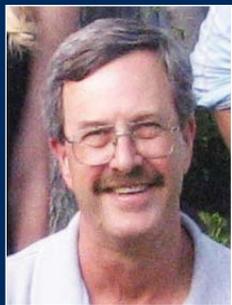
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# Police & Sheriff's Log

## Please just make her go away

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, JANUARY 16

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Theft from a vehicle at Santa Rita and Sixth.

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Lost items/possible theft reported at San Carlos and Fifth.

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Suspicious circumstances reported at Ocean and Lincoln.

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Dog found at Carpenter and Fourth was placed in safekeeping pending owner pickup. Dog return to owner.

**Pacific Grove:** Subject on Central Avenue was placed on a 5150 W&I hold [danger to self or others].

**Pacific Grove:** Dead body found at an Asilomar Avenue address following a medical call.

**Carmel area:** Theft of a water hose from a ranch on Highway 1. A 45-year-old male was arrested.

**Carmel area:** Deputies responded to Palisades Drive for a report of identity theft involving a 46-year-old female victim.

**Big Sur:** Theft reported on Highway 1.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Traffic stop conducted at Mesa and Atherton at 0004 hours for CVC violations, and the driver was found to be in possession of meth and had five outstanding warrants. The passenger was recently released from jail for a stabbing and was in possession of drug paraphernalia, a probation violation. Both subjects, a 42-year-old male and a 26-year-old female, were released with promises to appear.

See **POLICE LOG** page 8RE  
in the Real Estate Section



## The gavel falls

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

**Jan. 13** — A jury found Arnold Mata Sanchez, 27 and a resident of Salinas, guilty of numerous felonies, including inflicting corporal injury on a dating partner with personal infliction of great bodily injury, mayhem, kidnapping, and criminal threats with personal use of a dangerous weapon. The jury also found that Sanchez had previously been convicted of a strike offense within the meaning of California's three strikes law and that he had a prior conviction for committing corporal injury on a dating partner within the past seven years.

Jane Doe and Sanchez had only been dating for a few weeks in 2025 when Sanchez became increasingly violent toward Doe over perceived infidelity. Due to paranoia coinciding with methamphetamine use, a series of incidents occurred over the span of several

weeks when Sanchez would threaten Doe with extreme violence and sometimes act on those threats. On May 15, 2025, Sanchez stabbed Doe in the leg with a screwdriver multiple times — wounds that ultimately left permanent scars — while threatening to put her in a grave next to her father.

On the evening of May 23, 2025, Sanchez brutally beat Doe in an abandoned motel room in front of other associates of his because he believed Doe had cheated on him. Among other things, Sanchez pulled Doe by her hair so hard that he ripped out separate patches of hair on both sides of Doe's head. On one side of her head, Sanchez also ripped out a portion of her scalp underneath the hair, which left a permanent avulsion multiple

See **GAVEL** page 25A

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# P.G. coach nabbed for ‘sex assault’

By KELLY NIX

A FORMER Pacific Grove High School girls’ basketball coach and crossing guard was arrested this week on suspicion of sexual misconduct with a female student.

On Saturday night, Pacific Grove police arrested Marquis Brion Pickrom, 37, of Seaside and booked him into Monterey County Jail for alleged sexual assault of a minor and annoying or molesting a child.

He also served as the P.G. High campus supervisor and was often the after-school crossing guard at Sunset Drive and 19th Street.

News of Pickrom’s arrest comes months after Pacific Grove Unified School District placed him on administrative leave following accusations of inappropriate contact with the student.

### ‘Groomed’

“Between August 2023 and October 2025, the minor victim — 16 to 18 years old at the time — reported being groomed by Pickrom after he became the Pacific Grove High School basketball coach,” police said Monday. “The victim reported that Pickrom gave her special attention, made personal and romantic comments, and primarily communicated with her via Instagram.”

The girl said Pickrom kissed her in July 2025 and touched her in a sexual manner. She disclosed the conduct to a few close friends before it was reported to P.G. High staff, who notified police.

“Upon learning of the allegations, the school district immediately relieved Pickrom of his coaching position,” police said. “Upon conclusion of the investigation, a

warrant was issued for Pickrom’s arrest. On Jan. 31, at approximately 7:34 p.m., he was taken into custody without incident.”

Without identifying Pickrom, superintendent Linda Adamson told parents Sunday night that he’s no longer employed by the school.

### Bailed out

“Upon first learning of the allegations, the district immediately placed the employee on administrative leave while conducting an internal investigation, which remains ongoing,” Adamson said. “We have also been working closely with law enforcement throughout this process.”

She said state laws regarding employee confidentiality limited what the district could tell the public about the case.

As of Thursday morning, Pickrom had not been charged with a crime and is out on bail, Monterey County Superior Court records indicate.

His arrest comes less than four years after Andrew Chyo, a PGUSD school aide, was charged with numerous counts of oral sex with a teenage boy. He pleaded guilty to a single felony of oral copulation with a child under 18.

In November 2021, the PGUSD board of trustees fired a P.G. High teacher whom two female students accused of inappropriately touching them. He was not charged with a crime.

In an unrelated case, on Oct. 23, 2025, the Monterey County District Attorney’s Office filed a murder charge against former PGUSD teacher’s aide Benjamin Bahena, 37, who is alleged to have slain Misael Avilez Jr., 54, in Salinas.



Marquis Brion Pickrom

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# Man used daughter as human shield

By KELLY NIX

A SALINAS man who stabbed a woman, threatened to kill a female relative and used his 7-year-old daughter as a human shield pleaded guilty to those crimes and others, and is set to receive more than two decades in state prison when he's sentenced next month, prosecutors said this week.

Oscar Villareal Jr., 46, will receive 20 years and four months behind bars on March 5 for a long list of crimes, the Monterey County District Attorney's Office said.

## 'Kill everyone'

On May 16, 2025, prosecutors said Villareal went to the home of his ex-girlfriend, who had custody of his 7-year-old daughter. They argued about custody issues before Villareal took his daughter to a park. While the girl played, Villareal left the park, went to his ex's house, pushed the woman to the ground and stabbed her once in the neck with a folding knife.

"He attempted to stab his ex-girlfriend again, but she was able to block the blade with her hand," the DA's office said.

During the attack, the woman was on the phone with one of Villareal's relatives, who overheard the commotion. He told the unidentified female relative that he'd killed his ex and was on his way to kill her and everyone in her house.

Villareal drove to her home, banged on the door and demanded to be let inside. The relative's husband told him that police had been called.

"Villareal made the husband drive him

away from the scene, pick up his daughter from the park and drive to Gonzales," according to the DA's office.

On the way there, however, a California Highway Patrol officer pulled over the truck and the husband exited it, prompting Villareal to get into the driver's seat. While fleeing, he crashed into the CHP officer's car twice, nearly hitting her as she stood outside the car and ordered him to stop. To avoid pursuing officers, Villareal weaved in and out of his lane at speeds of more than 85 mph.

## Daughter as shield

The pursuit lasted about 10 minutes until another CHP officer forced the truck against a guardrail, disabling it. Villareal, with his daughter still in the truck, refused for about an hour to exit the vehicle, telling officers he had a loaded gun and would kill himself.

"He moved his daughter from her position in the backseat into his lap, despite multiple officers pointing firearms at him, and repeatedly told officers to shoot him in front of her," prosecutors said.

"A certified hostage negotiator with the Salinas Police Department was able to de-escalate the situation and ultimately take Villareal into custody," prosecutors said, adding that the girl was uninjured.

Her mother survived the stabbing but needed surgery.

On Tuesday, Villareal pleaded guilty to inflicting corporal injury on his ex-girlfriend, with a prior conviction for the same offense, false imprisonment of a hostage, assault with a deadly weapon on a peace

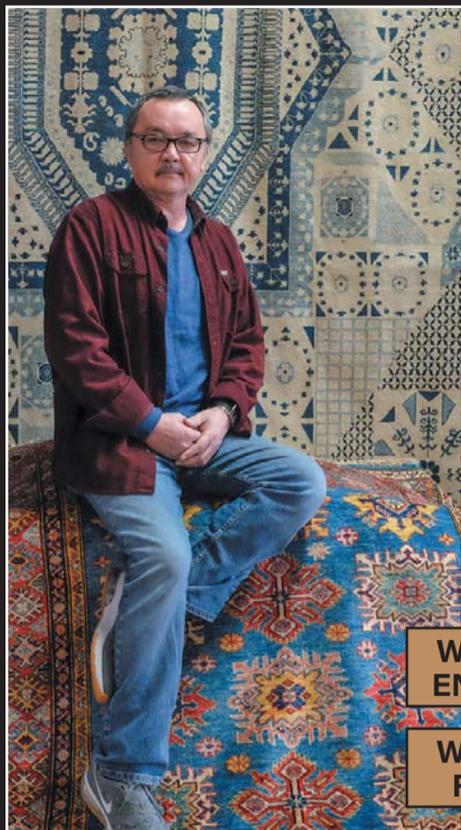
See **SHIELD** page 19A



Oscar Villareal Jr.

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# Carmel, Monterey mentioned in Epstein files

By KELLY NIX

**SEX OFFENDER** Jeffrey Epstein spent thousands of dollars at Monterey Peninsula restaurants, businesses and services during visits from 2004 to 2018, according to credit card statements in the Epstein files released this week by the U.S. Department of Justice. But the inclusion of a 2017 Carmel Middle School student's honor roll certificate is perhaps the most baffling local connection in files collected by law enforcement as they investigated Epstein, who died in 2019.

A search of the massive trove of documents on Epstein released by the Trump administration contains numerous references to Carmel and Monterey, and show he spent substantial sums on Peninsula hotels, restaurants and services.

### Sought local doc's advice

A March 2004 American Express statement shows that Epstein paid for meals at numerous Carmel and Monterey restaurants. He also spent hundreds of dollars at a Carmel clothing store and for a room at a prominent Carmel Valley hotel.

The statement also shows that Epstein paid \$1,353.68 for three nights in Monterey in February 2004, though the biggest bill on his Peninsula trip was \$3,717.12 for service from a private jet company, according to the statement.

On Feb. 26, 2019 — about six months before Epstein killed himself in prison — his longtime personal assistant Lesley Groff emailed the wife of a Monterey chiropractor, saying she had the "results of an MRI of Jeffrey's back" and his spine, and asked the wife if she could send the images via FedEx to her husband.

"Jeffrey also wants to make sure it is all FedEx'd back to us once [the chiropractor] has reviewed the images," Groff said.

### 'Best massage'

In an Oct. 18, 2011, email, a person whose name is redacted sent an email to Epstein stating, "Hello Dear Man, did you ever hear back from your Carmel Valley connection? I am really in need of work now and know that it only takes one connection sometimes for one's business to take off," according to the sender, who asked Epstein for "thoughts and suggestions" and signed it "XO."

An Aug. 17, 2012, message from Epstein's email address included the words "best massage in Carmel," to which the unidentified recipient followed up the next day with, "Thank you very much."

On Aug. 6, 2012, an email to Epstein from an unknown sender stated, "I am in Carmel Valley. Call me tomorrow.

"I can't wait to see you." Epstein responded by saying, "tomorrow I will stay in the Ritz in Half Moon Bay ... where are you?"

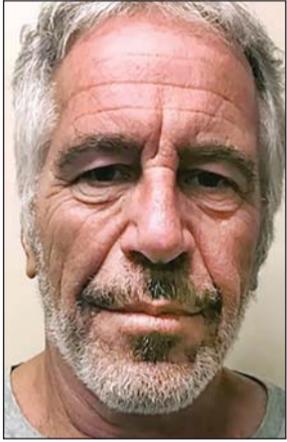
On Dec. 18, 2014, Epstein wrote a check for \$10,000 to a Carmel Valley business or resident, but the recipient's

name is redacted.

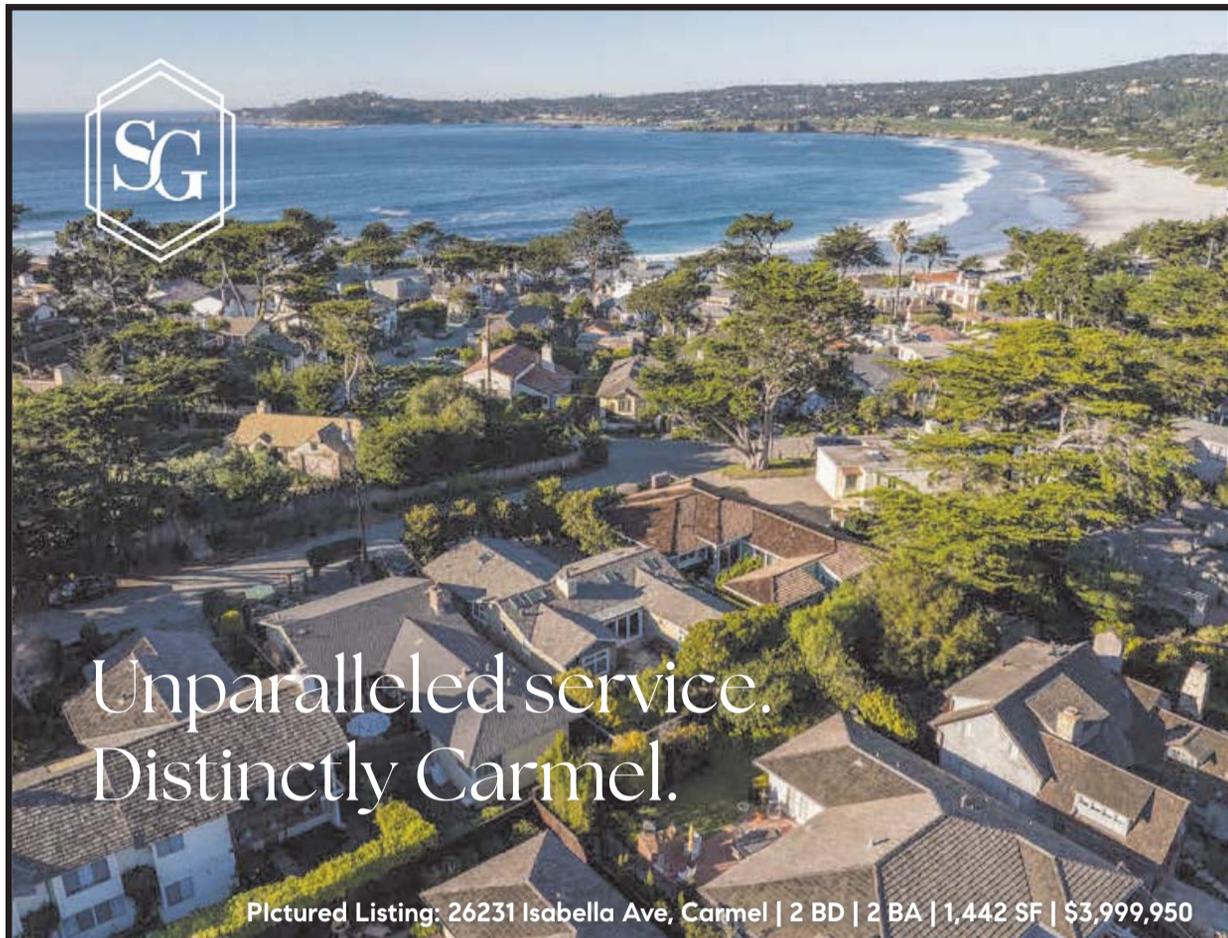
There is no indication in the files that any of these visits and connections were related to anything illegal or nefarious.

The strangest inclusion in the files is a Carmel Middle School student's honor roll certificate from May 15, 2017.

See **EPSTEIN** page 19A



Jeffrey Epstein



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CARMEL STUDENTS AMONG CALIFORNIA'S TOP PERFORMERS

By LILY PATTERSON

MORE THAN 75 percent of Carmel's high school seniors are ready for the next phase of their lives, according to a recent report from the Department of Education. The state agency puts Carmel Unified up there with Beverly Hills, Laguna Beach, and Palo Alto — among California's wealthiest and highest-rated public school districts — where 63 percent, 83 and 89 percent of seniors, respectively, are considered "prepared" for college, or a career. CUSD anticipates revenue of \$88.2 million, primarily derived from local property taxes, and plans to spend approximately \$39,435 per student in the 2025-2026 school year.

Accountability

Since 2018, all California districts that include a high school receive an annual College and Career Indicator score from the education agency, part of the state's efforts to be more accountable to its students.

"This indicator was designed to encourage high schools to provide all students with a rigorous, broad course of study that prepares them for post-secondary success," Ivonne Glenn, the district's director of college and career readiness, informed school board members during their Jan. 21 meeting.

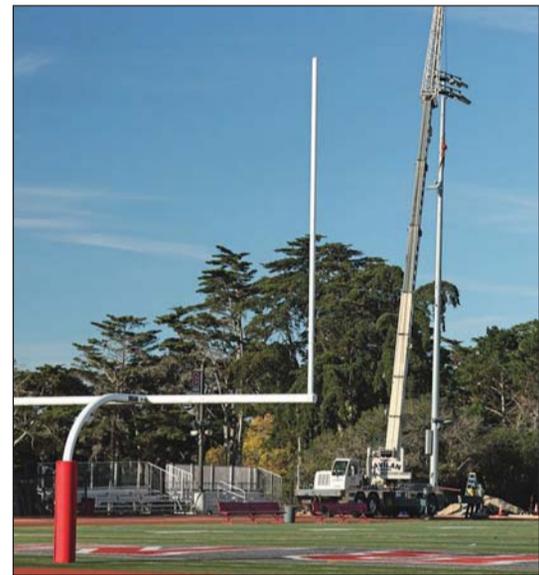
CUSD's score of 79 percent accounts for standardized test results, as well as the number of students who have completed Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate coursework, accredited classes through the UC/CSU system, or other courses for college credit. On the career side,

participation in registered apprenticeships, government job or pre-military programs, and career technical education courses is also considered.

Of course, most Carmel students will go the college route. Last year, 78 percent of Carmel seniors earned some form of college credit, and 80 percent successfully passed advanced placement (college-level) courses. And while 11th graders maintain their standardized test scores, even post-pandemic — 78 percent are passing literacy exams, and roughly 65 percent meet the standard for math — Glenn countered that the district's college and career indicator score has risen in that time, describing "a broader and more inclusive definition of success."

That definition is inclusive of the few

See TOP page 27A



PHOTO/KERRT BELSER

Light poles being installed at the Carmel High football field last year.

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# CHOMP nurses vote to unionize

By KELLY NIX

**I**N A move they say will lead to better patient care, hundreds of registered nurses at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula decided last week to unionize.

Nearly 500 CHOMP nurses on Jan. 30 “voted overwhelmingly” to join the California Nurses Association, which is an affiliate of National Nurses United, the largest union in the country, the association said. The election was held by the National Labor Relations Board.

CHOMP registered nurse Kim Campbell said the results will benefit the Monterey Peninsula and the people she and other nurses are tasked with caring for.

“I spent more than 30 years at CHOMP in the emergency department, and I recall when this was genuinely a community hospital and patient-focused institution,” Campbell said. “I am so pleased that by forming our union, we will now have a voice to advocate for our patients, create an environment that will help recruit and retain excellent nurses, and make improvements for patients.”

A nurse at CHOMP told The Pine Cone that the vote to unionize was 479 to 191.

### CHOMP denies understaffing

The move to unionize was due to concerns over “chronic short staffing,” according to the union.

“Due to short staffing, nurses cannot give each patient the optimal amount of time to address their specific care needs,” the organization said. “In addition, because management does not staff the hospital adequately, nurses are denied coverage for their breaks during their 12-hour shifts, meaning they are forced to either work without eating or leave their patients under the care of a nurse who already has a full

assignment.”

In response to the announcement, Community Hospital spokeswoman Monica Sciuto said the hospital “respects the outcome of the vote and the voices of our nurses.”

“We honor their decision and will work within the new framework to maintain our shared commitment to exceptional patient care and a positive work environment,” Sciuto told The Pine Cone.

The hospital denied it is understaffed.

“Community Hospital has maintained staffing levels that exceed California’s mandated nurse-to-patient ratios, underscoring our dedication to patient safety and clinical excellence,” she said. “The notion that we do not staff appropriately for

our patients and our nurses is simply not true.”

Sciuto went on to say that CHOMP’s commitment to patient care has been recognized nationally.

“For the fourth consecutive year, our hospital has been ranked in the top 5 percent of hospitals in the country by Healthgrades. This distinction reflects the dedication of our nurses, physicians, and support teams, and it reinforces our ongoing focus on maintaining a safe, high-quality environment for everyone we serve.”

### ‘More than enough’

The Pine Cone asked if the nurses’ union could mean higher hospital and patient costs.

“Our priority is delivering excellent care to our patients and supporting the nurses and other staff who make that possible,” Sciuto said. “Questions about costs often arise in conversations about labor representation, but it’s too early to draw

See **NURSES** page 19A

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# Legal filings add more details to dispute between hotel and its spa

By LILY PATTERSON

THE PORTOLA Hotel in Monterey wants out of its nearly 30-year relationship with Spa on the Plaza and filed a lawsuit in Monterey County Superior Court seeking

damages and early termination of the spa's lease. But the owners of Spa on the Plaza, while admitting that some of the hotel's claims are true, responded by alleging that owner Roy Malcolm's former wife and business partner is responsible for the mess he and chief financial

officer Nancy Shaw are apparently still untangling. Claiming they have "persistently tried to pay any past-due rents and reach an amicable settlement," papers filed Jan. 20 for Roy Malcolm and Shaw by Los Angeles attorney Nicholas Gross say the hotel's lawsuit is an "extreme action" that "serves no purpose but to harass and defame."

Portola Hotel entered its once-beneficial partnership with Spa on the Plaza in 1997, when the Malcolms signed a commercial lease for the property at 201 Alvarado St. in downtown Monterey. "A haven for those seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, and self-care," the day spa has since offered popular spa packages and memberships, massages and facials, and pool facilities to hotel guests and locals.

**'No purpose but to harass and defame'**

"Over the course of the next three decades, numerous amendments were incorporated into the original lease, reflecting a flexible and amicable relationship between the hotel and the spa that endured through global economic downturns and historic pandemics," the documents say. Those amendments also covered renovations in 2007, made possible in part because the Malcolms agreed to pay a percentage of the spa's gross receipts to the hotel every quarter. Subsequent amendments to that lease show they agreed to continue paying "percentage rent," albeit at a lower rate once renovations were completed.

**'Periodic access'**

Another change, much less peaceable, took place five years later. Though Roy and Camille Malcolm wouldn't divorce until 2015, the couple separated in 2012, when Camille took over Spa on the Plaza as CEO. Roy was living in Vermont, according to legal filings, and was "restricted" from reviewing the books unless he was "physically present at the spa offices in California."

"Until Ms. Malcolm retired on March 31, 2025, Mr. Malcolm only had periodic access to company records and had very limited insight into the operations and finances of the spa."

See SPA next page



RUTH BERNHARD

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Ruth Bernhard, "Angel Wing, 1943" - 10" x 13" Gelatin Silver photograph

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# SPA

From previous page

Under Camille Malcolm's watch, the slew of wrongs alleged by Portola took place — but its Nov. 12, 2025, lawsuit blamed only Roy Malcolm, Shaw, and numerous "Doe defendants" for withholding the spa's financial books, claiming that they owe the hotel 18 months' worth of percentage rent. Portola also accused them of using a pandemic-era small business loan for "his, her or their personal purposes," and for years operating the spa as an "alter ego" to perpetuate fraud or injustice, including undercapitalization, commingling of assets and operations," according to the original suit filed by Marco Lucido of Fenton & Keller on behalf of the hotel company — which not only failed to name the person responsible as a defendant, Malcolm and Shaw say, but has ignored their best efforts to reconcile.

Their attorney filed several motions in Monterey County Superior Court on Jan. 20, among them to add Malcolm's ex-wife as a defendant and to strike the "baseless claims" against him and Shaw from the suit, effectively dismissing it.

### SBA loan

When Malcolm took over in April 2025, "he discovered the extent of the deficiencies and inaccuracies in the company records. Over the course of the next six months (and even through the present), the spa worked tirelessly to sort through the company's finances, make corrections to company records, and to balance the books," the filings say.

Among the documents is part of Spa on the Plaza's

successful application for the pandemic-era loan, evidence that only the spa's assets were used as collateral — contrary to Portola's claims that it was unknowingly on the hook with the Small Business Administration. Malcolm's attorney claims that since his client was not running the spa at the time, he had "virtually no access" to those funds.

Malcolm and Shaw also accuse his ex-wife of refusing to hand over important documents and records, including the spa's lease agreement, even after her March 2025 retirement. (The website for Spa on the Plaza, however, still lists Camille Malcolm as its owner.)

"During this period, the spa operated under a letter from Chris Herman, Portola's director of finance, dated December 27, 2023, as the controlling document for the spa's rent obligations," which "accepted past-due amounts as either paid or forgiven as paid-in-full, and included no mention of percentage rent," according to the filings. Effective January 2024, the spa paid Portola a base rent of \$12,014.13 per month.

### 'Salacious allegations'

But when Malcolm and Shaw sought to renegotiate the spa's lease last August, they were blindsided by accusations of unpaid rent for the previous 18 months, most of it during Camille Malcolm's tenure. They say Portola "refused to provide a full copy of the lease or to provide the exact amount," and did not accept payment when they tried to guess at what was owed.

"The spa tendered an additional 15 payments to Portola for the amount of percentage rent allegedly owed for the period between Jan. 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. To date, Portola has not cashed these checks. We have set aside appropriate funds and stand ready to pay Portola," according to the filings.

Court documents also reference Dec. 5, 2025, coverage

of the lawsuit in The Pine Cone — "a local newspaper that typically covers lighthearted local stories and often carries advertisements for Portola" — to say the "salacious allegations" were designed to "hook" the local press. Portola Hotel was acting "not in a good faith effort to obtain relief under the law, but in a malicious effort to embarrass, harass and defame" Malcolm and Shaw, according to their response.

It's a motive that they'll seek to prove in a Monterey courtroom this month, following an "unsuccessful" effort to resolve their dispute with Portola in January.

## Vandal cuts tires of news vehicles

By KELLY NIX

THE TIRES of five news vehicles belonging to KSBW News were slashed in the organization's parking lot in Salinas last week, police told The Pine Cone.

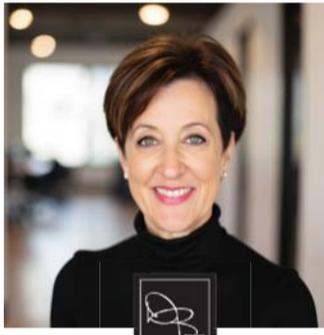
Police Sgt. Zach Dunagan said that the vandalism took place overnight on Jan. 30.

"They had five cars with slashed tires," Dunagan said. The vandalism occurred at "KSBW's lot at the corner of John and Abbott streets."

While KSBW's news director and general manager did not respond to a message from The Pine Cone about the crime, Dunagan said investigators reviewed police footage that appears to show one person involved.

"We do not have an estimation of damages, and we also do not know a motive at this point," Dunagan said.

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# VILLAGE

From page 1A

“This is my home,” he said. “I’ve lived here for 35 years. The stakes are arguably higher for me than they would be for a builder who doesn’t live here.”

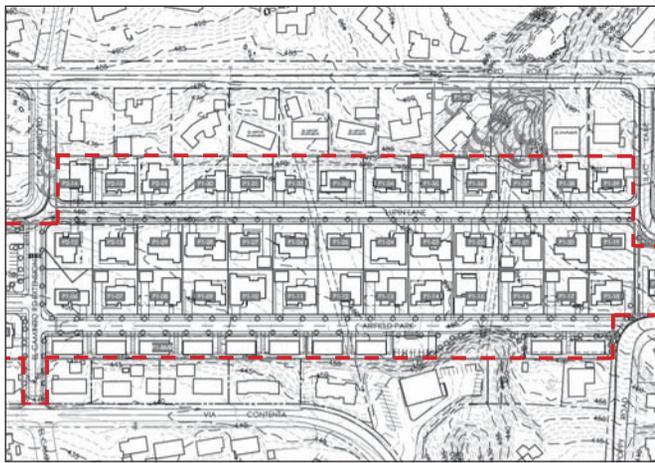
Orosco said he plans to listen to what others say about his project.

“I care what Carmel Valley Association thinks,” he said. “I care what LandWatch Monterey County thinks. I care what [Fifth District Supervisor] Kate Daniels thinks. I care what my neighbors think — and all of

those are pretty tough audiences.”

In its newsletter Thursday, Carmel Valley Association expressed concern over Orosco using a provision in state law known as “builder’s remedy,” which could make it possible for the project to bypass some local zoning, density and general plan requirements. The group contends such projects “punish” residents of communities where they are constructed. “Builder’s remedy projects very often sacrifice community character without achieving substantial construction of the affordable housing that we all agree is needed,” the group said.

The association concedes that the



A map shows where new homes will go if a plan by Patrick Orosco to develop the former Carmel Valley Airport is approved.

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Carmel Valley general plan allows development at the former airfield, but it says it must be done at a much lower density, with a maximum of 24 units. “Residents are understandably concerned about how this large-scale development would upend their quiet neighborhood,” the group said.

### Sooner or later

Orosco, though, pointed out that another developer could use the builder’s remedy — and “build hundreds of homes on this site.” “This site will be developed with a considerably greater density than 24 units now or in the near future,” he predicted.

The homes will be built on what Orosco calls “a classic infill housing site.”

“It’s flat, it’s not environmentally

sensitive, it’s two blocks from goods and services, it’s across from an elementary school, and it’s surrounded on all four sides by homes,” he explained. “This is a site that would have been developed in just about any community anywhere long ago.”

As for the affordable housing component of the project, Orosco said 11 homes will be reserved for those with low incomes, and nine for those with moderate incomes. He also said he intends to prioritize existing Carmel Valley residents, something he can do because the project isn’t subsidized with taxpayers’ money.

Any discussion about the airport’s future wouldn’t be complete without talk

See HOUSING next page

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# Chamber's inaugural Putts for Paws to coincide with AT&T Pro-Am

By MARY SCHLEY

CARMEL CHAMBER of Commerce volunteer Mark Oman — who had a career in golf writing, with several humor books published, and who writes a dog-related column for Carmel Magazine — will see his vision for a pet-themed fundraiser become reality when the first Putts for Paws miniature golf tournament takes place in Devendorf Park at Ocean and Junipero Tuesday, Feb. 10.

“Looking to bring some golf-goofy fun back to AT&T Pro-Am week?” the event pitch opens. “Look no further.”

Oman came up with the idea for the fundraiser, which will support two animal-based charities, as a way of spicing up AT&T Week. The event has changed considerably since it lost its celebrity component in favor of a more competitive professional format with higher earnings.

“I don’t have to tell you that AT&T Week used to be something special,” he said, but with actors and other celebrities no longer part of the mix, “that’s all gone,” he told the Carmel Community Activities Commission last year, when he was seeking permission to organize the event.

### Cats and dogs

At Putts for Paws, each hole will have a dog or a cat theme, and the format calls for two-person teams, one ball, alternate shot — just like the Ryder Cup, organizers point out. Players will leave their clubs at home and will instead use “our crazy canine and

feline custom clubs,” and their scorecards will indicate par for each hole and the maximum number of strokes allowed.

Participants are encouraged to don “outrageous golf fashion,” à la Bill Murray: loud, colorful, and even spectacular.

Registration costs \$150 per team for chamber members and \$200 per team for nonmembers, and the entry fee includes the tournament, tee gifts, prizes, invitations to a pairings party Feb. 9 and an after-party at the conclusion of the event. And, as with the AT&T, it will be played rain or shine, with no refunds available.

### Furry friends

Also, while the tournament is pet-centric, it is not pet-friendly, so players must leave their furry buddies at home — or at least outside the boundaries of the park, where dogs are not allowed. They can cheer on their favorite humans from the sidelines.

Players and spectators will enjoy small bites and mocktails in the Putts for Paws Rescue Lounge, and “emergency caddies will be on hand to help hard-core golfaholics survive the round.”

A portion of proceeds will support Golden Oldies Cat Rescue, which helps find homes for felines that are 6 and older that are at risk in local shelters or whose guardians can no longer care for them, and BirchBark, which helps pet owners who cannot afford emergency vet care and provides education and pet loss counseling programs.

To register, visit [carmelchamber.org](http://carmelchamber.org).

## Don your loud shirts and plaid pants and head to the park

# HOUSING

From previous page

about how the homes might impact the annual Santa’s Fly-In. One of Carmel Valley’s most cherished traditions, the fly-in happens on the second Saturday of December. Orosco said his project would create 5.5 acres of open space, more than enough space for the fly-in to continue in perpetuity. “To put that into perspective, it’s larger than Carmel Valley Community Park,” Orosco noted.

The airport was built by brothers Byington and Tirey Ford, who envisioned a community where homes had hangars instead of garages. But their timing was terrible — they planned a grand opening celebration

for Dec. 7, 1941, the same day Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan.

The Fords sold it to the Del Fino family in 1952, which closed it in 2002. The Del Finos sold the property to Griggs in 2020.

### Reaching out

While some say the open space at the old airport site is needed as a staging area for emergencies, others contend the site has been made obsolete for such purposes due to advances in firefighting and life-saving equipment.

Although many in Carmel Valley don’t like the idea of developing the former airfield — including some who unsuccessfully formed a group, Carmel Valley Save Open Space, to raise money to buy the land and turn it into open space — it has long been considered a site for housing.

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

# ABANDONED CAR FOUND UPSIDE DOWN IN BREAKWATER COVE

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

MONTEREY POLICE are searching for the facts behind a bizarre crash that left an unoccupied four-door sedan overturned in the harbor at Breakwater Cove in Monterey early Sunday morning.

According to MPD Lt. Ethan Andrews, shortly after 2 am. Feb. 1, officers were dispatched to a submerged vehicle at the boat launch ramp near the U.S. Coast Guard pier. They arrived to find the four-door sedan overturned and in the water.

“The vehicle was unoccupied and resting on its roof,” he said.

Surveillance video captured by a nearby camera showed the car “driving through

the parking lot at a high rate of speed and down the boat launch ramp into the water,” according to Andrews. “The vehicle floated for a brief period before sinking.”

They have the where, when and how, but not the who or the why.

“The cause of this incident and identity of the driver of the vehicle are still under investigation,” he said. “Officers have been in contact with the vehicle’s registered owner and determined they were not involved and the car was not reported stolen.”

Members of the public with any relevant information are urged to contact Andrews at (831) 646-3822 or leave an anonymous tip via (831) 646-3840.



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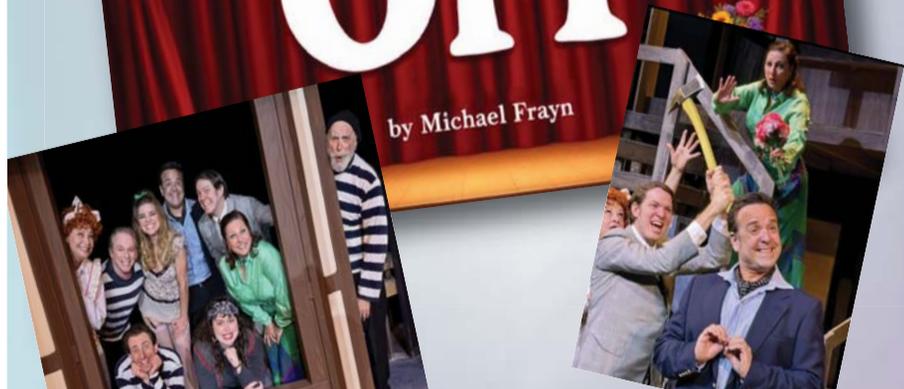
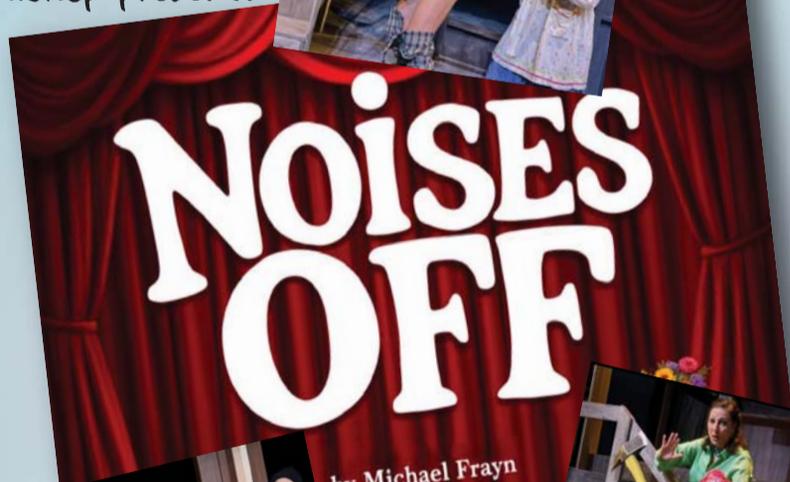
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## Ex-official wants P.G. voters to control pay

By KELLY NIX

LESS THAN a year after the Pacific Grove City Council gave itself a 130 percent raise, a former elected official has proposed making changes to the city's charter that would require voter approval of compensation and health benefits for council members.

On Tuesday, Luke Coletti filed a ballot initiative to amend Pacific Grove's charter — essentially, its constitution — which can be done per state law by a vote of the electorate. The idea of the amendment is to place authority for pay raises and benefits in the hands of voters, not the city council.

"The purpose of this initiative charter amendment for accountability, oversight, and transparency is to require voter approval of compensation and benefits for the mayor and the council members," according to the eight-page document.

### 'Not transparent'

Coletti's move comes after the P.G. City Council in May 2025 gave itself the raise — after rejecting requests to allow voters to decide — and considered giving itself medical coverage, both of which drew significant opposition from residents. In response, Coletti's group, Transparent Pacific Grove, led a successful referendum effort, collecting about 1,800 signatures, which allowed residents to decide on the increase. In August 2025, though, the council nixed the raise instead of allowing citizens to vote on it.

"The city council repealed its 130 percent pay raise to dodge voter oversight and accountability, which is not very transparent," Coletti told The Pine Cone this week.

Council members sought to increase their monthly stipends from \$420 to \$966 and from \$700 to \$1,610 for the mayor, which would have cost taxpayers about \$50,000 annually, and more with benefits. Members Lori McDonnell and Paul Walkingstick voted against the pay hike, which was facing overwhelming opposition from the public.

Mayor Nick Smith declined to comment on Coletti's initiative.

### Once and for all

Supporters of the raise argued that increasing the stipend was necessary since it had been the same for about two decades, and that increasing it could encourage more people, including younger people, to run for office.

See **VOTERS** page 27A

## Correction

Last week's story, "P.G. official fined for late filing," mischaracterized a March 19, 2025, Pacific Grove City Council vote. On that day councilwoman Tina Rau and three of her council colleagues — who were in favor of increasing the entertainment noise threshold downtown — directed the city attorney to return to the council with an ordinance to modify the Pacific Grove Municipal Code as it pertains to sound amplification.



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# Is it pride or waste? Plan to build arch divides East Salinas but moves forward

BY CHRIS COUNTS

FIVE YEARS after a decorative arch was installed over Main Street in Salinas, a plan to erect a similar arch in East Salinas received a \$100,000 boost from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors Jan. 27 — despite loud opposition from a handful of residents who called the project a waste of taxpayers' money.

Plans call for the arch to serve as a landmark to welcome residents and visitors to East Salinas along East Alisal Street, although county documents don't indicate the precise location.

Regarding the estimated cost of the structure, a county report said that "although a specific design has not yet been finalized, the City of Salinas has allocated \$348,104 for design and construction." It's anticipated that there will also be private donors. While it's uncertain how much it will ultimately cost, the arch installed over Main Street cost about \$525,000.

Supervisors voted 4-1 Tuesday to OK the county's \$100,000 contribution, with Fourth District Supervisor Wendy Root Askew voting against it.

Fifth District Supervisor Kate Daniels, who supported the allocation, noted that the funds are discretionary and intended to be spent in District 1, which is represented by Supervisor Luis Alejo, one of the arch's most outspoken supporters.

### 'Symbolic segregation'

During public comment Tuesday, a handful of speakers blasted the idea of spending taxpayers' money on the arch, including East Salinas resident Cal Paradox.

"Our city budget is projected to be in the red by millions," Paradox said. "Should we really be spending money on a symbolic gesture? It feels like symbolic segregation to me. The East Side needs real investment. Youth programs are underfunded, small businesses are barely surviving, our roads are falling apart, and we have people sleeping in the streets."

Also speaking out against the feature was Chris Barrera, president of the League of United Latin American Citizens Council 2055.

"This is not about culture and pride," he said. "It's about priorities, transparency and respect."

Barrera also said the approval process for the arch "raises serious concerns."

"Have conversations actually taken place between the Alisal Vibrancy Committee, City of Salinas staff and the city council about this project?" he asked. "If they have, the public hasn't seen them. If they haven't, this process is fundamentally broken."

According to Barrera, "the East Side doesn't need symbolism, it needs safe crosswalks, traffic calming, high speed internet and direct investment that improves daily life."

Peter Szalai of Salinas suggested that none of the city's residents would declare the arch one of its Top 10 priorities — and he said there is a shortfall of funding for addressing more important priorities like infrastructure, law enforcement, and homelessness. "Don't give a skeptical public

another reason to be disgusted with government wasting our money," Szalai warned supervisors.

In response, Alejo insisted "numerous" city council members expressed support for the project. He also maintained that "the request for the arch came from the community," and its future was discussed numerous times at public meetings.

Alejo noted that there was widespread support for the arch over Main Street when it was installed five years ago.

"But as soon as we want to put it up on the East Side — the most heavily Latino and immigrant zip code in all of Monterey County, now everybody makes the reason why that part of the city doesn't deserve it."

### Tensions rise

After that statement, someone in the audience began shouting at Alejo, but it wasn't clear what they were saying. The hearing was derailed for several minutes while the chair called for order.

Alejo shot back at his critics, suggesting that "the people who shout like that never come to the meetings." As for the arch, "East Salinas does deserve beautification projects — projects that can be a source of pride for the youth in their community." He urged his constituents to focus on "what's beautiful in our community."

"Uplift the families, uplift the youth, uplift the workers, uplift the immigrants," he said. "I want every young person who grows up in Salinas to be proud of their hometown, to want to come back and be a leader. And that means, along the way, to do these projects that are sources of pride, that beautify the neighborhood, that tell the story of the people who grew up there."

The supervisor didn't waver in his stance that the arch is a good thing.

"In the end, I know this is going to be a source of pride," he added. "I know it's going to be a lot of work, but I'm going to keep working on it until I get it across the finish line."

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# A 'bold and breathtaking' lineup, PacRep's 'Season of Wonder' starts Feb. 12

By CHRIS COUNTS

**BILLED AS** "A Season of Wonder," PacRep Theatre's 2026 season kicks off Thursday, 7:30 p.m., at the Golden Bough Playhouse with a discounted preview of "Noises Off," a farce that looks behind the scenes of a stage production to discover chaos and comedy.

Michael Frayn, "Noises Off" continues through March 15. Calling the production "the world's funniest farce," PacRep promises it "explodes onto the stage in this whirlwind of collapsing sets, runaway props, backstage romances and epic comedic chaos."

A husband-and-wife team, Michael Champlin and Katie O'Bryon Champlin, co-direct the play, while the cast includes

Julie Hughett, Michael Storm, Michael Jacobs, Keith Larson, Jennifer Newman, Izzy Pedego, Scott Silagy, Dale Thompson and Michelle Vallentyne.

According to the theater group, "Noises Off" marks the start of a season with "a bold and breathtaking lineup that celebrates the full power of live theater" — and is "overflowing with laughter, enchantment, heartbreak, joy and imagination."

hilarity in this sparkling, whimsical night-under-the-stars adventure," PacRep said. "Love, magic, mischief and moonlight collide."

A Tony and Olivier Award-winning musical by Canadian writing duo Irene Sankoff and David Hein, "Come from Away" opens Nov. 19 at the Golden Bough. PacRep described it as an "uplifting, heart-expanding, award-winning musical that celebrates generosity, unity and the astonishing kindness of strangers."

Set in Gander, Newfoundland, where 38 planes carrying more than 7,000 passengers were forced to land in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks, the show is "a joyful, profoundly human modern classic," the theater company said. "Come From Away" closes Dec. 20.

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**Season's rundown**

Following "Noises Off" at the Golden Bough is "Beetlejuice Jr.," a condensed family-friendly musical based on the beloved Gothic "horror" film by Tim Burton, which also spawned a hit musical on Broadway. It plays April 25 to May 17. PacRep describes the show as "a gleefully spooky theatrical party perfect for the whole family."

Opening June 16, also at the Golden Bough, is PacRep's production of the "monstrously hilarious" musical, "Young Frankenstein," based on the hit film by Mel Brooks. According to PacRep, it features "outrageous jokes, unforgettable songs and electrifying fun." That show continues through July 26.

And coming later this year to the Outdoor Forest Theater is PacRep's production of "The Little Mermaid," Disney's stage version of its 1989 film about a mermaid who dreams about the world above the waves. Premiering Aug. 6 and running through Sept. 20, PacRep describes the production as a "heart-swelling tale of love, bravery and finding your voice."

On a more serious note, "Medea" opens Sept. 3 at the Golden Bough's Circle Theatre. PacRep describes the Greek tragedy as a "gripping, raw and astonishingly intense masterpiece." Written by Euripides four centuries before the birth of Christ, the play "crackles with emotional power in an intimate staging that brings audiences face to face with one of theatre's most unforgettable characters." It continues through Sept. 20.

**Mischief, moonlight**

William Shakespeare's most enchanting comedy, "A Midsummer Night's Dream" comes to the Outdoor Forest Theater Oct. 1-17. "Fairies feud, lovers get lost, and a band of clueless actors stumbles into



PHOTO/COURTESY PACREP

The cast of "Noises Off" rehearses the play, which opens Thursday at the Golden Bough Playhouse.

And when the holidays roll around, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical" will be performed Nov. 28-Dec. 20 at the Outdoor Forest Theater. A PacRep School of Dramatic Arts production, "Rudolph" will feature a cast of student actors from throughout the Peninsula.

Besides selling single tickets to shows, PacRep offers a wide variety of ticket plans with discounts of up to 25 percent. For more details, including ticket sales, call (831) 622-0100 or visit [pacrep.org](http://pacrep.org).



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## PUBLIC NOTICES

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF MONTEREY**

**AMENDED ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**  
 Case No. 26CV000545

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner, DEBRA STEPHENS, filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

**A. Present name:** DEBRA STEPHENS  
**Proposed name:** DEBRA LEDGER

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at

the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

**NOTICE OF HEARING:**  
 DATE: April 7, 2026  
 TIME: 10:00 a.m.  
 DEPT: 14

The address of the court is 1200 Agujito Road, Monterey, CA 93940.  
 A copy of this Order to Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: The Carmel Pine Cone, Carmel.

(s) Ian A. Rivamonte  
 Judge of the Superior Court  
 Date filed: Feb. 3, 2026  
 Publication Dates: Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2026.  
 (PC 222)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**  
 File No. 20260137  
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 This business is conducted by a corporation. Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 20, 2026.  
 S/Oraldo Garcia Garcia  
 Date signed: Jan. 20, 2026  
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 20, 2026.  
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# ADDRESSES

From page 1A

which oversees the system that validates physical addresses, gave a cursory nod to the plan before it was rolled out in draft form. It has yet to be finalized, and the city warns that no one should assume the numbers shown will not change.

## Updates

When it was released, the map identified a few areas where the system had been unable to assign addresses, including some multifamily residences and other random parcels, but many of those have been given numbers. A few persist, such as the house on the northeast corner of Camino Real and Ninth. Parcels with numbered addresses are shown in blue, and on the latest version of the map, zooming in shows the full street address. Formerly, the map showed the last six digits of a property's APN.

On Friday, Swanson said the city is working on methods for assigning unit numbers in apartment and condo complexes — such as identifying them with numbers or letters — and this week, he characterized feedback on the map as “largely positive.”

## Put yourself in the history books!

Adding street numbers to Carmel-by-the-Sea is a significant moment in the town's history, and The Pine Cone needs lots of photos chronicling the change. When you paint or attach the new number to your house, apartment or business, take a really good photo (including yourself) and email it to [news@carmelpinecone.com](mailto:news@carmelpinecone.com). We will print the best ones.

“People appreciate the ease of use,” he told The Pine Cone, and those who had questions on how to navigate it were thankful for the open house held at city hall Jan. 23. That day, members of the address committee welcomed people on a drop-in basis to share their thoughts and ask questions.

“We had multiple laptops set up for the event,” he said, and another session is in the works.

Swanson said the city has also heard from those whose house numbers appear to be incorrect.

“We have received direct feedback from people that their address was wrong based on the system, largely due to the orientation of their main entrance on a corner, and we have been able to fix those when they are shared with us,” he said.

And, of course, Carmel being what it is and humans being what they are, “some people did make requests to change their number for personal preference.”

“But after we explained how the system worked by having more regimented number assignments, people were understanding and did not push their requests any further,” he said.

Late last year, the committee suggested the new system could be in place in May.

After it is finalized and the data are sent to Monterey County, the county will take up to three months to review the information and update its databases at the assessor's office, emergency communications, elections and elsewhere.

Next, the U.S. Postal Service Address Management Systems manager will perform a batch update that should take a week at most, according to the group. When that's complete, each property will have a verifiable physical address.

Utility companies will then update their account records, and Google and Apple maps will reflect the new addresses, too.

Last month, the city council also voted to change the law that required the use of directional addresses like Lincoln 2SW of Third. The revised ordinance states, “Buildings and parcels shall be identified by the address identification requirements of the California Building Standards Code,” including having legible “Arabic numbers or alphabetical letters” visible from the street.

To use the map, visit [ci.carmel.ca.us/street-addresses](http://ci.carmel.ca.us/street-addresses). Questions can be sent to [askstreetaddresses@ci.carmel.ca.us](mailto:askstreetaddresses@ci.carmel.ca.us).

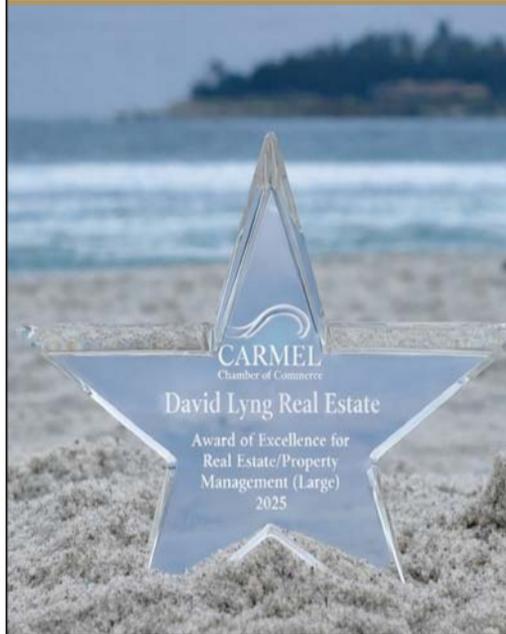
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# TOT

From page 1A

in future budgets.

Bermudez said raising the tax rate to 12 percent could generate another \$1.8 million per year, while bumping it to 14 percent might bring in an additional \$3.6 million. The city contains about 40 inns, hotels and B&Bs. Legal short-term rentals also charge TOT.

Regardless of the size of the proposed increase, city clerk Nova Romero said voters would have to OK it. If the tax hike would simply add to the city's general fund revenues, it could be passed by a simple majority of 50 percent plus one, and would have to be on the ballot during a general election. If the money is to be earmarked for a special purpose, it could be proposed during a general election or in a special election but would require approval by two-thirds of voters. A ballot measure during a general election is less expensive than putting the question to voters in a special election, she added.

Romero presented the timeline for a potential Nov. 3 vote. After hearings and discussions on the language of the ballot measure, the council would have to adopt a resolution calling the election and requesting consolidation with the other races by June 2, adopt a resolution placing the measure on the ballot by July 7, and then undertake public outreach through October.

The filing period for primary arguments would run Aug. 11-16, city attorney Brian Pierik would submit his impartial analysis Aug. 16, and rebuttals could be filed Aug. 17-23. Council members who want to campaign in favor of the measure would have to do so on their own time and on their own dime.

Voters deciding on the tax in the Nov. 3 election would also be choosing their next mayor and two city council members.

Not surprisingly, the hotel operators who commented at the Feb. 3 meeting objected.

### Discouraging reinvestment

Mark Watson, general manager of Inns by the Sea and treasurer for the Visit Carmel tourism group, said that while the TOT rate is lower than those in neighboring cities, the average daily room rates, and therefore the amount of taxes brought in, are higher.

"That's driven by pricing power and reinvestment, not by charging higher TOT," he said.

Watson provided a seven-page analysis of the proposal and the assumptions made by Bermudez and finance manager Jayme Fields in their report. The proposal "assumes revenue gains without accounting for reduced demand, occupancy shifts or length-of-stay impacts," he said, and increasing the rate would take money away from operators who might otherwise use it to make improvements. A higher tax could also cost Carmel its competitive advantage.

He urged the council to "understand the full impacts before moving forward."

Hofsas House owner and former councilwoman Carrie Theis asked council members to take a broader look at ways to raise money instead of focusing on a TOT increase, especially as more rooms come online throughout the Peninsula, and places like Pacific Grove's new Kimpton Hotel woo travelers away from Carmel.

Hoteliers here need to be able to use the lower tax rate as a marketing angle, "so people come here and stay, so they don't become day-trippers," she said. "The residents already complain about day-trippers."

"More and more, guests are asking about the total bill," she added, suggesting that arguments that consumers don't really know or care about tax rates are invalid. "Our guests are more price-sensitive, and the internet makes it easier to price-compare."

Sygalé Lomas, chair of the Carmel Chamber of Commerce's government affairs committee, argued for caution. Not only might a higher tax rate lead to reduced reinvestment in hotel properties, it could discourage longer stays, thereby cutting into dining and shopping, and therefore, sales tax revenues and businesses' profits.

"Further data development and analysis would be beneficial, including evaluation of total effective lodging costs across the region, potential impacts to overnight visitation patterns, and broader economic effects on sales tax and business vitality," she said. "Early and meaningful engagement with hotels, inns and other directly affected businesses will also be essential to ensure a complete understanding of potential outcomes."

Mark Stilwell, who's had decades of experience in the hospitality industry as an executive for the Pebble Beach Co. and the owner of two hotels in town, including the recently overhauled and rebranded Stilwell Hotel, told the council he feels "disappointed, angry and shocked" that a TOT increase is again under consideration.

"You're going down a road I think will damage the market long-term," he said. Before the renovation, Stilwell's aging hotel, then called the Carmel Lodge, generated \$160,000 in hotel taxes in 2019. After it reopened, he said, its first full year in operation added \$725,000 in tax dollars to the city's coffers.

"You take the 10 percent without taking any risk," he said, while hotel operators shoulder rising costs and other strains. "I don't know what more I can do. You're going to hurt my business."

Representing the Carmel Residents Association's board of directors, Nancy Twomey also argued against a Nov. 3 ballot measure.

"We do not support taking the next steps now for a TOT increase," she said, suggesting the council heed the hoteliers' warnings. "Our request is an initial introductory discussion on all possible incremental income options."

### 'Long overdue'

Council members, however, were generally unconvinced.

"It seems like every time the conversation comes up, the sky is falling," councilman Jeff Baron, who has repeatedly pushed for a TOT increase, commented. "It seems like the conversation has started with a 'No.'"

Councilman Hans Buder said he would have preferred starting the discussion with a broader look at potential revenue streams and acknowledged the city could have done a better job of notifying business owners the TOT topic was on the agenda.

Nevertheless, he said, "In looking at solutions, a TOT increase has consistently risen to the top."

Buder also said research indicates the city's capital-improvement needs are somewhere around \$10 million annually — funds it doesn't have. "There is a benefit to reinvesting in the community," he said, and business owners need to share in the sacrifices that will enable that.

He favored putting the increase to 12 percent TOT on the Nov. 3 ballot and earmark it for the general fund — so it can be passed with approval from just over half the voters — but said the council should allocate the additional funds to fixing public buildings, and other capital projects.

Councilman Bob Delves, who serves on a financial stewardship committee with Buder, agreed, as did councilwoman Alistandra Dramov, who called the potential ballot measure "long overdue."

She also noted the prospect of a TOT increase was last debated by the council in May 2024, providing hotel operators plenty of time to prepare.

Only Mayor Dale Byrne disliked the idea. He pointed out Theis' plans for building a new hotel and Watson's anticipated \$2.5 million renovation of the Wayside Inn and said each would result in higher room rates that will bring in more tax dollars without increasing the rate.

"As a businessperson, I always go for investment, growth and improvement," he said, and before he can support a ballot measure, it will need a lot more discussion.

Baron made the motion to "ask staff to come back at the April council meeting with language for the resolution and possible ballot language," Buder seconded it, and it passed 4-1, with Byrne dissenting.

While Carmel voters approved sales tax increases in 2012 and 2020, they rejected a proposed TOT increase in April 2005. The funds would have gone for specific uses rather than to the general fund, therefore requiring a two-thirds majority to pass, and the measure missed the mark, with 54 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed.



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# NURSES

From page 9A

definitive conclusions. What we can say is that we take our responsibility as stewards of our resources seriously and are committed to managing them in a way that helps keep care accessible for our community. Regardless of the outcome of the union process, we value our nurses and will continue working collaboratively to ensure a safe, supportive environment for both patients and staff.”

The nurses contend that the hospital has “more than enough money” to meet the community’s needs.

“From 2020 through 2024, CHOMP spent more than \$31 million on compensation for its top six executives, including \$11 million going to Steven Packer, CHOMP’s former president and CEO,” the union said.

But the nurses haven’t been doing too badly, either. According to the state Office of Healthcare Affordability, the average hourly wage for nurses at CHOMP in 2021 was \$81 per hour, while nursing administrators at CHOMP averaged \$107 per hour.

Now that the election is in the books, the next step

# EPSTEIN

From page 7A

“This certifies that [redacted] has achieved a cumulative academic grade point average of 3.92 GPA for two trimesters,” according to the certificate, which was signed by the school’s principal at the time, Dan Morgan.

Its inclusion is equally baffling to Carmel Unified School District officials, who were asked by The Pine Cone this week if they had been contacted by the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI or any other law enforcement agency about it.

“Carmel Unified has never been contacted by the DOJ and was not aware of any inclusion of any documents from Carmel Unified School District in the file,” Superintendent Sharon Ofek said Thursday.

# SHIELD

From page 6A

officer, making a criminal threat to the female relative, and evading police while driving recklessly.

Villareal had originally also been charged with attempted murder, kidnapping, child abuse and other charges, and his guilty pleas were likely a result of prosecutors dropping some of those counts. Villareal, who is being held in Monterey County Jail, has a prior strike under the state’s three strikes law.

He’ll be sentenced by Monterey County Superior Court Judge Mark Hood.

for the nurses is to elect a bargaining team and prepare to negotiate their first union contract.

Kristine Olalia, a nurse in CHOMP’s orthopedic unit, said she was thrilled the group would be able to start bargaining “on the things that matter most, like patient care, safe staffing and workplace violence prevention policies.”

CHOMP also responded to the nurses’ complaint that management closed the cafeteria in the evening, which they said left patients without access to hot food.

“We provide patients with hot meal service for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and with snack service throughout the day,” Sciuto said.

## Frances “Chudie” Marie Bruno Balesteri Verwold

Chudie passed away on January 16, 2026, surrounded by her family at the age of 94, in Monterey, California. Chudie was born in Pittsburg, California to Neno Bruno and Bessie Cardinali Bruno on February 10, 1931. Chudie embraced life with a positive light and encouraging attitude. She had a kind heart and was always helping anyone in need and not expecting anything in return. She was the most honest and loyal person anyone could ever meet and was always a “peacemaker.” She was unselfish, kind, patient and always brought out the best in everyone she met. She was truly the heart of her family and the “best mother in the world”.



Her passion was cooking for her family, and she will always be remembered for her delicious meals and superb baking. She was also known for making her crochet blankets that she “sprinkled” all over California. Chudie found guidance in her faith, saying prayers and the rosary every day and loved to share the spiritual healing of prayer with family and friends. Her passing will always leave a tremendous void in her family’s life and holidays will never be the same again.

Chudie attended Larkin, Colton and was a proud graduate of Monterey High School’s class of 1949. At the young age of 12 she started working at most of the sardine canneries on Monterey’s Cannery Row. Her last job was dedicated to working at Del Mar French Laundry. She was a lifelong parishioner at San Carlos Church and member of the ICF Branch #36.



Chudie is preceded to heaven by her husbands Adolph Verwold and Frank Balesteri Jr., granddaughter Tina Money, son-in-law John Money, sister Catherine Buccellato, and brother Dr. Vincent Bruno. Chudie is survived by her daughters, Angela (Larry) Escobar, Prudie Money, grandchildren: Cini Escobar, Larry Escobar Jr. (Viet Ho), J. D. (Laura) Money, great-grandchildren: Leia and Lorenzo Escobar, Johnny, Hannah, Mackenzie, and Vincent Money, and her brother Anthony (Hope) Bruno. In addition to many nieces, nephews and loving extended family and friends.

Visitation will be at Mission Mortuary, 450 Camino El Estero, Monterey on Wednesday, February 11th, from 4:00 – 8:00 pm. The Rosary will be at 7:00 pm. Her funeral mass will be held on Thursday, February 12th at 10:00am at San Carlos Cathedral, 500 Church St., Monterey, immediately followed by graveside services at San Carlos Cemetery.

## NICHOLAS JOSEPH SILVEIRA

Nicholas (Nick) Joseph Silveira, age 39, was taken from us in a tragic accident on Saturday, January 17, 2026. There are no words big enough to fully express the heartbreak of losing a man who brought so much love, laughter, and light into the lives of everyone around him. Nick is survived by his beloved wife, Annie Silveira (Bollinger); his adoring children, Carter and Samantha Silveira; his parents, Jeff and Carol Silveira; his sister, Heather Silveira; his father-in-law, Mike “Gramps” Bollinger; and many loving extended family members and friends.



Nick was born on June 10, 1986, in Monterey, California, and was raised in Pacific Grove. Growing up, Nick was active in many sports and was a standout football player at Pacific Grove High School. He loved building and working with his hands; after high school he began working in carpentry in Sacramento, learning heavy construction and helping build docks, piers, and Navy-related projects in Washington. As the owner of a residential construction business, Nick supported his family and built connections and friendships across town through the homes and projects he crafted with pride.

With his gentle spirit, infectious smile, magnetic personality, and a constant sparkle in his eyes, Nick had a unique way of connecting with people of every age, especially kids. He was a kid at heart, carrying a deep love for the people and families around him. Nick was often on the verge of a joke or a laugh and he created and appreciated small moments that made him and the people around him feel at home.

And then there was Annie. Nick and Annie met through friends, and it didn’t take long for everyone to see that they had something special. They were true soulmates—best friends, partners in crime, and each other’s “home.” Together, they built a beautiful life full of laughter, adventure, and a kind of love people hope for. No one could make Annie laugh the way Nick could. Nick and Annie married on September 2, 2017. Nick was a devoted husband and a proud, doting father: whether it was coaching the kids in sports, helping with homework, or teaching them important life skills, he was an incredible dad. He loved his kids fiercely and showed it through big squeezes and deep inhales, as if he were taking in every ounce of them.

Nick’s connections ran deep. He had a special effect on everyone he met, whether they were lifelong friends, contractors he worked with, or someone he’d just met. He introduced people to other people, brought groups together, and made everyone feel included. He was the glue and, often, the peacemaker. Nick was a son, a brother, an uncle, a husband, a father, a friend, a hard worker, a coach, a confidant, and a truly special person. We will forever remember Nick as someone whose laughter filled the air and made life feel a little lighter. It was impossible not to laugh with him. Nick—impossible not to love, impossible to replace.

A Funeral Mass honoring Nick’s life will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. at Holy Spirit Catholic Church (3159 Land Park Drive, Sacramento, CA 95818). All who knew and loved Nick are welcome to join in honoring his memory. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorial contributions be made to Holy Spirit Parish School.

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Research Psychologist  
PhD in Psychology,  
Stanford University

## Josephine Mercurio

Josephine Mercurio (née Pisto) passed away peacefully at home on January 27, surrounded by her loving family. She was born on September 27, 1934, in Syracuse, New York. She moved to Monterey with her family at a young age and remained there for the rest of her life. Josephine graduated from Monterey High School in 1953 and married the love of her life, the late Jean Mercurio, in 1956. They shared over 50 years of marriage before his passing.



Her greatest joy was being in the kitchen and with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She loved cooking for her family, delighted in food and her kitchen, and was glad just to have everyone gathered around her. No one left her house hungry — she always wanted everyone to be happy and well fed. She also enjoyed trips to Laughlin with the Italian Catholic Federation.

She is survived by her sons, Dominic (Roxanne) and

Sammy (Angeli); her grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Johnny Mercurio, Kathryn Donangelo (Matt) and their children Gianna and Mia, Dominic Mercurio Jr., and Sal Mercurio; her brother, John Pisto (Cheryl); and her sister, Betty LaBonte (the late Ray).

The family would like to thank Blanca Rivas and her family for their dedicated care, which made Josephine's final days peaceful.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice of the Central Coast at 30 Ryan Ct #250 in Monterey. A funeral Mass will be held on Wednesday, February 11, at 10:00 a.m. at San Carlos Cathedral.

## CORPORATE

From page 1A

introduced a bill to ban corporations from owning more than 1,000 single-family homes in the state, but it stalled in committee. Now that Trump and Newsom are on board, the lawmaker is hopeful his bill will make it to the governor's desk.

According to the California Research Bureau, large corporations own more than 25,000 single-family homes in the Golden State, while smaller firms have bought more than 53,000.

The investor purchases have largely been made in inland California, where real estate is cheaper, but the Monterey Peninsula is not immune. According to the research bureau, corporations with 100-plus deeds own 1,277 homes in Senate District 17, the area represented by State Sen. John Laird, which includes the Peninsula.

"Our office has not been made aware of any constituent concerns regarding a corporation having a large and outsized ownership in the market," said Laird, but added some have expressed support for Lee's bill. "Four constituents have reached out in support of the bill."

While state data don't break down the biggest owners by senate district, they

show the top buyers statewide. Invitation Homes is far and away the biggest, with more than 11,000 houses. Its nearest competitor, Cobra, owns 4,448, followed by JD Home Rentals with 2,785. Invitation Homes is one of the largest buyers on the national scene, too. Findings from the Urban Institute estimated in 2023 that businesses owning at least 1,000 single-family homes owned 446,000 properties nationwide.

The investment in single-family homes became a thing during the Great Recession when thousands of homes were foreclosed and snapped up at what were seen as bargain-basement prices. But even as prices have risen, the trend has continued.

Lee and other lawmakers have vilified these companies as financial scavengers, preventing young people from breaking into the housing market and driving up the cost of living for renters. While the former may be true, the latter is harder to prove.

### Impact on rents

Across the United States, median rent declined in December to the lowest level in four years. California hasn't seen the same drop at a statewide level, but some areas, most notably Los Angeles, have seen rent prices decrease.

*Continues next page*

## EDGAR CHRISTOPHER GAUDOIN

AKA: SAO HKAM HAN HPA

Edgar passed away at the age of ninety-nine on January 10, 2026. He was born on October 4, 1926, in Kanpetlet, Chin Hills, Burma. His parents were Edgar Thomas David Gaudoin, the governor of a state in British-Burma, and Sao Nang Hseng Oo, a princess in the Shan state of Burma.

Edgar's adult life started early when he lied about his age at fifteen and enlisted in the British Army Medical Corps. Burma was going through dramatic changes during this period of her history, so Edgar also served in the Indian Army. He was then commissioned into the Burmese Army in 1948. He commanded two Infantry Battalions in combat during the Burmese civil war. Edgar received many awards from the militaries he served in. It is worth noting that he was recommended for several higher awards during his time in the Burmese Army. These awards were not approved due to racial, religious and political discrimination. His service in the British Army was also part of that discrimination.

The most important highlight of his time in the military was when he met Bertha Vera D'Alvis. She was a Lieutenant in the army while he was a private. The joke was that he could never join her at the Officers Club while they were courting. However, love overcame their military ranks, and they were married on October 4, 1943; it was also Edgar's 17th birthday. Children followed and they were parents of six sons during their time in Burma.

1957 was a turbulent time in Burma, so Edgar and Bertha, along with their six boys, decided to immigrate to the United States. They settled down in Pacific Grove, California. He worked as a teacher at the Army Language School (D.L.I.). It was also during the early years in Pacific Grove that their only daughter was born. It was such a relief after six sons. Life was hard but happy for the young family.

Edgar held citizenship in the three countries of Britain, India and Burma. However, nothing gave him more pride than when he and his family became American citizens on December 12, 1962. He and Bertha had given their children a future in the country he felt was the greatest in the world.

Edgar's professional life continued at the D.L.I. when he was appointed as one of the first audio-visual specialists in 1964. He was then appointed as the Chief of the Instruction Media Center in 1978. He remained Chief until his retirement in 1987.

Edgar believed in education; he attended night school to attain degrees at Monterey Peninsula College and DeVry's Technical Institute. He also attended San Jose State and Indiana University.

A man who lives to the age of ninety-nine has many stories and adventures. Edgar was no different: witnessing elephants stampeding during forest fires, walking hundreds of miles from Burma to India, retreating from the Japanese in sampans, hoping they wouldn't get strafed by enemy planes, and almost dying of malaria at the Chinese border. However, these war stories were softened when talking about his passion for golf and his hole-in-one at the Pacific Grove Golf Links.

His retirement was filled with service to his community. He was president of the Presidio of Monterey Credit Union, president of the Monterey Peninsula Kiwanis Club, a driver for Meals on Wheels for thirty years and a Eucharistic Minister at St. Angela Merici Catholic Church.

Edgar's life came crashing down when he lost his sweetheart, Bertha, on February 4, 2012, after 68 years of marriage. He was preceded in death by his beloved sons, Michael and Mark.

Edgar is survived by his sons, Keith (Nola), Ed, Tom (Theresa), Pete; daughter Mary (Bret), his daughter-in-law Linda, and his grandchildren Ross, Peter, Christina, Michelle, Flint, Kelli, Dexy, Dana, Rachel, Ryan and Justin — and sixteen great-grandchildren.

The family would like to thank the staff at Seaside Cypress (formerly known as Angelica's Villa). In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Edgar's memory to Meals on Wheels or V.N.A Hospice.



## STEVEN GENE KALLISON

October 22, 1944 ❖ December 26, 2025

Steve Kallison, age 81, of Carmel-by-the Sea, CA passed peacefully on the morning of December 26, 2025. Steve was a man of exquisite taste, and deeply appreciated the intricacies of life, a theme that ran through everything he did.

Steve is survived by his son, Eli; his sisters-in-law, Rachel and Ellen Rush; his brother-in-law, Gary Parsons; his nephews; and his cousin, Sheila. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ethel Vinik and Morris Kallison, and by his beloved wife, Sarah Kallison.



Steve was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, where he developed an early love for cars and design. He attended the University of Chicago as an architecture major and joined an art club that allowed members to rent a high-end artist's work each semester. It was there that his lifelong love of art began to take shape. He later switched majors,

graduating with a degree in Biology, and went on to attend medical school at the University of Florida. Here, he learned he was squeamish around blood, and promptly decided to become a Psychiatrist where he found his calling.

He practiced as a psychiatrist in the San Francisco Bay Area for more than 30 years. During that time he met his wife, Sarah, and had his first and only son, Eli. Steve worked at Kaiser Permanente until retiring in 2010, after which he settled in beautiful Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Steve had a deeply intentional love for the finer things in life. From an impressive lineup of exotic cars he enjoyed over the years, to his impeccable taste in wine, food, and art, to his deep knowledge and appreciation of the esoteric world of audiophile high-fidelity sound, Steve lived with style and discernment. He even carried business cards titled "Taste Police," which he delighted in handing to innocent passer-bys from whom he would elicit a chuckle. He had a full arsenal of (somewhat repetitive!) Dad jokes and was often mistaken for Steve Martin when out to dinner with his family.

Though sometimes reserved, Steve loved his family deeply. He was devoted and loyal to his wife and son and cared for his family above all else. Steve will be greatly missed. No memorial is currently planned, but those who wish to connect may email Eli Kallison at [elirushkallison@gmail.com](mailto:elirushkallison@gmail.com).

## From previous pag

Data from Apartment List shows L.A. County's median rent of \$2,035 a month was the lowest it's been since 2022. Other major metropolitan areas are still seeing prices climb, including Lee's San Jose, where rent rose nearly 5 percent between 2024 and 2025.

An analysis of 2023 data from the Urban Institute found corporations tend to choose markets with large populations, where employment growth is steady and rents are already increasing. The same analysis also found that while investors chase rising prices, on average they are rarely the cause.

What is clear is that private equity has an edge over first-time homebuyers. The firms are usually cash buyers, whereas families often need to secure mortgages.

Research by economists with the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond in 2024 found investors, especially those with more cash, tend to buy low-priced houses — the kind first-time buyers typically target.

### Housing market boogeyman

Redfin chief economist Daryl Fairweather dubbed private equity the "boogeyman" of the housing market in 2025. His argument was that people want to blame someone for high home prices, but in reality the problem is a lack of supply. State data show investors only own 3 percent of single-family homes in California, and that dataset includes any owner with at least 10 properties.

Corporations make a good scapegoat for rising housing prices, but they're not the only ones to blame, and curbing them should be done with caution, especially if it interferes with new housing development.

In 2024, three bills aimed at reining in private equity fell flat, including one that would have banned developers from selling "build-to-rent" homes in bulk to big investors. It had the backing of the state's association of realtors, who collect commissions on individual sales, but it likely would have prevented future housing stock from getting off the ground.

Fast forward to 2026 and Lee's bill, while stalled in committee, is still an active piece of legislation. It's also a bill Monterey Peninsula Assemblymember Dawn Addis supported when it passed the Assembly last June.

"Homeownership is one of the most important pathways toward long-term stability, and I remain committed to doing everything I can to make sure it becomes a reality for more Californians," said Addis. "That means putting all options on the table, including examining the role large corporate investors play in our housing market."

Trump followed up his promise to do something with an executive order last month that limits Wall Street-style investors from buying single-family homes, but only when federal mortgage programs are involved. The order cuts off federal support, but it's far from a blanket ban, which is how Trump promoted it a day later during his speech at the World Economic Forum.

"America will not become a nation of renters. We're not going to do that — that's why I have signed an executive order banning large institutional investors from buying single-family homes," said Trump.

The order also carves out an exception for build-to-rent, promoting from-scratch rental investment by big business. Newsom, on the other hand, is leaning toward taxing

his way out of the investor-owned problem. The governor suggested changing the tax code to make it less attractive for corporations to accumulate houses. Newsom hasn't released specifics, but one likely lever is to increase property tax rates on real estate investment trusts and LLCs that exceed a threshold of single-family home ownership in the state.

A new revenue stream in a precarious budget year? Sounds like something Sacramento could get on board with.

**'America will not become a nation of renters.'**



**Angelina R. Buita**  
AUG 11, 1938 - FEB 9, 2021

Always thinking of you, Mom  
Love You



### IN LOVING MEMORY OF ANTOINETTE (ANN) CIARAMITARO FERRANTE

Heaven has gained another angel. With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of our beloved mother, Antoinette (Ann) Ciaramitaro Ferrante. Born in 1933 to Neno and Antonia Ciaramitaro in Pittsburg, California, Ann was the 12th of 13 children, growing up in a lively and loving family.

In 1955, Ann married the love of her life, Neno Ferrante, and together they began a new chapter in Monterey. Their partnership was filled with warmth and devotion, and they cherished the time spent with family and friends.

Ann dedicated 25 years of service to Bank of America, where she made many lasting connections. She and Neno enjoyed many trips over the years to Tahoe and Reno, as well as the many bus trips with friends. These trips made for many wonderful memories with family and friends.

She found immense joy in volunteering. Ann was actively involved with organizations such as the Italian Catholic Federation, Santa Rosalia Festa Italia, Italian Heritage Society, Catholic Daughters, Young Ladies Institute, Monterey Civic Club and San Carlos Cathedral. She enjoyed her monthly Bunco groups and Monterey Ladies Bocce.

Ann was preceded in death by her husband, Neno; and is survived by her son, Anthony (Jeanine), and daughter, Theresa. Her family and friends will always remember the love she brought into their lives and the positive impact she made within her community.

Graveside service will begin at 11 a.m. Friday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, at San Carlos Cemetery, 792 Fremont Ave, Monterey. In lieu of flowers, donations to San Carlos Cathedral (for Monterey Ladies Bocce), St. Angela Merici Church Pacific Grove, St. Jude's Children's Hospital or Shriners Hospitals for Children in Ann's name are appreciated.



**CHRISTINE K. SEIDEL WILLIAMS**  
10/11/1951 ♦ 12/22/2025

Chris, whose father served in the U.S. Army, was born in Nuremberg, Germany, on Oct. 1, 1951. She was a steadfast and joyous Christian who lived the last two decades in Browns Valley with her devoted husband of 40 years, Ron Williams. After having a heart attack on Oct. 20, 2025, Chris succumbed to pneumonia at Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital in Santa Rosa on Dec. 22, 2025, three days before the celebrated birth of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Chris grew up on the Monterey Peninsula with her six siblings. She graduated from Monterey High School in 1970. After opening and operating her beloved daycare business in her beautiful homes in Fort Ord, Germany and Salinas, she and Ron retired and moved to Yuba County. Chris loved being surrounded by the calm and quiet of nature. She devoted her time to her big garden and yard. She held a special place in her heart for God's creatures. She took loving care of her goats, chickens, ducks, doves, finches and hummingbirds. She adored her three little dogs, Spencer, Bella and Mia, with whom she would snuggle daily while watching her favorite TV shows and movies. Chris read her Bible every day. She was filled with God's bright light. You could depend on Chris to bring joy, goofiness and laughter to your day and to the many family gatherings she attended.

Chris is survived by her husband, Ron Williams, who was a totally dedicated, loving and dependable dad and mentor to her two sons, Rick and Rey, from her first marriage, and to his son, Eddie. Chris was a caring mom to Eddie, whom she considered a son. Chris is also survived by those three sons, Rick Ramirez of St. Louis, MO, Reynold Ramirez of Prunedale and Eddie Williams of Idaho Falls, ID; and her six siblings, Linda Brown of Williamsburg, VA, Robert Seidel of Monterey, Theresa Houseman of Pacific Grove, Jinny Meyers of Carmel Valley, Andrea Weaghtington of Salinas and Sam Seidel of Charleroi, PA. She was a much-loved grandmother to Noah, Paige, Reyden, Mason, Emma and Tyler.

Chris's friends and family are invited to her memorial service which starts at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 19, at the California Central Coast Veterans Cemetery, 2900 Parker Flats Road, Seaside; and to her Celebration of Life reception at 3 p.m. at Compass Church, 830 Padre Drive in Salinas.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Northwest SPCA in Oroville, Hitchcock Animal Shelter in Salinas, or to the Peace of Mind Dog Rescue in Pacific Grove.

"We called her Chris. She isn't gone. Just away for a little while."

"Until Heaven and Then Forever."

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# Editorial

## Not all rates are created equal

IF A tax is tied to activity in the private economy, the money collected by the tax will automatically rise with population increases, productivity and inflation. So why should the rate itself ever be increased?

Sales taxes are a good example. Imagine collecting 10 percent of everything sold in California, year in and year out, in perpetuity. If you did that, you'd be a very rich person. How rich? According to estimates from the Federal Reserve Bank, retail sales in California rose from \$652 billion in 2019 to \$792 billion in 2023, which means (assuming a 10 percent sales tax rate) the government increased its sales tax revenue by \$14 billion over that same time span — with no increase in the rate. By taking a fixed percent of everything Californians buy, the government has a fantastic revenue stream, even if it never raises the rate.

Same thing with income taxes, property taxes and TOT, which are all linked to earning and spending by the public and automatically rise and fall with the public's economic activity.

But the government is never satisfied with keeping its revenue in line with how much money the public touches. For one thing, many politicians don't see taxation solely as the means to pay for things the government needs to do. Year in and year out, leading Democrats can be heard calling for the rich to pay their "fair share," and by "fair," they mean whatever takes money from the rich and gives it to the poor. If that is your goal, no tax rate is ever too high.

Similarly, the idea of spending more on public schools has become political orthodoxy, regardless of whether the increased spending makes the schools produce better results for students.

New York City is a prime example. According to City Journal, the number of students enrolled in New York public schools has shrunk by 10 percent since its peak in 2010. Despite this, the city's education budget has grown by more than \$1 billion yearly since 2019, reaching \$40 billion, or \$42,000 per pupil, this year.

Despite that shockingly high outlay, New York City students perform far below national averages in math and English, with proficiency rates among fourth graders of just 28 percent and 33 percent, respectively. And what does Mayor Zohran Mamdani do? He promises to spend more on the schools, of course.

Government officials have a tendency to spend right up to the limit of whatever money is at hand, and having done that, always find themselves needing more, not only to accommodate unavoidable increases in expenses due to inflation, population growth and demands for new services as a population ages, but also for luxuries, like generous pension and healthcare benefits for government employees, or to satisfy demands from politically favored groups.

This is not to say that there's never a justification for raising tax rates pegged to economic activity, but the public should keep in mind that the firehose of revenue they're already providing to government at all levels is far more than what's needed to provide essential services, and that any attempt to raise tax rates — especially for sales taxes, property taxes and hotel taxes, which already produce revenue at ever-increasing rates — should be viewed with skepticism.

## 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

### STRs are good for community Dear Editor,

We are a fourth-generation Carmel family and short-term rental hosts in Monterey County. We are deeply concerned about the board of supervisors' push toward a total ban or overly burdensome permitting processes for STRs. The stated goal is to address affordable housing shortages, but their measures fail to achieve that as STRs make up less than 2 percent of the overall housing supply. Their actions are threatening the livelihoods and property rights of local families like ours.

Our small family home, which we cherish and use personally, also serves as a welcoming space for visitors to experience the beauty of California's coastal area. We accommodate families and their pets, providing comfortable stays that hotels often cannot match. In doing so, we create essential jobs for local workers. We hire cleaners, landscapers and maintenance professionals

who depend on this income to support their own families in our community.

Banning or complicating STRs with expensive permits won't magically create affordable housing. It will only squeeze out longtime residents like us, who rely on this modest revenue to maintain our properties and stay rooted here. Our family has called Carmel home for generations, and sharing our space benefits not just us but countless visitors who boost the local economy through tourism.

Many in our community agree that a total ban is a bridge too far, infringing on our property rights without solving the underlying issues. We are not a large corporation trying to take over Carmel for commercial purposes. We, and the many other STR host families like us, are preserving a connection to this community for future generations.

We urge the board of supervisors to reconsider and seek balanced solutions that preserve STRs as a vital part of Monterey County's fabric. Let's work together to support locals, jobs and responsible tourism.

Dennis and Susan Jones,  
Carmel Valley

### Highway's troubles Dear Editor,

With Highway 1 finally reopening after nearly three years, it's time to take an honest look at what this closure has cost our region, and why we continue to accept timelines and expenses that would have

See LETTERS page 24A

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# The Carmel Pine Cone

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

## An enduring business that started with a summer vacation

JAN LEASURE, founder and managing broker of MontereyRentals.com, got into the business because she wanted to travel. Now celebrating her company's 40th anniversary, she recently received the Monterey County Association of Realtors' Lifetime of Service Award.



PHOTO/COURTESY JAN LEASURE

Jan Leasure founded MontereyRentals.com, a 40-year-old vacation rental and property management business.

Leasure grew up in West Virginia with two younger sisters and graduated from West Virginia University with a degree in education.

"I never wanted to do anything but teaching," she said. She moved out here as a military wife with her then-husband and

handful — maybe three or four houses." Things grew quickly through the late 1980s, when her guests came mainly through classified ads in the Los Angeles Times, the San Francisco Chronicle and the Sacramento Bee.

Since she had tenure, great benefits and a job she loved, launching a business full-time felt risky. It took four years. First, she cut her schedule to half-time by sharing her job with another teacher and was "kind of surprised" by how much money she made in the other 20 hours a week.

Next, Leasure took an unpaid one-year leave of absence, then another. When she tried for a third year, however, her bosses offered a choice: Come back to work or resign. She's been a full-time entrepreneur ever since.

### Early signs

Almost everyone in Leasure's small West Virginia hometown worked for Kaiser Aluminum, she said, including her father, a mechanical engineer. Her mother was a homemaker.

Leasure's first experiment with entrepreneurship came at age 10, when an ad in a comic book enticed her to try selling greeting cards door to door. Then, as a junior or senior in high school, she started running gymnastics classes out of the gym.

These days, it would sound crazy, but she just went to her school's administration and said something like, "Hey, I'd like to teach kids gymnastics on Saturday mornings," and they OK'd the idea.

Using only her devotion to and experience with gymnastics, she taught youngsters ages 3 to 10 how to tumble across mats, navigate the balance beam and use the uneven parallel bars.

Their parents just dropped them off, and Leasure said she charged a dollar or two per child for her services. She estimated that at the class' peak, about 25 kids were attending, and she had to recruit a couple of friends to help her out.

One of the 5-year-olds had some real

See **LIVES** page 25A

## Great Lives

By ELAINE HESSER

began teaching in the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District. One summer, as her time off stretched out before her, she thought, "Why don't I rent out my house and go somewhere else? I could finance my vacation." She did it, and when word got out, other teachers started asking her to do the same for them.

The first year, she said, it was "just a

From the mayor's desk —

## The folklore of the impossible

By DALE BYRNE

THE LAST two weeks, I've put the "rhinoceros skin" you grow in public office to good use while seeing many examples of what we've quietly decided is "impossible." We have a long list. Parking structures are "not allowed." Undergrounding utilities is "too hard." We can't build new hotels without ruining the town. New housing can't exist without destroying our character. We can't have an honest talk about our untenable parking situation. And developing a downtown master plan or a real business development function it isn't even open for discussion.

None of these things is actually impossible. But in Carmel, repetition turns preference into folklore. And heavy lifts aren't popular in a town mostly overseen by retired folks like me.

### How belief becomes policy

Take parking structures. A former city administrator tried to insinuate that our general plan doesn't allow them in Carmel. It sounded authoritative. It also happens to be untrue. They are not prohibited by our general plan. They are discouraged

See **MAYOR** page 26A



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## PLEIN AIR PAINTER ACQUIRED HER 'STIFF UPPER LIP' AS A CHILD

A WELL-SPENT upbringing in England instilled Peninsula artist Laura Lindem with a "very British" approach to painting, she said, along with the "village mentality" that helped attract her to Carmel-by-the-Sea. Lindem, represented by Carmel's Nancy Dodds Gallery, is a dedicated plein air artist, meaning she paints almost exclusively outdoors and nearly always "from life." Copying from photographs lacks the purity her heart demands.

hours, you better go home," said the artist, a member of the Monterey Bay Plein Air Painters Association.

As she drives or walks, Lindem habitually makes notes in her phone, recording the exact time and location that she noticed ideal lighting streaming from a specific direction onto a worthy subject. She frequently drives off road, straps a weighty backpack onto her shoulders and hikes to a desired spot. And she almost always paints alone, prioritizing focus over chat.

Most of those things have been ingrained since her school days.

"That's just how I was taught, and it's how I've

always believed you were supposed to paint," said Lindem, who discovered at age 9 — her first year in England — that her elementary school was equipped with "a proper art studio."

"Our wonderful art master, Mr. Gay, wore a black gown," she remembered. "He was probably about 60, but to all of us, as 9- or 10-year-olds, he might as well have been 100."

"We'd walk into his studio, put on our smocks, go to an easel, and we were artists!"

At 12, Lindem and her classmates learned to paint with oils, the medium she prefers.

For an evolving child-artist, England felt idyllic.

"We lived between Coventry and Stratford, and it was safe back then for 10-year-old kids to take the bus into Stratford," Lindem reminisced of her adventures with her 13-year-old sister. "We'd ride into the village, spend our money at the sweets shop, then walk through a gallery and look at all the art."

She also fondly recalled frequent school trips to preview performances of Shakespeare plays, which seemed especially "magical" whenever her big sister was part of the cast.

### Early exposure to creativity

And she benefited from the support of creative parents.

Her mom, a former Chicago fashion model, became a musician and performer, singing at coffee houses throughout England and Ireland — often as little Laura snoozed on a corner bench.

One of Lindem's earliest memories, at age 4, is napping on a blanket at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island, when thousands of people began booing, startling her out of

See **ARTIST** page 27A

## Carmel's Artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

"Painting from life is, I think, a very British thing," she said. "Long before the internet, long before anybody heard of 'plein air,' painters in England and Europe always painted from life."

"Fabulous paintings also are done from photographs, of course — but if I'm painting from a photo, I feel removed. I don't feel like I'm there. And I can't do that."

### Any weather but wind

Lindem is a plein air purist. She's painted in falling snow, stifling heat, and rain — until it became a downpour. "Anything but wind, which can blow my easel over," she said, "although there have been times when I've literally been holding my easel with one hand and painting with the other."

She has also mastered the formidable challenge of completing most of her paintings on site, rather than finishing her work in a studio.

"If you're out there more than two



PHOTO/COURTESY LAURA LINDEM

Carmel artist Laura Lindem paints the vast majority of her work outdoors, on site, like this recent rendering of a well-known hotel in London's Notting Hill district.

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# LETTERS

From page 22A

been unimaginable to the engineers who built this road in the first place.

I drive Highway 1 regularly, and every weekend the same scene plays out at Bixby Bridge: cars lined on both sides, visitors pouring out for photos, and the pavement, shoulders and pullouts in visible decline. Crumbling edges, uneven surfaces and worn-out guardrails surround one of the most photographed landmarks in California. If the most heavily visited sections of the route look neglected, what confidence should we have in the rest?

Meanwhile, the Regents Slide closure dragged on for nearly three years and cost approximately \$82 million just to repair the roadway. The economic fallout was even more staggering: Big Sur and Monterey Peninsula businesses lost an estimated \$438 million in visitor spending during the shutdown. Inns, restaurants, tour operators and small shops bore the full weight of that loss — not Caltrans, not Sacramento.

And here's the comparison no one seems willing to make: In the early 1930s, during roughly the same three-year span, crews built over 20 miles of brand-new Highway 1 along the Big Sur coast — carving roadbeds out of sheer cliffs, blasting rock with dynamite, building retaining walls, installing drainage and constructing multiple bridges. They completed Bixby Bridge in 14 months for \$199,861 (about \$3 million today), hauling 45,000 bags of cement across the canyon using a suspended cable

“high-line” system. In other words, with primitive machinery and Depression-era budgets, they built entire sections of the highway from scratch in the time it now takes us to repair a few hundred yards of roadway (dirt).

Yes, regulations and safety standards have evolved. But the pattern is unmistakable: projects now take far longer and cost exponentially more, with little accountability for the economic damage caused by prolonged closures. Highway 1 is the backbone of our region's economy. We cannot afford another multi-year shutdown — and we certainly cannot pretend this is the best we can do.

**Vincenzo D'Amico,**  
Carmel

## Invitation from India

Dear Editor,

I am from Mumbai, India, and have come to the U.S. to visit my son in Sunnyvale. I have visited Carmel-by-the-Sea twice and am extremely overwhelmed by its rich heritage, hospitality of its peace-loving people, its neatness, cleanliness and the city's beaches.

Last Sunday, I came across your fascinating and informative newspaper. I loved its varied content so much that during my journey back home I read each and every page.

Your paper's journey of the last 115 years must have been rich with accolades and milestones. The Carmel Pine Cone reminds me of a similar local weekly newspaper, Gurjarmatt, of my suburb Mulund situated on the northern tip of Mumbai.

There is so much similarity of topics of coverage, bringing to the fore issues of public interest fearlessly and without any favoritism which reflects the elixir of best journalism standards of your newspaper. Both papers look like twin brothers 12,000 kilometers apart. The unique way of involving the readers is appreciable.

I am a life member of Lions International USA and governing council member of District 3231 A-2 Bombay. I shall be leaving for India after three weeks and would like to carry with me some memories of my interaction with you and wonder if you can oblige me by printing this letter. I invite like-minded organizations from this fine city of the world to interact on some topics of common interests, public welfare and cultural heritage.

**S.K. Patel,**  
Bombay, India

## Doctor's termination

Dear Editor,

I rarely write letters like this but feel a need to comment on the very regrettable situation involving Dr. Bradley Tamler and Montage Health. CHOMP has been a wonderful hospital and Tamler is an extraordinarily well-trained, highly competent and compassionate physician who has treated and cured cancers for many of us, including my wife and me. I have had the opportunity to know many

wonderful physicians on university medical center staffs, as mentors and as colleagues in this community, and I would place Tamler among the best of the best.

Unfortunately, Montage Health has previously lost some top physicians — a couple of whom now practice at Natividad Medical Center — in somewhat similar work requirement disputes. The situation with Tamler should never have gotten to the point of a termination. His absence from CHOMP is a big loss for this community. Removal from a hospital medical staff is typically the result of incompetence, serious behavioral problems or substance abuse, none of which applied in any way in Tamler's case. I know that, for some time, he has had no need to work but did not retire because he loved being a physician, practicing his specialty in the way he had been trained, and, most of all, helping those who were his patients.

15-minute medical visits work for many illnesses, but for complex medical problems like cancers, there should not be a clock running.

**Geoff White,**  
Pebble Beach

## Leadership begins before office

Dear Editor,

Communities do not fail overnight. They drift. And when they drift long enough, people begin to sense it — not through headlines or audits, but through a quiet erosion of confidence. Things feel harder than they should. Conversations become more reactive. Trust thins.

Monterey is a city of extraordinary heritage, natural beauty and civic pride. It has endured because generations before us understood something fundamental: leadership is not merely positional — it is relational, cultural and grounded in stewardship.

Long before any election, leadership begins with how we listen, how we build consensus, and how we respect the institutions that came before us while still preparing them for what lies ahead.

I have spent my professional life in environments where trust was not optional. As a health care professional, people placed their well-being in my hands. As a developer and operator of senior-living communities, families entrusted me with the care of their loved ones. In each role, the lesson was the same: progress is never achieved through force, volume or ego — but through patience, accountability and an unwavering respect for human dignity.

Civic leadership is no different.

Cities function best when there is alignment between public institutions, private enterprise and the cultural fabric that binds people together. When that alignment weakens, even well-intended policies can create unintended consequences. The solution is not blame — it is recalibration.

Monterey does not need reinvention. It needs renewal.

That renewal starts with asking better questions:

Are we creating conditions where families can remain rooted here?

Are we supporting those who invest their lives, labor and capital into this community?

Are we honoring our history while responsibly stewarding our future?

These are not political questions. They are civic ones.

Healthy communities are built when leadership is practiced long before it is formalized — when individuals step forward to contribute thought, time and care without demanding titles or outcomes. When dialogue replaces division. When solutions are pursued with humility rather than urgency alone.

In a time when public discourse often rewards the loudest voice, Monterey has an opportunity to choose something steadier: leadership that listens first, plans carefully and acts with restraint.

Our city deserves nothing less.

**Vincent Malfitano,**  
Monterey

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## Pacific Grove Advanced Chiropractic HEAD AND NECK PAIN

A CHIROPRACTIC MESSAGE  
from Dr. Steven MacDonald, D.C.

Dr. MacDonald's specialty is the Cervical Spine and Skull alignment. The skull and the cervical spine (Cranial-Cervical segment) must be in alignment to keep the rest of the body in balance. This section of the spine houses and protects the most important area of the central nervous system—the brain and brainstem. There are also so many life forces housed here, often called the mouth of God where the skull meets the cervical spine. The nervous system, Cerebral spinal fluid, circulatory system must be able to flow freely here to keep you healthy. Head and neck injuries and stress can misalign this area and interfere with these systems. Old and new injuries can hurt this spinal alignment and then be the cause of many of the symptoms people have today and distort posture later in life. Headaches can occur, balance problems, middle ear problems, neck and shoulder pain, mid and low back pain, poor memory, brain fog, blurred vision, speech, mood, depression, numbness and tingling, constipation, Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue. Cranial-Cervical misalignment can hurt every system in the body. It's not something to take lightly.

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# LIVES

From page 23A

potential. Little Mary Lou Retton, another West Virginia native, was one of her students. About 11 years later, Retton took home the gold for all-around women's gymnastics in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, along with two silver and two bronze medals.

Leasure is certain she had nothing to do with it.

### There wasn't a book

As an adult, her gift for improvising let her fly by the seat of her pants for a while. "I had no business experience," she said.

In the early days, she did everything herself — placing the ads, booking the guests, cleaning the houses and doing the paperwork. She got a real estate license when she realized she needed one to do the job well.

And the company kept growing.

"It was the golden age to have vacation rentals," Leasure said. "There were no regulations and nobody minded," that she was bringing guests into the neighborhood.

She created a niche attracting visitors to Monterey and Pacific Grove. "Before I was in business, everyone wanted to stay in Carmel and didn't seem to know the rest of the Peninsula had some nice places to stay." She convinced people to give other cities a try, and they liked them.

Business kept improving, and Leasure started enlisting — and paying — friends and relatives to help. People stayed longer back then, she noted. "They'd save all year for a one- or two-week vacation in the summertime. Now they do two to four days a few times a year."

If they come for special occasions, "I like to leave flowers or something — maybe Champagne — to celebrate," she said. Other times, "It's a very solemn occasion — their mother or father loved the area and died, so they come here for the memorial."

MontereyBayRentals.com works with about 40 long- and short-term rentals and employs 12 people plus outside

# GAVEL

From page 4A

multiple centimeters in diameter.

Fearing that the police would come looking for them, Sanchez and the others in the hotel room got into a car, along with Doe. While in the vehicle for multiple hours, Sanchez continued to be violent with Doe and encouraged others to do so as well. A little before 2:30 a.m. on March 24, 2025, one of the vehicle occupants escaped from the vehicle and ran away to call 911.

Doe also attempted to escape. However, Sanchez grabbed Doe by the hair and arms and forced her to remain in the vehicle as it drove off.

Three hours later, Salinas Police officers were able to find the suspect vehicle and conducted a traffic stop on West Market and Clay Street. Inside were Doe, Sanchez and two other occupants.

Sanchez attempted to run from the police during the traffic stop but was quickly detained and arrested by Salinas Police Department officers. Sanchez had Doe's blood on his hands, shoe, and belt at the time of his arrest. When Doe was taken to Natividad Medical Center, staff observed bruises all over her body in various stages of healing.

Judge Jennifer O'Keefe will preside over Sanchez's sentencing on March 10, 2026. Sanchez's maximum exposure is more than 40 years in prison.

The case was primarily investigated by district attorney investigator Dominique Hohmann and officer Fabian Aquino of the Salinas Police Department.

vendors for things like housekeeping, repairs and gardening. In addition to vacationers, Leasure rents to long-term tenants, including service members here on temporary duty or as students at the Naval Postgraduate School.

### Spare time

In honor of her business' 40-year milestone, Leasure launched a charitable effort she's calling Homes with Heart, donating money and providing in-kind support — like furnishings and linens — to the Veterans Transition Center, the Alliance on Aging, I-HELP of the Monterey Peninsula (a nonprofit that helps homeless people) and Habitat for Humanity. "We like things that are housing-related and promote housing for everyone," she explained.

Would somehow reducing the number of part-time residents free up more housing for locals? Leasure doesn't think that's realistic. "You can't legislate whether someone makes their house available," she said. "A lot of people with second homes plan to be full-time residents someday. We have to find ways to create housing."

To that end, Leasure said she was involved for "a very long time" speaking before various government agencies. "I was a fixture," she laughed. "The wheels of government turn slowly." She thinks the permitting process could be improved and contemplates the possibilities of repurposing empty commercial buildings as housing.

In her spare time, the 71-year-old Monterey resident enjoys gardening, skiing and golfing, and visiting her second home in Kauai, Hawaii, where she loves getting out on the links.

Leasure said if she could talk to her younger self, she'd say, "'Don't be afraid to ask for help.' I thought I should be able to do it all myself. I made it harder than it was."

She's repurposed her passion for teaching, too.

"I look at my employees as my students," she said, and she took great joy in helping one of them open a property management business in Pacific Grove.

"It is the ultimate goal of a teacher to produce students who can stand on their own two feet. This was a shining example of that," she said.

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# MAYOR

From page 23A

culturally, difficult politically and complicated legally, but not forbidden. And our general plan was approved 24 years ago, before state mandates dominated our discussions. We committed to building housing and related parking on Sunset Center property a couple years ago. Over time, we've let "hard" become "illegal," and "controversial" become "impossible."

## ■ Avoidance has consequences

That is convenient, because it means we never have to solve problems. Instead, we remove parking spaces, don't want to re-evaluate it and pretend that enforcement and paid parking will make the problem go away. We propose hundreds of housing units without parking and ignore the ramifications. And now we raise taxes on hotels that are already investing in major improvements that will dramatically increase TOT (hotel tax) to the city. Meanwhile, our infrastructure ages quietly underneath us. This is how structural deficits are born: not from bad intentions, but from good intentions paired with avoidance.

We do the same thing with tourism. We market Carmel extensively as a destination, then act surprised when visitors arrive. We love the revenue but don't want to admit that being a destination requires destination-level services. Restrooms, trash services, good roads and emergency response don't come free just because we wish they did.

## ■ Scenic indecision

Being fiscally responsible is not just about saying "no." It is about choosing what kind of town we are designing for and paying for it honestly. We have mastered the art of "scenic indecision." We hold meeting after meeting. We have debated our design guidelines for four years. We write long letters about small things. We are all, apparently, traffic engineers and urban planners. I say that with affection, because it means people care. But caring without deciding is how towns drift into trouble while still arguing about philosophy.

## ■ What we should be asking

So when you hear someone say something "isn't allowed" in Carmel, ask a simple question: Is it actually prohibited, or have we just decided it's uncomfortable? The problems in front of us — parking, housing and deferred maintenance — are not going away. They will either be shaped deliberately, or they will shape us. Carmel has always prided itself on being different. The next test is whether we can be different in how we plan, not just in how we protest or approve a task list for staff.

In the end, evaluating some "impossible" growth ideas may be the only real solution to our financial challenges, rather than taxing our most productive revenue source. On Tuesday, several hotel owners showed how reinvestment can dramatically increase city revenue. They were rewarded with a 2 percentage-point tax increase.

To hear a podcast generated from this column go to [cli.re/impossible](http://cli.re/impossible).

Dale Byrne is mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea. His email is [dbyrne@cbts.us](mailto:dbyrne@cbts.us).

# State of City breakfast

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

THE CARMEL Chamber of Commerce is hosting the annual Carmel-by-the-Sea State of the City Breakfast at the Carmel Youth Center Feb. 27 at 9 a.m. The event is "designed for Carmel's business community — connection, insight, and a clear look at what's ahead."

Mayor Dale Byrne, Police Chief Todd Trayer and acting city administrator Brandon Swanson will discuss public safety, top priorities and upcoming projects that impact the area's businesses and quality of life.

"Enjoy a continental breakfast while networking with fellow chamber members, community leaders and local officials — and leave with a better understanding of what's happening in our city and how you can stay engaged," organizers said.

Seats cost \$45 for chamber members and \$55 for non-members. Questions for Byrne, Trayer and Swanson can be submitted in advance. The youth center is located at Torres and Fourth, and the doors will open at 8:30 a.m. For information and to reserve, visit [carmelchamber.org](http://carmelchamber.org).

# VERIZON

From page 3A

countered that those options would not work.

Olander's analysis of Verizon's extensive application led him to recommend approval, in part because no better sites are considered viable and "a technical analysis" by Verizon's consultant "determined that there were no technically feasible and viable private parcel locations for placement."

The wireless company argued for exceptions to the ordinance's requirements regarding the pole's location in the single-family-residential district, in the public right of way and within several feet of a window. Disallowing the facility would violate federal and state laws, it said, because it would amount to an "effective prohibition" of telecommunications services.

Numerous letters, as well as reviews by the opponents' lawyers, ran dozens of pages and argued otherwise and opposed the project.

Genette advised commissioners to push the hearing off until Feb. 4, and they concurred on a 4-1 vote after listening to testimony, which took more than three hours.

At Wednesday's meeting, however, officials said they had received yet more information and wanted to put a vote off again, this time to Feb. 10. The deadline imposed by the federal "shot clock" is in early March.

"Staff is still working with our outside consultant to review the technical information," Genette said Wednesday. "We weren't able to get that in time, and we also received additional information, so we want to make sure we address that and try to make it the most complete record for the commission to consider."

Commissioners agreed and voted to delay the hearing again to Feb. 10.

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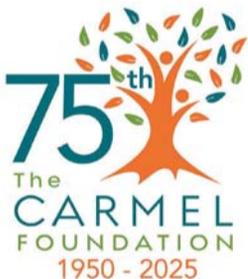
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# The Carmel Foundation Celebrates 75 Years of Community



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 founded by community members who cared deeply about their older neighbors. That same spirit continues to guide us today.

support strength, balance, movement, connection, and healthy aging. It reflects what we believe at The Carmel Foundation: living fully matters at every stage of life.

As we mark this milestone year, we are in the final stretch of completing our new Wellness Center, and we invite the community to help us carry it across the finish line. Our goal is to raise the remaining \$150,000 through our \$50 for Wellness Campaign. The idea is simple: if 3,000 community members contribute at least \$50, we can complete the Center—no gala, no auction, just neighbors helping neighbors.

Whether \$50 is easy or a stretch, every gift makes a difference. For those inspired to give more, contributions of \$250 or more will be recognized permanently on our Donor Tree in the Wellness Center.

Membership at The Carmel Foundation is open to anyone age 55 and older, regardless of where you live, and costs \$60 per year. If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join us—contact us for a tour and be part of a community built on care, connection, and a shared commitment to healthy aging.

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## TOP

From page 8A

Carmel high schoolers who may opt to graduate straight into the workforce. Half of students who tried their hand at technical classes — among them engineering and architecture, auto mechanics, digital design, and biotechnology “pathways” offered by CUSD — went on to complete those courses of study, Glenn told board members. Those technical and vocational classes are offered both at Carmel High and Carmel Valley High, and the latter will add a dual-enrollment course in agriculture and natural resources next year.

## VOTERS

From page 14A

On the same day council members voted to increase their pay, they OK'd a motion to defer a decision on health benefits, which left open the possibility they could eventually offer themselves the perk.

“The public record shows that I have consistently opposed allowing the city council to increase its own compensation or benefits, stating this position before, during, and after serving on the council,” Coletti said. “Despite this longstanding

“We’re also collecting some testimonials from students, and that’s how we’re finding out about the entrepreneurial side of things. Some students would really like to have their own business, and start that work,” Glenn said of the district’s efforts to expand its job-readiness program.

At the same meeting, the district shared School Accountability Report Cards for each of the district’s six schools. These assessments also derive from the Department of Education, which reports that Carmel’s elementary, middle, and high school students are performing significantly above the average in California where, across the state, fewer than half of students are passing basic literacy tests, and just over a third make the grade in math.

and unchanged position, the issue has repeatedly resurfaced. The proposed city charter amendment is intended to put this matter to rest permanently by removing the authority from the council and placing it with the voters.”

He filed a notice of intent with the city clerk, which included written text of the amendment, including its purpose, effect and findings. The proposal, he said, would be on the ballot.

If P.G. voters approve the initiative, which requires a simple majority, it will be filed with the California Secretary of State and recorded with Monterey County and become effective.

## Souper Saturday fundraiser

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

COMMUNITY HUMAN Services and Gathering for Women will host Souper Saturday on Feb. 7 to raise funds for homeless shelters for women and families with children.

From 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Shuman HeartHouse, 600 E. Franklin St., Monterey, you can get drive-through take-out meals featuring clam chowder from Old Fisherman’s Grotto and The Fish Hopper.

Meals include chowder, sourdough bread, salad and brownies. Prices are \$40 for a 16-ounce portion and \$75 for a 32-ounce portion. Place an order at [chservices.org/soup](http://chservices.org/soup) or take your chances in person while supplies last.

Proceeds benefit Shuman HeartHouse and Casa de Noche Buena, the county’s sole shelters dedicated to women and families experiencing homelessness.

“Souper Saturday is a simple, feel-good way to show up for our friends and neighbors who need us most,” said Robin McCrae, chief executive officer of Community Human Services.

“Every order helps us keep the doors open at Shuman HeartHouse and Casa de Noche Buena.”

Community Human Services provides mental health, substance abuse and homelessness services, and Gathering for Women operates a walk-in center offering resources and support for homeless women.

## ARTIST

From page 23A

her slumber.

“I remember being frightened and my mom saying, ‘It’s all right, darling. They’re booing because Bob Dylan brought out an electric guitar,’” she recounted with a laugh.

Lindem’s father introduced her to painting, buying her a “kiddie set” of watercolors and taking her along on Saturday-morning excursions to paint the flowers at a nearby farm.

“I loved those times because I had him all to myself,” she said of her father, a design engineer. “My dad was a talented painter, and I really think he would’ve preferred being just an artist.”

Lindem spent a year at London’s Goldsmiths School of Art, then was accepted to the fine art painting department at Maidstone College of Art in Kent, where she studied under contemporary giants of British painting — landscape artist Bill Bowyer, still-life specialist Peter Morell and impressionist Fred Cuming, who became her tutor.

“Fred Cuming ended up being one of the British greats, in my book ... and in a lot of people’s books,” she said of the celebrated landscape artist.

### Finish it

Her college years instilled many of her beliefs about the artistic process, honed her skill for painting quickly before the light changes, and reinforced her preference to paint from life.

“We were taught to finish our paintings on the spot — we never brought anything inside. And the idea of painting anything from a photograph ... that never came up,” she said.

University art students were granted permission to practice by copying the paintings of famous artists at London’s historic Courtauld Institute Gallery — home of Édouard Manet’s “A Bar at the

Folies-Bergère,” Vincent van Gogh’s “Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear,” and other masterpieces.

After college, Lindem returned to the United States, where she raised two sons. Her firstborn is an attorney, and his brother is in medical school. She also is a two-time grandmother. And she enjoyed a 16-year career as an educator, teaching math and science to middle-schoolers, and art in junior college.

In the 1990s, Lindem met and married Garrett Henry — a dermatologist, now semi-retired — and decided to focus full time on her art.

In 2010, she and her husband became Carmel residents, fulfilling her longtime dream.

### ‘Oh, yes ... it’s blue!’

“My great-aunt used to come here in the 1940s, so I knew about this place. But when I first visited Carmel in the 1990s, I knew I wanted to live here someday,” said Lindem, who keeps a second home in Sedona, Ariz. — another plein air paradise.

“When I wake up every morning in this wonderful place, all I want to do is go out and paint,” she said. “I look up at the sky and say, ‘Oh, yes ... it’s blue!’”

Lindem’s ongoing art education has included workshops with well-known American painters, including Matt Smith, Ned Jacob, Skip Whitcomb, Dan Young, Randall Sexton, Thomas Kitts, Ray Roberts and Robert Lemler.

Her portfolio is populated with picturesque landscapes and seascapes of Carmel Lagoon, China Cove, Carmel Beach, Cypress Point, Rocky Point, Big Sur and Mission Ranch. She has also depicted local landmarks like La Bicylette in Carmel and Monterey’s Fisherman’s Wharf, along with favorite vistas near her Arizona home.

View her paintings at [lauralindem.com](http://lauralindem.com) or [nancydodds-gallery.com](http://nancydodds-gallery.com), or on exhibit at the Nancy Dodds Gallery (Seventh and San Carlos).

*Dennis Taylor is a professional freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at [scribelaureate@gmail.com](mailto:scribelaureate@gmail.com).*

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# 4Q 2025 | Market Update Carmel Highlands & Carmel



## Carmel Highlands:

“The Highlands market recorded 9 sales in Q4 totaling \$38.5M - tripling that of last quarter’s 3 sales. On an annual basis, this sub-market accelerated in 2025 with 27 total sales, outpacing that of last year’s 25 sales. Worth noting there were two oceanfront sales in Q4 at \$11.5M and \$8.475M which lifted the median sales price for the region to \$3.4M (+76% QoQ). All buyers this quarter were secondary-home purchasers, primarily from California, with one buyer from the Midwest – consistent with the common demographics seeking privacy and ocean views that the Highlands neighborhoods have to offer.

The Carmel Meadows area enters 2026 with no active listings or pending sales. This tightly held enclave functions as a distinct micro-market, attracting buyers seeking ocean and beach views closer to Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Clear fall weather highlighted the dramatic coastal setting that defines the Highlands and likely supported renewed activity after a foggier prior quarter. With La Niña conditions expected to bring increased rainfall in 2026, proactive home maintenance is advisable, particularly for owners considering a spring or summer sale.”

## Carmel:

“Carmel slowed down this quarter to 29 deals, which is in line with the seasonal adjustments in demand that we’ve seen; the fourth quarter in the past 2 years had 27 and 33 deals close. Downtown Carmel is considered one of the most charming and romantic cities in the country, which means that lots of people are dreaming of owning here one day. This consistent demand, paired with very short supply, keeps prices steady and flattens out market fluctuations. While I know some buyers are hoping for a great steal downtown, that’s unlikely to materialize as we actually saw median sales prices climb this quarter to \$3.0M (up from \$2.65M last quarter). The good news is buyers are finally starting to see more options come to the market, with 7 listings in the Golden Rectangle and 3 on Carmel Point. While still off considerably from historic averages, it’s worth paying attention to the pipeline. We’re bringing one on Carmelo to the market and two on Scenic in the near future.”

Jessica Canning  
Carmel Specialist



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# The Carmel Pine Cone

Section 2

## She has serious basketball ambitions, but injuries keep getting in the way

OVER THE past 3 1/2 years, the lofty basketball dreams of a standout student-athlete have repeatedly been interrupted by a recurring nightmare, creating a Sisyphus-like struggle. But Peyton Sanchez, a junior at Stevenson School, refuses to take a backward step.

Since February 2023, Sanchez has endured three complex surgeries on the same knee, along with 25 months (so far) of intense rehabilitation — an ordeal that might’ve crushed another athlete. Instead, the arduous journey has transformed her into a model of determination and resilience.

### The whole package

Sanchez has packaged her 6-foot body and formidable physique with top-drawer athleticism, a strong basketball IQ, and exceptional skills. She applies a soft touch to long-range jump shots. She’ll drive the lane or crash for rebounds. She’s a leader on the court and off. And with a 3.9 grade point average at an academically elite high school, she is a college recruiter’s dream.

But after three surgeries (including two reconstructions)

“I landed awkwardly, and felt a pop in my knee as I went down,” Sanchez remembered.

An MRI revealed tears in her anterior cruciate ligament, or ACL, and medial meniscus, both stabilizers in a healthy knee.

Monterey orthopedic specialist Rick Ravalin (a family friend) grafted a tendon from her hamstring to repair part of the damage, and Sanchez, just 14, began 11 months of rehabilitation at Monterey’s Balance Physical Therapy.

She watched the first half of her freshman season at Stevenson School in street clothes, finally making her debut on Jan. 12, 2024, as one of three ninth-graders on the varsity roster. In the team’s final nine games, Sanchez averaged 9.6 points and 5.2 rebounds. She scored in double digits in five games, with a high of 17 points against Soledad.

That spring, she played softball for the first time — 16 varsity games at first base — and hit a home run in the Pirates’ second-to-last game.

“My knee felt great until June,” she said. “Then I woke up one morning and couldn’t extend my leg. The knee was locking up.”

Sanchez somehow had torn her medial meniscus for the second time. Ravalin again repaired the damage. Eight months of rehab followed, sidelining her again for the first two months of her sophomore basketball season.

She returned in late December, played 15 games and won first-team All-Mission Division honors, averaging 8.1 points, six rebounds, and leading the Pirates in field goal percentage and blocked shots.

### Turning the page?

With Peyton’s knee problems apparently in the rear-view mirror, her father, Ryan Sanchez, asked Archbishop Mitty head coach Sue Phillips to recommend a high-level AAU summer team for his daughter.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

After sitting out half of her freshman and sophomore seasons, Stevenson’s Peyton Sanchez is missing her entire junior year of basketball, rehabbing her third knee surgery since 2023. Her workouts begin at 5:30 a.m. and frequently continue late into the evening.

Phillips invited the young Stevenson star to try out for her own powerhouse team, the San Jose Cagers.

“She was the only non-Mitty player on the roster,” said her proud father.

Two months later, at a tournament in Oakland, Peyton made a quick move on defense and felt her left knee slip

*Continues next page*

## Peninsula Sports

By DENNIS TAYLOR

On her left knee, her chances of earning an NCAA Division I basketball scholarship are dimming. Injuries limited her to half-seasons as a freshman and sophomore, and she won’t play at all this year.

At a time when standout athletes are typically sorting through overtures from prominent coaches, she’ll be sending letters and videos to introduce herself.

Four basketball seasons ago, as an eighth-grader at San Benancio School, she was leading an undefeated team against Carmel Middle School in a league championship game. She was flying high toward the basket when an opponent bumped her from behind.

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# Valentine's Day

## FIRST COURSE

mango salad with pickled red onion, grilled halloumi with citrus vinaigrette

♥ wine pairing illumination by quintessa sauvignon blanc, napa valley, 2023

## SECOND COURSE

fresh ahi tuna ceviche with spicy jalapeno & cilantro sauce

♥ wine pairing flowers pinot noir, sonoma coast, 2023

## THIRD COURSE

4oz classic bacon wrapped filet mignon, potato timbale, grilled asparagus & porcini wild mushroom demi-glaze or

5oz halibut with risotto, sautéed broccolini & passion lemon butter sauce

♥ wine pairing benton lane pinot noir, willamette valley, 2023

## FOURTH COURSE

chocolate lava cake with chocolate ganache & macerated strawberries

♥ wine pairing faust cabernet sauvignon, napa valley, 2020



## RESERVATIONS

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+\$40 per person to include suggested wine pairings\*

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Jacks dinner menu will not be available.

Please email [jacks@portolahotel.com](mailto:jacks@portolahotel.com) or call (831) 649-7830 to reserve your table.

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From previous page

out of its socket, then pop back in.

"I fell down, crying — not out of pain, but frustration," she said. "I knew exactly what had happened."

The following day, the Sanchez family flew to Australia for a long-planned basketball trip with Stevenson's girls and boys teams.

"I didn't want to miss that trip, but I didn't play in any of our games there," said Peyton, who had her knee examined in Melbourne, where she learned she had torn her medial meniscus — for the third time — along with her lateral meniscus.

"Before I got hurt, I had 100 percent confidence in my knee," she said. "That was a huge blow."

### Surgeon to the stars

Upon their return, Ravalin connected them with Dr. Neal ElAttrache, the L.A.-based sports medicine specialist who famously extended the careers of basketball superstar Kobe Bryant (Achilles tendon), football giants Aaron Rodgers (Achilles) and Tom Brady (knee), and baseball great Shohei Ohtani (elbow), among others.

ElAttrache performed a complicated, multifaceted operation on Aug. 7, then set

up his young patient with Elite OrthoSport, the L.A. rehabilitation center that heals superstars.

"When I started my rehab in L.A., the person right next to me was Patriots wide receiver Julian Edelman," she said. "Next to him was a linebacker from the Ravens. Next to him was somebody from the 49ers. It was amazing to be surrounded by such great athletes, all patients of Dr. ElAttrache."

Midway through her third rehab, Sanchez is investing heavily in a full recovery, embracing the difficulty, staying positive, even as she sits out her entire junior year of athletics.

"Mentally, it can be really hard. Emotionally, it's been very challenging. Physically ... well, I've already done it twice, so I know I can do it again," she said of her daily rehabilitation routine, which frequently ends around 9 p.m.

Her days begin at 5:30 a.m., with movement exercises at home, or a gym workout with her dad, until it's time to head to Stevenson.

Her school day always includes a visit with Stevenson athletic trainer Jeff Yamashita, who works on her scar tissue, and ices and evaluates her knee.

See SPORTS page 34A



Injured and unable to play, Peyton Sanchez (black jersey) says cheering from the bench can be lonely. With an athletic body on a 6-foot frame, Sanchez targets a Division I NCAA women's basketball scholarship, but after three knee surgeries, she'll have much to prove next year as a senior.

PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Edgar's

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Food & Wine  
Galleries and Art

# This Week

Live Music,  
Clubs and Events

## Jazz singer, friends play Friday at Sand City Art Park, PG music venue reopens

A FAMILY-FRIENDLY gathering that happens just before sundown on the first Friday of every month in the Sand City Art Park, **Night Market 831** showcases some of the Monterey Peninsula's finest homegrown musical talent — including jazz singer **Miranda Perl**, who performs this Friday at 5 p.m.

"We're excited to welcome Miranda and friends to the stage for a night of jazz, featuring some of the area's best musicians," organizers announced.

### On a High Note

By CHRIS COUNTS

Perl comes from a local family with a deep appreciation for music. Her mom, Janice, is also a jazz singer, while her late grandfather, Michael Marotta Sr., was a beloved local musician. Music was always a big part of every family gathering. "I began singing as soon as I could talk," Perl told *The Pine Cone*.

As a teen, Perl started taking music more seriously and started auditioning for shows produced by PacRep. "I realized I was kind of good at it, and I had a lot of fun," she recalled.

#### 'Never the same thing'

Along the way, Perl fell in love with jazz, and in particular, the way jazz players can communicate with each other musically, even if they've never met.

"It's so improvisational," she said. "It's never the same thing twice."

By the time she was in high school, Perl was participating in the Monterey Jazz Festival's youth music program. "That was really cool," she said.

After graduation, Perl attended Northern Colorado Uni-

versity in Greeley, Colo., where she earned a degree in jazz voice. There she met guitarist **Adam Astrup** — not only is he one of her chief musical partners, but the two married in January.

When she performs Friday, Perl will be accompanied by Astrup, along with multi-instrumentalist **Ben Herod**, bassist **Zach Westfall** and drummer **Mike Shannon** — all familiar faces on local stages.

Besides live music, Night Market 831 features a marketplace of food and arts vendors, along with activities for kids. The park, which is noted for its colorful murals, is located at 525 Ortiz Ave.

#### Back in the saddle

In downtown Pacific Grove, **The P.G. Meetinghouse** reopens this weekend after a six-week make-over, and **Sean and The Skinwalkers** kick things off Friday at 7 p.m.

"They're wonderful," owner **Scott Soifer** said. "They bring high-energy rock and blues."

Besides redoing the venue's lighting and sprucing up the space, Soifer has expanded its offerings to better accommodate nighttime audiences. "We're listening to our customers with a beautiful update to our space, full bar service and later hours — all while keeping our family feel and unique Pacific Grove spirit," he said.

Soifer sees a bright future for live music in downtown P.G.

"Pacific Grove has become a wonderful place for a night out and we're excited to be part of it," he added. "With our couches, crackling fireplace, great live sound, and now with a cozy upgraded vibe, full bar service and later hours, we think we have something for everyone."

The P.G. Meetinghouse is located at 599 Lighthouse Ave. [pgmeetinghouse.com](http://pgmeetinghouse.com)



Singer Miranda Perl and three of her friends play jazz Friday, 5 p.m., at Night Market 831 in Sand City.

#### Irresistible groove

A soul food restaurant and live music venue located in the heart of Seaside, **Deja Blue**, welcomes **The Rjae**

See MUSIC page 35A

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# FOOD & WINE

## Rancho Cielo's annual party, romance, football, and Edgar Allen Poe

**RANCHO CIELO** — the nonprofit alternative high school in Salinas — is having its annual Culinary Round Up fundraiser Feb. 22 from 4 to 8 p.m. at Portola Hotel in Monterey. Proceeds benefit the Drummond Culinary Academy and other youth programs at Rancho Cielo, where students can earn their high school diplomas and get hands-on training and certifications in a variety of vocations.

Organizers describe the event as “an evening of fun, food and libations with a Western flair, including an exciting raffle and silent and live auctions,” one of which will have people bidding on a 1952 MG TD Roadster.

### Braving the crowd

Janine Chicourrat, who sits on the school's board and is managing director of Portola Hotel, said, “It's incredibly meaningful for us to host Rancho Cielo's Culinary Round Up and welcome the Monterey area community into a space where these students can truly shine,” adding, “We are deeply grateful to everyone who shows up each year to champion these students and the work being done at Rancho Cielo.”

One student who will be working the event, Cali Paz, already has the lay of the land — she's doing a six-week

internship in the hotel's pastry department. “I love it there,” she said. “Being in the kitchen with everyone is the best.” The 17-year-old came to Rancho Cielo when she felt like Salinas High School just wasn't a good fit for her. She had a part-time job in a pharmacy, and one of her coworkers told her about the school.

## Soup to Nuts

Paz had planned to become an aesthetician after getting her diploma but reasoned that cooking is “a good life skill. I can't be eating microwave food all my life.” She's completed her high school diploma and thoroughly enjoys the camaraderie of a busy kitchen.

You can meet Paz and several other students who will be listed on a “passport” provided to each guest. These brave cooks-in-training will not only help prepare and serve the food, but have volunteered to talk with diners.

Manny Cardenas, 18, will also be one of them. He graduated from North Salinas High School, where he took restaurant career classes and a Regional Occupational Pro-

gram culinary course. Cardenas' mother and uncle both graduated from Drummond Academy, and he applied to be admitted as one of a few “culinary only” students.

Now, he said, “I'm living the dream,” with an internship at The Lodge at Pebble Beach. Visiting for the first time, he said, was “like Disney World,” especially the spectacular views.

“I also had to learn about all the history,” he added. “This isn't just some random kitchen.” Lobster saffron risotto is one of his favorite dishes, even though it's a lot of work. He said he probably resembles “a witch using a giant spoon in a cauldron,” because the infamously long-cooking dish requires constant stirring. Cardenas has participated in the school's Friday dinners and other events, too.

### Community-minded restaurants

Among the event's more than 30 participating restaurants are The Lodge, Grasing's, Seventh & Dolores, Carmel Valley Ranch, and the Covey Grill at Quail Lodge. Beverages will be provided by more than a dozen wineries — Galante, Dawn's Dream, Scheid, and Wrath among them — Alvarado Street Brewery, Peter B's at the Portola Hotel, Doc Pepe's Lab, Fog's End Distillery, and Peerless Coffee & Tea.

Tickets are \$195 per person and can be purchased by visiting [ranchocieloc.org/fundraisers/culinary-round-up](http://ranchocieloc.org/fundraisers/culinary-round-up). The Portola Plaza Hotel is at the foot of Alvarado Street.

### Seahawks, Patriots and beer

Peter B's in the Portola Hotel invites locals to come watch

See **FOOD** next page



Manny Cardenas and Cali Paz are two of many culinary students from Rancho Cielo who will be helping with the school's annual fundraiser on Feb. 22 at the Portola Hotel. More than 30 restaurants and two dozen wineries and breweries will provide food and beverages, and a 1952 MG Roadster and other tempting items will be auctioned off.



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# FOOD & WINE

## FOOD

*From previous page*

the Super Bowl Sunday. The recently revamped brewpub will be open from 2 to 10 p.m., with happy hours featuring \$5 drink specials from 4 to 6 p.m. and 9 to 10 p.m. The regular menu — with wings, sliders and other bar favorites — will be available. Kickoff is at 3:30 p.m. local time.

### ■ Love is still in the air ...

Grasing's at Sixth and Mission has eat-in and takeout options for Valentine's Day dinner. A three-course prix fixe menu for \$125 per person will be served from 5 to 10 p.m., enticing guests to start with a welcome glass of Taittinger Brut La Française and a cheesy arancini (Italian fried rice ball) with prosciutto in red sauce. The starter is a choice of spiny lobster salad or a coddled egg with winter truffle, then diners can opt for prime rib-eye with prawn scampi, or wild mushroom pasta with white truffles. For dessert, there's a dark chocolate mousse heart with raspberry sauce.

Takeaway dinner for two on the same day is creamy lemon chicken soup, spiny lobster salad, chateaubriand for two, and the chocolate mousse heart. A single rose and some heart confetti are included in the \$175 price. You can add 2 ounces of reserve caviar with crème fraîche and chive pancake for \$250 and purchase a bottle of bubbles, too. To order, call (831) 624-6562 before 5 p.m. on Feb. 11. Pickup is from 4 to 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 14. View the full menu at [grasings.com](http://grasings.com).

#### 'Love feast'

Oystertown USA at 281 Lighthouse Ave. in Monterey is taking reservations for a "Love Feast" on Feb. 14 from 5 to 8 p.m., offering a five-course prix fixe dinner. After an amuse-bouche of an oyster with caviar, the first course will be tuna carpaccio and avocado, or wild mushroom rigatoni with

truffle and crème fraîche. A shareable second course of escargot will follow, and guests can choose braised beef or fresh rock cod with lobster risotto as an entrée. Dessert options are chocolate mousse with caramel sauce and a chocolate chip cookie, or Pavlova (a meringue-based dish) with cherry reduction and white chocolate ganache. The meal is priced at \$115 per person, exclusive of tax and tip. Call (831)



If you're looking for a romantic spot to take your sweetheart on Valentine's Day, Grasing's is offering a three-course prix fixe dinner from 5 to 10 p.m. Lobster, winter truffle and other luxe items promise to make for a smashing dinner.

312-8150 or email [oystertownusa@gmail.com](mailto:oystertownusa@gmail.com) to reserve.

The busy kitchen staff at Portola Hotel is all over this holiday, too. On Friday, Feb. 13, they've scheduled a five-course wine dinner for \$125 per person. Highlights include crab fritters, mango salad, grilled halloumi (Greek cheese), gnocchi with lemon beurre blanc, herbed chicken, and braised short rib, followed by "indulgent desserts," including chocolate nougat truffle. Each course will be paired with specially selected wines.

Make reservations (required) by calling

See **WINE** next page

## FLOWERS *Vineyards & Winery*

*Six Course*

# WINE DINNER

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2026  
6PM TO 9PM**

Join us in The Club Room at Portola Hotel & Spa for a five-course Valentine's Day-inspired wine dinner. Enjoy a romantic evening thoughtfully curated by our culinary team, featuring exquisite pairings and elegant flavors.

### SIX-COURSE WINE DINNER DETAILS

Enjoy a six-course dining experience priced at **\$125 per person, inclusive.**

Menu highlights include Crab Fritters, Mango Salad, Grilled Halloumi, Gnocchi with Lemon Beurre Blanc, Herbed Chicken, and Braised Short Rib, followed by indulgent desserts such as Fromage Blanc and Chocolate Nougat Truffle. Each course is expertly paired with exceptional wines from **Flowers Vineyards**, creating an unforgettable evening of flavor and romance.

Reservations are required  
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# WINE

From previous page

(831) 649-7870 or emailing lhenderson@portolahotel.com.

## Scary stories and cocktails

For those seeking an unusual immersive cocktail experience, the Edgar Allan Poe Speakeasy is returning to Salinas' Fox Theater for its sequel, and all are invited — assuming they can find their way into the “dark, moody, and intimate setting.” The group travels around the country doing reenactments of Poe’s pieces while its expert mixologist concocts cocktails to match.

The Poe Historians will present “chapter two” of their speakeasy Feb. 20-21 and are planning to bring four tales from the author’s dark imagination to life, pairing each with a creative, sometimes ominous-sounding, cocktail — the details of which have yet to be released.

During the first chapter, the speakeasy focused on four Poe classics: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Raven,” “The Masque of Red Death” and “The Black Cat.” Three of the four accompanying cocktails were

vodka-based, and all were playful, despite the sinister stories.

Consider the Pale Blue Eye, featuring blueberry vodka, fresh lemon juice, rose syrup, and La Croix seltzer, Cocktail of the Red Death — 100-proof vodka, cherry liqueur, Benedictine liqueur, lime juice, pineapple juice and bitters — and Edgar’s Twisted Brandy Milk Punch, with bourbon, brandy, vanilla cream, milk syrup and half and half topped with star anise.

### Into the shadows

The sequel takes participants “a step deeper into the shadows of Poe’s most harrowing tales,” including “The Cask of Amontillado,” “Annabel Lee,” “The Pit and the Pendulum,” and “The Fall of the House of Usher.”

“As you delve into these chilling tales, savor four expertly crafted cocktails, each paired to enhance the haunting atmosphere of the story it accompanies,” organizers promise. The experience runs 90 minutes and caters to small groups, with time slots scheduled for Feb. 20 at 6 and 8 p.m., and Feb. 21 at 2, 4, 6 and 8 p.m. Tickets are \$55 per person for earlier shows and \$65 for evenings.

The Fox Theater is located at 241 Main St. in Salinas. Parking is available in municipal lots, and there’s a parking

garage next to the Steinbeck Center. For tickets and other information, go to edgar-rallanpoebars.com.

Elaine Hesser and Mary Schley contributed to this column.



Oystertown USA on Lighthouse Avenue in Monterey is having its first “Love Feast” Feb. 14 from 5 to 8 p.m. Starting with oysters and caviar, a five-course menu is designed to impress.

# Golf book signing at Pilgrim’s Way

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

JUST IN time for the big tournament, author, golfer and former sportscaster Peter Melton will sign copies of his latest book, “Conversations with PAR,” during a meet-and-greet Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, from noon to 1 p.m. at Pilgrim’s Way, Dolores Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues. The book’s quirky point of view — the author has discussions with the concept of par and “finds joy” — explains the title.

The free event welcomes the public to chat with Melton, pick up a signed copy of his work, and hear about this unconventional look at golf.

Melton shares stories from his lifelong relationship with the game, from early triumphs to decades of frustration and a turning-point conversation that changed his perspective.

Melton, 63, said his work is designed to appeal to golfers and general readers alike, with wit, and insights on personal growth.

The event is open to all. No advance registration is required.

# CALENDAR

**Feb. 12 – “B4Noon Community Recital,”** 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., at Carmel Presbyterian Church, Ocean and Junipero, SE corner, every Thursday from Feb. 12 to April 30. Free. This week, Feb 12: “Four Impromptus” Op. 90 by **Franz Schubert** with **Eun Ha Chung** (pianist).

**Feb. 14 – Poetry reading: Andrew Schelling** will read from his new volume of poetry, “**Forests, Temples, Glacial Rivers,**” and a just-released book of translations of the Sanskrit poems of Vidyā (ca. 7th-9th century), **Old Time Love Song Magic.** 7 p.m. at Tor House, 26304 Ocean View Ave., Carmel, CA 93923. Admission: \$15. Reservations (required) at [www.torhouse.org](http://www.torhouse.org). Seating limited. Reception to follow. For more information: (831) 624-1813.

**Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Dinner and Dance Elks Fundraiser for Children with Disabilities,** 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Monterey Elks Lodge, 150 Mar Vista Drive, Monterey. Open to the public. \$60 per person includes Surf and Turf dinner with salad, bread, pasta, dessert and one complimentary glass of Champagne. Full-service bar available to purchase additional drinks. Music by DJ Jose Camacho. Pre-paid reservations required by calling (831) 373-1285.

**Feb. 14 – “That’s Amoré! ~ Baum & Blume’s “Flavors of Italy” Valentine dinner!** Celebrate with someone special at this delightful, delicious 4-course dinner served in Baum & Blume’s cozy boutique café! View menu @ [www.baumandblume.com](http://www.baumandblume.com). Seatings @ 5:15 & 7:30pm Call ASAP to reserve. (831) 659-0400. 4 El Caminito Road, Carmel Valley.

**Feb. 15 – 4 pm: St. Dunstan’s invites you to Choral Evensonng,** a wonderful way to greet sunset, with prayer, meditation and music from American composers and the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. High Tea follows. Free will offerings gratefully accepted. 28005 Robinson Canyon Road, Carmel Valley. [stdcv.org](http://stdcv.org).

**Sundays – Jazz brunch with the Andrea Carter Trio,** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Terry’s Restaurant + Lounge, inside Cypress Inn, Lincoln and Seventh, Carmel-by-the-Sea. For more information, please contact Cypress Inn, (831) 624-3871.

**Sundays – Live music 5 to 7 p.m. at Woody’s at Del Mesa.** Musical guests **Brice and Nina** deliver an eclectic mix of jazz, rock and reggae, 500 Del Mesa Carmel. (831) 624-1854

**Feb. 16 – Cheryl Sharp – “The Solid Self - Love Starts with You – Married or Single,”** Cheryl will deliver insight, laughter and that little nudge women often need to put themselves back on their own priority list. 2 p.m. Carmel Woman’s Club, San Carlos and Ninth, Carmel-by-the-Sea. Open to the public. \$10/guests/members free.

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# SPORTS

From page 30A

Mondays and Fridays, she goes directly after school to Balance Physical Therapy in Monterey for an hour-long session with physical therapist Joey Melo, whose program coordinates with instructions provided by Elite Ortho-Sport and ElAttrache.

“Rehabbing from a third knee surgery at 17 would break a lot of people, but not her. Peyton is resilient in the truest sense of the word,” Melo said.

“She shows up every day with a positive attitude — and even on the toughest days, she doesn’t complain. I have no doubt that she’ll be successful, not only on the court, but in life.”

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, Sanchez exercises on her own at Monterey Sports Center or The Lab, a local fitness and performance facility.

Sanchez also shares her rehab videos with Jordan Radliff, a physical therapist she and her father met in Australia. They Zoom with Radliff every Sunday for feedback.

### Pedaling through practice

With Stevenson’s basketball season in full swing, she goes to every practice, morning or evening, where she exercises on a Peloton, working on leg strength while watching her teammates drill with coach Justin Clymo and his assistants.

“I sit, I watch, and I learn,” she said. “It’s a view I really wasn’t getting before — I’m gaining a lot of knowledge about how the game works.”

At Stevenson games, Sanchez sits on the bench between the assistant coaches and her teammates, feeling

separate and invisible.

“I kind of feel like the team is over here, and I’m alone on an island. It’s lonely,” she said.

Once a month, she has a session with Grant Parr, a well-known San Jose-based sports psychologist and mental performance coach.

“He works on the ‘scar tissue’ in my brain — my PTSD — and helps me shift my perspective,” said Sanchez, who admits “why me” is a question she’s asked too many times since her first injury.

After three betrayals, regaining trust in the knee can be a mental mountain.

### ‘For you ... not to you’

“Grant told me, ‘Don’t look at yourself as a victim. This is happening for you — not to you.’ Now, I live by that,” she said.

Parr, a former college quarterback, has endured similar challenges, undergoing two replacements of the same hip before he turned 40.

“Athletes with Peyton’s level of dedication, commitment, and willingness to fight through their setbacks, fears, and pain ... those are the ones who become great,” Parr said.

With an all-star support team overseeing all phases of her recovery — every day of the week — Sanchez fully expects to be full speed in her senior year, and a big part of her motivation is a desire to set an example for others.

“Rehab is like a full-time job for me, but I just want to prove I can do it,” she said. “I want to be known as a great basketball player, not as the kid who’s always getting hurt.”

Lauren Wittrock, a physical therapist who works with superstars at Elite OrthoSport, is beyond impressed.

“Peyton is one of the most determined high school athletes I’ve ever had the pleasure of working with,” she said. “She views her injury not as a setback, but as a challenge to become stronger, mentally and physically. She refuses to simply go through the motions.”

This summer, Sanchez looks forward to participating in Stevenson’s preseason basketball camp for the first time in her high school career.

Dennis Taylor is a professional freelance writer in Monterey County. Contact him at [scribelaureate@gmail.com](mailto:scribelaureate@gmail.com).

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# MUSIC

From page 31A

## Haas Band Saturday at 3 p.m.

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Deja Blue is located at 500 Broadway.

## Live music Feb. 6-12

### ■ Big Sur

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

### ■ Carmel

**Barmel** — singer and guitarist **Kyle Kovalik** (Sunday and Thursday at 6 p.m.). Carmel Square on San Carlos north of Seventh.

**Carmel Mission Inn — Open Mic Night** (Wednesday at 6 p.m.). In the Shearwater Tavern, 3665 Rio Road.

**Hyatt Carmel Highlands** — singer and pianist **T.J. Kuenster** (jazz, Friday at 4:45 p.m.), singer **Dino Vera** (jazz, r&b and dance music, Saturday and Thursday at 6 p.m.). 120 Highlands Drive.

**Cypress Inn** — singer **Dino Vera** (jazz, r&b and dance music, Friday at 6:30 p.m.), pianist **Gennady Loktionov** and singer **Debbie Davis** (cabaret, Saturday at 6:30

p.m.), **The Andrea Carter Trio** (jazz and pop, Sunday at 11 a.m.), **The David Morwood Jazz Band** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). Lincoln and Seventh.

**Links Club — Pattie Gilbert & the Wanderlust** (pop and rock, Friday at 6 p.m.), **Dan Cioper and the Jokerz** (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.

**Edgar's** — singer and multi-instrumentalist **Alison Sharino** (Friday at 5:30 p.m.). At Quail Lodge, 8205 Valley Greens Drive.

**Folktale Winery** — singer and multi-instrumentalist **Rory Lynch** (Friday at 4 p.m.), **Two Rivers** with singer **Richard Bryant** and guitarist **Kyle Kovalik** (pop and rock, Saturday at 4 p.m.), **The Paul Contos Trio** (jazz, Sunday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Cloe Hubbard** (Monday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kito Rayburn** (Thursday at 4 p.m.). 8940 Carmel Valley Road. 8205 Valley Greens Drive.

**Trailside Cafe** — singer and guitarist **Cisco Jim** (cowboy music, Saturday at 6 p.m.). 3 Del Fino Place.

### ■ Monterey

**Albatross Ridge Winery** — singer and guitarist **Ryan Sesma** (Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Peter Barnes Martin** (jazz, Saturday at 6 p.m.). 316 Alvarado St.

**Bulldog Sports Pub — Tribe in the Sky** presents a weekly jam (Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.). 611 Lighthouse Ave.

**Hyatt Regency Monterey** — singer and guitarist **Zack Freitas** (Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Scott Slaughter** (Saturday at 6 p.m.). 1 Old Golf Course Road.

**InterContinental Hotel** — guitarist **John Sherry** (rock and blues, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m.), guitarist **Terrence Farrell** (Spanish, classical and jazz, Sunday at 9 a.m.), guitarist **Glenn Bell**

(jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 750 Cannery Row.

**Melville Tavern — Chuck & Kyle** (rock and blues, Tuesday at 6 p.m.). 484

Washington St.

**Midici Pizza** — singer **Lauri Hofer-**

See **LIVE** page 37A



Sean & the Skinwalkers take the stage Friday, 7 p.m., at the P.G. Meetinghouse, which is officially reopening after an extensive makeover.



Joined by his band, singer and guitarist Rjae Haas rocks Deja Blue in Seaside Saturday at 3 p.m.



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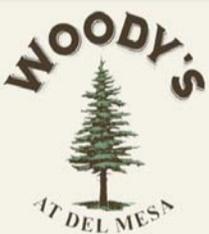
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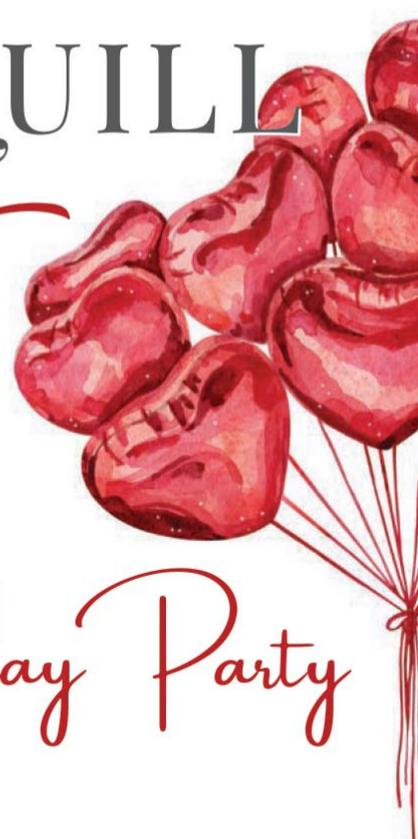
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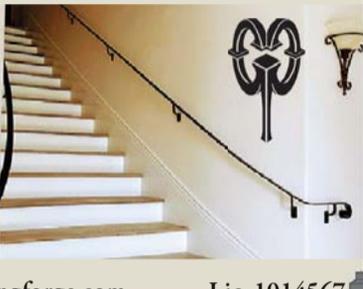
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# LIVE

From page 35A

Romero and keyboardist **Bill Spencer** (jazz, Sunday at 5 p.m.), singer **Lee Durley** and keyboardist **Bill Spencer** (jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 467 Alvarado St.

**Monterey Plaza Hotel** — pianist **Joe Indence** (jazz, Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and pianist **Scott Brown** (jazz and pop, Saturday at 6 p.m.), pianist **Gary Meek** (jazz, Sunday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Adrea Castiano** (Monday and Tuesday at 6 p.m.), multi-instrumentalist **Gary Regina** (jazz, Wednesday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Peter Barnes Martin** (jazz, Thursday 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.

**Sardine Factory** — singer and guitarist **David Conley** (Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m.). 701 Wave St.

**Sly McFly's** — **Bobby & Friends** (funk, soul and r&b, Friday at 9 p.m. and Thursday at 8:30 p.m.), **The Speakeasy Band** (pop and rock, Saturday at 9 p.m.), **Victory Lane** (classic rock, Monday at 8:30 p.m.), **Blue Fire** (classic rock and modern funk, Tuesday at 8:30 p.m.) **5 Star** (rock and soul, Wednesday at 8:30 p.m.). 700 Cannery Row.

## ■ Pacific Grove

**Il Vecchio Restaurant** — **The Cena Jazz Trio** (Thurs-

day at 6 p.m.). 110 Central Ave.

**Julia's Vegetarian Restaurant** — singer and guitarist **Rags Rosenberg** (Friday at 7 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kevin Smith** (Saturday at 6 p.m.), **Andrea's Fault Duo** (jazz and pop, Monday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Holysea** (Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Rick Chelew** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 1180 Forest Ave.

**The Monarch Pub** — **The Katherine Lavin Band** (pop and rock, Friday at 7 p.m.). 617 Lighthouse Ave.

**PG's Meetinghouse** — **Sean & The Skinwalkers** (rock and blues, Friday at 7 p.m.) **Open Mic** (Tuesday at 6 p.m., sign up by 5 p.m.). 599 Lighthouse Ave.

**Pop 'n' Hiss** — **Blue Fire** (classic rock and modern funk, Saturday at 7 p.m.), **Dan Cioper and the Jokerz** ("folky local rock," Thursday at 7 p.m.). 215 Forest Ave.

**Wild Fish** — **The Lighthouse Jazz Quartet** (Friday and Saturday at 6:30 p.m.). 545 Lighthouse Ave.

## ■ Pebble Beach

**The Inn at Spanish Bay** — **The Andy Weis Trio** (jazz, Friday, Saturday and Thursday at 7 p.m.). 2700 17 Mile Drive.

## ■ Seaside

**Deja Blue** — **The Rjae Haas Band** (rock and blues, Saturday at 3 p.m.). 500 Broadway Ave.

To update these listings, email [chris@carmelpinecone.com](mailto:chris@carmelpinecone.com).



Singer and guitarist Cloe Hubbard takes the stage Monday, 4 p.m., at Folkale Winery in Carmel Valley.

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Continues from previous page

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20252225

The following person(s) is(are) doing business as:

**FERGUSON HOME, 1144 FREMONT BLVD. SEASIDE, CA 93955**, County of MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): FERGUSON ENTERPRISES, LLC, 751 LAKEFRONT COMMONS NEWPORT NEWS, VA 23606; VA

This business is conducted by A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on NOT APPLICABLE

S/ IAN T. GRAHAM, MANAGER

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 12/15/2025 1/16, 1/23, 1/30, 2/6/26

**CNS-4000763# CARMEL PINE CONE**

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026. (PC 111)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260040

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**BRIGHTFIRE ARTWORKS, 2860 Ransford Ave., Pacific Grove, California 93950.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): ERICA ROSE GALANTE, 2860 Ransford Ave., Pacific Grove, California 93950.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 7, 2026.

S/ Erica Galante

Date signed: Jan. 7, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 7, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 114)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20252292

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**TANDEM EDGE SOLUTIONS, 26105 S. Carmel Hills Drive, Carmel, CA 93923.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): LAITH IVAN RODRIGUEZ, 26105 S. Carmel Hills Drive, Carmel, CA 93923.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 16, 2025.

S/ Laith Rodriguez

Date signed: Dec. 31, 2025

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 31, 2025.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 115)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260021

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**1. SAKE COLLECTIVE  
2. SAKE COLLECTIVE ADVENTURES  
25317 Carmel Knolls Drive, Carmel, CA 93923.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:

ART FERNANDEZ PHOTOGRAPHY, LLC, P.O. Box 399, Pebble Beach, CA 93953.

State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA

This business is conducted by a limited liability company

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 28, 2025.

S/ Arturo J. Fernandez, Member

Date: Jan. 5, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 5, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026. (PC 117)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260048

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**HEART AND HOME NURSING SERVICES, 850 Cactus Court, Salinas, CA 93905.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): JENNIFER H. ACILO, 850 Cactus Court, Salinas, CA 93950.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 8, 2026.

S/ Jennifer Acilo

Date signed: Jan. 8, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 8, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 119)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260022

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**MONTEREY COUNTY EXAMINER, 8305 Prunedale North Road #139, Salinas, CA 93907.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): BRYAN CANARY, 8305 Prunedale North Road #139, Salinas, CA 93907.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 29, 2025.

S/ Bryan Canary

Date signed: Jan. 5, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 5, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 120)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260007

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**GREEN HOME SOLUTIONS, 288 Pearl Street #076, Monterey, CA 93940.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the

Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:

GREEN HOME PROPERTY SERVICES, LLC.

State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA

This business is conducted by a limited liability company.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 1, 2026.

S/ Emil J. Font, Managing Member

Date: Jan. 1, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 2, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 123)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260056

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**CENTRAL COAST SURVEILLANCE, 1450 Nogal Dr., Salinas, CA 93905.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): MANUEL SALGADO ALCARAZ.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 8, 2026.

S/ Manuel Alcaraz

Date signed: Jan. 8, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 8, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 124)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260064

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**CENTRAL COAST SIGN AND DESIGN, 1311-B Dayton St., Salinas, CA 93901.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:

GILCO INC, 1311-B Dayton St., Salinas, CA 93901.

State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA

This business is conducted by a corporation.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 1, 2026.

S/ Julio C. Gil, CEO

Date: Jan. 9, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 9, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 125)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260088

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**CARMEL VALLEY BUSINESS CENTER, 13766 Center St., Ste. G5, Carmel Valley, California 93924.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): DANIEL PADILLA, 13766 Center St., Ste. G5, Carmel Valley, California 93924.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

S/ Daniel Padilla

Date signed: Jan. 13, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 13, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 127)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260001

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**DRIVE 1 AUTO SALES, 326 Reservation Rd., F1, Marina, CA 93933.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:

ALRAYA COMPANY, 326 Reservation Rd., F1, Marina, CA 93933.

State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA

This business is conducted by a corporation.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Dec. 7, 2025.

S/ Ali Shan, CEO

Date: Jan. 2, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 2, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 128)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20252241

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**Restore Home Health, 5005 Texas Street, 4th Floor, San Diego, CA 92108**

County of SAN DIEGO

Registrant(s):

Fast Care Home Health, Inc., 820 San Fernando Rd., #205, San Fernando, CA 91340

This business is conducted by a Corporation

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

Fast Care Home Health, Inc.

S/ Jason Bliss, CEO

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 12/17/2025.

1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13/26

**CNS-4003161# CARMEL PINE CONE**

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026. (PC 129)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260081

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**ETHOS-BIOTA, 65 Norman Way, Salinas, CA 93906.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s): ENRIQUE GARCIA, 65 Norman Way, Salinas, CA 93906.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 12, 2026.

S/ Enrique Garcia

Date signed: Jan. 12, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 12, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 2026 (PC 130)

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF MONTEREY****ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME**

Case No. 26CV000079

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS: Petitioner, BRYANT MUNOZ ALVARA &amp; CINTHIA LISSETH RAMIREZ CENTENO filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

**A. Present name:**

ROSIE AMARA ALVARA RAMIREZ

**Proposed name:**

ROSIE AMARA MUNOZ RAMIREZ

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

**NOTICE OF HEARING:**

DATE: March 10, 2026

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

DEPT: 10:00 a.m.

The address of the court is 1200 Aguajito Road, Monterey, CA 93940.

(s) Ian A. Rivamonte

Judge of the Superior Court

Date filed: Jan. 12, 2026

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026. (PC 132)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260024

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**BMTS MOBILITY GROUP, 415 Hall Rd., Royal Oaks, CA 95076.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.:

BETOS MOBILE &amp; TRUCK SERVICES LLC, 311 Main St., PMB #190, Watsonville, CA 95076.

State of Inc./Org./Reg.: CA

This business is conducted by a limited liability company

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

S/ Ana V. Gonzalez Renteria, Vice President

Date: Jan. 5, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 5, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026. (PC 134)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20250014

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**Jumpstart Finance and Accounting, 27136 Prestancia Way, Salinas, CA 93908**

County of MONTEREY

Registrant(s): William Cole, 27136 Prestancia Way, Salinas, CA 93908

This business is conducted by an Individual

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

S/ William Cole

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 01/05/2026.

1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13/26

**CNS-3995556# CARMEL PINE CONE**

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026. (PC 135)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260087

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**SERAPHIM'S TOUCH, 1011 Cass Street, Ste. 203-E, Monterey, CA 93940.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

JADE MICHELLE MINELLI, 500 Glenwood Circle #2210, Monterey, CA 93940

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Jan. 13, 2026.

S/ Jade Michelle Minelli

Date signed: Jan. 13, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Jan. 13, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026 (PC 136)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20252253

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**1. INKED OCTOPUS BOOKS  
2. THE INKED OCTOPUS BOOKSTORE  
3. INKED OCTOPUS BOOKSTORE  
4. THE INKED OCTOPUS BOOKSTORE AND COFFEEHOUSE  
5. INKED OCTOPUS BOOKSTORE AND COFFEEHOUSE**

1141 Wanda Ave., Seaside, CA 93955.

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

KAREN McDONALD, 1550 Canyon Del Rey Blvd #1025, Seaside, CA 93955.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

S/ Karen McDonald

Date signed: Dec. 19, 2025

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Dec. 19, 2025.

Publication Dates: Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 2026 (PC 137)

**FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT**

File No. 20260092

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:

**FRL CONSTRUCTION, 277 Tapadero St., Salinas, CA 93906.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

FRANCISCO S. RODRIGUEZ, 277 Tapadero St., Salinas, CA 93906.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on N/A.

# NEW SHOW AT MONTEREY MUSEUM OF ART CELEBRATES THE RESILIENCE OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

AN EXHIBIT that explores one of American history's most difficult chapters — and yet celebrates the resilience of the human spirit — “Pictures of Belonging” opens this weekend at the Monterey Museum of Art.

The show highlights three gifted female artists — Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo — who were interned during World War II. One of the artists, Haya-

## Art Roundup

By CHRIS COUNTS

kawa, lived in Monterey and Pacific Grove in the 1930s. Okubo was the last to pass away, in 2001.

All three artists regularly exhibited their work in California during the years immediately preceding World War II. The art in the display spans eight decades. “The show reveals a broader picture of the American experience by presenting artworks and life stories of three trailblazing Japanese-American women in dialogue with each other for the first time,” according to the museum.

The exhibit will be on display through April 19. The museum is located at 559 Pacific St.

### ■ Sharing wonder

In a show that just opened at Monterey Regional Airport, teens and kids as young as 3 use art and journals to explore the natural world. Titled “Nature Journaling: A Lens into Conservation,” the exhibit will be on display through the end of May. The exhibit marks a collaboration between the airport and the Pacific Grove Museum of Natural History.

“I am inspired every day by the curiosity and love of nature our young visitors have. My goal with this exhibit is to share some of that wonder,” said the museum’s Natalie Johnston, who co-curated the show.

Airport officials, meanwhile, urged travelers and airport visitors “to view the exhibition and celebrate our region’s talented young artists and stunning natural wonders.”

The museum is located at 165 Forest Ave.

### ■ P.G. teen wins poetry prize

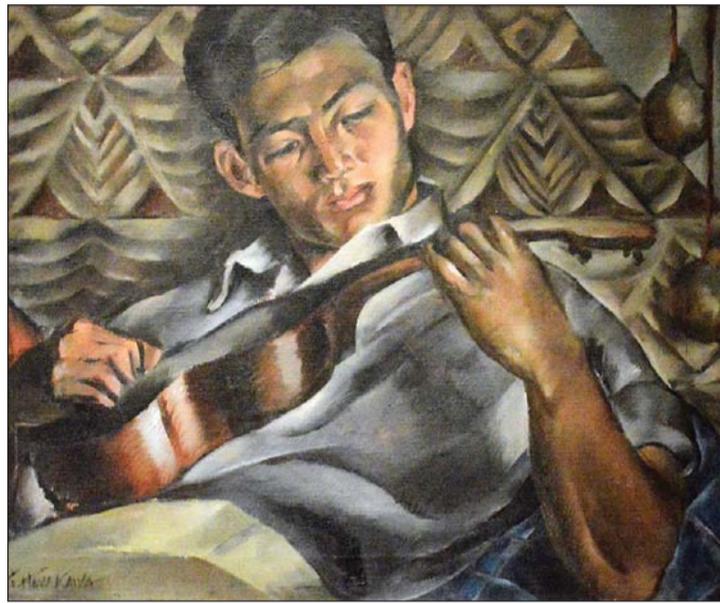
Competing against high school students from across the county, Antony Gabrik of Pacific Grove High School took home the first-place prize at the Monterey County Poetry Out Loud Competition last Saturday at Black Box Theater in Marina.

Now Gabrik moves on to a statewide Poetry Out Loud contest in March, with the winner advancing to a national competition.

Other winners included Milagros Santiago Gonzalez of Alisal High and Ozzy Godoy of Palma School, who tied for second place, and Amelia Quintana of Rancho San Juan High School, who earned third place.

“Watching these students take ownership of these poems is a powerful experience,” said Jacquie Atchison, executive director of Arts4MC, which hosts the contest.

“They aren’t just reciting lines — they are the voices of the next generation interpreting human emotion and history with incredible poise and clarity,” Atchison added. “We are honored to provide a platform for their inspiring voices.”



This painting by the late Miki Hayakawa of a young man playing a ukulele is featured in a new show at the Monterey Museum of Art.

## PUBLIC NOTICES



### PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea will conduct a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 4:00 PM**, or as soon thereafter as possible.

This meeting will be held via teleconference and in person in the City Council Chambers at City Hall located on Monte Verde Street between Ocean and Seventh Avenues. To participate via teleconference, use this link: <https://www.google.com/url?q=https://ci-carmel-ca-us.zoom.us/j/85373464007?pwd%3Dpon1yEbm2h37QTLaoTJaasr4DOKxTF1&source=calendar&st=1770567516328523&usg=AOvVaw25LjeG8RyWu02dfrqV87UV> To participate via phone, dial +1 (669) 444-9171. Webinar ID: 853 7346 4007. Passcode: 001916.

All interested people are invited to attend in person or via teleconference at the time and place specified above to give oral or written testimony concerning this matter. Written comments may be submitted to the Community Planning & Building Department at City Hall located on the east side of Monte Verde Street between Ocean and Seventh Avenues, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, 93921, or P.O. Box CC, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, 93921, or by emailing [agnette@ci.carmel.ca.us](mailto:agnette@ci.carmel.ca.us) prior to the meeting. With respect to written comments, please submit them at least 2 hours before the meeting to ensure they are provided to the legislative body and made part of the record. Comments received after that time and up to the end of the public hearing will be saved as part of the record but may not be provided to the legislative body prior to or during the public hearing.

The staff report and relevant documents will be available at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting on the City’s website at <http://www.ci.carmel.ca.us> and found by clicking on “Government” and then “Meetings.” The Planning Commission meeting will be broadcast live on the City’s website at <https://carmelbytheseaca.portal.civicclerk.com/> and the City’s YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/c/CityofCarmelbytheSea> and archived there after the meeting. For more information regarding Planning Commission meetings, please contact the Community Planning & Building Department at (831) 620-2010.

### Design Traditions

Citywide  
Consider a City Council referral to compare the Nore Winter and Steering Committee draft versions of the revised Design Guidelines (Design Traditions 1.5) and provide feedback on which version is preferred. The Planning Commission’s feedback will be shared with the City Council at an upcoming meeting where the Council will also be receiving a presentation and providing direction on completing the Design Traditions 1.5 Project.

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea  
Anna Ginette, Director of Community Planning & Building

Publication dates:  
Feb. 6, 2026  
(PC220)

LEGALS DEADLINE: Tuesday 3:00 pm • [legals@carmelpinecone.com](mailto:legals@carmelpinecone.com)

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## Celebration of the Arts



We’ll visit with some old favorites and introduce a few up-and-coming artists, check in with how galleries are doing these days and explore the local art world in-depth. Painters, sculptors, jewelers, musicians – longtime favorites and newcomers, creators, teachers and learners – might just see themselves here.

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# SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.



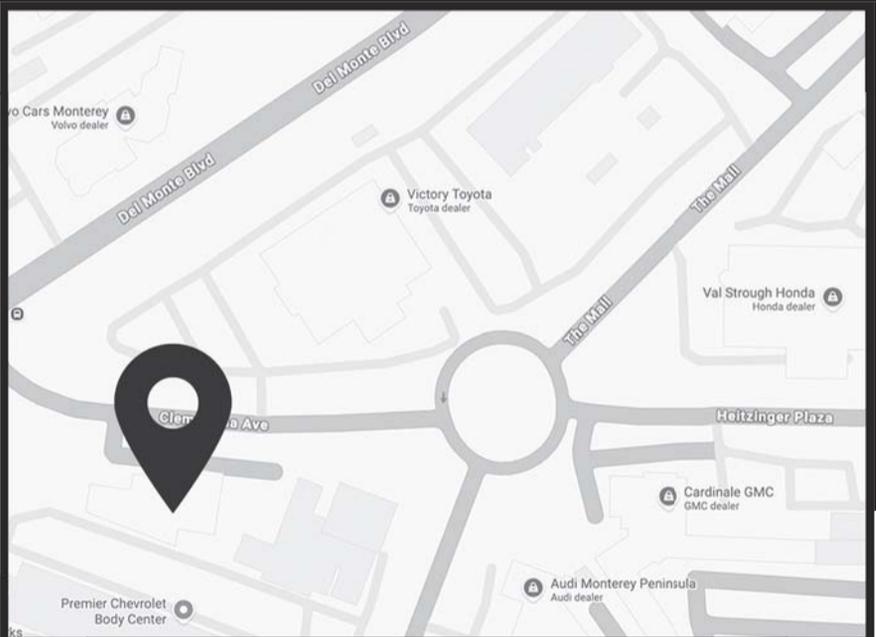
As we prepare for a major facility upgrade, Lexus Monterey Peninsula is making room for what's next—with exceptional values during our Construction Reduction Event.

Great things take shape with vision, craftsmanship, and time. While our future home is being transformed, we're pleased to offer exclusive opportunities on a carefully curated selection of new and pre-owned Lexus vehicles.

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Our Parts Department will continue to operate at our current Lexus Monterey Peninsula location during this time.

Thank you for your continued trust and for allowing us to serve Carmel, Monterey, and the Peninsula with the hospitality you expect from Lexus. We look forward to unveiling a space worthy of this remarkable community.



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- Parts: Remaining at Lexus Monterey Peninsula

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