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P.G. mayor drops bid for Assembly, will challenge Potter instead

By KELLY NIX

THE MAYOR of Pacific Grove, Carmelita Garcia, has dropped her bid for State Assembly and turned her attention toward a political office closer to home.

Garcia announced this week she intends to run against incumbent Dave Potter for supervisor of the 5th District, an area that includes Carmel, Carmel Valley, Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove.

When Garcia disclosed in November 2011 she was running for Assembly, she said, "It's time for a new leadership and an honest discussion about our state's priorities." She cited the state's education system among her concerns.

As a candidate for county supervisor, Garcia, a Democrat, is citing the poor economy as her primary motivation to run for the political office.

"I am running for supervisor because in these tough economic times, we need new ideas and vision to bring better paying jobs to our local community," she said, "while at the same time striking a balance in order to protect our environment."

Garcia also said the Peninsula needs a "final resolution" to its water problems and to "provide [water] at a reasonable cost so our local economy does not suffer any more than it already has."

See **CHALLENGE** page 8A

April ballot set with six candidates

By MARY SCHLEY



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

More than 200 people, including U.S. Rep. Sam Farr (left), jammed the the Charles Sumner Greene Studio Wednesday evening as Jason Burnett (right) officially launched his campaign for mayor.

A LATECOMER kept the city's staff working into the evening Wednesday verifying that all six candidates for the April 10 Carmel municipal election had enough valid signatures to get their names on the ballot, assistant city clerk Molly Laughlin said Thursday.

The latest candidate to enter the race, Bob Profeta, met with Laughlin Wednesday morning to pick up his nomination papers for the city council race and managed to get the required 20 to 30 signatures by the 5 p.m. deadline the same day.

Profeta, who co-owns Alain Pinel Realtors in Carmel with his wife, Judie, said he extensively discussed a potential run for council with her before deciding to commit to the effort. With decades of experience helping to start nuclear power plants all over the world, and having lived in Carmel for more than 20 years, Profeta said he has the management skills and time to give back to the city he appreciates so much.

He will face three other candidates in the fight for two council seats. Incumbent Ken Talmage is running for reelection, while councilwoman Karen Sharp will give up her seat in April, opening it for one of the newcomers. Mayor Sue McCloud is also not running again, leaving the spot at the head of the dais open for one of the two men seeking it: councilman Jason Burnett and restaurateur Rich Pepe.

Burnett v. Pepe

Burnett, the 35-year-old owner of Burnett EcoEnergy LLC, was elected in 2010 and is therefore running for mayor from a safe seat. "I am running for mayor of Carmel-by-the-Sea to build on the progress we have made by working together for the community we

See **ELECTION** page 30A

CAL AM GIVES UP ON REGIONAL DESAL PLAN

■ With cutback deadline looming, company says there's no time to waste

By KELLY NIX

THOUGH WATER provider California American Water gave the regional desalination project a death knell by dropping

its support of the plan this week, company officials and politicians are viewing the move as a positive step toward a new water solution for the Monterey Peninsula.

On Tuesday, Cal Am withdrew its support of the three-party agreement it forged with Marina Coast Water District and the Monterey County Water Resources Agency to build the proposed \$400 million regional water project, which includes a desalination plant in Marina.

While Cal Am's president, Rob MacLean, said the regional project would no longer be the vehicle to deliver Peninsula residents water, he said desalination would still be a part of the plan.

"Recognizing the severity of the state's cutback order," MacLean said, "we must now move forward on an alternative water supply project as quickly as possible."

Cal Am spokeswoman Catherine Bowie said the urgency surrounding a 2009 cease and desist order imposed by the state water board requiring Cal Am to stop diverting most of its water from the Carmel River by 2017 was the company's primary reason for backing out of the regional project.

"We are very cognizant of how serious the cutback schedule is," Bowie said. "The project clearly

See **CAL AM** page 14A

Woman thrilled to be reunited with lost parrot

By KELLY NIX

WHAT BEGAN as a relaxing day in a Pacific Grove park for a Seaside family ended in sorrow when a treasured member, a parrot named Digga, went missing. But less than one week later — in almost unbelievable happenstance — the family was reunited with the bird.

The mini-saga began on Jan. 13, when Laura McKinnon left her 14-year-old African grey parrot in her car while she and her son, Cody, visited Caledonia Park. When McKinnon returned to the car, Digga was gone.

"I cracked my window to give him air, because it was an especially warm day," McKinnon told The Pine Cone this week. "He wasn't happy when we left. I know he climbed through the window and was making his way to the park to find us."

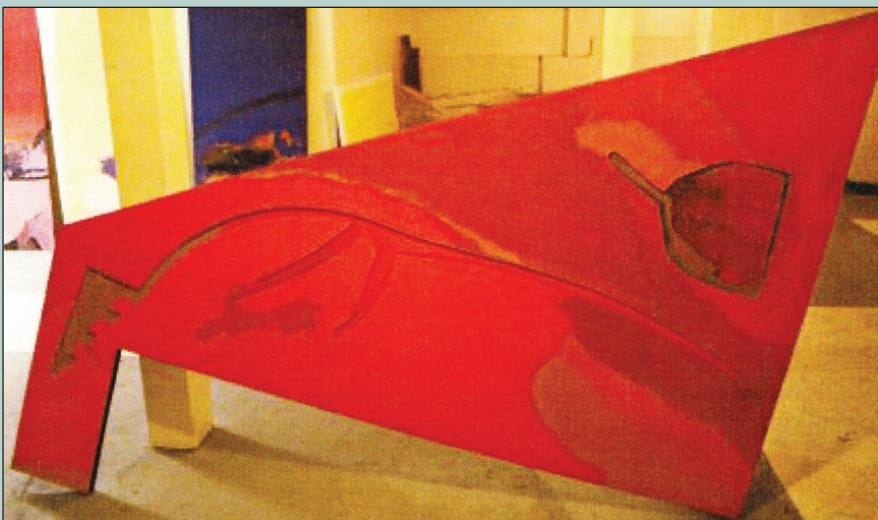
While McKinnon frantically searched the park try-



Digga the parrot escaped from his family's car and was then nabbed by somebody else.

See **PARROT** page 8A

City knows art when it sees it



If you're looking to pick up an abstract piece of art for your living room, the city will soon be offering "Passage" by Lee Waisler. The canvas work, 65 inches by 101 inches, which is made of "acrylic sand glass, walnut shell & white oak wood," is one of six the city council decided to part with. See page 3A.