



A special section celebrating
the Carmel lifestyle ...
inside this week!

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YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS, ARTS AND OPINION SINCE 1915

Police: La Playa vandalized by union picketers

■ Union spokesman says charge ‘made up’ — hotel still on track for July 1 reopening

By MARY SCHLEY

UNION MEMBERS pounded on the doors of La Playa, defaced signs and broke into the hotel during an organized protest last Thursday evening that resulted in the arrest of 22-year-old Michael Frederiksen for trespassing, according to Carmel Police Cpl. Steve Rana.

The Antelope (Sacramento County) resident was apparently not a former La Playa worker, he said. The union has been regularly protesting in town and testifying at city council meetings since the hotel closed last October and was sold to an Arizona company that has spent the last several months upgrading and restoring it.

See **LA PLAYA** page 24A

Scenic Road restrooms finally approved

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CITY first placed porta-potties at Scenic Road and Santa Lucia in 1986 and has long intended to replace them with permanent bathrooms. After years of delays, false starts, and countless hearings and workshops, the planning commission on Wednesday approved architect Rob Carver’s plans for men’s and women’s restrooms, an outdoor shower, a baby-

The city council decides to ask voters for a sales tax increase. See page 6A.

changing area, foot- and pet-washing areas, and a landscaped roof.

The planning commission and city council reviewed conceptual plans in February and March, and provided Carver

with the necessary feedback to complete the design. They asked him to cut costs by removing the solar panels that would have heated the water, and reduce the building’s footprint. Proposed skylights were replaced with mesh-covered clerestory windows to provide some natural light and ventilation. Carver also proposed a vegetation-covered three-foot fence around the landscaped roof to prevent people from climbing up onto it — a concern expressed at prior hearings.

New planning commissioner Don Goodhue, a retired architect, said the green roof would be an “attractive nuisance,” while the proposed fence would “stick up above the horizon” and interfere with the architect’s intentions to make the building low profile and provide an unobstructed view of the ocean from Scenic Road and Santa Lucia.

Goodhue also wondered if the restroom should be more of a “non-building.”

See **APPROVED** page 22A

Teenager gets probation, suspended sentence in crash that killed friend

By MARY SCHLEY

RYAN ARMSTRONG, the Carmel High School graduate who killed his best friend and seriously injured another when he crashed a Jeep off a remote Cachagua road last August, was characterized as a hero and a villain during his two-hour sentencing hearing in Monterey County Superior Court Judge Albert Maldonado’s Salinas courtroom Thursday afternoon. Armstrong, who earlier pleaded guilty to misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter, was sentenced to three years’ probation and a suspended one-year jail term.

Maldonado opened the hearing by listing dozens of people who had sent him letters about Keenan Lucero, who was killed when he was thrown from the Jeep as it careened down a steep ravine after Armstrong failed to make a corner, and Angel Cabrera, a friend who was critically injured and spent weeks recovering in a San Jose trauma center. Another man

See **SENTENCED** page 14A

Orcas aplenty in the bay



More and more killer whales are being seen in Monterey Bay, producing images such as this stunning photo by Daniel Bianchetta of Big Sur of an orca breaching just off Cannery Row Monday. Is the increase in orca sightings because their population is growing, or because more people are looking for them? For the answer, see the story on page 9A.

More than 15,000 protests filed against user fee

■ Water district talking ‘compromise’

By KELLY NIX

A STORM of protest over its proposed user fee has Monterey Peninsula Water Management District officials asking whether another way should be found to fund its water projects.

With more than 15,000 protest notices received by the Tuesday deadline, the board may have no choice.

But even if the number of valid protests falls a bit short of the number needed to overturn the fee, water district general manager Dave Stoldt and the district’s board of directors are grappling with possible alternatives after a meeting at the Hyatt Regency in Monterey Tuesday when a large number of people spoke against the fee.

At the end of Tuesday’s meeting, the water district

See **PROTESTS** page 21A

Agha claims ‘bias’ on water committee

By KELLY NIX

THE BUSINESSMAN who wants to see a desalination plant built on his Moss Landing property, and promises to deliver water at far less than the cost projected by competing projects, has accused members of the committee tasked with reviewing possible water projects for the Peninsula of being “biased.”

In a June 5 letter signed by Nader Agha and business partner George Schroeder, Agha contends that “some of the members” of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Water Authority’s Technical Advisory Committee, including John Narigi, have knocked his \$129 million desal idea.

See **BIAS** page 21A

DOG CLINGING TO BIG SUR CLIFF RESCUED BY SPCA

By KELLY NIX

A SKINNY, tick-ridden German shepherd mix that wore off his front foot pads trying to scale a steep Highway 1 cliff where he’d been stuck for several days was rescued by workers from the SPCA for Monterey County Wednesday.

The un-neutered, year-old dog was found Tuesday night huddling on a ledge 15 feet down a perilous oceanside cliff



PHOTOS/COURTESY SPCA OF MONTEREY COUNTY

A dog is barely visible off Highway 1 on the Big Sur coast Wednesday as he waits to be rescued (top). Despite being ill, covered with ticks and injured from trying to climb back up, he’s doing much better after being treated by the SPCA (right).



in Lucia along the Big Sur coast. A woman from San Jose first spotted the shepherd.

“She stayed there for a few hours trying to lure him up the cliff” but was unable to, SPCA spokeswoman Beth Brookhouser told The Pine Cone.

SPCA workers got to the scene Wednesday morning. SPCA pet behavior specialist Amanda Mouisset was helped down the cliff so she could get to the white-faced dog, which they later named Billy.

“She was wearing a climbing harness, and they lowered her down,” Brookhouser explained. “It was really steep at the top, and there was a ledge that [Billy] was on. She managed to reach the ledge and get him.”

After being hoisted up the cliff, the dog was examined by SPCA veterinarian Carol Iida. Billy

See **RESCUED** page 23A