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Construction worker gets helicopter rescue

PINE CONE STAFF

A CONSTRUCTION worker who fell 20 feet from a ladder while working inside a Pacific Grove home was airlifted to a San Jose trauma center last Thursday. The condition of the man, whose name Pacific Grove Fire Department would not release, is unknown.

According to assistant fire chief Dave Brown, emergency crews were dispatched to the home on Balboa Avenue shortly before 6 p.m. Sept. 18.

"He was doing some painting or plastering," Brown said. "He was working on top of a ladder and fell off," landing on a plywood floor.

Deciding a trauma center would be better equipped to treat the worker's injuries, emergency workers summoned a CALSTAR helicopter, which landed on the playing field at Pacific Grove Middle School to retrieve the patient brought there by



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

While soccer-playing teens watched from the sidelines, a helicopter landed at Pacific Grove Middle School Sept. 18 to rescue a construction worker who was injured in a fall.

ambulance.

The helicopter took the man to the Regional Medical Center of San Jose, according to Brown.

"He was conscious when he was transported," he said. "But he didn't look good when I saw him."

Anticipating mudslides, Big Sur residents to create emergency response team

By CHRIS COUNTS

UNSURE HOW much help they will receive from government agencies if winter rains trigger devastating mudslides, a handful of Big Sur residents have decided to prepare themselves for the worst.

The group is encouraging Big Sur residents to form a community emergency response team. Administered by the Department of Homeland Security, the CERT program trains residents in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, search and rescue operations, and first aid.

In addition to helping deal with anticipated mudslides, the CERT program could also allow some Big Sur residents to stay near their homes when disaster strikes. During the recent Basin Complex and

Indians fires, which burned more than 240,000 acres, most Big Sur residents were ordered to evacuate — an order that was ignored by many, including a few who ended up in conflicts with law enforcement when they tried to defend their homes. But the CERT program would add the resources and skills of individual residents into an organized — and presumably government-sanctioned — emergency response effort.

With entire hillsides stripped of vegetation as a result of the summer wildfires, officials now worry that mudslides could devastate rural communities still struggling to recover from the fire. In particular, Pheneger, Juan Higuera, Graves, Castro, Torre and Partington creeks

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ER DOCTOR CHOSEN FOR SCHOOL BOARD

By MARY BROWNFIELD

A BILINGUAL emergency-room physician with four kids in Carmel public schools joined the Carmel Unified School District Board of Education Sept. 22. Carmel Valley resident John Ellison was one of seven applicants interviewed Sept. 9 and was selected on a 3-1 vote.

"I've had some people call with the congratulations/condolences type of thing," he said the following day. "But I am very excited."

In addition to working as an ER doctor at Community Hospital, Ellison helped launch Monterey Bay Urgent Care in 1999 and serves as its president. But he said his life really revolves around his twins, Maggie and Peter, who are in second grade at Tularcitos; son Jack, a fifth grader there; and daughter Edie, who attends seventh grade at Carmel Middle.

A 13-year Monterey Peninsula resident, Ellison and his wife, Kristine, moved with their family to Carmel Valley eight years ago. His time there and his experiences as a CUSD dad inspired him to seek appointment to the school board.

"It's a natural thing to be involved in something that your life is focusing around anyway," he said. "I'm impressed with the education they've received in the Carmel school system. It's a highly functioning organization, but like anything else, it needs to be constantly growing and changing to meet the needs of its students."

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John Ellison

Raccoon attack leaves woman injured

By MARY BROWNFIELD

ALISA DEZEE and her yellow Lab, Roxy — newly relocated with their family from metropolitan Los Angeles — received an unwanted welcome from Carmel's most infamous wildlife: the raccoon. Last Sunday night, a particularly large one chased and attacked DeZee and her Lab, resulting in quarantine for the dog and rabies shots for her owner.

DeZee, who lives on Guadalupe Street near the Forest Theater, had let Roxy out into the lit backyard around 11:15 p.m. Sept. 14.

"This big raccoon came tearing out of the bushes and attacked her," she said. As the 55-pound Labrador grappled with the large raccoon, DeZee yelled from the doorway for her dog to get in the house.

Roxy broke away and ran, with the raccoon giving chase.

DeZee thought that once her dog was inside she could slam the door in time to keep the masked pursuer out.

"But they just knocked the door and me out of the way and came in," she said.

Inside, the raccoon decided to go after DeZee, leaping up and biting her on the back of her upper thigh.

Surprised, bleeding and in pain, she recalled "screaming and spinning around and knocking stuff over."

Her awakened husband rushed down the stairs and turned on the light as DeZee fled into a nearby bedroom where one of their children slept. He opened doors and somehow got the creature out of the house.

"My husband has been traveling, and 95 percent of the time I've been here alone, but he came back that night," she

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P.G. to vote on pension plan withdrawal

By KELLY NIX

WHEN VOTERS in Pacific Grove take to the polls Nov. 4, they will be asked if the city should abandon the state public employees retirement system, something no other city in California has done.

Because of skyrocketing costs from participating in CalPERS, the P.G. City Council in July voted to put a referendum — later called Measure Y — on the ballot to allow residents to give an advisory vote on whether to do away with the retirement package in favor of a 401(k)-type plan.

"No city or employer that has been affiliated with CalPERS has ever withdrawn or terminated their relationship with CalPERS, to the best of our knowledge," said Edd Fong, a spokesman for the state plan.

CalPERS offers a retirement plan based on the number of years an employee has worked, when he retires and his highest salary. It covers employees who work for many state and local government agencies in California, which can be very convenient for people who change jobs.

While opting out of CalPERS could save the cash-strapped Pacific Grove millions of dollars in the long

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Dance Kids announces return to Sunset Center



Ballerina Jade Suyematsu joined Sunset Center director Peter Lesnik and Dance Kids owners Alan and Carol Richmond this week in announcing the group's return. See page 36A.

Inside: Winners of the 2008 Golden Pine Cones ...

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