

# The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 112 No. 9

<https://carmelpinecone.com>

February 27-March 5, 2026

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## Jury awards nearly \$19M in Pt. Lobos crash

### ■ Volunteer deemed an employee

By KELLY NIX

A FORMER Rhode Island city councilwoman who was nearly killed at Point Lobos when a docent driving an electric vehicle crashed into her was awarded more than \$18 million Wednesday by a Monterey County jury. Helen Anthony was in a crosswalk at Point Lobos State

Natural Reserve on June 10, 2023, when a docent, identified as Jack Duncan Arnold, then 82 years old, crashed into her. Anthony, a member of the Providence City Council at the time, was rushed to a Salinas hospital with major head and chest injuries. Claiming negligence and other causes of action, on Dec. 14, 2023, she filed a lawsuit against the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Arnold,

See VERDICT page 31A



PHOTOS/(LEFT) CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS, (ABOVE) PROVIDENCE CITY COUNCIL Security video (left) shows a van driven by docent striking Helen Anthony (shown above before the accident) in a Point Lobos crosswalk.

## Commission deadlocks on cypress removal

### ■ No mention of state's fire mandates

By MARY SCHLEY

A 60-FOOT-TALL, 200-year-old, 77-inch-diameter Monterey Cypress on Carmelo Street is either fine, or it's in failing health and therefore an imminent threat to nearby people and property, depending on which arborist is being asked. Last Thursday, the Carmel Forest and Beach Commission considered a request from the tree's owner to cut it down but split 2-2 on whether to allow it, leaving the debate and decision for another day.

### Arborists disagree whether 200-year-old tree is ready to fall

City forester Justin Ono told commissioners Feb. 19 that he'd been asked to assess the tree in May 2025, while construction of a new house on the lot was underway, and he "found the tree to be in fair condition and was not overly concerned with the health or stability of the tree."

But two months later, after Tope's Tree Service did some pruning and requested that another arborist evaluate the tree, Albert Weisfuss assessed it and concluded it's in poor health and should be removed. Ono subsequently denied owners John Brookes' and Kelly Meldrum's application to cut the tree down, and in November 2025, the couple "reopened the tree assessment for the purpose of appealing the decision" to the commission, he said.

"Staff believes this removal is inconsistent with the municipal code because the tree does not constitute a threat to public safety," Ono said in his report.

### High risk

Weisfuss, however, painted a different picture, concluding it's probable the tree will fall and is therefore considered high risk.

"The subject tree exhibits multiple structural deficiencies that significantly compromise its stability and health," he said in his report, citing a sparse canopy that contains dead twigs and foliage, several "over-extended limbs" that could fail, and "advanced decay" in multiple areas of the trunk, "as confirmed through probing, sounding and

See CYPRESS page 22A

## County may allow marijuana use where it's sold

By CHRIS COUNTS

IF THE wine industry can rake in millions of dollars from tasting rooms, why can't the cannabis industry do the same? That question looms over a proposal to make it legal for marijuana sellers to let customers sample products in their stores.

The Monterey County Planning Commission hosted a workshop Wednesday on the idea, giving commissioners and residents a chance to comment. While some raised tough questions, most who spoke seemed supportive.

A county report says staff have drafted ordinances "that would allow existing and future permitted marijuana retailers to also include consumption on site if they can meet all the requirements." The rules focus on ventilation, ensuring a safe environment for employees, customers and the public, and addressing odor control by requiring businesses to ensure the smell is not detected off site.

### Easy permits

According to a draft of the new rules, a vendor who wants to host indoor pot consumption would only need an over-the-counter permit, while one seeking to offer outdoor consumption would need one that might trigger public hearings.

County official Mike Novo, who gave a presentation on the topic, made the case for allowing marijuana use onsite

at shops that sell it.

"Cannabis is a legal drug right now," Novo said. "A lot of people are consuming it illegally because they don't

See POT page 19A

## C.V. snowfall has locals pleading, 'stay away'

By CHRIS COUNTS

FOR SOME who live in the Monterey Peninsula but miss experiencing four distinct seasons, the temptation to drive to Upper Carmel Valley — especially up Tassajara Road when it snows on Chews Ridge — is apparently so great that they can't let a road closure get in their way.

After snow fell last week on the ridge — which tops out at just above 5,000 feet — county officials closed the road near Jamesburg to all but local traffic as a precaution. According to the county, the closure was requested Feb. 18 by law enforcement due to "safety and road concerns." But that didn't stop many people from going to the snow. Describing the scene, a resident

See SNOW page 16A

## Democrats look to corporations to plug deficit

CALIFORNIA LAWMAKERS are searching for ways to fill a massive hole in the state budget driven by chronic deficits and cuts to federal funding. For some, raising taxes on businesses looks like the answer.

millions of Californians, including giants like Apple, Intel and Qualcomm, all of which have foreign subsidiaries and could face significantly higher tax bills — if they choose to stay headquartered in California.

Until 1986, California required multinationals to report all income, including profits earned overseas. Connolly's bill would return California to a similar system, which hasn't seen popular support in decades.

### 'Profits have soared'

"For the last 40 years, California has allowed the biggest corporations to choose a tax scheme that ensures they pay as little in taxes as possible," said the San Rafael Democrat. "Even as corporate profits have soared and the federal government has cut corporate tax rates to historic lows, these companies still stash profits overseas to avoid paying billions in state taxes each year."

With the Water's Edge Election, corporations paid \$38.7 billion more in taxes last year than in 1986, thanks in part to California's 8.4 percent corporate tax rate — the nation's third highest.

See TAXES page 15A

## Capitol Access

By CAITLIN CONRAD

Assemblymember Damon Connolly has proposed the first major tax increase of the year with legislation to eliminate what is called the "Water's Edge Election" — an idea that has been introduced before but gone nowhere in Sacramento.

The Water's Edge Election allows multinational companies based in California to limit the amount of foreign income they include when calculating their California taxes. Under Connolly's AB 1790, any portion of overseas profits would be subject to state taxation.

This change would affect businesses employing

## Doc's lab set for ADA upgrades



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

This building made famous in John Steinbeck's "Cannery Row" should be renovated so disabled people can visit, Monterey officials said. See page 8A.



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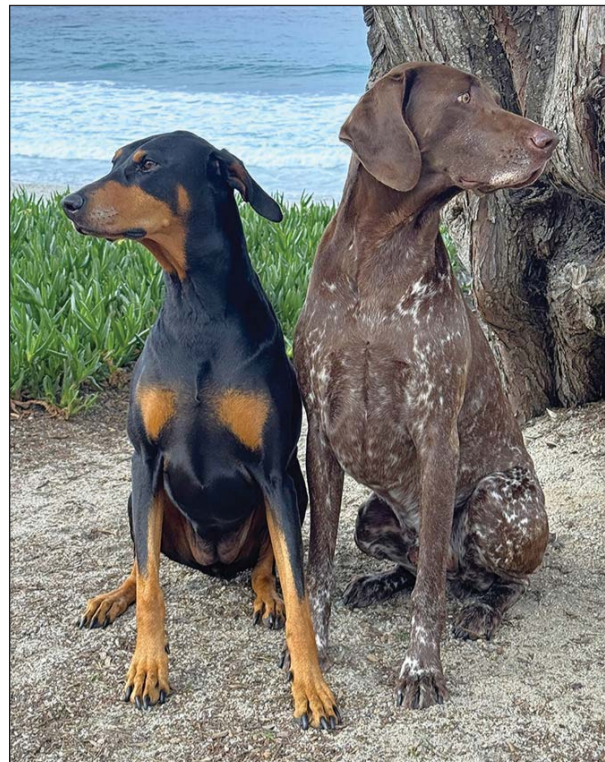
By Lisa Crawford Watson

## Hopelessly devoted

You really don't know one without the other. Copper, a 6 1/2-year-old German shorthaired pointer, was only a year old when his family brought home Phoebe, a 6-month-old Doberman pinscher, rescued in Stockton. Mom and Dad understood before they brought her home that she had to be a good fit for the family – which included, first and foremost, Copper.

Copper came from a breeder to his family's home just north of Ocean Avenue when he was 9 weeks old. His energy soon made it clear he needed a lot of exercise, which his person provides by taking him on long runs through Mission Trail and the fire roads off Highway 68. By the time Copper was a year old, his family had realized he also needed an animal companion. Then they got a call from the organization which had rescued Phoebe.

"I took Copper with me, so I could see the interac-



tion," their person said. "It was during Covid, so I was masked up, but she was not thrown by that. She was happy and bubbly and loving, just wanting interaction with people. She and Copper seemed to get along fine."

Phoebe was "all puppy," said her family, so they enlisted Copper to help them socialize her. The pups became a really good pair.

"She kind of worships him," their person said. "He's her idol, while she's incredibly sensitive and cuddly."

Both have been to Carmel Beach, but since they tend to ingest a lot of saltwater and sand, they have been relegated to walks on the path overlooking the beach along Scenic Road.

"They have such a different take on their lives," their person said. "Phoebe looks at us with such gratitude in her eyes, while Copper's look says, 'Do you know how lucky you guys are?'"

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# Some businesses say loss of green zones means loss of customers

By MARY SCHLEY

WHEN THE City of Carmel implemented AB 413, the Daylighting Law, in early 2025 to make intersections safer for pedestrians and cyclists, many former corner spots were turned into red zones or loading zones. Among the changes was the loss of dozens of green 30-minute zones downtown, including many that were converted to two-hour parking, making life tougher for the owners of businesses that don't require long customer visits.

In November 2024, as the city council considered options for meeting the state mandate to get rid of parking near crosswalks, a survey showed the downtown area contained 810 parking spaces: 696 two-hour spots, 102 green zones, eight commercial loading zones and four for disabled parking. To meet the state's daylighting requirements, 30 red zones were created, the number of green zones dropped to 42, and 31 commercial loading zones were added. The net loss of two-hour spots — which was the issue of greatest concern at the time — was nine.

## Round and round

That meant the removal of several 30-minute zones on the west side of Lincoln Street between Sixth and Ocean avenues, where the spaces on both sides of the street were formerly green. Steve Green, owner of Optique America, said the change has negatively impacted his business.

At the traffic safety committee meeting Wednesday afternoon, Green — who has owned his store for 34 years — said the two-hour spots are keeping his customers away.

"They continue to tell me they are having to drive around looking for a place to park," he said, and sometimes, they give up and go elsewhere. "When we had 30-minute parking, there would be a good flow of traffic moving, but we don't have that anymore, and that's the problem."

Since he's in his shop daily, he said he often sees people park in the two-hour spaces and leave their cars there for hours, since enforcement is infrequent.

## 'Do something'

Mayor Dale Byrne, who has been trying to remedy some of the parking issues at the council level, called in to support Green's request to turn at least one of the two-hour spaces back into a 30-minute zone.

"This is clearly a combination of taking the green spaces away and not really having enforcement a number of days a week," he told the committee, which includes Police Chief Todd Trayer, planning director Anna Ginette, public works director Ken Wysocki and public works superintendent Rob Culver.

"I'm one of his customers, so I can vouch for that," he said. The mayor acknowledged other businesses that typically have quick customer turnover might ask for the return of green spaces, too.

"We have to do something — start enforcing or selectively put a few more green spaces in, especially near businesses like this where people don't stay long," he said at the Feb. 25 meeting. "This might be something we can do to at least ease some of the pain for local businesses."

Former councilwoman Karen Ferlito,

## Circling blocks in search of parking, then giving up

See ZONES page 21A

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# Police & Sheriff's Log

## No glasses found, police have case

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.

### SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7

**Pacific Grove:** At about 1229 hours, property was turned in for destruction. Property was collected, photographed and booked.

### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Traffic stop at Ocean and Carpenter at 0336 hours for CVC violations resulted in two subjects arrested for parolee at large, drugs, burglary tools, warrants and possession of stolen property.

**Carmel-by-the-Sea:** Theft from a vehicle and burglary into a storage unit at Mission and Eighth.

**Pacific Grove:** Found property on Juni-

pero Avenue was booked into evidence for safekeeping.

**Pacific Grove:** A 60-year-old male was arrested on Central Avenue for possession of a controlled substance for sales, public intoxication, possession of drug paraphernalia, vandalism, obstructing/resisting arrest, and being under the influence of a controlled substance. He was booked into Monterey County Jail on \$70,000 bail.

**Carmel Valley:** Damage to a vehicle on Merrill Way was reported.

**Carmel area:** Deputies responded to a water rescue at Point Lobos.

### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9

**Carmel area:** Mail theft on Ward Place.

**Carmel area:** Possible financial elder abuse on Oakshire Drive.

See **POLICE LOG** page 11RE in the Real Estate Section



## The gavel falls

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

**Jan. 29** — Judge Stephanie Hulsey sentenced Brandon Peters, 36, to 20 years in state prison for four counts of possession of child sexual abuse material. Peters also admitted having a prior strike conviction.

The convictions stem from two separate incidents that occurred while Peters was serving a state prison sentence at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad. On March 5, 2023, and again on Dec. 11, 2023, Peters was found in possession of two separate cell phones, each containing child sexual abuse material. He also received two rules violation reports for possessing prohibited cell phones while incarcerated and was disciplined accordingly.

Prior to these offenses, Peters was convicted in Sacramento County for sexually assaulting two children under the age of 10.

The crimes occurred in 2009, and he was sentenced to 30 years to life in prison for those offenses. His prior parole eligibility date was September 2029. The new 20-year sentence will be served consecutively to the 30-years-to-life sentence he was already serving at the time of the current offense.

This case was investigated by the investigative services unit at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad.

**Jan. 29** — Judge Pamela L. Butler sentenced Gonzalo Rios, 71, and a resident of Salinas, to 18 years in prison for committing six counts of lewd acts upon a child under 14 years. These offenses are serious and violent felonies and are considered strikes under California's three strikes law. Rios will also

See **GAVEL** page 31A

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# Cops save suicidal man from bridge

By KELLY NIX

IT WAS a moment when one misstep could have been fatal, but a quick-acting deputy sheriff last week helped prevent anyone from being hurt — including the distraught man who apparently wanted to kill himself.

On Feb. 21 at about 11:30 a.m., deputies with the Monterey County Sheriff's Office were called to assist California Highway Patrol officers with a suicidal individual threatening to jump from the San Miguel Canyon Road overpass onto Highway 101 in Prunedale. The unidentified man at one point was straddling the bridge railing.

For two hours, CHP officers and sheriff's deputies — one of them a hostage negotiator — tried to convince the man to step away from the ledge.

"Despite their efforts, the individual remained on the railing," the sheriff's office said.

Things took a dangerous turn when the man repositioned himself, looked down at the freeway, and began praying. Sensing he was about to jump, deputy Alejandro Cosio sprang into action, quickly grabbing the man away from the ledge and — with help from deputy Patricia Osuna and two

See **SAVED** page 21A



PHOTO/MONTEREY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff's deputies and CHP officers rescue a man they said was suicidal and wanted to jump from a bridge onto Highway 101.

### NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT AND CLAIM PROCESS

CFMG Contempt Fines – Hernandez v. County of Monterey

**If you were incarcerated at the Monterey County Jail between May 27, 2016 and December 31, 2025, a settlement may provide you with money.**

*Please read this notice to learn more and submit a claim.*

Hernandez v. County of Monterey is a class action lawsuit about conditions at the Monterey County Jail (the "Jail"). In September 2023, the Court found the Jail's health care provider California Forensic Medical Group, Inc. ("CFMG") in contempt for violating Court orders about medical, mental health, and dental care.

CFMG has agreed to pay **\$2,470,000** to people incarcerated at the Jail from May 27, 2016 to December 31, 2025 (the "Settlement Period") to compensate for its violations of Court orders about minimum standards of care at the Jail. This settlement is **only** about CFMG's liability for contempt for violating the Court's orders. The settlement does **not** compensate people for personal medical conditions, and it does **not** affect any individual claims you might have about health issues or injuries you may have experienced at the Jail. Administration costs will be paid from the settlement amount.

**If you were incarcerated at the Jail between May 27, 2016 and December 31, 2025**, you can submit a claim online at [www.MontereyJailSettlement.com](http://www.MontereyJailSettlement.com). To receive money, you must make a claim by **April 20, 2026**. If you were incarcerated during this period and are currently incarcerated, you can request that the money be sent to an address outside the Jail.

#### HOW MUCH MONEY WILL I RECEIVE?

It is estimated that the minimum amount each person will receive may be as much as **\$110**, depending on how many valid claims are submitted. This minimum amount will be the full payment if you were incarcerated for 10 days or fewer during the Settlement Period. If you were incarcerated for more than 10 days, you will receive an additional payment based on the number of days you were incarcerated.

The exact amount that each person receives may be changed by a further order of the Court once the number of valid claims is known.

#### HOW CAN I LEARN MORE AND SUBMIT A CLAIM?

For more information, go to the settlement website at [www.MontereyJailSettlement.com](http://www.MontereyJailSettlement.com). The website has links to the complete settlement documents and a form for you to submit a claim. You can also call **833-319-5926** or contact the attorneys who represent incarcerated people in this case at Rosen Bien Galvan & Grunfeld, LLP, P.O. Box 390, San Francisco, CA 94104.

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## Ex-P.G. High coach charged with felony

By KELLY NIX

COUNTY PROSECUTORS have filed a criminal charge against a former Pacific Grove High School coach who was arrested in late January on suspicion of sexual misconduct with a female student.

Former campus supervisor and girls basketball coach Marquis Pickrom, 37, was charged with a single felony, according to a Monterey County District Attorney's Office complaint filed Feb. 1 in Monterey County Superior Court.

"A felony was committed by Marquis Brion Pickrom, in that he committed an act of sexual penetration against Jane Doe, who was under the age of 18 years," says the complaint filed by deputy district attorney Danielle VanDamme.

Pacific Grove Police say that between August 2023 and October 2025 — after Pickrom became the girls basketball coach — he groomed the girl. The student told investigators that Pickrom gave her special attention, made personal and romantic comments about her, and sent her messages through Instagram. She was 16 to 18 years old at the time.

She also told police that Pickrom kissed her and touched her in a sexual manner. School officials learned of the alleged impropriety after she told friends about her relationship with the coach.

Pickrom was arrested Jan. 31 and booked

into Monterey County Jail in Salinas but was released on bail. He remains free but must adhere to numerous conditions, including submitting to searches of his person, car and home without a warrant.

Pickrom's Oakland-based attorney, Darryl Stallworth, said it was too soon to answer questions about the case.

"I've yet to receive the discovery," Stallworth said. "I cannot comment until I have reviewed the evidence."

### Stay-away order

Accompanied by Stallworth, Pickrom appeared before Monterey County Superior Court Judge Stephanie Hulsey on Feb. 20 and pleaded not guilty. During the hearing, Hulsey issued a criminal protective order against Pickrom, prohibiting him from contacting the victim. The order expires Feb. 20, 2028.

Like most school districts, Pacific Grove Unified prohibits sexual and inappropriate personal relationships between employees and students, regardless of a student's age.

Pickrom's next court appearance is May 26, when Hulsey is expected to set a date for a preliminary hearing, which will determine whether there is enough evidence to put Pickrom on trial.

If convicted, he could be sentenced to state prison and be required to register as a sex offender for life.

## Famous lab to get renovation

By KELLY NIX

A WEATHER-WORN building immortalized in John Steinbeck's 1945 novel, "Cannery Row," is one step closer to receiving modern upgrades that will allow everyone to visit.

The City of Monterey has for years hosted tours of Pacific Biological Laboratories at 800 Cannery Row, where famed marine biologist Ed Ricketts lived, worked and spent considerable time collaborating with his close friend, Steinbeck.

The storied city-owned building, constructed in 1937, is not accessible to people with disabilities or mobility issues. While there has long been talk about making it more accessible for people in wheelchairs, progress has been slow. At a Feb. 12 meeting, Monterey's historic preservation commission adopted a historic preservation and ADA access plan for the building.

Commissioners were presented with two options, both of which include a platform lift, exterior stairs,

and ramps to provide access to the building's two levels. Option A, the preferred choice, places the lift on the southwest side of the lab's rear yard.

### Lift and ramp

"Instead of having to climb stairs to enter the building, this would allow access from Cannery Row to the rear yard," and "access into the building" via the lift, Monterey city planner Fernanda Roveri told commissioners.

The lift and ramp would be accessible from an existing paved public access path behind the lab.

"Locating the new lift and restrooms on the exterior preserves

and maintains the building's interior historic fabric to the greatest extent possible while focusing new construction on the exterior of the building in an area of previous change — near and adjacent to the new exterior stair," the report states.

Other proposed upgrades include

See RICKETTS page 20A

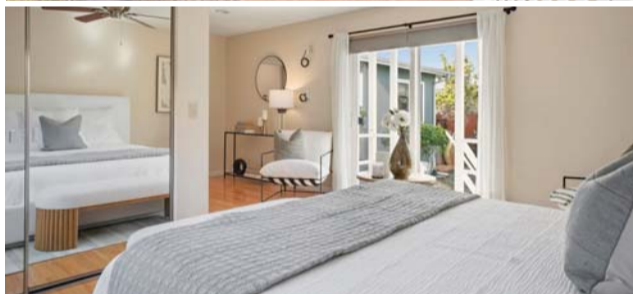


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# Airport housing to be discussed

By CHRIS COUNTS

RESPONDING TO concerns about builder Patrick Orosco's proposal to construct 90 homes at the former Carmel Valley Airport, the Carmel Valley Association has will hold a public meeting March 18 at 6:30 p.m. at Tularcitos School. According to the group, Orosco plans to attend.

"The aim for the meeting is to help us understand what the community's priorities are, what exactly is being proposed, what is known and what remains to be studied, what regulatory framework applies, and what the timeline and next steps are," the association announced. "The meeting will provide a platform for the developer and Carmel Valley residents to interact in a publicly transparent and accountable setting."

The group urged locals to attend and ask questions.

"Help define community priorities and clarify what we want to see happen in this significant corner of Carmel Valley," they

suggested.

Orosco recently met with the Carmel Valley Association's board of directors to discuss the project.

"While Mr. Orosco and the CVA have divergent visions for the future of Carmel Valley Village, the CVA board appreciated the opportunity to meet with him," the group reported. "He and the CVA firmly agree on one point — members of the community should also have a chance to hear his presentation and ask clarifying questions."

### Project details

All 90 homes will be single-family residences with three bedrooms and two baths. No apartments are planned. Seventy will be market rate, while 20, in 10 duplexes, will be "affordable." The lots will measure between 10,000 and 12,000 square feet.

The project site measures 17.5 acres and includes an additional 6.36 acres of street improvements and 5.5 acres of improved open space.

# WATCH FOR ROAD DELAYS FRIDAY

By CHRIS COUNTS

MOTORISTS CAN expect delays of up to 30 minutes Friday due to construction on the roundabout at Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade — but a county official told The Pine Cone that it's likely the traffic trouble caused by the work will ease after this. "There's light at the end of the tunnel," Monterey County spokesperson Nick Pasculli told The Pine Cone.

The delays are expected to start Friday around 6:30 a.m. and last until 5:30 p.m.

The project is in its fourth phase. While construction of earlier stages caused lengthy delays when work crews moved K-rails, Pasculli said the shift to the fifth phase, which is set for next month, won't

impact traffic nearly as much. The county official noted, though, that wet weather could make traffic worse — as well as motorists driving cautiously through a work zone. He urged drivers to be patient when it comes to both.

### Completed next month?

Monterey County 5th District Supervisor Kate Daniels also put out word that traffic delays are expected Friday.

"Flaggers will be used to direct traffic," Daniels said. "No complete roadway closure is planned during this period. Public works will make every effort to minimize the traffic disturbance and expeditiously

See DELAYS page 21A

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# CAR WEEK AUCTIONS MOVE HOUSE

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER MORE than 20 years of being held alongside The Quail motorsports gathering each August, the Bonhams car auction is moving to Laguna Seca and will take place in conjunction with the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion historic races. Shortly after officials announced the

shift Feb. 7, The Quail revealed a new auction partner, too. Staged at the Monterey Jet Center during the Motorlux event since 2021, Broad Arrow is replacing Bonhams at the Carmel Valley show.

“We’ve established a great relationship with them,” Mel Harder, president and general manager of WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, said of Bonhams. The

auction company has had a presence at the vintage races since 2011 and last year sponsored the driver’s lounge at the Pre-Reunion historic races.

“We’ve had ongoing talks with them, and they expressed some interest in moving, and I think the facility lays out really well for what they want to do,” Harder said. “It gives their buyers great access, and I think people are just excited about what we’re doing and how we’re moving forward. We have a great platform to have events within events, and this is great example of how we can leverage those relationships.”

### Collecting and competition

The Bonhams auction will take place Thursday, Aug. 13, with previews offered during the two days prior. The sale will be set up in the lakebed area of the track, allowing the cars to be displayed in an expansive space, Harder said.

“They are coming out this week to do a walk-through, and they’ve got a basic plan for how to lay it out,” he said.

Track officials noted Bonhams’ relocation to Laguna “brings the worlds of collecting and competition closer than ever, giving collectors the rare opportunity to experience, acquire and even race their historic automotive treasures at the legendary raceway.”



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

For the first time, the historic races at Laguna Seca will host a major car auction when Bonhams moves its sale there.

Bonhams car division managing director Whitney Maxwell said the annual Car Week auction “is one of our flagship global sales on the calendar, and the location of the auction is hugely important.”

And with the Friends of Laguna Seca taking over operations and management of the raceway and its surrounding recreation area, the venue “has seen significant investment in recent years and gives us almost limitless space to grow and develop our sales as the quality and volume of cars we consign for our Monterey Car Week sale develop,” he said.

While the auction will be over before the height of the historic races at Laguna Seca hits, many of the sale cars will still be

See AUCTIONS page 28A

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# C.V. woman sentenced in deadly hit-and-run

By MARY SCHLEY

**JENNY LESCH**, a 47-year-old former Cachagua resident, was sentenced to seven years in prison earlier this month for the 2023 hit-and-run death of a 62-year-old man on Highway 1 near Carmel. Following a two-week trial last October, a jury found Lesch guilty of vehicular manslaughter with gross negligence, felony hit-and-run with injury or death, and assault with a deadly weapon.

On the afternoon of May 31, 2023, Lesch was tailgating James Pack, who was driving to his home on Carpenter Street in his 1988 VW van, as he prepared to merge onto southbound Highway 1 from Fremont Street in Monterey.

### Out of control

When he tried to enter the highway, Lesch swerved next to him to block him, Monterey County prosecutor Christopher Puck explained after the verdict. "Around this time, Lesch and Mr. Pack flipped each other off," and when he got on the highway behind her, she repeatedly jammed on the brakes, causing Pack to nearly rear-end her and lose control of his VW.

"As Puck's van began to swerve, Lesch quickly moved into another lane, nearly hitting a second vehicle, a silver Honda," the D.A. said, which then also swerved out of

control to avoid her.

That driver, later identified as Nicholas Krenke, now 34, collided with Pack's van on the shoulder just south of the Aguajito Road offramp, and the impact caused the van to roll multiple times. Pack was not wearing a seatbelt and was ejected, and he died at the hospital later that day.

Rather than stopping to help, Lesch and Krenke fled. The highway was shut down for nearly five hours as the CHP investigated, and some of what the officers found led

them to Lesch.

"When CHP officers contacted Lesch at her home that night, she denied any involvement in the accident," the prosecutor said, and she "repeatedly lied to police by claiming that she wasn't able to call 911 because her phone wasn't working."

But records proved her phone was on and receiving a

See **MANSLAUGHTER** page 21A



Video taken at the time of the wreck shows the victim's van (upper left) upright after it rolled and he was ejected. The driver later died.

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## CAMP HELPS GIRLS LEARN TO FIGHT FIRES

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

**M**ONTEREY PENINSULA College and California Fire Women are offering a free one-day camp for girls ages 14 to 23 who might be interested in a career in the fire service and want to learn more. Plus, they get to climb ladders and rescue mannequins.

"Have you thought about a career in the fire service?" they ask. "Are you interested in a day of being challenged physically and mentally?"

The camp, set for 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 25 in the Public Safety Training Center at

4495 John Lloyd Way in Seaside, will start with orientation, briefing and team assignments at 7:30, with "evolutions" beginning an hour later. Those activities include live fire, rescuing mannequins, rope rappelling, wildland hose lays, CPR, extinguishers, ladder climbing and chainsaw training.

Parents will return at 4:30 p.m. "to watch an exciting demonstration which will showcase what the cadets learned all day," after which certificates of completion will be presented and photos will be taken.

For more information and to register, visit [mpc.edu/firecamp](http://mpc.edu/firecamp). Applications are due Feb. 28.

## More money to combat gun crimes

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

**G**OV. GAVIN Newsom announced Thursday that another \$107 million is being awarded via 42 grants to cities, counties, community-based organizations and tribal governments to prevent gun violence and reduce crime.

Since 2019, the state has invested more than \$350 million in the California

Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program to support "proven, community-driven strategies to reduce shootings, homicides, and retaliatory violence," he said. "Public safety is as much about prevention as it is about enforcing the law."

The grants enable leaders to "step in before a trigger is pulled — interrupting cycles of harm, saving lives, and creating real pathways to opportunity."

## SPCA seeks shop volunteers

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

**T**HE SPCA's secondhand store on Carmel Rancho Lane at the mouth of the valley is in need of helping hands, according to the animal-welfare group.

"Looking for a fun way to make a difference for animals?" asked Beth Brookhouser, VP of marketing and communications for the nonprofit. "The SPCA Benefit Shop needs fun, hardworking volunteers to join our team."

Funds raised at the store help enable SPCA Monterey County's lifesaving

programs, including rescuing and rehabilitating injured wildlife, healing neglected pets and finding loving, permanent homes for animals in need.

Volunteers are being sought to assist customers and work the cash registers, and to curate and sort donations.

Christy Jacoby, SPCA Benefit Shop manager, described volunteers as "the heart of everything we do."

"We work hard together, we make new friends with customers and team members, and we know that every sale makes a real difference," she said.



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# Storage spaces burned in Ramona fire

By MARY SCHLEY

**M**ONTEREY AND Seaside firefighters acted quickly to halt a blaze in a condo complex Friday night before any of the units could catch fire, but several residents were displaced due to smoke and other damage, according to Assistant Fire Chief Greg Greenlee.

At around 11 p.m. Feb. 20, the Monterey Fire Department received reports of a structure fire at the complex in the 500 block of Ramona Court, Monterey, and the first engine arrived within three minutes. Firefighters reported seeing smoke in the complex and searched for the source.

“Crews located a fire in the parking area below the occupied condominium complex,” Greenlee said.

## \$6M saved

Using hoses, firefighters swiftly confined the blaze to two storage areas, preventing it from extending into any residential living spaces, he said. But some of the condo units sustained damage when firefighters had to force entry while trying to get people evacuated, and some suffered light to moderate smoke intrusion, as well.

While an insurance adjuster will conduct a thorough investigation to determine the extent of the damage, the fire department estimated impacts on the structure and lost contents at roughly \$50,000, “with an estimated \$6,000,000 worth of property saved.”

Four residents were displaced due to smoke intrusion, and the American Red Cross assisted them with finding temporary accommodations. No one was injured, according to Greenlee.

Acting Monterey Division Chief Silas Fischer said Thursday that investigators are homing in on the cause of the fire, which appears to have been accidental.

While the fire department wasn’t summoned until much later, “residents first noticed smoke around 8 p.m.,” he said, and

they tracked it to one of the storage spaces in the complex, where an individual was using a power sander that experienced some sort of electrical short.

“It sounds like this person isn’t a resident — there might be some sort of dispute over whether that person was supposed to be on the property — but the fire wasn’t intentionally set,” he said.

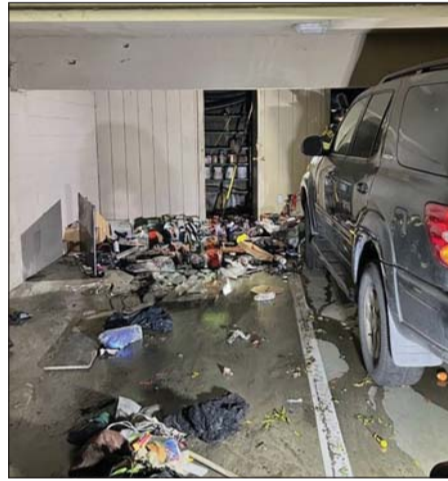
The residents believed they had extinguished the small fire, but they were wrong.

“They thought they got it out,” he said. “If you have a fire and you think you put it out, ask us to come check it out, anyway.”

Firefighters have specialized tools and equipment to determine a fire is actually cold and not just smoldering below the surface.

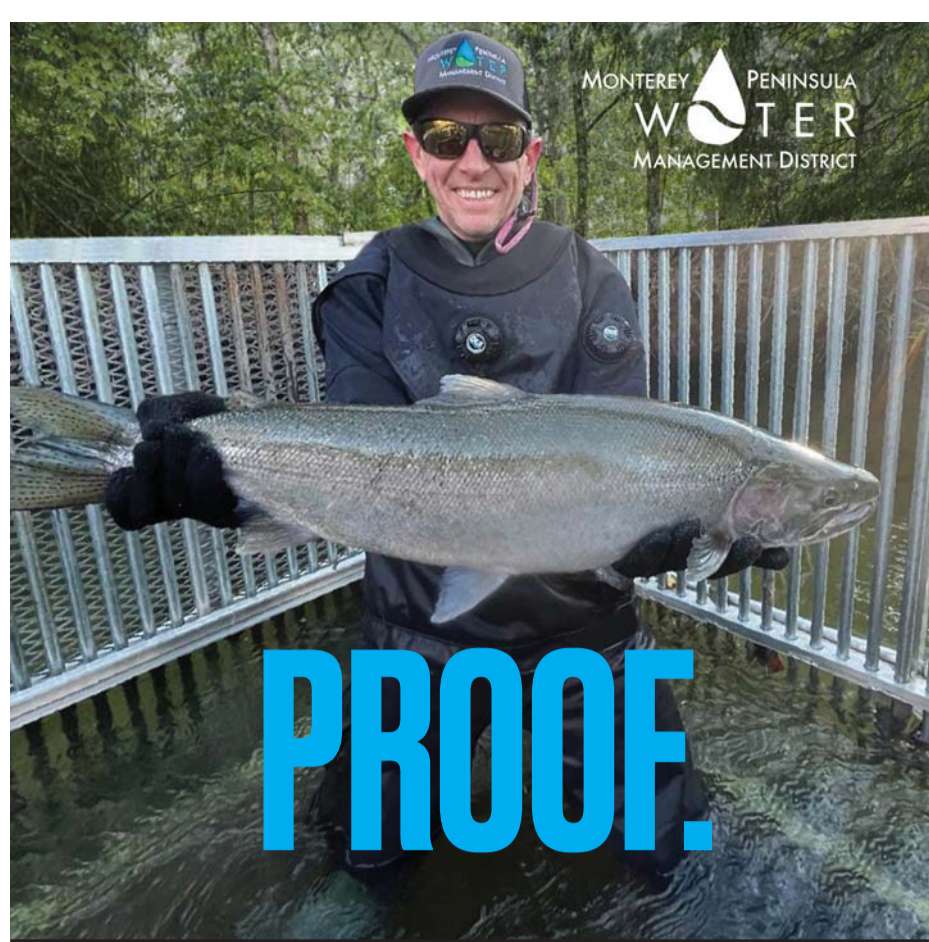
One of the reasons they’re so thorough about it, Fischer added, is “the last thing we want to do is go back” to a fire they thought they’d doused.

In the Ramona incident, the smoldering debris reignited, starting the fire that burned through the wall from the first storage space into the second before MFD got it under control and put it out.



PHOTO/MONTEREY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Debris scattered in the garage of a condo complex after a fire damaged two storage areas.



34" migrating steelhead ready for river release (2.5.26)

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- The innovative Aquifer Storage and Recovery project stores winter surplus water in the Seaside Aquifer.
- Pure Water Monterey, the advanced water purification project MPWMD co-developed with Monterey One Water, now provides **60%** of the Peninsula's drinking water.



## Harrison Memorial Library

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# TAXES

From page 1A

Connolly and his progressive backers, including the Service Employees International Union, hope the Water's Edge repeal will seem more palatable this year, especially alongside the "billionaire's tax" being pushed by another union. That initiative would impose a one-time tax of 5 percent on the net worth of billionaires. The proposal has drawn the ire of Gov. Gavin Newsom and other Democrats who fear it could accelerate the exodus of the wealthy from the state.

Connolly unveiled his bill at a press conference where supporters held signs reading "End Global Tax Havens," calling the move a way to close what they see as a tax loophole.

"California faces a \$3 billion budget shortfall, but if we remove the Water's Edge Election, we will generate an estimated \$3 billion in new revenue," Connolly said.

Problem solved — or so Connolly would have us believe. But another \$3 billion a year won't be nearly enough to keep up with California's spending spree.

Under Newsom, total state spending has soared 72 percent, rising from \$203 billion in fiscal year 2019-2020 to a proposed \$349 billion this year.

The money has funded a range of new programs, including free healthcare for low-income and undocumented Californians as well as public school financing and a 28 percent increase in state workers — 104,860 more employees.

### 60 percent more revenue

If you favor expanding government, this may sound great. But state revenues have grown only 60 percent in the same period, leaving a cumulative \$125 billion budget gap. A 60 percent rise in revenue over seven years is impressive — about double the rate of inflation — but the state has still mismanaged the numbers.

California has relied on creative accounting to balance the books, but that can't last. Legislative analyst Gabe Petek predicts multi year deficits ranging from \$20 billion to \$35 billion if trends continue.

Repealing the Water's Edge Election was discussed at the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee this month, with one speaker promoting it as a way to shore up reserves.

"Our perspective is these folks aren't paying their fair share, while they're making billions in profit," said Scott Graves with the California Budget and Policy Center.

### Pro 13 chopping block

Graves was among several speakers presenting budget solutions and reminding lawmakers they have the power to raise revenue to fund services.

State Sen. John Laird, committee chair, did not comment on the idea of eliminating the Water's Edge Election but did address Proposition 13 after another speaker suggested revisiting the popular law limiting property taxes. "When Proposition 13 was enacted, it contributed to volatility by lowering one of the more stable sources of revenue," Laird said.

Adopted in 1978, Prop. 13 caps property assessment increases at 2 percent annually. While it has benefited homeowners enormously, it has limited revenue for the state while property values have exploded. One speaker even suggested that Prop. 13 was motivated by racism, a comment that drew criticism from Republicans but interest from some Democrats who would like to see a "split roll" — maintaining assessment caps for homeowners but removing them for commercial property owners.

"The problem with Prop. 13 is all the corporations that found loopholes. When you have a company like Disneyland paying no property taxes, that's a problem," said Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes.

Disney does pay huge sums in property taxes — just not as much as Reyes would like. The 85-acre Disneyland parcel

remains assessed at near-1970s values, but the company paid \$16.6 billion in property taxes for all Anaheim Resort holdings last year.

### 52 vote percent no

A split-roll would affect not just big corporations, but small businesses. In 2020, a ballot initiative to separate residential and

commercial property assessments was rejected by 52 percent of voters.

Neither Newsom nor Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas has signaled support for repealing the Water's Edge Election or adding any other major tax on businesses. If recent history is a guide, even massive revenue increases may not be enough to keep California in the black.

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# SNOW

From page 1A

said a line of motorists formed at the “road closed” sign as each car navigated its way around it.  
 “I sat and witnessed more than 200 people illegally passing by the road closure,” the resident reported. “This

was in less than an hour.”  
 Her comments were echoed by a couple others, who added that the visitors left behind trash, including beer cans and diapers.  
 Monterey County spokesperson Nick Pasculli confirmed that authorities received word that “motorists were disobeying the road closure and driving past our road closed signage.”  
 When KSBW aired a report showing snow falling on



PHOTO/PAUL LEWELLEN

Recent snow along Tassajara Road drew visitors from near and far — even though the road was closed.

Chews Ridge, several residents urged them to stop encouraging people to visit. Several verbal skirmishes erupted on Facebook as some urged non-residents to stay away, while a few encouraged them to come anyway.

**Facing fines**

“Every year, the locals that live on the ridge ask you not to report the snow, as it brings people that have no idea how to drive in it and get stuck and block the roadway,” one resident said.

One woman who lives in Upper Carmel Valley said closing the road to all but residents is necessary to keep everybody safe. “It would be irresponsible to do otherwise,” she insisted.

Another local urged county officials to crack down on the illegal activity — and boost their depleted coffers at the same time. “Imagine how much money the county could take if they followed the law and issued a fine for each and every one,” she added.

According to state law, local authorities have the power to close highways or restrict access to roads for construction, safety or other reasons. The law also states that it is unlawful to fail to obey a sign, signal or traffic control device, including “road closed” signs. If caught, drivers risk receiving a citation that could cost more than \$200.

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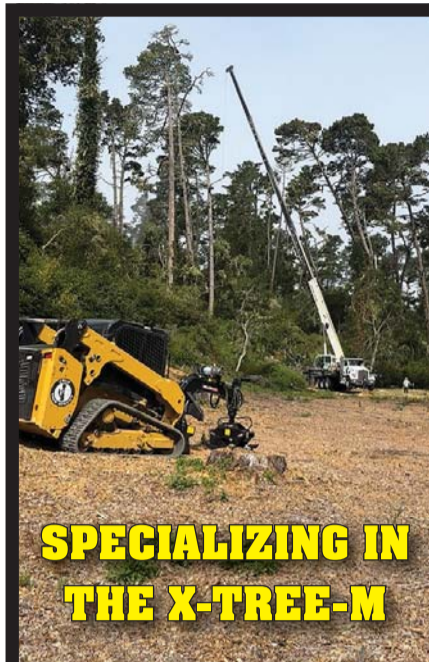
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# POT

From page 1A

have a legal place to consume it.”

Novo noted that if the new rules are approved, the California Coastal Commission would also need to sign off for locations along the county’s shoreline.

### Clear standards

Besides speaking in favor of allowing dispensaries to let customers sample products onsite, Aram Stoney, co-owner of Big Sur Cannobotanicals, sent a letter to the planning commission supporting the new rules.

Stoney suggested that “clear, enforceable operational standards” for “properly regulated cannabis consumption venues” will “protect neighbors and promote responsible adult use.”

Such a venue would “create a legal, designated place to consume” cannabis — something not everyone has access to, especially tourists.

“Many adults, particularly renters, visitors and those living in smoke-free housing or staying in hotels have few lawful options for consumption,” he explained. “A permitted venue helps solve the practical ‘legal to buy, nowhere to use’ gap by providing a compliant, adult-only space. They reduce public consumption and related complaints. Venues move use from sidewalks, parking lots, beaches, parks and cars into a controlled indoor setting. When consumption occurs in a permitted venue, impacts are easier to manage and enforce, and the community benefits from fewer nuisance issues in public places.”

During Wednesday’s hearing, Novo complimented Stoney’s letter. “I don’t think I could lay out a better set of reasons for supporting the measure,” he said.

### Real issue?

During the public comment period, most speakers were supportive, while several planning commissioners had questions

about odor and ensuring people who are too impaired to drive are prevented from doing so.

Although generally supportive of the industry, planning commissioner Christine Shaw questioned whether finding a legal place to consume marijuana is truly an issue. “I’ve never run into somebody who said, ‘Oh my God. I don’t have a legal place — what am I going to do?’” But others argued it is a real issue, especially for visitors staying in places that don’t allow smoking.

County public health officer Dr. Ed Moreno also spoke and expressed concerns about how secondhand smoke might impact vendors, contractors and inspectors.

Planning commissioner Martha Diehl suggested that a cannabis shop adding consumption onsite should be treated like any other business seeking to expand.

### ‘Odor’ vs. ‘smoke’

“If somebody wants to put in a picnic area next to their store, this would be a similar type of thing, as long as the impacts are dealt with,” Diehl said. “We’ve already said what those are — smoke and odor. And if there’s a need for added parking, water, wastewater, or those kinds of things related to an increase in the intensity of use. Whatever we do, my lens is: What would we ask anybody else to do in any other type of business?”

Diehl also suggested that the word “smoke” replace “odor” in the regulations, since smoke has a greater impact on public health.

“The public interest here is not necessarily the odor, just because we don’t like it. It’s the actual particulate matter related to the smoke,” she said. “I’m not really crazy about going to places where they spray perfume or use air fresheners — it makes all my allergies go. I don’t think the word we want here is ‘odor.’ The word we want here is ‘smoke.’”

The planning commission took no action Wednesday. Meanwhile, staff will continue refining the new rules, according to a county report.

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# RICKETTS

From page 8A

a new second-floor deck and railing, a single-occupancy restroom and improved drainage.

The renovation won't be cheap. The city estimates costs could range from \$1.8 million to more than \$2 million.

Monterey "is anticipating funding from the Western Flyer Foundation for design and construction of the accessibility upgrades," the report to the historic preservation commission explained.

The foundation's mission is to "stir curiosity through marine research, education, and a blend of science and art

inspired by John Steinbeck, Ed Ricketts and their journey on the Western Flyer" fishing boat. It also leads research and education programs aboard the ship, which Steinbeck and Ricketts used on their 1940 expedition to the Gulf of California.

## Main house

The lab — listed on the National Register of Historic Places — was rebuilt after the original building was destroyed in a fire.

Dubbed Doc's Lab in "Cannery Row," it served as Ricketts' home until his death in 1948.

Detailed drawings of the proposal and a compliance analysis will be completed before the project returns to the commission.



## JOANNE LEE BENDER (NÉE BROOKFIELD)

Sept. 4, 1946 – Feb. 12, 2026

Joanne Lee Bender passed away peacefully in the early hours of Feb. 12, 2026, after a life defined by adventure, grace, fortitude and an indomitable spirit.

Joanne was the devoted wife of 63 years to Dale Bender, loving mother to Melody King and Janine Bender, proud grandmother to Mackenzie and Delaney King, and cherished mother-in-law to Matthew King.

A young mother who "hit the ground running," Joanne built her life through unapologetic determination and talent. Without a formal college education, she mastered the world of business with intelligence and grit. She became an expert in the antiques and glassware business, helped run her husband's construction company (even climbing onto roofs when needed), and later partnered with her youngest daughter in an estate sale business.

Diagnosed with incurable kidney cancer at 28, Joanne refused to accept the prognosis because, as she declared, that simply did not work for her. She defied the odds. Years later, when given 18 months to live after a neuroendocrine cancer diagnosis, she again would not let cancer define her limits, living 23 more years. Her journey not only inspired those who knew her personally, but contributed to evolving cancer treatment protocols that would benefit others facing similar diagnoses. Her message was simple and powerful: fight the good fight, love fiercely and never let a diagnosis define you. Those who knew her were shaped by her example. Those who did not know her have nonetheless benefited from the medical ground she helped break.

Joanne embraced adventure and shared her razor sharp wit with new friends everywhere she went. From road trips across the country to cruises around the world, she delighted in seeing penguins in Antarctica, wandering the canals of Venice, exploring the South Pacific and making memories at "Dizzyland." She treasured her time in Incline Village, Nevada, and on Westport Island, Maine.

Family was her greatest joy. She delighted in genealogy research, planned memorable reunions, and reliably prepared her legendary ham and bean soup (her granddaughters' favorite). She ruthlessly competed in fiery rounds of croquet, mini golf and epic tournaments of Caliente Canasta. She welcomed many cats into her home, always offering them a warm lap in which to cuddle.

Joanne was no-nonsense when it came to challenges, meeting each the same way she met cancer: head-on, without self-pity and with resolve. She instilled in her daughters and granddaughters the belief that strength, independence, and courage were not optional, but essential.

Her family takes comfort in knowing she is free from pain. They remain forever grateful for the extraordinary gift of having loved — and been loved by — such an exceptional woman.

Donations in her honor may be made to the Jerry Rubin Foundation for Cancer Care. Thank you to the late Dr. Jerry Rubin, Dr. Zach Koontz, Dr. Brad Tamler and Dr. Dharma Naidu who helped give Joanne and her family the gift of longevity.

A celebration of life will be held in May.  
For more information, please email  
[JoanneBenderCOL@gmail.com](mailto:JoanneBenderCOL@gmail.com).



## Joanna Chapman

1936 – 2026

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## JAMES TALBOT BRADY

1934-2026

In hospice care since January 17<sup>th</sup> and lovingly cared for his wife, daughter and aides Wendy and Yohana, James Talbot Brady passed away ever so peacefully in the early morning hours of February 12<sup>th</sup>. The month of December had been particularly full of happiness for him. He celebrated Christmas Eve Mass as a newly baptized Catholic. He saw his large family gathered for his wife Suzanne's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday where he was full of his usual good humor and keen wit. As one already in his 90s, he appreciated comments about his full head of brown hair. Ready as always for a conversation filled with sly humor, he wanted a reaction, not a laugh but a big smile. Smiles were a big part of his loving and being loved.



Jim was born in Oakland, California in 1934 to Dudley and Harryette Brady. He graduated from Oakland Tech High School and took a gap year before deciding college. During that time he worked in the High Sierra as a ranger and met Suzanne, a Girl Scout Camp Counselor at Silver Lake. She was working a summer job between college graduation and teaching school. Because he was gifted in math and art, enrolling in UC Berkeley in the College of Architecture was a good beginning for a marriage lasting 68 years. During the five-year program, he and Suzanne were living in Albany in married student housing where a daughter and three sons were born. After graduation the young family moved to Carmel at the invitation of architect Sebastian Bordonaro. Here his career began. Memories of those years include working with Peter Meckel at the beginning of the dream of Hidden Valley Music Seminars. Also, he was a master of 6-point perspective long before computers took on that role, and made beautiful architectural presentations of projects to various firm's clients.

He and Suzanne toured Europe and Mexico with children and grandchildren using Home Exchange. More than just a tourist, he made new friends smile. Mr. Jim was a funny man. His life was enhanced by classical music, daily puzzles in the Monterey Herald, birds at the feeders outside his window, Jeopardy and desserts.

Big Jim is survived by his wife, Suzanne; sister, Elisa Brady; daughter, Keren (Gary) Haedrich; sons, Kristopher (Jona) and Jonathan Brady; grandchildren, Jacob (Ashley), Ryan (Laura), Kristine Brady and Kiara (Matt) Brady-Kennedy, Leslie and Hayley Haedrich. He is also survived by great-grandchildren, Emmalyn, Conor, Avery and Liam Brady, and Liesel and Aoife Kennedy put the sparkle in Papa Jim's eyes.

He was preceded in death by his parents and dearly loved and missed youngest son, Jeffrey Talbot (August 2025).

Jim's family thanks the VNA Home Health and Hospice Care Services team and caregiver Wendy Adler and Yohana Aristondo for their outstanding care and support. He made them smile, too.

A celebration of life Mass will begin at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at Carmel Mission Basilica. A reception will follow at Crespi Hall. In memory of Jim, please consider contributing to Josephine Kernes Memorial Pool, 15 Portola Ave., Monterey, CA 93940.

# ZONES

From page 3A

long a champion of paid parking, said she sympathizes with Green's situation. "People stop, pick up their glasses and go," she said. "I don't think it would be a problem to just make a green zone for this."

The parking situation has deteriorated, she said. "In the 37 years I've lived here, I don't think it has ever been worse," she said. "We've got to get enforcement, and we should have paid parking."

Green emphasized that his request for a green spot isn't selfish. "I don't just want this for me — I think it would be good for everybody, so if we could have a green stripe all the way down the street like we did before, that would be best."

### Precedent?

Another speaker who didn't give her name said the short-term parking would also benefit locals visiting the library across the street.

"We want to encourage everyone to use the library," she said.

Wysocki agreed having more 30-minute zones would make it easier for people to patronize stores that don't require longer stays, but Trayer worried about starting a trend.

"I 100 percent sympathize with what you're saying," he told Green. "My concern is we set a precedent with every business in town that wants a 30-minute zone."

The chief said he needs help "making sure we're doing the right thing for the community."

As for enforcement, he said he's working on getting more people on the job, but it's going to take months. Community services officer Cindi Mitchell, who also handles animal control, is the city's sole parking enforcer.

Culver backed turning one spot on the west side of Lincoln south of Sixth back into a green zone — "with the rationale being that it's across the street from the library," Trayer added — and the committee voted unanimously in favor of the change.

# DELAYS

From page 9A

move to the next phase of construction."

The effort to build the roundabout started last June and is expected to be completed sometime next month. It was proposed by then District 5 Supervisor Mary Adams in 2022. The intersection has seen several bad accidents, and a study determined a roundabout will make it safer. It's expected to cost taxpayers \$3.8 million, with the money coming from Measure X funds, Carmel Valley traffic mitigation fees and a grant from Monterey Bay Air Resources District.

The contractor is Teichert Construction of Pleasanton.

# MANSLAUGHTER

From page 11A

signal at the time of the crash, and "forensic evidence from the scene of the collision and dash camera footage capturing part of the road-rage incident contradicted what Lesch told police had happened," according to Puck.

A Monterey County judge signed arrest warrants for Krenke and Lesch on July 17, 2023, and Krenke was booked into county jail the next day for felony hit-and-run causing injury or death. Lesch turned herself in to Monterey P.D. a week later and was booked on multiple felonies.

Krenke, a Monterey resident who already had an extensive criminal record that includes theft, trespassing, possession of a deadly weapon, possession of narcotics and paraphernalia, possession of less than an ounce of marijuana, obstruction, shoplifting, second-degree burglary, and car theft, pleaded guilty on Aug. 22, 2024, and was sentenced by Superior Court Judge Jennifer O'Keefe to two years' probation.

### Past rages

The D.A. noted the fatal crash wasn't the first time Lesch lashed out at another driver. In 2021, she was prosecuted for vandalizing a Tesla in Newport Beach after she felt the driver cut her off and nearly hit her as she was walking through a parking lot to her car. She initially lied to police about it but relented when she was told officers had surveillance footage.

Lesch has not been involved in any other criminal cases in Monterey County, however.

O'Keefe was initially set to sentence Lesch in November 2025, but the hearing was delayed to Feb. 10. She faced up to nine years in prison and was sentenced to seven.

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# SAVED

From page 6A

CHP officers — pulled him to safety.

"Cosio was the first to grab the subject, while the others also intervened," MCSO Chief Deputy Eric Bixler told The Pine Cone.

The sheriff's office provided still images from body-cam footage showing Cosio wrapping his arms around the man while the other deputies and officers stepped in to help.

The man was taken into custody, transported to Natividad Medical Center for treatment, and placed on a mental-health hold. State law allows authorities to detain someone experiencing a mental-health crisis for up to 72 hours if they pose a danger to themselves or others. He did not face any criminal charges.



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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260321  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:  
**MOCO BACKFLOW, 321 Capitol Street, Salinas, Ca 93901.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Name of Corporation or LLC as shown in the Articles of Inc./Org./Reg.: PSMAC LLC, 321 Capitol Street, Salinas, CA 93901.  
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. 19, 2026.  
S/Patrick McDonald Jr., Managing Member Date: Feb. 10, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 10, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 256)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260351  
The following person(s) is(are) doing business as:  
**Rehrig Financial Services, 211 High Point Drive, Victor, NY 14564,** County of ONTARIO  
Registered Owner(s): First American Equipment Finance, 211 High Point Drive, Victor, NY 14564; State of Inc./Org./Reg. Illinois  
This business is conducted by a corporation  
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on N/A  
S/ Emma Helfrich, Vice President  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 02/13/2026 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20/26  
**CNS-4014639# CARMEL PINE CONE**  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026. (PC 257)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260350  
The following person(s) is(are) doing business as:  
**TRACTOR SUPPLY COMPANY, 447 NES- TLES RD, SOLEDAD, CA 93960,** County of MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): TRACTOR SUPPLY COMPANY WEST, LLC, 5401 VIRGINIA WAY, BRENTWOOD, TN 37027, DELAWARE  
This business is conducted by A LIMITED LI-

### ABILITY COMPANY

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on NOT APPLICABLE  
S/ KURT BARTON, CFO  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 02/13/2026 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20/26  
**CNS-4014641# CARMEL PINE CONE**  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026. (PC 259)

### ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME

Case No. 26CV000848  
Superior Court of California, County of MONTEREY  
Petition of: DENISE TORRES, ISRAEL OROZCO FOR ABRAHAM AMMANUEL OROZCO MINOR for Change of Name TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS.  
Petitioner: DENISE TORRES, ISRAEL OROZCO FOR ABRAHAM AMMANUEL filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:  
ABRAHAM AMMANUEL OROZCO to ABRAHAM AVII OROZCO  
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: 04/14/2026,  
Time: 11:00AM, Dept.: 13A  
The address of the court is 1200 AGUAJITO ROAD, MONTEREY, CA 93940  
(To appear remotely, check in advance of the hearing for information about how to do so on the court's website. To find your court's website, go to www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm.)  
A copy of this Order to Show Cause must be published at least once each week for four successive weeks before the date set for hearing on the petition in a newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: CARMEL PINE CONE  
Date: FEBRUARY 19, 2026  
IAN A. RIVAMONTE  
Judge of the Superior Court  
2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20/26  
**CNS-4016031# CARMEL PINE CONE**  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026. (PC 260)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260396  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **REDEFINED BRIDAL, 10 W. Gabilan St., Salinas, CA 93901.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): ASHLEY MARIE TROTTER, 10 W. Gabilan St., Salinas, CA 93901.  
This business is conducted by an individual.  
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 20, 2026.  
S/Ashley Trotter  
Date signed: Feb. 20, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 20, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 261)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260393  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **SIMPLIFY CONSTRUCTION & PAINTING, 510 Paradise Rd., Salinas, CA 93907.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): DIEGO RODRIGUEZ GONZALEZ, P.O. Box 584, 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/Diego Rodriguez Gonzalez  
Date signed: Feb. 20, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 20, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 262)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260379  
Filing type: NEW FILING - with CHANGE(S) from the previous filing.  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **SNAP STUDIO BY SENDY, 15015 Charter Oak Blvd., Salinas, CA 93907.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): SENDY PAULINA CHAVEZ.  
This business is conducted by an individual.  
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 18, 2026.  
S/Sendy Chavez

Date signed: Feb. 19, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 19, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 263)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260416  
Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **SHORTBREAD BY THE SEA, 10 Victoria Vale, Monterey, CA 93940.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): TIMOTHY JAMES YEE, 10 Victoria Vale, CA 93940.  
This business is conducted by an individual.  
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 23, 2026.  
S/Timothy James Yee  
Date signed: Feb. 24, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 24, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 265)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260417  
Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: **AVERY CADENCE STUDIOS, 10 Victoria Vale, Monterey, CA 93940.**  
County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY  
Registered Owner(s): TIMOTHY JAMES YEE, 10 Victoria Vale, CA 93940.  
This business is conducted by an individual.  
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 23, 2026.  
S/Timothy James Yee  
Date signed: Feb. 24, 2026  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 24, 2026.  
Publication Dates: Feb. 27, March 6, 13, 20, 2026 (PC 266)

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# CYPRESS

From page 1A

removal of loose bark.”

Weisfuss, a certified arborist who specializes in risk assessment, further concluded that its roots were damaged during the construction of a retaining wall.

“Taken together, these factors elevate the likelihood of partial or complete structural failure, especially under adverse weather conditions or soil saturation,” he wrote. “Mitigation of removal is recommended to reduce risk to nearby structures and occupants.”

At the hearing, Brookes — who purchased the property with Meldrum in 2010 for \$1,245,000, according to Monterey County records, and recently demolished their cottage and constructed a new home designed by architect Erik Dyar — said they didn’t want to lose the cypress but that it’s become a source of anxiety for them and their neighbors.

“Our intention was always to keep the tree — we love that tree,” he said. But

after a neighbor expressed concern about the drooping limbs and apparent lack of robustness, Brookes had it evaluated.

“We were told the tree had some hollowing in the interior and was in decay and in a state of decline,” he said. “We are very concerned about our neighbors and our house,” and recent stormy nights kept him awake with worry.

“We just don’t know how long our luck is going to hold out,” he said.

### Hollow, termites

While Weisfuss told commissioners he’d recently conducted a more intensive follow-up assessment that confirmed his opinion, Ono countered that “all mature cypresses like this one” are hollow, and they all have termites.

“There definitely is decay — I’m not denying there is decay,” he said. “It does look way better now that they’ve pruned everything out,” including the dead twigs and foliage in the tree canopy.

Commissioner Neal Rutta said he could not OK removal, because according to the Carmel Municipal Code, he can only do so “if this is impacting a building,” since it’s

not being considered as part of an application for a construction project.

Weisfuss replied that he was hired to evaluate “the health and condition of the tree, not how it’s impacted by any construction around it.”

Commissioner Sarah Berling concluded it’s time for the tree to go, and commissioner Harry Ross leaned that way, too, after contemplating how he’d feel if he were in Brookes’ position.

“I’m torn, because we have to trust our city forester and his opinion,” he said. “I have to ask myself, ‘If this was my house, what would I want?’ If it was my house, I would probably say it should come down.”

### ‘So sad’

Rutta was firm, because the code states, “When not related to construction or development, removal of significant trees is prohibited unless authorized by the forest and beach commission consistent with the following finding: That the tree is causing substantial damage to a building that cannot readily be repaired or alleviated on a long-term basis, through minor reasonable building modifications.”

In other words, even if it’s dying and in jeopardy of falling on a home or person, the tree is so big and old that its removal would be illegal, since it’s not leaning on a structure.

Despite increasingly strict state rules and the recent history of wildfires in California, that section of the code makes no mention of the fire risk presented by sick and dying trees.

Berling countered that the commission has “more latitude than that.”

Linda Smith, who frequently speaks at forest and beach commission meetings, remarked that the cypress’ story is “so sad”

and lamented the loss of trees throughout the city, but she acknowledged the situation.

“I guess I just have to speak for the tree,” she said. “I’m grateful to Justin for fighting for it, but I understand the property owners’ conundrum, as well.”

Berling made the motion to grant the



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

The tall cypress tree at the rear of this Carmelo Street home is ailing and should be removed, according to an arborist. The forest and beach commission isn’t so sure.

appeal and allow the cypress to be cut down and replaced, and Ross seconded, but it failed on a 2-2 vote, with Rutta and chair Tamara Michie dissenting. Commissioner Kelly Brezoczky was absent.

As a result, commissioners voted 3-1 to continue the hearing at their next meeting, when, they hope, more information will be provided and Brezoczky will be present.

Berling objected. “We have all the information we need,” she argued, before casting her no-vote on the delay.

## JAMES FRANKLIN HICKS

July 3, 1939 – December 30, 2025

Jim died peacefully Dec. 30, 2025, at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula after an extremely short duration with pancreatic cancer.

Born in Carmel, California and raised in Carmel Valley, Jim met and fell in love with his wife of nearly 50 years, DeeDee (deceased, 2009). After graduating Carmel High School in 1956, Jim went on to graduate from his beloved alma mater, the University of California, Berkeley (Go Bears!) before also attending optometry school at Cal. He had a long and illustrious practice in Salinas for more than 50 years. He adored his patients, and they him, often having multiple generations of families over the years.



After a brief time living in Salinas, he and DeeDee returned to Carmel Valley to raise their two daughters, Sarah and Stacey. Active in the community, Jim was a longtime member of the Salinas Jaycees, Rotary Club, and acted as president of the Colmo Del Rodeo in the early 1970s. He was an involved girl dad, participating in his girls’ swim club (Carmel Barracudas) and 4-H Club where he led the backpacking group.

Jim was his happiest when he was outdoors, whether that was in his treasured garden, backpacking (Mount Whitney, Tahoe Rim Trail, John Muir Trail — twice!, Ventana Wilderness, and other locations throughout the Sierra), skiing and tennis. He and DeeDee also enjoyed traveling all over the world, continuing his travels with family and friends after her passing. Another cherished respite for Jim was his home in Lake Tahoe, where he could host family and friends during any season and enjoy the nearby slopes, trails or the lake itself — he took up jet skiing in his 70s and enjoyed it every summer until he was 85!

Jim is survived by his two daughters, Sarah Hicks and Stacey Pray (Max); three grandchildren, James Hicks, Kelly Kavanaugh (Tyler) and Henry Pray (Britta); great-granddaughter, Maeve Kavanaugh and brother, William “Bill” Hicks (Margie).

Generous in spirit and time — whether that was with dogs, foreign exchange students or family and friends — Jim will be greatly missed. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Big Sur Land Trust or Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.

We love you Jim, Dad, Papa.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICE

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that City of Carmel-by-the-Sea will conduct a Community Meeting on Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 4:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as possible. Interested members of the public are invited to attend.**

**This meeting will be held via teleconference and in person at Carpenter Hall in the Sunset Center located on San Carlos Street between 8th and 10th Avenues. To participate via teleconference, use this link: <https://ci-carmel-ca-us.zoom.us/j/83556817705?pwd=81cRAIU5bBudtJojaxhZbYdk93eWdD.1>. To participate via phone, dial +1 (669) 444-9171. Webinar ID: 835 5681 7705. 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 [mwaffle@ci.carmel.ca.us](mailto:mwaffle@ci.carmel.ca.us) prior to the meeting. With respect to written comments, please submit them at least 24 hours before the meeting.

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 Community 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, please contact the Community Planning & Building Department at (831) 620-2010.

#### Community Meeting on Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS) Citywide

This is the second in a series of community meetings on the creation of objective design and development standards (ODDS) for accessory dwelling units, multifamily housing, and mixed-use residential. This meeting will focus on Opticos’ key findings from their field visit and identification of prevalent building styles and character-defining architectural elements. Share your thoughts and ideas about which architectural styles to include in our ODDS. The meeting will primarily be in person, with a Zoom option also available.

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea  
Marnie Waffle, Principle Planner  
Publication dates: Feb. 27, 2026 (PC267)

LEGALS DEADLINE: Tuesday 3:00 pm • [legals@carmelpinecone.com](mailto:legals@carmelpinecone.com)

## 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, March 11, 2026, at 4:00 PM, or as soon thereafter as possible. Immediately prior to the Public Hearing, the Commission will visit some or all the project sites in person as part of a Tour of Inspection. Interested members of the public are invited to attend both the Tour and the Hearing.**

**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://ci-carmel-ca-us.zoom.us/j/86287177199?pwd=GwHIW4HciBil6Bd8Sbo5RGSTbhofpD.1> To participate via phone, dial +1 (669) 444-9171. Webinar ID: 850 7527 4055. 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 [aginette@ci.carmel.ca.us](mailto:aginette@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.

**DS 25377 (Dolores 2 SW 10th LLC)**  
Adam Jeselnick, Architect  
Dolores Street 2 southwest of 10th Avenue  
Block 115; Lot 5  
APN: 010-158-003-000

single-family residence and 215 square-foot detached carport at San Carlos Street 2 northwest of 11th Avenue in the Single-Family Residential (R-1) District. APN: 010-155-019-000

Consideration of a combined Concept and Final Design Study, DS 25377 (Dolores 2 SW 10th LLC), for substantial exterior alterations and a 27 square-foot addition to an existing 925 square-foot, one-story single-family residence located at Dolores Street 2 southwest of 10th Avenue in the Single-Family Residential (R-1) District. APN: 010-158-003-000

**Proposed CEQA Action:** Find the consideration of a Concept Review is not a project under CEQA as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21065 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378

**DS 25299 (White)**  
Alan Lehman, Designer  
Viscaino 9 southeast of Mountain View  
Block: 103; Lot 18  
APN: 010-052-014-000

DS 25299 (White): Consideration of a Concept Design Study, DS 25299 (White), for the demolition of an existing 1,837 square-foot, one-story single-family residence and the construction of a 2,460 square-foot, two-story single-family residence inclusive of a 254 square-foot attached garage at Viscaino 9 southeast of Mountain View in the Single-Family Residential (R-1) District. APN: 010-052-014-000

**Proposed CEQA Action:** Staff recommends that the Planning Commission find the project categorically exempt from environmental review pursuant to section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines and that none of the exceptions to the exemptions contained in section 15300.2 can be made in this case.

**DS 25356 (Dale)**  
Merritt Hawley, Architect  
San Carlos Street 2 northwest of 11th Avenue  
Block 116, Lot 17  
APN: 010-155-019-000

**Proposed CEQA Action:** Find the consideration of a Concept Review is not a project under CEQA as defined in Public Resources Code Section 21065 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15378

Consideration of a Concept Design Study, DS 25356 (Dale), for the demolition of an existing 1,168 square-foot, one-story single-family residence and the construction of a 1,585 square-foot, one-story

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea  
Anna Ginette, Director of Community Planning & Building  
Publication dates: Feb. 27, 2026 (PC268)

# DEEP DOWN, HE'S JUST A LITTLE GLASS SQUID

By KELLY NIX

‘CUTE’ AND ‘adorable’ are not adjectives often used to describe squids — though most people haven’t seen the type of cephalopod recently caught on camera by researchers with the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

During a scientific outing in Monterey Bay aboard the institute’s research vessel, Rachel Carson, biologists from the aquarium happened to come across a baby glass squid, with an ample oval head and a large pair of conspicuous eyes.

A roughly 30-second video uploaded to YouTube shows the tiny mollusk in a leisurely descent about 1,500 feet underwater. The squid was captured on an ultra-high definition 4K

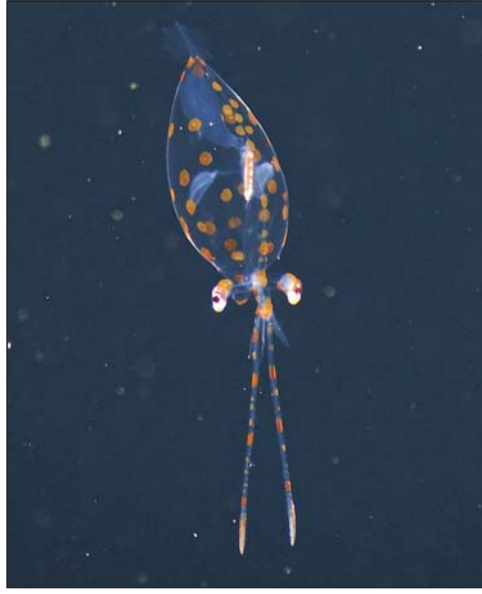
camera on MBARI’s remotely operated vehicle, Ventana.

“Experts in MBARI’s video lab suspect this individual was a juvenile cockatoo squid, *Gali-teuthis phyllura*, but without collecting the animal, they cannot be entirely sure,” according to the research center.

### ‘Stalked eyes’

The squid observed by the crew was a paralarva — which the aquarium described as “juvenile stage between a hatchling and an adult.” Glass squid undergo several remarkable transformations as they grow, including developing distinctive, long, stalked eyes.

Even high-resolution 4K cameras have difficulty capturing the squids’ identifying features, MBARI noted.



PHOTO/MBARI

This spotted squid was caught on video about 1,500 feet under Monterey Bay.

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## FEBRUARY 2026

### NEW MEMBERS

**BEE OAK PARTNERS**  
beeoak.com

**ELEVATED RETIREMENT SOLUTIONS**  
elevatedretirementsolutions.lpl.com

**FRIENDS OF HITCHCOCK ROAD ANIMAL SERVICES (FOHRAS)**  
fohras.org

### SAVE THE DATES

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11**  
Chamber Non-Profit Mixer with Carmel Woman’s Club  
5:00pm – 7:00pm  
Carmel Woman’s Club  
9th & San Carlos

**THURSDAY, MARCH 12**  
Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting  
Signature Day Spa  
5:00pm – 7:00pm  
Carmel Plaza

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19**  
Carmel Groomers Ribbon Cutting  
5:00pm – 7:00pm  
3694 The Barnyard, F-22

**TUESDAY, MARCH 31**  
Jill Sheffield Wellness Studio  
Ribbon Cutting  
Leadership Carmel Class of 2025  
Time: 4:30 – 6:00pm  
Carmel Foundation Wellness Center  
Dolores & 8th

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22**  
Chamber Mixer at Edwins  
5:00pm – 7:00pm  
6th & San Carlos

**CARMEL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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



**CARMEL**  
Chamber of Commerce



**CARMEL BUSINESS SALES RIBBON CUTTING**  
Photo by DMT Imaging



**VIN-BY-THE-SEA CHAMBER MIXER**  
Photo by DMT Imaging



**PUTTS FOR PAWS INVITATIONAL**  
Photo by DMT Imaging



**PUTTS FOR PAWS INVITATIONAL**  
Photo by Manny Espinoza



## NON-PROFIT CHAMBER MIXER

Discover • Support • Celebrate

**Wednesday, March 11**

5:00pm - 7:00pm  
Carmel Woman’s Club / 9th & San Carlos

**REGISTER AT CARMELCHAMBER.ORG**

\$15 Members / \$30 Non Members  
\$50 Exhibitor Members / \$150 Exhibitor Non-Members

# Out of sight, but hardly out of mind, local alumni shine at college

HIGH SCHOOL heroes of yesteryear remain relevant today at the collegiate level. Let's catch up with a few of the many local athletes who are competing for their colleges and universities this spring.

**Trosky sizzles at SDSU:** Jabin Trosky (Carmel Class of 2021) is the starting shortstop at San Diego State, where he leads the Aztecs in hitting (.435), on-base plus slug-

ging (1.132), at-bats (23), hits (10) and extra-base hits (4) through six games. He is also regarded as one of the top defensive infielders in the nation.

**Main hits winners at TCU:** Tomi Main (Stevenson '21) has won her first two singles matches of the spring and all three of her doubles matches as a graduate student at Texas Christian University, where she is in her second year on the women's tennis team. She was 8-4 in singles and 5-5 in doubles during the fall season.

A year ago, Main was 16-10 in singles and 18-13 in doubles at TCU.

She previously played two seasons at the University of the Pacific, earning second-team All-West Coast Conference honors after spending fall 2021, her freshman year, at Texas Tech.

**Kosmont streaks at Yale:** Juliette Kosmont's 7.43-second indoor clocking in the 60-meter dash and an 11.52 time in the outdoor 100-meter dash are the fastest ever recorded at Yale University, where she is entering the spring season of women's track in her junior year.

Kosmont (Santa Catalina '23) received Yale's Lee Calhoun Award as a sophomore as the team's top sprinter/hurdler.

**Ferreire and Salinger excel in pool:** Stevenson alumnae Emmerson Ferreira and Miranda Salinger are seeing action as true freshmen on the women's water polo team at UC Santa Barbara.

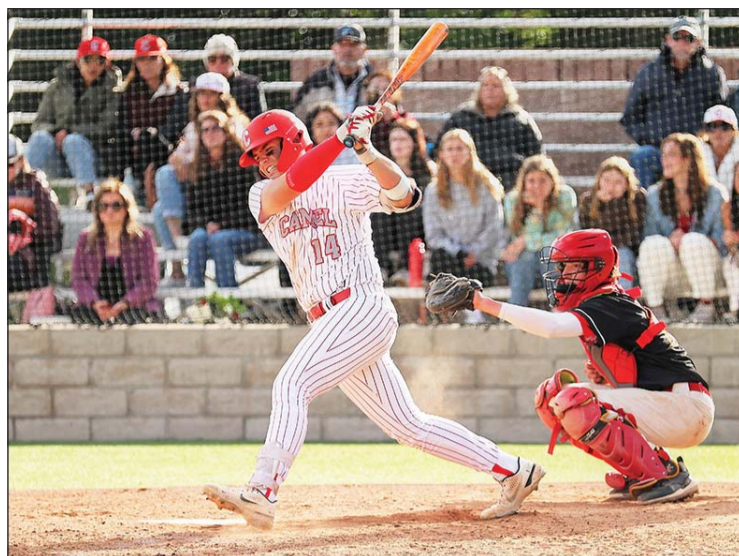
Ferreira, an attacker, has appeared in 13 games, tallying four goals with two assists and five steals. Salinger has one goal and three assists in six games as a backup center.

**Four on MPC baseball squad:** Carmel alumni Ethan Jackson, J.J. Sanchez and Ben Tucker, and Stevenson grad Andrew Airada, are on the baseball roster this season at Monterey Peninsula College.

Jackson (Carmel '23), the starting catcher, leads the Lobos with a .395 batting average and .521 on-base percentage and ranks second in on-base plus slugging (1.126).

Sanchez (Carmel '24) has a 1-0 record and a 5.17 ERA as a left-handed starting pitcher, with 16 strikeouts and eight walks in 15.2 innings. He has also batted 30 times as a utility player.

Tucker (Carmel '24), a catcher, and Airada (Stevenson '24), a left-handed pitcher, haven't seen action yet.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Ethan Jackson, a slugger at Carmel High in 2023, is the starting catcher and top hitter this year at Monterey Peninsula College.

Jackson is a sophomore, and Sanchez, Tucker and Airada are freshmen.

## ■ CCS UPDATES

All Central Coast Section postseason qualifiers in basketball and soccer were eliminated by midweek, despite posting a couple of victories early in their brackets.

In girls basketball, No. 7 Stevenson defeated No. 10 Jefferson 68-51 in the 12-team Division 4 bracket on Saturday but was eliminated by a 63-36 loss to No. 2 Scotts Valley in Tuesday's quarterfinals.

Carmel's girls team earned a spot in the same bracket by winning a first-round play-in game over KIPP San Jose 62-22 but was eliminated Saturday by No. 5 King's Academy 38-27.

After posting an undefeated Santa Lucia Division record during the regular season, Santa Catalina routed San Jose-based Cristo Rey 42-22 in its first-round play-in game in Division 5 but was eliminated in the second round 69-28 by No. 6 St. Francis.

*Continues next page*

## Peninsula Sports

By DENNIS TAYLOR

Trosky is a redshirt junior at SDSU after three previous seasons as a significant player at Oregon State.

**Bozzo makes waves at UC Davis:** Sofia Bozzo (Stevenson '23) has 14 goals, two assists and 11 steals through 17 games at UC Davis, where she is a redshirt sophomore in eligibility in water polo.

Season bests for Bozzo include a three-goal, three-steal



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Sofia Bozzo, the Pacific Coast Athletic League's Player of the Year for Stevenson in 2022-2023, is a notable contributor at UC Davis.

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**From previous page**

Carmel boys basketball, seeded No. 6 in the 12-team CCS Division 4 bracket, defeated 11th-seeded Gonzales 60-25 on Saturday to advance to Tuesday's quarterfinals, where the Padres lost 58-49 to No. 3 Menlo.

**Soccer:** In girls soccer, Santa Catalina qualified for the CCS Division 5 postseason as champion of the Santa Lucia Division with an 8-0-2 record but lost its play-in game to Watsonville 3-0.

Stevenson and Carmel girls, both Mission Division teams, were left out of the playoffs despite winning records during the regular season.

**Wrestling:** Carmel High junior Skyler Madsen placed sixth on Saturday in the 157-pound weight division at the Central Coast Section Masters Wrestling Championship at Watsonville High.

Madsen, a fourth-place finisher the previous weekend at the CCS Southern Regional tournament, narrowly missed qualifying for this week's state tournament, where only four wrestlers advance from sectionals in each weight division.

Two other Padres, 215-pound Dominik Randansky and 285-pound Alexander Noto-Hagan, failed to reach the podium at the Masters event after taking sixth place at the regional.

One more Carmel wrestler, freshman Sam Lopez, competed two weeks ago at the regional as a 126-pound alternate but didn't advance to Masters.

**Bronze for Buchwald:** Retired physician Alan

Buchwald, a 75-year-old resident of Weston Ridge on the Big Sur coast, won a bronze medal in the 70-and-over age division on Feb. 8 as a member of Team USA at a European Veterans Fencing tournament in France.

Buchwald took third place in a 12-athlete field (populated mostly with fencers from France and Great Britain) in the men's foil event at the tournament in Faches-Thumesnil in northern France.

A 15-year competitor in the sport, Buchwald added his medal to a collection that, in recent years, has included a gold medal at the 2025 Canadian American Veterans Cup, gold in the over-55 age division (and sixth overall) in mixed foil at the 2025 Escrime Mexico International Interclubes, and a No. 4 world ranking in his age division in 2022, when he qualified to compete in the 2022 World Veterans Fencing Championship in Zadar, Croatia, where he placed 23rd overall.

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



PHOTO/TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Former Stevenson standout Tomi Main is wrapping up her college tennis life as a graduate student at Texas Christian University, the third stop of her NCAA career.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Juliette Kosmont, a record-setting sprinter at Santa Catalina, is re-writing the record book at Yale University.



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# Editorial

## The end of typos

WE GET the question all the time: “How does the Pine Cone use AI?” The answer is that we don’t use it for writing, not least because everything produced by AI comes across as amateurish or canned. And we can’t use it for news coverage because nobody’s figured out a way to have AI sort out what’s what at a city council meeting, skeptically assess a candidate’s campaign promises, or interview a police officer who just arrested a violent felon. You still need experienced reporters for all that stuff. AI doesn’t shoot videos or take photographs, either.

But one thing AI does better and faster than any human is research. If you want 10 eye-catching examples from around the country of homes being protected from demolition because somebody decided they were historic, AI can dig them up from thousands of media and government sources in seconds. Same thing if you want to know how a local school district’s per-pupil spending compares with other districts around the country. Or how many tech millionaires have “retired” by running for public office. Pretty much any question you have about current or historic events, social trends or scientific advances — you can get the answer from AI.

And here’s another thing AI does better than any mere mortal: correct typos.

Until recently, Pine Cone staffers collectively spent about 30 man-hours per week hunched over printed proofs of pages, searching for misspelled words, imprecise punctuation and incorrect phone numbers. And this was after they finished their work of reporting, writing and editing their stories. Should the word be “its” or “it’s”? Is “their” correct, or is it “they’re”? What about “rein” vs. “reign” vs. “rain”? “Peek” vs. “peak” vs. “pique”? “Proved” or “proven”? And our all-time favorite: Has “pubic” snuck in when it should be “public”?

By definition, a typo is an incorrect word that the person who wrote the story knew was wrong, but which escaped notice because of the human proclivity to read by looking at groups of words, not individual ones, even in your own work. Indeed, you can easily comprehend a phrase or sentence without looking at some words at all by judging what a word had to be — in terms of meaning — based on the shape of the word and its context. It’s also been proved that you can read perfectly well even if several interior letters of each word in a paragraph are missing.

Nevertheless, good writing requires grammatical accuracy, which explains why, for centuries, newspapers, book and magazine publishers, academic journals, courts and government officials in much of the world have gone to great lengths to eliminate even minor typos from their output. Legend has it that the New York Times, in an era gone by, would assign two proofreaders to each story — one to read it out loud and the other to follow along and mark up the copy.

That chore is gone now, at least for people who avail themselves of AI, which can review a 1,200-word story by a Pine Cone reporter in less than a minute and correct all the typos, including verifying phone numbers and the spelling of proper names, with uncanny accuracy. The first time you experience it, you feel like something very liberating has descended upon the universe. Which it has.

From now on, if you see a misspelled word in The Pine Cone, it’s because we either forgot to run a story through AI or somebody added a typo after AI completed its work.

## BEST of BATES



“What’s the weather like on your patio?”

## Letters to the Editor

Letters cannot exceed 350 words, and must include the author’s name and home town. The Pine Cone only accepts letters to the editor by email. Please submit your letters to mail@carmelpinecone.com

### ‘Our Rubicon’

Dear Editor,

On March 2, the Carmel City Council will face a historic decision: uphold the planning commission’s denial of Verizon’s cell tower application on Carmelo Street or bow to a telecom giant’s appeal. Taking on a corporation with endless resources is a David-versus-Goliath fight, but our village must win.

Verizon deliberately chose a site in the heart of our residential district, directly in front of a historic home. As the owner of a historic home, I know what’s at stake. If Verizon can force a tower here, they can put one anywhere. Suddenly, residential zoning, historic preservation and design guidelines become meaningless. What good is our city’s wireless ordinance if we can’t enforce it to protect our most sensitive neighborhoods?

Verizon claims this tower is needed for broadband, but this is about profits, not public service. Modern options — high-speed cable, Dish’s Project Genesis, Starlink — show the future is moving beyond cell towers. We should put our

infrastructure underground, not blight our scenic streets.

Verizon’s application has been a moving target. Alternate sites deemed “technically feasible” become impossible overnight, propagation maps change at a click, and a tree becomes a fatal flaw — conveniently supporting their predetermined conclusion that the tower must go on Carmelo. In court, judges don’t look kindly on shifting positions and after-the-fact justifications.

Past generations of Carmelites rallied to protect our retreat from suburban sprawl. We must do the same. March 2 is our Rubicon. I urge residents to join this fight and call on the council to deny Verizon’s appeal.

Douglas Hollenbeck, Carmel

### One-eighth inch

Dear Editor,

I have owned my Carmelo home since 2002. When I bought it, the house needed extensive repairs. The city required I hire a historian, and in 2005 the home was declared historic — a designation I supported.

Renovating taught me how seriously Carmel takes historic standards. I couldn’t install off-the-shelf windows; replacements had to match original mullions exactly — at significant expense. An eighth of an inch mattered.

Now Verizon proposes a wireless pole about 20 feet from my living room, with a large equipment box. If an eighth of an inch mattered for historic integrity, how does a bulky pole and box not?

See LETTERS page 29A

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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

# They traveled different roads, but share one generous aim

IF YOUR business is chartering yachts for fancy cruises, “Man overboard!” is the last thing you want to hear. But on Oct. 17, 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake jolted a passenger on one of Marti Diamond’s boats into San Francisco Bay, and the woman’s husband jumped in after her. Both were quickly rescued, but the man had dislo-

supportive clan. “My mother was an alcoholic,” he said, and his brother also struggled with addiction but eventually recovered.

His father, a doctor, worked in public health, and they rarely stayed anywhere for more than 18 to 24 months. He was a successful hospital administrator, Steve said, but he was rarely at home.

“It was extremely dysfunctional,” he said, and his goal became simply to escape.

A gifted student, Steve learned that Northwestern University and Tulane University took applicants who hadn’t graduated from high school. He chose Tulane because “I’d already lived in Chicago,” and New Orleans had to be warmer.

### ‘Took too long’

At age 15, thanks to a scholarship, he became an undergrad in theoretical mathematics and finished a pre-med program with minors in physics and chemistry in three years. He completed his M.D. and did his surgical internship and psychiatry residency at Stanford.

Once in practice, he became frustrated with the pace of the work. “It took too long to see results,” he recalled, so he used his earnings and borrowed money to invest in real estate in the San Francisco Bay area. There were “10 units, then 100, then 1,000,” Steve said, and he left psychiatry for the excitement of making deals.

While he was up north, he met and befriended the late Bill Mitchell (of Carmel Realty), who founded the Mitchell

See LIVES page 30A

## Great Lives

By ELAINE HESSER

cated his shoulder. So she bundled him in a bedspread, put him in her new Mercedes and drove him to the emergency room. And since he was wet in addition to being injured, she then went to his hotel to pick up a change of clothes.

That sort of attention to detail was something she learned in a one-room Chicago apartment she shared with her immigrant family. In fact, Marti and her husband, Steve Diamond, came from worlds that had one thing in common: neither involved smooth sailing. Vivid memories of those days are easily summoned — even in the living room of their cheerful beachfront home on Scenic Road.

### Bettering lives

Marti and her brother were youngsters when their family came to the United States from El Salvador. She and her mother frequented thrift stores, and they all lived on a shoestring. At age 7, Marti learned to make tissue-paper flowers and sold them door to door in her neighborhood. Her mother, a gifted seamstress, ran an alterations business from home and taught her to reupholster furniture and refurbish used household goods. They also designed, made and sold custom clothing together.

“I could recycle before recycling was ‘in,’” she said. “It was my priority to make a difference to better my parents’ lives and make them proud. Watching our family constantly worried about paying bills, I wanted to achieve success and be financially independent. I did not have a clue how to accomplish that, but I was determined to find a way.”

### Gifted

Her father, Marti said, had been an engineer from a prominent family. He was educated in England for several years and spoke three or four languages. After coming to the States in the wake of a family conflict, however, he sold auto parts for some time before Ford Motor Co. hired him as an engineer.

Steve’s family, was unlike Marti’s close,



PHOTO/ELAINE HESSER

After decades of hard work, Marti and Steve Diamond have found joy in giving back to local youth.

Don’t miss “Scenic Views” by Jerry Gervase — every week in the Real Estate Section.

# RETURNING TO HER FIRST LOVE — AND TRYING SOME NEW THINGS

AS A 19-year-old college student, Diana Vernon had an infatuation with fine art that was so intense, she frequently painted in a campus studio until the wee hours of the morning, then called security to walk her home through L.A.’s dark and dangerous streets.

“I’d work until I was completely exhausted, then come back the next day and do it again,” said the Monterey Peninsula native. “I was just exploding with ideas, floating from this to that, and I loved it.”

But another passion, more practical, detoured her path of study toward the medical world and a career as an occupational therapist. That intensely rewarding profession conspired with motherhood to push art into the rearview mirror for 28 years.

In 2024, when she retired, Vernon finally found herself with the time to return

In May 2025, her moody, soft-palette oil rendering of a Borzoi dog (also known as a Russian wolfhound) was awarded first place by Carmel Art Association luminary Christine Crozier, who judged the Central Coast Art Association exhibition.

That painting, she said, and a recent landscape were her attempts to “break out” from the representational still-life art that makes up most of her growing portfolio.

### Opens March 6

Fifteen of her pieces will be showcased at the Pacific Grove Art Association, 568 Lighthouse Ave., in a seven-week, multi-artist event that opens March 6 with an artist reception from 6 to 8 p.m.

Other artists exhibiting in that show will include Amanda Menefee, Harvey Schrum, Christine Chatwell, Guna Hebbbar, Bob Selin, Gordon Dill, Eva Bernstein and Robynn Smith.

High on Vernon’s list of childhood memories is the day she stood in her kindergarten class at Ord Terrace Elementary School and created her very first painting

## Carmel’s Artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

to the easel and rekindle a long-dormant flame.

“I love being able to walk into my studio — my own room — and paint again,” she said. “My husband (Dennis Vernon) and I had a long discussion about it when I was deciding to retire. When he said, ‘I am 100 percent behind you — go for it,’ I was literally in tears, because that’s my heart’s passion.”

Returning to form over the past two years has been an evolution for Vernon — “I’m still getting my chops back, so to speak,” she said. But her progress has been noticed and acclaimed.

— a horse.

“I was 4 1/2 years old, maybe 5, standing in front of a canvas with a brush, cups of tempera paint, and a big piece of paper. I was in heaven,” she reminisced.

She attended Martin Luther King Junior High until seventh grade, when her parents (Paul and Eva Towber) became concerned about social unrest there and enrolled the 13-year-old in a private Christian school at Pacific Grove’s Mayflower Church.

“I stayed a couple of years,” she said. “It was a small school — maybe 50 students. There were no sports, and I didn’t like it after a while.”

### No poking

As a junior and senior, she went to Seaside High School, then moved on to Monterey Peninsula College, where she immersed herself in art classes and became interested in science, health and nutrition. She volunteered at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, first as a teen, then as an MPC student.

“But I didn’t want to be a nurse, didn’t want to poke people and make them hurt, but I discovered that I like taking care of people,” said Vernon, whose sister — 14 years older — made a career of medical-surgical nursing in the U.S. Army, retiring as a colonel.

After earning an associate’s degree from MPC, she enrolled at the Bible Institute of Los Angeles.

“That was a place where you did your major and studied the Bible. I lasted two years,” said Vernon,



PHOTO/DENNIS TAYLOR

Peninsula native Diana Vernon returned to art two years ago after 28 years as an occupational therapist. She’ll show 15 of her paintings in a multi-artist show that opens March 7 at Pacific Grove Art Center.

See ARTIST page 30A



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# AUCTIONS

From page 10A

on the property, Harder said.

“We’re going to talk about logistics this week and come up with a plan that’s efficient for everyone,” he said. “It certainly is going to add to the excitement for the people who come out to see the cars.”

## Broad Arrow

Last week, The Quail announced that the Broad Arrow auction, which is owned and run by Hagerty, is moving to the valley, with roughly 175 cars expected to cross the block Aug. 13-14. Broad Arrow President Kenneth Ahn said the move was driven by the auction’s outgrowing its space at the airport.

“Broad Arrow has also quickly evolved from a startup in 2021 to one of the top players in the industry, and we very much look forward to seeing how this new partnership will elevate the experience for driving enthusiasts and collectors during the world-renowned Monterey Car Week,” he said, adding that Broad Arrow “continues to build a world-class roster of some of the most exclusive and exciting auction venues.”

When the Bonhams contract came up for renewal,

Cory Burns, senior vice president for Kahn Media, said, it offered the opportunity to make a change that “represents the constant evolution of The Quail.”

“As part of the larger Peninsula Signature Events’ long-term strategy, we chose Broad Arrow as it is emerging as a leading auction house with a unique take on the auction experience that aligns well with our customer base,” Burns said.

And Broad Arrow’s “experienced team, premium car selections and strategic growth align perfectly with the continued evolution of our events,” according to Kai Lermen, senior vice president of Peninsula Signature Events.

The multi-year agreement further supports The Quail’s “vision of expanding its auction platform and elevating results for consignors and collectors,” while making the overall experience more fun for everyone.

“An auction has been an additive part of The Quail experience since its inception,” Burns said. “The alliance with an auction company has always given guests more to do during Monterey Car Week.”

Ahn described the new partnership as “a collaboration between two best-in-class organizations focused on exceptional hospitality, celebration of automobiles, and a shared vision for the future of the hobby.”

While the sale will be held in Carmel Valley, Broad Arrow will still have a presence at Motorlux, according to Ahn, by bringing some auction and private-sale cars.



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# LETTERS

From page 26A

A mature oak stands 4 feet from the existing pole. We're told construction will "slip in" with minimal impact, yet excavation would occur within the oak's root zone, requiring heavy pruning. Oaks don't tolerate such disturbances.

Staff concluded there would be no adverse visual or property value impacts. I disagree. Local real estate professionals Tim Allen and Shelly Lynch have stated that proximity to a cell tower can diminish a home's value.

I live in that house. I'm a Verizon customer and get excellent service — two bars minimum. I don't need a tower at my front door. Would you want one 20 feet from yours?

**Ned Spieker, Carmel**

## Desal needed for housing

Dear Editor,

Everyone on the Monterey Peninsula agrees we need more housing, especially for working families. But housing depends on a legally secure, reliable water supply. Treating water as an afterthought leads to moratoriums, lawsuits and stalled projects.

A recent commentary claims lifting current water constraints will unlock housing because "verified supply exists today" and desalination isn't needed soon. That misses both the legal framework and history. The cease-and-desist order wasn't speculation — it stopped unlawful Carmel River diversions, and that legal structure still applies. Relying on stretched sources risks triggering new cutbacks.

Housing needs certainty, not temporary margins. Since 2012, the Peninsula has pursued a three-pronged plan: aquifer storage and recovery, recycled water, and desalination for long-term stability. ASR and Pure Water Monterey are successes. But desalination — a drought-proof supply — was always essential. Dropping it didn't come from new data, but from a political debate over water system ownership. That changed the narrative, not the need for a permanent supply. Now, that pivot is costing us the water security that housing and employers require.

Some point to diversified sources and recent years without violations as proof the problem is solved. But that's not the same as a legally secure allocation for thousands of units over decades. Recycled water, groundwater and ASR depend on rainfall. Only desalination is independent of the weather.

Approving new connections based on short-term capacity risks repeating history: growth in wet years, cutbacks in dry ones. That cycle hurts the people we want to help.

Desalinated water costs more, but the economic cost of an unreliable system is higher: constrained housing, rising rents, workforce displacement and stalled economies.

The choice isn't between housing and water — housing depends on water. To move affordable housing forward, we must complete the system we agreed on — including desalination.

**Jeff Davi, Coalition of Peninsula Businesses**

## Long lines

Dear Editor,

This past week I again saw extremely long restroom lines at Piccadilly Park — often more than an hour. Visitors reported a backed-up toilet, lack of servicing, and even no toilet paper. I personally purchased supplies so guests wouldn't be further inconvenienced.

This isn't an isolated incident. It's become a regular problem in one of Carmel's busiest areas.

Our town depends on visitors, yet we're asking them to tolerate restroom conditions unacceptable in most destination communities. Local businesses end up apologizing for something that is clearly the city's responsibility. Businesses with restrooms shouldn't have to absorb the burden for non-customers.

For years, I and others have urged the city to address restroom shortages. A permanent facility would be ideal, but even an interim solution — such as a professionally serviced trailer on busy weekends — could be implemented quickly and affordably. Continued delay suggests this need isn't a priority.

Carmel's reputation is built on visitor experience. Adequate public facilities aren't optional — they're a civic responsibility. I hope the city will act before another busy season arrives.

**Jack Galante, Carmel**

## Why aren't there fires when it's raining?

Dear Editor,

Your recent article on wildfire defense systems was a welcome surprise. Thank you for highlighting the city's arbitrary approach to regulating these systems — especially without citing any specific code or regulation. I also commend the reporter for reviewing the appeal documents and detailed proposal, which included hydraulic calculations, roof plans, watershed impacts, water sources, operating mechanisms, material specifications and flow data. These were engineered details, yet the fire chief and board failed to review them meaningfully. Their "concern" seems like a bureaucratic tactic to avoid a real discussion.

The Peninsula does face wildfire risk. While Carmel doesn't have Big Sur's history, we must still ask: What should be required? The state is moving toward mandates that will alter the character of our "village in the forest by the sea." I'm not saying these measures lack value, but even "non-combustible" communities like Malibu haven't survived wildfire. No approach is foolproof.

I'm not against viable options. I'm advocating for professionally designed water-based defense systems, which have a proven record in protecting structures.

A few points: The fire chief hasn't identified any city that restricts such systems, nor have I found any record. No specific code backs officials' claims about water risk. Cal Am designs the system for fire flows even during peak demand. The real risk is uncontrolled water loss from damaged plumbing, not controlled, time-limited wetting systems.

The fire chief wrote, "Currently exterior fire sprinkler systems are not regulated by the State Fire Marshal's office. Cities should develop ordinances to create rules for these systems and ensure they meet or exceed standards."

That's the way forward — not prohibition without authority. The city should work with property owners to

implement these systems discreetly and effectively.

**Matthew DeMars, Carmel**

## Monterey's deficits

Dear Editor,

Monterey's budget deficit now exceeds \$10 million, and it's recurring. This isn't a temporary downturn but the result of deliberate choices: expanded programs, added staffing, redundant health plans and compensation hikes, even for elected officials. All were approved by a consistent council majority.

The mayor and two allies form that majority. One never opposes a mayor-backed motion; another rarely does. The outcome is predictable: initiatives pass and fiscal policy follows. This isn't a criticism, just voting reality — majorities shape results, and the deficit is the result.

A structural deficit means recurring expenses outstrip recurring revenues. Expanded programs and staffing create permanent obligations — salaries, benefits, pensions, liabilities. When these outpace income, imbalance is locked in.

Proposed fixes — a sales tax hike, a parking fee hike, and diversion of Neighborhood Community Improvement Program funds — don't solve the underlying problem.

Both taxes raise daily costs for residents. These aren't just visitor fees; locals pay sales tax on essentials and parking for work, appointments, shopping. Sales tax revenue also fluctuates with tourism and the economy. It might offer temporary relief but won't change the spending path.

NCIP funds aren't spare cash — they're a set portion of hotel tax revenue earmarked for neighborhood projects. If redirected, there's no replacement without new taxes or cuts. That loss is permanent. Using special funds for deficits just shifts the problem.

The inconsistency: Leaders who decry high rents now push policies — like higher sales and parking taxes — that drive up everyday costs. Affordability is about the total burden: housing, utilities, transport, food, taxes. Raising these costs makes life less affordable.

The rental registry program, with its software and staffing, hasn't lowered rents for a single tenant and should be cut.

Structural deficits stem from policy choices. Sustainable budgeting means matching ongoing spending to reliable revenue. Closing Monterey's gap requires real reform and political courage.

**Rosemarie Barnard, Prunedale**



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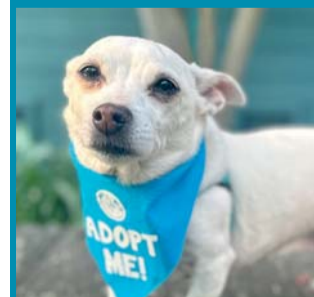
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# ARTIST

From page 27A

who discovered lithography, ceramics, sculpture and printmaking while she was there.

After college, she returned to the Peninsula and was hired by Marzi Studios in Seaside, where she worked for more than six years as a staff artist, painting tile murals, floral arrangements and other things.

"I made \$10 an hour and got to draw and paint, so Marzi's was like my art thing," she said. "But I couldn't afford an apartment and was living at home in my mid-20s, and finally decided, 'I don't want this.'"

Instead, she went to San Jose State, studied occupational therapy and supported herself and her education working temp jobs.

"So, I'm working a front-desk job one day, stuffing mail into mail slots, answering the phone and being a receptionist, when this fellow walks in and gets on the elevator," she reminisced.

"I had sworn off men at that point — I'd just broken off an engagement, and was, like, 'No friggin' way,' but I said, 'Oh, who's that?' I had never been twitterpated before, Bambi-style, but that's what happened when I saw him."

### 'Proper channels'

The handsome employee, Dennis Vernon, went through "proper channels" before dating her, calling his boss in Atlanta for a green light. The boss, a friend, said, "Oh, heck, go for it!"

They'll celebrate their 33rd anniversary this year. "He's a really smart, interesting guy," she said of her husband, who worked on a nuclear submarine, then ran a nuclear power plant during a stint in the U.S. Navy. He parlayed his computer skills into a career in manufacturing and technology that spanned multiple companies.

Diana juggled her career as an occupational therapist with motherhood. She has four sons.

Her firstborn, Sean, is an interventional radiologist, living in the Central Valley with his wife and four children.

Zachary Vernon, a plumber in San Jose, is newly married, with an 8-month-old son and 9-year-old stepdaughter. Joshua Vernon does smart-home setups for an electronics company on the Peninsula. Alexander, the youngest, is a Pacific Grove High graduate in the hospitality industry, with plans to enter the Police Academy.

Dennis' daughter, Sarah Giroux, is a two-time mom in Rhode Island.

Diana Vernon's career as an occupational therapist included hospital work plus almost 15 years with the Visiting Nurse Association, serving patients all over the Peninsula and along the Highway 101 corridor, from San Benito County to King City.

"I loved my work — I love people, and I loved helping people get healthier and stronger after surgery, or disease, or a stroke," she said.

"The fun and rewarding part was that the progress was tangible. You could start with them on Day 1, and by Day 5, there was improvement."

In retirement, she cherishes the time she spends at the easel in her home studio.

"I'll go in there, start painting, and suddenly, it'll be

hours later," she said. "I won't have eaten. I didn't drink anything. It's that absorbing."

### Favorite media

Vernon's main mediums are graphite, oils and acrylics, and favorite subjects include florals, sea life, still lifes and animals. View samples of her paintings on her artist page at [fineartamerica.com](http://fineartamerica.com), and see them on exhibit March 6 through April 23 in the Boyer Gallery of the Pacific Grove Art Association, open Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m.

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

# LIVES

From page 27A

Group in Palo Alto in 1975. Then, insisted Steve, "I just got lucky" with investments.

"Everybody told me, 'You're crazy,'" he recalled. Mitchell asked why he didn't buy more affordable properties, but Steve said he preferred high-end places. Naysayers thought his timing was wrong, but in four decades, he has owned and managed commercial properties and thousands of apartment units across California, Hawaii, Nevada and Arizona, and he's still at it.

While Steve built his business on land, Marti charted hers on the water — starting small and growing with the resourcefulness she learned as a child. It started with a relative who had a damaged boat. She bought it and fixed it up inside and out, relying on her sense of design and those childhood lessons in now-trendy upcycling.

After selling the finished product, she fixed and resold more boats, moving to New York and then San Francisco along the way.

### Awkward moments

Her California friends said they wanted to take cruises on the Bay with food and entertainment, which led Marti to start purchasing and leasing luxury yachts. She said 13 banks turned her down for loans before she could build the 700-passenger San Francisco Spirit, but she finally prevailed. It was part of her fleet until she sold it to Giants Enterprises, which manages events at Oracle Park and other venues, and she partnered with the company to provide charter services for its clients. Marti also built the first dock on Pier 39 that met ADA standards.

At one point, she had four boats and often worked 100-hour weeks, sometimes pitching in with tasks like food prep. Guests' compliments made her proud, and A-listers like Steph Curry have been among her passengers.

Nowadays, her Yacht Connections International has one boat for lease, the 92-foot Diamond Seas.

Marti and Steve's romance began awkwardly in 2007. They knew each other, but when Marti contacted Steve on the advice of one of her clients, she thought she was making a business call, while he thought she wanted a date. He said that things didn't merely "get off on the wrong foot."

"It was more like two or three wrong feet." Steve, an art collector, said he made a faux pas by bringing Marti to an art gallery in San Francisco. The show there featured some anti-Catholic works, but she had been raised in the church.

"They bordered on pornographic," they laughed, "and they were huge — 10 feet wide by 12 feet tall." Still, she said, "I had to know more about him." And they've been "pretty much inseparable" ever since.

### Excellence, drive

For all they've accomplished, they still have plenty of motivation and energy to give back. According to the Community Foundation for Monterey County, their firsthand understanding of the impact that encouragement and financial support can have on someone's future has led them to several philanthropic efforts.

They established a charitable foundation in 2017 "to support women, disadvantaged youth, and nonprofit capital projects that create lasting impact in their communities."

The Steve & Marti Diamond Scholarship Fund, launched in 2022, has already provided about 75 renewable, need-based scholarships for high-achieving students pursuing four-year university degrees or trade school certifications.

They're awarded for academic excellence and exceptional drive, character, and a clear vision for their future. Marti and Steve read the applications and often build relationships with awardees, following their progress long after awards are granted.

Their lives and the fruit of their hard work are, no doubt, a source of continuing inspiration as well.

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# VERDICT

From page 1A

and the Point Lobos Foundation, which was later removed as a defendant.

The case went to trial earlier this month, and the jury returned Wednesday with a verdict awarding Anthony \$18,854,000. The trial — presided over by Monterey County Superior Court Judge Thomas Wills — was held at the Monterey courthouse on Aguajito Road.

Jurors rejected the State of California's claim that it wasn't responsible for the accident because Arnold was a volunteer and not a state employee. Instead, the jury found that Arnold, even though unpaid, was acting as an employee of the state, which owns and operates Point Lobos. Jurors also found that the state's failure to properly train and supervise him was a substantial factor in the accident, according to Anthony's attorney, Roger Dreyer.

"This verdict makes clear that the State of California cannot escape responsibility by simply labeling someone a volunteer," Dreyer said. "The jury found that the state failed to properly train and supervise this individual, and that failure resulted in devastating, lifelong consequences."

Dreyer told The Pine Cone Thursday morning that Anthony has "tremendous appreciation and gratitude toward the jury," which she noted "gave up a month of their time to serve their community."

Anthony in September 2025 stepped down from her position on the Providence City Council.

"As I continue to heal from the traumatic injuries I suffered when I was struck by a van in June 2023, my neurologist has recommended that I devote more time to my recovery," Anthony wrote to her constituents in an August 2025 letter, adding that she was proud to have served on the panel.

Dreyer said Anthony, an attorney, also retired from practicing law, "as she simply cannot do the job she used to do for her clients."

The verdict was especially significant considering that California offered Anthony just \$50,000 to settle the case.

An attorney usually receives between 30 and 50 percent of a client's jury award. Anthony's award will be funded by state taxpayers.

While the judgment was entered against Arnold and the State of California, because Arnold was a state employee at the time of the accident, the state is responsible for paying Anthony.

## Nearly Fatal

Anthony's husband, Douglas, testified in September 2025 that his wife almost died at the scene, according to documents reviewed by The Pine Cone. He credited a physician who happened to be nearby for resuscitating her.

She suffered major head and chest injuries, including 22 rib fractures and internal bleeding, which required transfusions totaling 14 pints of blood. Adult humans have about 10 pints. Her top teeth were knocked out, he said.

Anthony was in the ICU for about 18 days, unable to communicate because her jaw was wired shut and she was on a ventilator, her husband, a neuropathologist, said.

Video footage of the accident showed Anthony walking easily when she entered the crosswalk. She was about halfway across when Arnold turned from an adjoining park road and struck her, a CHP report said. Anthony did not seem to notice Arnold until just before the collision.

Arnold told investigators he accidentally pressed the accelerator instead of the brake and was unable to stop

the car in time. He dragged Anthony for "some distance" before stopping.

Dreyer said he believes if the state appeals the verdict, it will lose.

"The state had a very fair trial, and all it did was demonstrate the failure on the part of its personnel to do their job, resulting in a remarkable human being suffering and living a life of pain and not impacting her community in the fashion she would have had the state done its job," he said.

Asked about an appeal, State Parks spokesman Marty Greenstein said the agency is "evaluating its legal options."

State Parks "respects the jury's decision and expresses its sincere and deepest sympathy to Helen Anthony and her family for the injuries she suffered," Greenstein told The Pine Cone.

Monterey resident Adam Rogers sued the State of California for negligence after striking a wild pig on Highway 1 near Point Lobos on Sept. 23, 2003, while riding a motorcycle. Rogers, who suffered brain damage in the crash, argued that California should have kept feral pigs off the highway. A jury in March 2009 agreed, and after a three-week trial, awarded Rogers \$8.6 million. Jurors believed the state had attracted wild pigs to a habitat restoration project on the west side of the highway adjacent to the Carmel River Lagoon and did not do enough to keep them from crossing the road. State taxpayers had to pay for that accident, too.

# GAVEL

From page 4A

be required to register as a sex offender for at least 20 years.

Jane Doe reported that Rios, a family member, had been sexually assaulting her for many years. The sexual assaults started when she was 7 years old and continued until she was 14 years old. She reported that Rios molested her numerous times in Salinas and continued to molest her when her family moved to another state. Doe delayed reporting the crimes for more than 7 years because she had a close relationship with Rios and was worried about breaking up her family. According to research into sexual-assault-victim behavior, it is very common for victims to delay reporting the sexual abuse, especially when the victim is a minor and has a close relationship with the perpetrator.

This case was investigated by Monterey County Sheriff's Office detective Dan Hopkins as well as other Monterey County Sheriff's deputies. The victim in this case was assisted by district attorney victim witness advocate Mayra Sandoval.

**Jan. 29** — The district attorney's cannabis enforcement unit has resolved a case against Faith & Family Farms LLC, a licensed cannabis cultivator located at 22730 Fuji Lane in unincorporated Monterey County. This case resolves allegations that the company used unlicensed transporters to distribute their cannabis products and that they failed to include all of their product in the state's cannabis track-and-trace system. Under the terms of the stipulated judgment, Faith & Family was ordered to pay \$120,000 in civil penalties and is subject to injunctive relief prohibiting future violations of state and local cannabis laws.

Cannabis cultivation is a highly regulated industry in California. State and local laws govern the cultivation, harvesting, transportation and sale of cannabis. To prevent unlawful diversion into the illicit market, cannabis is tracked from "seed to sale" through the state's mandatory track-and-trace system, Metrc. All licensed cannabis businesses are required to accurately record their activities in Metrc and to only conduct business with other licensed businesses.

On Dec. 20, 2023, Monterey County investigators and inspectors conducted a routine inspection at 22785 Fuji Lane, a property licensed to Monterey Botanicals, and observed employees of Faith & Family loading cannabis clones onto a tractor trailer owned and operated by RP Trucking, an unlicensed transporter. When questioned by investigators, a manifest and receipt were created that did not correspond to the plants loaded onto the truck. The manifest was fraudulently provided to investigators. Further investigation revealed that the cannabis clones being loaded were not tracked in the Metrc system, as required by law. Investigators then reviewed Faith & Family's Metrc manifest history, which revealed repeated instances in which Faith & Family used unlicensed transporters to transport cannabis, in violation of the law.

This case was investigated by district attorney investigators Damon Williams and Leo Gomez, and Monterey County Cannabis Program compliance inspector Paul Mattox. The Monterey County District Attorney's office remains committed to enforcing cannabis regulations and prosecuting unlicensed activities as well as unfair competition in the cannabis industry to ensure a level playing field for licensed businesses.

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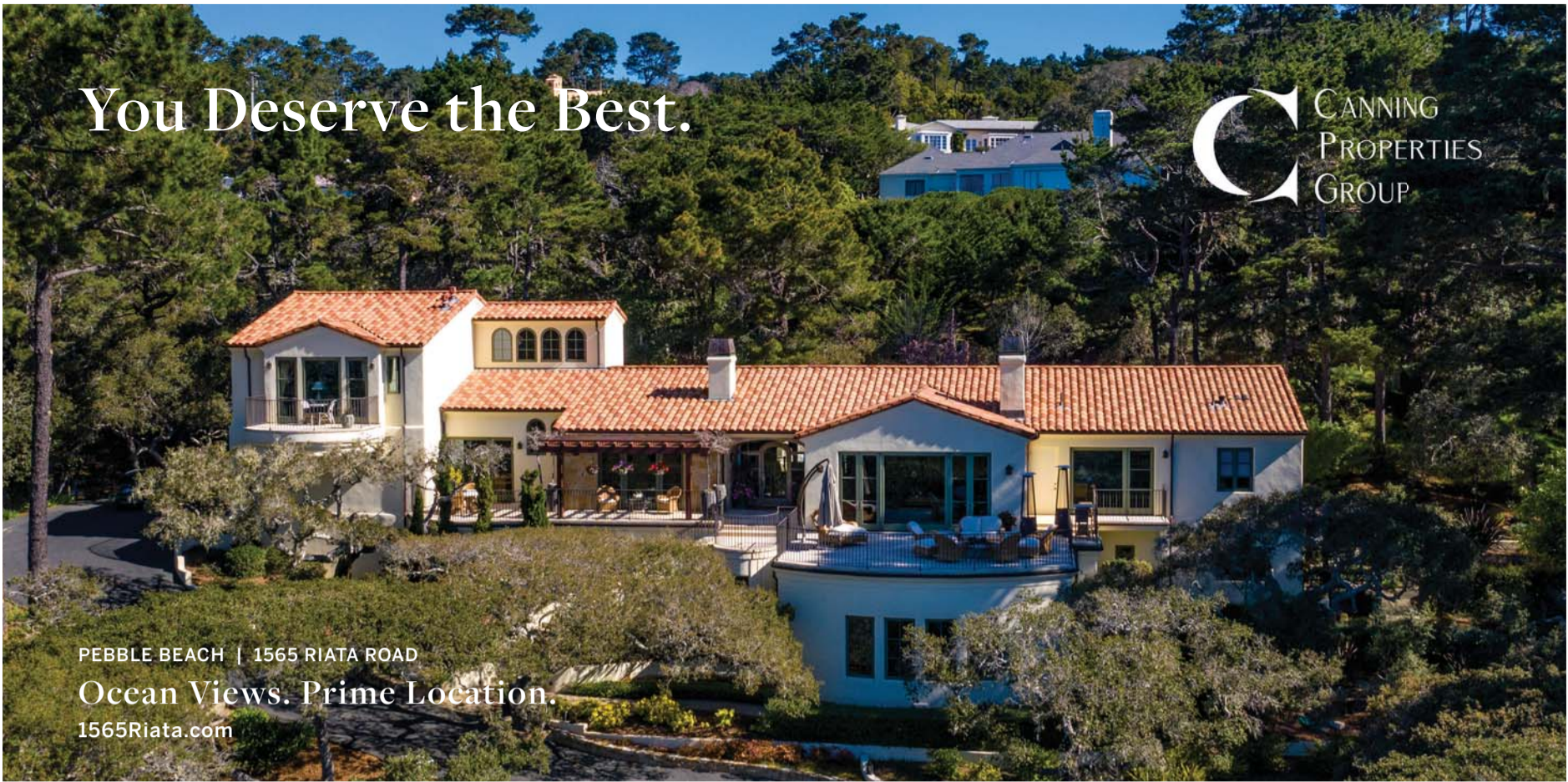




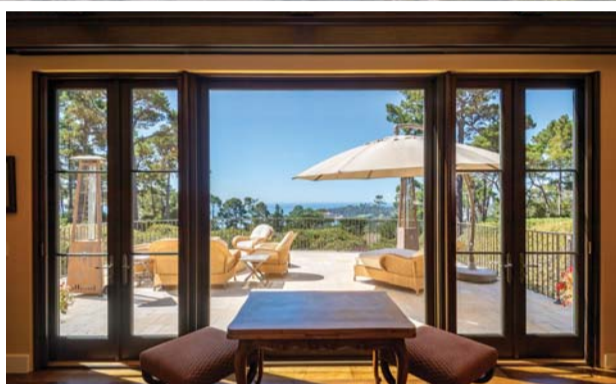
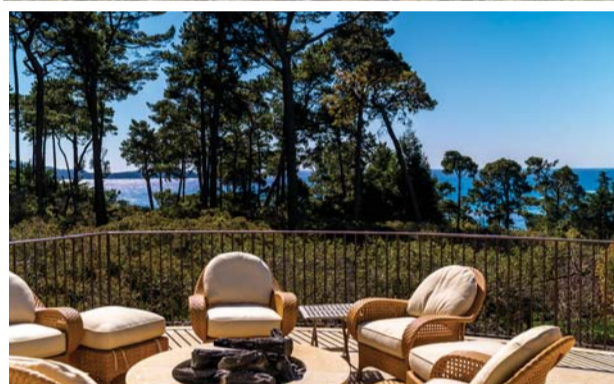
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# HEALTHY

## Lifestyles

Is your phone giving you a headache? It's not just social media.

By LILY PATTERSON

**“BLUE-LIGHT FILTER”** is a popular add-on when purchasing glasses, and a friendly sales associate might try to cajole you into dropping an extra \$50–100 on a special coating they say will reduce computer-related eye dryness, prevent blurred vision and headaches, and even protect long-term eye health.

“Some companies will use that scare tactic, saying blue light is damaging your eyes, even causing health issues. When it comes to screen time, the No. 1 question I get from patients is, ‘Am I going to go blind?’ And my answer is ‘absolutely not,’” said Maureen Hong, a Peninsula-born optometrist who practices at Modern Eyes in Monterey.

“Computer vision syndrome” and “digital eye strain” are catchall terms for symptoms including dry eyes, blurred vision, headaches and neck pain resulting from screen time. One of the most common eye conditions of our time, it’s simple to treat — and hardly as sinister as some “wellness” podcasters and online optical shops would have you believe.

In fact, it seems that enterprising minds have used the ubiquity of rapidly evolving tech and obfuscation about high-frequency wavelengths of blue light to spook consumers into buying health myths — and accessories — wholesale.

One of the most common notions is that

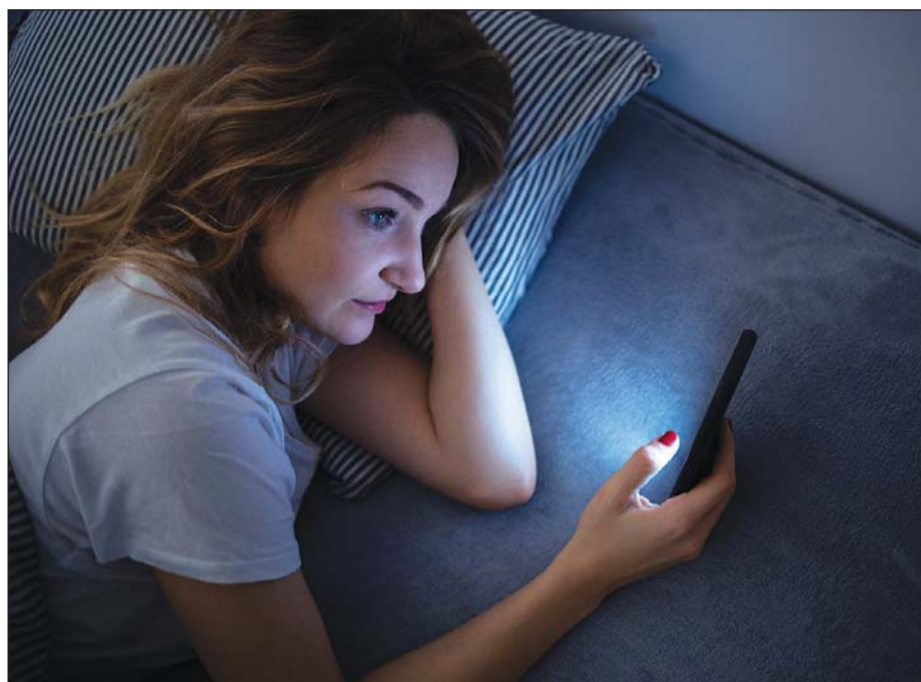
blue light exposure might eventually cause macular degeneration, a condition that can result in distorted vision or total blindness. There’s no credible, consistent evidence to prove it, the American Academy of Ophthalmology insists, but that hasn’t stopped the flow of snake oil.

Blue-light blockers range from a \$10 pair of amber-tinted specs to specialty glasses marketed to video gamers and priced at upwards of \$150. And while an optician may offer it as a thin coating applied to your everyday glasses, you’re better served by a prescription that keeps you from squinting at the computer screen, Rosenblum and Hong agreed.

### Keep blinking

There are plenty of medically sound reasons to limit screen time. It’s true that they keep us up at night, since high-intensity light interferes with the production of sleep-inducing melatonin. However, the evidence says blue light isn’t to blame for symptoms you may experience after a long day on your laptop, said ophthalmologist Leland Rosenblum, an ocular surgeon with Monterey County Eye Associates.

First, if you’re experiencing headaches or other sight-related problems, it’s best to visit an eye doctor for a diagnosis. If screen time is the culprit, though, Rosenblum recommends the same advice he’s given to



It's tempting to scroll in bed, but turn on a lamp. A bright screen in a dark room puts a lot of stress on your eyes.

computer users for more than 20 years.

“The first thing I tell people is, ‘Remember to blink.’ In general, people blink about 15 times per minute, but research has shown our blink rate slows way down when we’re looking at a screen, and that causes dry eyes,” he explained.

Hong said, “There was a study a few years ago which took videos of people staring at a computer, and not only did they not blink as often, they didn’t blink fully, only closed their eyes partially.”

SCREENS *con't.* page 35A

“ I’m a heart attack survivor and my wife has an arrhythmia. Can you see us both? ”



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## 'Silent thief of sight' can be treated if it's caught early

By ELAINE HESSER

**FOR THOSE** who have long worn glasses or contact lenses, skipping eye doctor appointments isn't usually an option. Eyes change over time, so keeping lens prescriptions up to date is crucial.

That's why this reporter, who's been nearsighted since first grade, was shocked — shocked, I tell you — to learn that some folks make it to 40 or even 50 without visiting an optometrist or ophthalmologist. However, there are preventive reasons to establish a relationship with an eyecare professional, and glaucoma is among the most important. It is appropriately called the "silent thief of sight," because it causes permanent vision loss without any eye pain or symptoms. By the time the loss is noticed, severe damage has already occurred.

In fact, Dr. Anna Shi, an ophthalmologist at Monterey Bay Eye Center who specializes in the disease, said it's the No. 1 cause of irreversible blindness in the United States and in the world.

### Under pressure

Glaucoma "isn't one single thing," she said, noting that the term covers a group of diseases that damage the optic nerve, which carries information from the eye to the brain. Often, but not always, high pressure inside the eye is the culprit.

The Cleveland Clinic says that normally, a fluid — the aqueous humor — flows in and out of the front of the eye to keep proper eye, or ocular, pressure. "The pressure is maintained by having the same amount of fluid come in as the amount of fluid leaving the front of your eye," the clinic's website explains. When it leaves, it goes into the bloodstream. It's not something you'd notice, like tears.

Over time, for a variety of reasons, drainage can slow, gradually increasing

eye pressure and damaging the optic nerve.

That can cause open-angle glaucoma (named for a portion of the eye's anatomy), which is not the only form of the disease, but it is the most common. It doesn't cause any symptoms in its early stages and gradually leads to patchy spots in peripheral vision and loss of vision in the center of the field of vision.

Other types include acute angle-closure, normal-tension glaucoma and pigmentary glaucoma, and each has a characteristic set of symptoms.

Risk factors include family history. Shi said someone whose parent, sibling, aunt or uncle has had glaucoma has a strong chance of developing it as well.

Eye injuries and some medications, including any type of steroid, can increase the risk, too, she said. Some over-the-counter nasal sprays used to help with allergies, for example, contain corticosteroids that can increase eye pressure to dangerous levels with long-term use. However, eye pressure will most often return to normal within several months after stopping the nasal spray.

Other risk factors include being very nearsighted or farsighted, age (the Cleveland Clinic notes that 10 percent of those 75 and older have signs of glaucoma), and uncontrolled diabetes. Black, Hispanic and Asian people are also at higher risk.

Regular eye checkups can catch glaucoma in time to treat it. One test involves a safe, painless puff of air or "gentle tap" on the front of the eye to measure pressure, but since some forms of optic nerve damage can develop without increased pressure, your ophthalmologist or optometrist might want to dilate (expand) your pupils to look inside your eye.

Shi said that people who haven't had



Regular eye exams can catch glaucoma in its early stages, when it can still be treated.

their pupils dilated find the prospect scary — some believe it involves needles.

### Bring sunglasses

As a veteran of dozens of dilations, I can tell you it's nothing to fear, and no jabbing is involved. After a few eye drops, which may sting slightly, there's a waiting period of about 15–30 minutes during which your pupils fully dilate and your vision blurs, which is normal. You'll notice it if you try to check your phone or read while you wait. Light feels much brighter and stronger.

Once the pupils are fully dilated, the doctor brings a scope close to one eye at a time and shines a small, strong light into it

to thoroughly examine the inside. There's a fair amount of, "Look up, look down, look left..." so they can see everything.

Except for the light sensitivity, it's painless. It usually takes four to six hours to get back to normal, though that varies from person to person. If you wear contact lenses to the exam, you'll have to take them out until it's over.

You can drive afterward — but you'll definitely need sunglasses, and you won't want to take an extended trip. Many experts recommend arranging a ride home if it's your first time or if glare/blurring feels significant, as distance vision can be

GLAUCOMA *con't.* page 37A



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# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

## SCREENS from page 33A

She and Rosenblum encourage patients to keep a bottle of preservative-free artificial tears handy, especially if they're contact lens wearers.

Since high contrasts in light and color force the eyes to work harder, it helps to adjust a screen's brightness to match your surroundings, Rosenblum added. Some electronic devices offer a "Night Mode," which casts a soothing yellow hue over the screen, reducing contrast.

And whenever you find yourself spending more than a few minutes in front of your device, follow the 20-20-20 rule, Rosenblum said.

"Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away from you for at least 20 seconds to give your eyes a break from what's called 'accommodation.'"



Leland Rosenblum

The automatic process by which the eyes readjust to focus on objects at different distances, accommodation — or rather, trouble accommodating — is the root of computer-induced headaches.

We're simply working our eyes too hard, Hong said.

"Focusing up close is a lot more work for the eyes than seeing objects at a distance. Driving or even watching TV is very different work than reading a book or looking at your phone," said Hong.

### Muscle strain

Three things happen to the eyes when viewing something close-up: The gaze turns inward, pupils constrict, and optical muscles tighten and change the shape of the lens to sharpen focus.

Then, people hold that for several hours — or however long it takes to clear their inbox — which strains those muscles.

Rosenblum said, "The problem is, we don't do 'a little bit' of computer work anymore. Prolonged near work is a fact of modern civilization. Humans evolved to look far away, occasionally close up, but we weren't born to interact with this stuff."

"As a society, we're developing epidemics of nearsightedness because we don't get out and play," said Rosenblum, who explained that ophthalmologists are meeting more and more young patients experiencing myopia, or nearsightedness.

And their prescriptions are intensifying more rapidly, possibly due to the strain of looking at screens, or the simple fact that devices tempt kids to stay indoors more than reading or Legos ever did.

"Whether this has to do with accommodation or lack of exposure to UV light, we don't know yet. But there's evidence that even an hour a day outdoors, focusing on things far away, does a lot to counteract the progression of myopia," Rosenblum said.

### Simple solutions

Since digital eye strain doesn't discriminate, just about everybody with a screen can benefit from eyeglasses adjusted for digital work.

A computer prescription, Hong explained, is just a low-power lens, similar to reading glasses but calibrated for middle distance. You can, however, request an anti-glare coating — something eye doctors have long recommended to help with



Maureen Hong

COMPUTERS cont. page 37A



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## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

## They can still feel your love

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

**JULIE BLANK** was not planning on adopting a dog. Not until the Carmel Valley resident learned of Layla, a Persian shepherd puppy that had been hit by a car in Iran and left to die. Despite her crushed legs and a spinal injury that ensured Layla would never use her hind legs again, a donor to Peace of Mind Dog Rescue had managed to get her to the Pacific Grove nonprofit.

"I read about Layla and thought, 'I could do this, I could foster her,'" Blank said. "But what you read and what you encounter are two different things. Layla grew to be 65 pounds. I have 15 stairs in my house and had to carry her up and down every day," she continued. "Still, I fell in

love, and she became a 'foster fail.' I had her for 10 years till she passed away."

Layla's legacy inspired Blank to continue fostering special-needs dogs — 25 during the past 12 years — three of which have been blind, including Pepa, a Chihuahua-dachshund mix, or Chiweenie, now 15.

"Pepa was going to be euthanized because he's blind, but Peace of Mind stepped in and rescued him," she said. "A blind dog needs to find his way around, and Pepa quickly got the lay of the land and of the house. He can go up and down the stairs quite well. Because he's so skilled, people

**DISABLED** *cont. page 38A*

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# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

## COMPUTERS from page 35A

driving, among other things — which will noticeably reduce eye discomfort by cutting screen glare from the sun or overhead lighting.

She said her daughter benefited from a computer prescription when, as a high schooler in 2020 — thanks to virtual learning due to Covid — she began spending eight-plus hours a day online.

“She never had issues with headaches until she did online school, so I wrote her a prescription for computer glasses. Midway through college, she says they continue to help,” Hong said.

Everybody should be viewing their screens at the optimal intermediate distance, Rosenblum said, approximately 2 feet away and 4-5 inches below eye level to prevent neck pain.

From that view, a computer prescription can lighten the load on ocular muscles, reducing the likelihood of headaches and blurred vision.

Hong said it’s possible for some people

to find over-the-counter readers that match her prescriptions for computer glasses. But everyone should start by visiting an optometrist or ophthalmologist who can provide individually tailored options — for instance, adding a computer prescription to bi- or multifocal lenses.

They can also tell you what’s new in eye tech. The Stellest lens, for instance, was approved by the FDA last year.

### Nearsighted kids

“It’s a technology used in contacts, but personally I don’t feel comfortable putting a 6-to-10-year-old in contacts. Basically, the lens goes from clear to blurry around the edges, and research has shown that if focus is slightly blurred in the peripheral retina, it can actually slow the progression of nearsightedness in kids,” said Hong.

But even better — and simpler — than fighting high-tech problems with high-tech solutions, Hong and Rosenblum agreed, is unplugging the whole family and taking a walk. It feels good, and it’s scientifically savvy, too.

## GLAUCOMA from page 34A

affected by brightness. Reading and computer work will have to wait a while, too.

Digital devices in the doctor’s office can also be used to scan the inside of the eye and look for signs of damage.

If glaucoma is diagnosed early and patients follow treatment instructions, outcomes improve significantly.

Treatment used to be a series of different kinds of eye drops, and it relied heavily on people using them regularly, something Shi said was complicated by the fact that some of the drops burn or cause redness in the eyes. Now, she noted, laser therapy and procedures like inserting a minuscule stent to open the passage are also available. It’s even possible to build a new drain if the

doctor decides that’s the best approach.

All of that depends on early diagnosis. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends regular eye exams every two to four years starting at age 40. The frequency increases with age or increased risk, and insurance coverage varies.

There’s nothing like the crimson sunsets over Carmel Beach, and those exams help ensure you can keep taking them in.



Anna Shi

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# Mom's Minestrone

Josephine Mercurio, provided by Dominic Mercurio, Café Fina

By SALLY BAHO

“YOUR COOKING ought to be in a restaurant.” Many a mom has heard that from grateful children, but not all of them get to see it actually happen. Dominic Mercurio named his restaurant after his beloved mother and muse, Josephine, and her dishes appear regularly on the menu. Mercurio collected her handwritten recipes and preserved them (and others) in “The Café Fina Cookbook,” published in 2023 and available at the restaurant.

Josephine died on Jan. 27 at 91, but her son said her spirit lives in the warmth of the family kitchen and the satisfying foods that were her way of saying, “I love you” and surrounding everyone at the table in a warm hug.

Minestrone — a hearty but healthy Italian soup made with vegetables, beans and pasta in a tomato-based broth — is a wonderful example of Josephine’s comfort-in-a-dish. It makes a great starter but can also be a showstopping main course. You can make it vegetarian by using water or vegetable broth instead of chicken broth.

Minestrone can be a complete protein meal, meaning it provides all the essential amino acids necessary for the body to function — amino acids our bodies cannot produce on their own. Complete proteins are made by combining a legume and a grain, such as the pasta and beans used here. It’s a great choice if you’re looking for a meat-free dish that still provides plenty of protein.

It’s also an easy soup to prepare, with the practical use of canned beans and tomatoes as well as ingredients that are almost all probably in your pantry or fridge already — nothing fancy to lead you on a culinary scavenger hunt. Note the import-

ant instruction to add the cooked macaroni just before serving. Also, here at Healthy Lifestyles, we’ve had better experiences freezing soups — even chicken noodle — like this without the pasta. Its texture seems to go a bit “off” when it’s frozen.

## INGREDIENTS

(Serves 4-6)

### Ingredients

- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 stalks of celery, diced finely
- 1 carrot, peeled and diced
- 1/2 white onion, diced
- 1 clove of garlic, diced
- 28 ounces chicken broth
- 1 14.5-ounce can crushed tomatoes in juice
- 1 14-ounce can cannellini beans, strained
- 1 14-ounce can kidney beans, strained
- 1/4 cup fresh chopped Italian parsley
- 1/4 cup fresh chopped basil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch each of dried oregano and thyme
- 1 cup cooked elbow pasta
- Optional, 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- Pesto for serving (optional)

Sauté celery, carrots, onions and garlic in olive oil in a pot. When the vegetables are soft, add chicken broth, tomatoes, beans, parsley, basil and thyme. Stir well and let simmer for about 30 minutes. Taste for salt and pepper. If you like a richer tomato flavor add a tablespoon of tomato paste and stir to incorporate. Add cooked pasta just before serving so the pasta doesn’t overcook and become mushy.

Add a little pesto to each bowl before serving, if you like.



DISABLED. from page 36A

and has a great time. He’s full of life.”

usually don’t realize he’s blind till they see his white eyes.”

Especially, said Blank, because Pepa gets to do everything a sighted dog does. And she makes sure of that. As does his best pal, Tarot, a sighted husky-shepherd mix also considered a “foster fail” because his temporary family adopted him.

“Pepa and Tarot hang out together a lot,” their person said. “There’s a bond that goes beyond sight issues, but I do think Tarot realizes Pepa can’t see and has developed a protective sense about him.”

Pepa is very quiet, she said, but not shy. He doesn’t bark often, perhaps because his person and his pal are so tuned in to his needs that he doesn’t have to ask for much. In the evening, Blank lifts him onto her bed, and he burrows under the covers and slips into sleep. In the middle of the night, he tucks into his person’s neck and continues to doze, secure.

“Pepa is a very subtle dog,” she said. “If he wants something, he’ll tap me lightly. He is part of my family, my household, my heart. He knows us. He belongs to us and we to him. He’s spry, he has character, and he’s not giving up. He still goes to the park

### The Brady Bunch

There are similar stories involving cats with special needs. Peter, Bobby and Greg Brady, a trio of brothers, are beautiful slate-gray domestic shorthair cats born with a congenital condition called eyelid agenesis — the absence of eyelids — which compromised their vision and their adaptability.

Yet, after they were dropped off at Animal Friends Rescue Project in Pacific Grove, they underwent surgery involving eyelid construction using tissue taken from their mouths. In addition, once he began losing vision in one eye, Bobby underwent enucleation, the surgical removal of his deformed eyeball, as well as treatment to remove eyelashes growing inward.

“We treat and foster cats with all kinds of medical issues, including vision,” said Maria Skypta, who works with AFRP as an adoption counselor and pet-care specialist. “Depending on what the eye issue is, it may just need wound cleaning or, in the case of the Brady cats, they needed surgery. Once healed, the cats generally adjust really

LOVE cont. page 39A

## Chef Bio

**DOMINIC MERCURIO** grew up in Monterey in a Sicilian-American family. His father was a fisherman and followed the fish, landing him in Monterey. He grew up watching his mom make everything from scratch and enjoying family lunches on that lasted for hours on Sundays. In 1989, he bought what is now Cafe Fina on the Wharf from the Genoese family and has since dedicated his life



to it. Loved by locals and visitors alike, Cafe Fina is a mix of Sicilian, seafood, and fresh dishes with something for everyone.

Mercurio is a fisherman and avid duck hunter. He is also a weekend farmer, tending a plot of land in the Central Valley where he grows watermelons, the “best tomatoes you’ve ever had,” peaches, almonds, and more. You can find seasonal menu items featuring his harvest at Cafe Fina. This recipe and others are in the “Cafe Fina Cookbook: You Don’t Have to be a Chef to Cook Great Food,” available for purchase on Amazon and at the restaurant.

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# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

LOVE from page 38A

well to navigating with compromised vision.”

Bobby was transferred to a foster home, where he is finding his way. In fact, Skypta said, it’s quite amazing how quickly he has adapted and can figure out his way around the house. The Brady brothers are available for adoption; visit [animalfriendsrescue.org](http://animalfriendsrescue.org) to learn more.

“Sometimes it’s a little harder to find a permanent home if the cat is older or his medical condition is ongoing, because we can’t predict what kind of care he will need down the road,” Skypta said. Years ago, she remembered, AFRP received a cat who had cysts on her eyes and whose pupils were star-shaped, which was how Skypta knew something was going on. It turned out to be a case of persistent pupillary membrane, which reportedly happens when the tiny tissues that form the eyes of a kitten don’t fully disappear, leaving star-shaped strands in the iris.

“We couldn’t know what the future would hold for her,” said Skypta. “But she did get adopted, and her family

understood she may require more care later on. When an animal has ongoing medical needs, this often makes it a little harder to find their right home. But we often find the right family willing and able to provide the love and care the animal needs.”

Early in their transition to a foster or permanent home, she said, cats and dogs with vision problems tend to lean on a particular person or other pet. But, as they figure out the vibrations of where everyone is, they learn how to move through the house to be where their people are. Skypta’s crew also includes two older dogs, both of whom have age-related vision loss.

It’s abundantly clear that the Monterey Peninsula isn’t just a great place for people to live — its loving residents make it a paradise for pets, too, with several organizations like Peace of Mind Dog Rescue and Animal Friends Rescue Project. The nonprofits — along with dedicated fosters and adopters — continue to prove that every animal, regardless of challenges, deserves a loving home and a chance to live their best life.



The “Brady Bunch,” Greg (above), Peter and Bobby, are up for adoption.



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# This Week

Live Music,  
Clubs and Events

## Trio back at Sunset for first time since virtual show during Covid

FOR ITS third concert of the season at Sunset Center on Saturday at 7:30 p.m., **Chamber Music Monterey Bay** welcomes the award-winning **Morgenstern Trio** — and

**Emanuel Wehse** — the trio found fame quickly, winning the prestigious Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio Award in 2010.

Saturday's concert marks the sixth time the trio has performed at Sunset Center. But the last time they were set to play here, in 2021, Covid turned the event into a virtual affair. The program featured Arnold Schoenberg's memorable *Verklärte Nacht [Transfigured Night], Op. 4*. "Their performance of Schoenberg's composition was so remarkable and moving that we asked them to play it again for a wider audience when they next appeared in Carmel," the chamber music group's **Amy Anderson** said.

Besides Schoenberg's piece, the concert will include Beethoven's *Piano Trio in C minor, Op. 1, No. 3*, and Frank Martin's *Trio on Irish Folk Tunes*.

A pre-concert talk starts at 6:30 p.m. Tickets start at \$25, with discounts for kids, college students, music teachers and active military.

Sunset Center is at San Carlos and Ninth in Carmel. Call (831) 625-2212 or visit [chambermusicmontereybay.org](http://chambermusicmontereybay.org).



Guitarist Jordan Tice teams up with fiddler Patrick McGonigle Sunday afternoon at St. Mary's by the Sea in Pacific Grove.

### On a High Note

By CHRIS COUNTS

celebrates the return of a piece of music that previously mesmerized local audiences from afar.

Formed in Germany in 2008 and named after a 19th-century poet — and showcasing the talents of pianist **Catherine Klipfel**, violinist **Stefan Hempel** and cellist



The Morgenstern Trio makes its sixth visit to Sunset Center Saturday, presenting a piece of music that wowed a local audience six years ago during a streamed concert.

### ■ 'Passion, struggle and beauty'

Also at Sunset Center, **Youth Music Monterey County** presents its latest concert, titled "Hidden Depths," on Sunday at 3 p.m. The group's second concert of the season showcases some of the county's most talented student-musicians.

"Our young musicians dive deep into emotionally rich pieces by clas-

sical masters in 'Hidden Depths,' bringing to life the passion, struggle and beauty inherent in every melody," the group said. "Featuring works by Tchaikovsky, Bruch, Schubert, and Clark, this concert captures a diverse range of profoundly intense emotions of the human psyche."

Youth Music Monterey County's latest Honors Concerto Competition winner, violinist **Katherine Lin**, will be featured as a soloist when the Honors Orchestra plays Bruch's *Violin Concerto*.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for seniors, and \$4 for students. Go to [youthmusicmonterey.org](http://youthmusicmonterey.org).

See MUSIC page 43A

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Yum! Such a quick and easy stop for water, snacks, and food if you're staying nearby. They have a full deli with DELICIOUS sandwiches and some sides as well (veggies, macaroni salad, etc.). I also recommend the seeded French roll like a few others. The sandwiches are packed very well, so it's easy to take them to the beach or down to Point Lobos or Big Sur for a picnic. They also seem to have "pop-ups" (not sure what to call these) on a rotating basis — for example, a burrito cart on Wednesday. It was very popular!  
— Tushita H., Long Beach, CA

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# FOOD & WINE

## The sweetest science, the best pinot, and the nicest doggone people

IF YOU'VE ever looked at one of those fancy cakes in a shop window and wondered if you could DIY something similar, there's a workshop for you in town on March 12, when the delightful Sharon Runde will welcome guests into her world of Sugar Science, which combines her former career at the Naval Postgraduate School with her family's baking heritage.

Lovers of pinot noir won't want to miss out on some special events focused on its all-but-hallowed sources in the Santa Lucia Highlands and especially Garys' Vineyard. Finally, we've got fundraisers for two of the Peninsula's favorite charities — both related to rescuing animals, of course.

Pour yourself a cup of coffee — or a nice glass of pinot — and read on.

### Scientific leprechauns?

Sharon Runde, owner of Sugar Science, a local baking company, is planning a festive St. Patrick's Day-themed cake-decorating class.

Two sessions will be offered at American Legion Post 512, Dolores Street and Eighth Avenue, on March 15, 2026 — one from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and one from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Participants will have the chance to try their hand at professional

welcoming setting, Runde said.

She's a fourth-generation baker who started at age 5, learning from her great-grandmother, grandmother and mother, each of whom specialized in their own favorite desserts and treats.

Later, Runde spent a 20-year career at the Naval Postgraduate School, where she worked her way up from a student aide with no college background to a faculty associate for research with a Master of Science in program management. "I have a master's in herding cats," she joked.

### Sharing joy

After launching herself into the process of becoming a Ph.D., she decided she "didn't need to be called 'Dr. Runde,'" and returned in 2022 to her childhood love, baking. She trademarked "Sugar Science" and has combined her passions for scientific research and baking to create unique and delicious custom desserts.

Runde's company turns out artistic cakes, pies, brownies, cookies and more, which can be ordered for birthdays, anniversaries, bridal or baby showers, bachelor/bachelorette parties, reunions, company functions, celebrations of life, or "just because." Customer reviews say the artworks taste as good as they look, too.

"Sugar Science is about sharing the joy of my childhood baking, teaching through personal experiences, and making memories that will last a lifetime," Runde said. "This class is a fun way to learn new skills,



Gary Francioni and Gary Pisoni (left) are a formidable duo when it comes to wine production in the Santa Lucia Highlands. At their much-lauded Garys' Vineyard, they nurture grapes that are in high demand for prized pinot noirs and other impressive wines. Their work will be celebrated along with other Highlands wine artisans May 1 and 2 with a sold-out dinner (there's a waitlist) and an event at Mer Soleil.



ask questions, and leave with something delicious that you're proud to share."

Whether you come alone or bring a friend, it's a sweet opportunity to celebrate the "luck of the Irish" with your own signature creation. Cost is \$65 per participant, and advance registration is required.

If you struggle with pie crust, she's also got a workshop on that subject scheduled for April 18 at the Legion. "I have screwed up pie dough every which way from Sunday and now know how to make it," Runde confided. For more information or to reserve your spot for any of her upcoming workshops, visit [sugarsciencebaker.com](http://sugarsciencebaker.com), or contact Runde at [sugarsciencebaker@gmail.com](mailto:sugarsciencebaker@gmail.com) or (831) 869-2862.

### Sun, Wind & Wine

On the eve of the Santa Lucia Highlands Wine Artisans' annual Sun, Wind & Wine festival at Mer Soleil Vineyards in Salinas, Bernardus Lodge in Carmel Valley will host a dinner celebrating the 30th anniversary of Garys' Vineyard — owned by "the Garys," Gary Francioni and Gary Pisoni. The dinner is sold out, but a waitlist is available.

The duo is a powerhouse in Santa Lucia wine production, with fruit from Garys' and their other vineyards, including Pisoni Vineyard, in high demand and yielding

See WINE next page

## Soup to Nuts

decorating techniques and take their edible creations home.

Each student will receive a two-layer vanilla bean cake square and step-by-step guidance on decorative piping and design elements. Appropriate for beginners and seasoned bakers alike, the class will emphasize creativity and fun in a relaxed,

company functions, celebrations of life, or "just because." Customer reviews say the artworks taste as good as they look, too.

"Sugar Science is about sharing the joy of my childhood baking, teaching through personal experiences, and making memories that will last a lifetime," Runde said. "This class is a fun way to learn new skills,

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# FOOD & WINE

## WINE

From previous page

top-quality wines year after year. The dinner at the lodge will include special selections from Pisoni and Frascioni's labels, as well as from Bernardus Winery, paired with four courses prepared by the lodge's executive chef, Gus Trejo. Bernardus Winery's winemaker, Jim McCabe, and winery president Jeff Meier will be there, too — "for a celebratory night of stories, history and remarkable wines."

The dinner will be held at the lodge at Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade on May 1 from 6 to 10 p.m. and costs \$225 per person. To join the waitlist, go to [events.humanitix.com/garys-vineyard-30-year-](http://events.humanitix.com/garys-vineyard-30-year-)

celebration-winemaker-dinner.

Tickets remain available at a range of levels for the Santa Lucia Highlands Wine Artisans' biggest event of the year on May 2 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Mer Soleil Vineyards, where many of the region's winemakers will gather to share tastes, including some rarely or never offered elsewhere. Local chefs and purveyors will provide food to match. The event also marks the one day Mer Soleil is open to the public each year.

Some 40 wineries are signed on to participate, including Caraccioli Cellars, Landmark Vineyards, Mer Soleil, Morgan Winery, Siduri, Belle Glos, McIntyre, ROAR, Talbott Vineyards, Pisoni and Wrath.

Upgrades include a Bubbles Bar and VIP tables with guaranteed seating and

amenities. Live music and the opportunity to purchase bottles to take home are planned, too, and those who pay for early admission at 11 a.m. will enjoy a special hour featuring rare wines, library releases and new gems. Young Vines passes provide discounted admission — including one option with transportation from Monterey Peninsula College — for guests 35 and under.

Tickets must be purchased in advance through [santaluciahighlands.com/events](http://santaluciahighlands.com/events).

### ■ Furry fundraisers

Sanctuary Vacation Rentals will host its seventh annual fundraiser benefiting Animal Friends Rescue Project on Sunday, March 15, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Hatch Southwest Kitchen in the Barnyard shopping center.

As part of this tradition, 10 percent of all restaurant sales throughout the day will be donated to AFRP, supporting the nonprofit's efforts in rescuing and providing medical care and adoption services for animals in need.

Gracee Blossom Joy — Sanctuary Vacation Rentals' official ambassador of goodwill, a charming pup adopted from AFRP — will be dining at Hatch during the event. Guests are encouraged to say hello to the adorable celebrity as they join in the day's good deeds.

The event is open to the public. No tickets or reservations are required — just show up, order lunch, and help support local animal welfare.

### Pool party in April

Dog lovers and their four-legged companions are invited to a tail-wagging fundraiser at the "Bow Wow! Pawty," a dog-friendly event benefiting Peace of Mind

Dog Rescue. The poolside gathering takes place Thursday, April 9, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Hofsas House Hotel.

The event combines local food, wine and pet-centric fun to support the nonprofit, which serves as a resource and advocate for local senior dogs and senior people.



This is Spork. Spork needs a home. An April fundraiser in Carmel will help support Peace of Mind Dog Rescue in rescuing pups like him.

Its mission includes helping to keep aging pups and their elderly guardians together, finding loving homes for dogs in need and providing assistance so seniors can continue to live with their best buddies.

Attendees can sip wine from Bernardus Winery, enjoy freshly prepared paella by chef Brandon Miller, appetizer bites from Sweet Elena's bakery in Sand City,

See PUPS next page

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## PUPS

From previous page

munch cookies from Café Carmel and treat their pups to bark bites from Carmel Dog Shop. Richard Green Photography will take portraits of all the bestest boys and girls, and there will be paw readings and a photo booth perfect for more casual pics.

Tickets are \$50 per person, with space limited to 50 two-legged guests. Four-legged attendees are encouraged to show up in their finest "Fun in the Sun" attire, and they must stay leashed throughout the event.

Tickets are available on Eventbrite. For more information or to RSVP, email [info@thebuzzpr.net](mailto:info@thebuzzpr.net) or call (831) 747-7455.

The Hofsas House Hotel is hosting the fundraiser, with its support making the sunny, pet-inclusive evening possible, organizers said.

*Elaine Hesser and Mary Schley contributed to this week's column.*



Sharon Runde is the owner of Sugar Science, a popular local baking company. She's giving a workshop on decorating cakes for St. Patrick's Day — and has one on conquering pie crust, too.

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## MUSIC

From page 40A

### ■ Acoustic duo visits church

St. Mary's-by-the-Sea kicks off its latest music series on Sunday at 3 p.m. when it hosts a concert by guitarist **Jordan Tice** and fiddler **Patrick McGonigle**.

"This show will be an exceptional treat, and a bit of an evolutionary journey from Celtic, to present-day Americana, to contemporary bluegrass," Jackie Pierce of St. Mary's said. "We are so fortunate that these exceptional musicians are coming for a visit to our humble stage."

Tickets are \$31 for general admission and \$12 for kids. The church is at 146 Central Ave. [celticsociety.org](http://celticsociety.org)

### ■ Live music Feb. 27-March 5

#### ■ 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 **Ryan Sesma** (Sunday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Tony Burciaga** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). Carmel Square on San Carlos north of Seventh.

**Carmel Mission Inn** — singer and guitarist **Ryan Sesma** (Tuesday at 5 p.m.), **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** — **Alex & Justina Lucero** (rock, Friday at 6 p.m.), **Dr T & the Remedy** (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.



Singer and guitarist Neko Case takes the stage Thursday, 7 p.m., at Golden State Theatre in Monterey.

#### ■ Carmel Valley

**Bernardus Lodge** — pianist **Joe Indence** (jazz, Friday at 6 p.m.), **Andrea's Fault** (jazz and pop, Saturday at noon p.m.), 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.

See LIVE page 45A

## CALENDAR

**March 2 - "An Insider to Outer Space" - James Hansen Newman**, provost of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, American physicist, and former NASA astronaut who flew on four Space Shuttle missions will share his pathway to space. 2 p.m. Carmel Woman's Club, San Carlos and Ninth, Carmel-by-the-Sea. Open to the public. \$10/guests/members free.

**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

**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.

**March 5 - "B4Noon Community Recital"**, 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., at Carmel Presbyterian Church, Ocean & Junipero, SE corner, every Thursday through April 30. Free. This week, March 5: music of **Beethoven, Debussy, Schumann & favorite hymns** with **Patti Adams** (piano) and 3 talented student pianists.

**March 5, 6 & 7 - Soapbox StageWorks presents "Romance with a Twist,"** three incredible plays, "**Broken Yolks**" by **Jeff Westfield**, "**Wormwood**" by **Babara Blatner** and "**Hemlock Haven**" by **Karen Devaney**. Curtain is at 7 p.m. at the Stanton Centre Theatre, Monterey. For information and tickets, visit <https://www.soapboxstageworks.org>

**March 6-8 - Jazz Bash By The Bay - classic jazz festival** in Monterey at Portola Hotel & Spa with 20+ bands, 8 venues, swing, ragtime, blues, dancing.

**March 14 - The Monterey Elks Lodge**, located at 150 Mar Vista Drive overlooking Monterey Bay, invites the Monterey Peninsula community to attend our **OPEN HOUSE** between 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. to celebrate the **Lodge's 62nd Anniversary**. Families are welcome! Come learn about Elks USA and meet our Committees who will be available to answer questions about membership and the Elks Charities and Community Support Programs we sponsor e.g., Veterans Services, Youth Programs, Social Events and more. We will have music; food and drinks for purchase; a Kids Game Zone, and guided tours of our facility including the pool and our gym. For more information about this event, contact our Office Monday - Friday between 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. at (831) 373-1285. Visit [www.elks1285.com](http://www.elks1285.com) to learn more about our Lodge.

**March 14 - Are You Ready for the Academy Awards?** Enjoy the glitzy excitement from your cozy couch! Order Baum & Blume's "Oscar Nosh Box" filled with frozen appetizers, popcorn, snacks, cookies and even a bottle of bubbly! Call now to pick up Sat. March 14th! (831) 659-0400. 4 El Caminito Road, Carmel Valley.

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# Photographer shares 'Naturally Sharon'

**BEST KNOWN** for capturing the grandeur of the American West through his striking photography, Bob Kolbrener recently focused his camera on a subject that complements those wide-open vistas — his wife, Sharon.

An exhibit of those photos, titled “Naturally Sharon,” is on display through March 22 at Winfield Gallery, which will have a reception for the artist on March 7 at 2 p.m.

Photographed at various sites throughout the West, including old mines and Native American ruins, the black-and-

she had no modesty when it came to being without her clothes.”

The photographer said he and his wife spend about two months each year rambling around the West in a camper van.

Winfield Gallery is on Dolores between Ocean and Seventh. [winfieldgallery.com](http://winfieldgallery.com)

## ■ 'Peaks and Crests'

Like many painters, Al Shamble is mesmerized by distant horizons and finds creative inspiration in both landscapes and seascapes. Titled “Peaks and Crests,” a display of his latest creations opens Sunday at Venture Gallery in Monterey. A reception and artist demonstration are set for March 7 at 3 p.m.

Edi Matsumoto of Venture Gallery described Shamble as an environmentalist who hopes his work will help people “recognize and preserve our exceptional natural resources.” He leads weekly painting outings for the Monterey Bay Plein Air Painters Association.

“He paints in a realistic style with a flair for impressionism,” Matsumoto explained. “Primarily a plein air painter, he prefers to paint on location despite the weather and inherent challenges of wind, bugs, tides, sun and rain — as it allows him to capture the true sense of place.”

The show will be on display through the end of the month. The gallery is at 260 Alvarado St.

## Art Roundup

By CHRIS COUNTS

white nudes show Sharon in a variety of poses that explore both light and landscape.

“To photograph my wife Sharon was a special privilege,” he said. “Because Sharon is strong and fit, and very attractive,



Employing a realistic style “with a flair of impressionism,” painter Al Shamble draws inspiration from wild and natural places.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260323

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**HABIBI'S KABAB, 223 Reindollar Ave., Suite A-1, Marina, CA 93933.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

MAY SAID ALRSHADAT, 152 Via Vaquero Sur, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045.

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/May Alrshaidat

Date signed: Feb. 11, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 11, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2026 (PC 231)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260326

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**CENTRAL COAST MARKETING STRATEGIES, 620 Lighthouse Ave. #165, Pacific Grove, CA 93950.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

SELINA SAHBA.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 11, 2026.

S/Selina Sahba

Date signed: Feb. 11, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 11, 2026.

Publication Dates: Jan. 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2026 (PC 232)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260324

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**TERIYAKI MADNESS, 1606 N. Main St., Salinas, CA 93906.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

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

AZASA INC., 1674 Noreen Dr., San Jose, CA 95124.

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 N/A.

S/Avez Bashadi, CEO

Date: Feb. 11, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 11, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2026 (PC 233)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260050

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**1. LUMINOUS BEING**

**2. GOLDYN**

### 3. GOLDEN LIGHT HEALING CRYSTALS

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#### 45560 Carmel Valley Road, Greenfield, CA 93927

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

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

ROYAL GOLD STAR 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 N/A.

S/Morningstar Foiada, Manager

Date: Jan. 8, 2026

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

Publication Dates: Feb. 13, 20, 27, March 6, 2026 (PC 234)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260335

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**LUNA ROSE & ESENCIA, 1157 San Rafael St., Soledad, CA 93960.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

BRENDA DE LA PAZ ESTRADA MADRANO, 1157 San Rafael St., Soledad, CA 93960.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 11, 2026.

S/Brenda de la Paz Estrada Maadrano

Date signed: Feb. 11, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 11, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 236)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260336

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**FLOR DE LA MONTANA TRIQUI, 1600 Monterey St., Apt. 12, Soledad, CA 93960.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

IRAIS HERNANDEZ GUZMAN.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 11, 2026.

S/Hernandez Guzman Irais

Date signed: Feb. 11, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 11, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 237)

### LEGALS DEADLINE:

**TUESDAY 3:00 PM**

[legals@carmelpinecone.com](mailto:legals@carmelpinecone.com)

*Se Habla Espanol*

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260338

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**OWL STEAM ACADEMY, 222 Katherine Ave., Salinas, CA 93901.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

ROBERTA KATHERINE CHATMAN, 222 Katherine Ave., Salinas, CA 92901.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Aug. 12, 2020.

S/Roberta Chatman

Date signed: Feb. 12, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 12, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 240)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260341

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**NEST NUTRITION, 25770 Partridge Pl., Carmel, CA 93923.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

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

DENISE KLEIN NUTRITION LLC, 25770 Partridge Pl., Carmel, California 93923.

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 Feb. 12, 2026.

S/Denise Klein, Manager

Date: Feb. 12, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 12, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 241)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260276

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**COASTLINE JUNK REMOVAL, 39 Navajo Dr., Salinas, CA 93906.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

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

SALINAS VALLEY APPLIANCE REPAIR, INC., 1628 N. Main St., Salinas, CA 93906.

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 Oct. 20, 2025.

S/Frank Jacobo, President

Date: Feb. 3, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 3, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 243)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260253

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

**America's Tire, 75 Iron Point Circle, Suite 180, Folsom, CA 95630, County of Sacramento**

Registered Owner(s):

Southern California Discount Tire Co., Inc., 20225 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85255.

This business is conducted by a corporation.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name listed above on February 12, 2013.

S/David Scott Fehrman, Secretary

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on 02/02/2026.

2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13/26

**CNS-4012206#**

**CARMEL PINE CONE**

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026. (PC 246)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260366

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**ANTHEM CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING, 577 Powell St., Salinas, CA 93907.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

Registered Owner(s):

TIMOTHY MICHAEL OXENDINE.

This business is conducted by an individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name or names listed above on Feb. 18, 2026.

S/Timothy Oxendine

Date signed: Feb. 18, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 18, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 247)

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260360

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

**MYCARD.GOLF, 21112 Country Park Rd., Salinas, California 93908.**

County of Principal Place of Business: MONTEREY

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

KINGMAN TECHNOLOGY GROUP LLC., 21112 Country Park Rd., Salinas, CA 93908.

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/John Thomas Kingman, CEO

Date: Feb. 17, 2026

This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Monterey County on Feb. 17, 2026.

Publication Dates: Feb. 20, 27, March 6, 13, 2026 (PC 248)

Be prepared for emergencies —

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### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

#### NAME STATEMENT

File No. 20260102

Filing type: ORIGINAL FILING.

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

# LIVE

From page 43A

**Edgar's** — singer and guitarist **Dan Cortes** (Friday at 5:30 p.m.). At Quail Lodge, 8205 Valley Greens Drive.

**Folktale Winery** — singer and guitarist **Trianna Feruza** (Friday at 4 p.m.), singer and multi-instrumentalist **Rory Lynch** (Saturday at 4 p.m.), **The Tristan Norton Trio** (jazz, Sunday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Adrea Castiano** (Monday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Benny Bassett** (Thursday at 4 p.m.). 8940 Carmel Valley Road.

**Trailside Cafe** — **The Mighty Maple** (“acoustic jams and cool grooves,” 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 **RJ DeMarco** (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 multi-instrumentalist **Reija Massey** (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.

**Midici Pizza** — saxophonist **Ben Herod** and keyboardist **Ayana Bradley** (jazz, Sunday at 5 p.m.), singer **Miranda Perl** and guitarist **Adam Astrup** (jazz, Thursday at 6 p.m.). 467 Alvarado St.

**Monterey Plaza Hotel** — pianist **Steve Mann** (jazz, Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and pianist **Scott Brown** (jazz and pop, Saturday at 6 p.m.), pianist **Michael Culver** (jazz, Sunday at 6 p.m.). 400 Cannery Row.

**Pearl Hour** — **The Al James Trio** (rock and r&b, Friday at 8 p.m.), **The Zach Westfall Quartet** (jazz, Sunday at 8 p.m.), **The Ben Herod Trio** (jazz, Wednesday at 8 p.m.). 214 Lighthouse Ave.

**Puma Road at Portola Plaza** — **Songbird Meadow** (Friday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Talmon Owens** (Saturday at 4 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Peter Barnes Martin** (jazz, Sunday at 5 p.m.). 281 Alvarado St.

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

**Sly McFly's** — **Everyday People** (classic Latin rock with an old-school funk twist,” Friday at 9 p.m.), **The New Wave Band** (1970s and 1980s pop and rock, Saturday at 9 p.m.). 700 Cannery Row.

**Wave Street Studios** — **Wild Rose** with singer and guitarist **Chris Webster** and guitarist **Nina Gerber** (Americana, Friday at 7 p.m.). 774 Wave St. wildrose-productions.com/events

## Pacific Grove

**Asilomar Conference Center** — singer and multi-instrumentalist **Casey**

**Wickstrom** (rock and blues, Saturday at 4 p.m.). 800 Asilomar Ave.

**The Center for Spiritual Awakening** — **The Dave Holodiloff Celtic Quartet** celebrates St. Patrick's Day (“classic bal-

lads, standards, jigs, upbeat reels, slip jigs, chanteys,” Friday at 7 p.m.). Tickets are \$60, and kids can get in for free with an

See PERFORM page 47A

SOAPBOX STAGEWORKS PRESENTS

## Winter One-Act Romance... with a Twist

-Three Incredible Plays-

**Broken Yolks** by Jeff Westfield  
A suspicious dream and a single missing sock ignite a chain of betrayals among two couples. *Broken Yolks* is a sharp, intimate dramedy about love, guilt, and the messy accidents that can scramble families-only to remake them in unexpected ways.

**Wormwood** by Barbara Blatner  
Wormwood follows a woman moving through daily life as the Ukrainian war hums in the background of her texts with her husband as he was conscripted.

**Hemlock Haven** by Karen Devaney  
Five strangers arrive at an elite Vermont retreat to cure their anger, only to discover their tempers and secrets-won't stay quiet. As the weekend unravels in hilarious and heartfelt ways, each must face the burn.

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Guitarist Tristan Norton leads a jazz trio that will perform Sunday, 4 p.m., at Folktale Winery in Carmel Valley.

## Celtic Music Series at St. Mary's

### St. Mary's kicks off the SPRING CONCERT SERIES

with a spectacular guitar player, **Jordan Tice**. This show will be an exceptional treat, and a bit of an evolutionary journey from Celtic, to present day Americana to “Newgrass.” Jordan will be joined by the extraordinary fiddler **Patrick M'Gonigle**, we are so fortunate that these exceptional musicians are coming for a visit to our humble stage! **Proud to collaborate with our friends at The Otter Opry!**



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Continues on next page

**P**olice Log: Pacific Grove, Dec. 23



**T**enant on Presidio Blvd. reported that his landlord shut off his power.

**L**andlord said the tenant was playing a guitar loudly.

Officer advised the landlord that he could not shut off the power.

**P**ower turned back on.

**SKREEEEECH**

# PERFORM

From page 45A

adult. 522 Central Ave. Visit [daveholodil-off.com](http://daveholodil-off.com).

**Il Vecchio Restaurant — The Cena Jazz Trio** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 110 Central Ave.

**Julia's Vegetarian Restaurant** — singer and guitarist **Rags Rosenberg** (Friday at 7 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kevin**

**Smith** (Saturday at 6 p.m.), **Andrea's Fault Duo** (jazz and pop, Monday at 6 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Holysea** (Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Rick Chelew** (Thursday at 6 p.m.). 1180 Forest Ave.

**Lighthouse Cinema — The Chuck Brewer Trio** (rock and blues, Friday at 6 p.m.). 525 Lighthouse Ave.

**PG's Meetinghouse — Open Mic** (Tuesday at 6 p.m., sign up by 5 p.m.). 599 Lighthouse Ave.

**Pop 'n' Hiss — The Suborbitals**

("burlesque strip club music," Friday at 7 p.m.), **Sweet Thursday** ("old-timey" jazz, 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.

**The Lodge at Pebble Beach** — singer

and multi-instrumentalist **Rory Lynch** (Friday at 5 p.m.), singer and guitarist **Kip Allert** (Thursday at 5 p.m.). In the Terrace Lounge at 1700 17 Mile Drive.

## ■ Seaside

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

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

# SERVICE DIRECTORY

Continues from previous page

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