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Wrecking ball on its way to demolish failed bridge



■ Replacement could take a year; temporary access sought

By CHRIS COUNTS

CALTRANS OFFICIALS say it could be nine months to a year before a replacement is built for the doomed Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge — which means it will also be that long before Highway 1 is accessible for people who want to drive all the way through.

But Kirk Gafill, general manager of Nepenthe restaurant, is warning that the local tourism industry would take a massive hit from such a delay, and that the impact would be felt statewide. Gafill says he's holding out hope that a temporary one-lane bridge can be installed in the near future so tourists can again travel freely up and down the coast.

Meanwhile, the failing bridge will be demolished early next week. Cracks were discovered in it Feb. 12, and it's been slowly falling apart ever since. Located just south of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, the bridge crosses a tributary of the Big Sur River.

Caltrans very doubtful

While Gafill and others are calling for the installation of a temporary bridge, Caltrans spokesperson Susana Cruz said she doesn't believe it's possible — and will only delay the completion of a permanent bridge.

"How would we work on the bridge and leave room for a lane?" she asked. "It's nothing we're entertaining — it's not a feasible fix."

For now, workers are drilling at the site, where an active

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Monk who broke hip dies of heart failure

By ELAINE HESSER

BROTHER EMMANUEL Wasinger, who broke his hip at New Camaldoli Hermitage Feb. 23 and was airlifted to Natividad Medical Center in Salinas, died Monday of heart problems discovered when he reached the hospital.

Despite the heart trouble, Wasinger underwent surgery for his hip soon after being evacuated and was then moved to Windsor Monterey Care, a skilled nursing facility, for rehabilitation.

Several visitors who saw him after the surgery said he seemed "fine," and that his only wish was for "peace and joy." But on the morning of March 6, he died of heart failure, at the age of 89. He had rarely left the hermitage for 45 years.

Jill Gisselere, director of development for the hermitage and a friend of Brother Emmanuel, remembered him as "a cheerful person," who was very curious about the afterlife.

"He wanted to know what heaven was like, and whether there were dogs there," she said with a smile.

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PHOTO/KAYLEIGH MEYERS

Brother Emmanuel, who regularly blessed bulldozers and other equipment at the Camaldoli Hermitage, died March 6.

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Carmel Belle in a pickle after council says, 'No'

By MARY SCHLEY

JAY AND Chloe Dolata will have to figure out how to make their restaurant in the Doud Arcade comply with the law, since the city council decided Tuesday not to add a new category of restaurant that would accommodate counter service.

City regulations allow two types of eatery — sit-down, like we're all used to, and "specialty," which includes coffee shops and ice cream parlors.

After Carmel Belle expanded a few years ago, decision makers were tasked with developing regulations that would allow it and others where customers walk up, order and pay for food at a counter before eating.

But after several planning commission meetings — preceded by prolonged discussions by a subcommittee that started with two planning commissioners and grew to include several restaurateurs and a member of the Carmel Residents Association — city officials opted this week for no change.

Instead, the Dolatas will have to use the area they expanded into in the Doud Arcade only for table service, or not at all, while still being allowed to take orders at the counter in the original footprint of the restaurant, which is a "legal non-conformity," because counter service has been offered there for more than six decades, well before the current rules were established. They have until November to figure out how they

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Mayor derides 'spending like drunken sailors'

By MARY SCHLEY

THE IDEA of paying a "construction project manager" almost \$5,000 to oversee repainting the interior of the library's Park Branch raised hackles among city council members Tuesday, when they were considering the painting contract. But it wasn't the first time the issue rankled them: Last month, the council complained about taxpayers having to cover nearly \$56,000 in fees for project management.

In general, a project manager prepares requests for proposals and contracts, oversees their implementation, reviews plans and related documents, creates and monitors schedules, works with developers and contractors, assists with grants, and prepares and presents staff reports to decision-makers. They help ensure contractors are not over-billing the city for their work, too. Carmel had one on staff, but he quit, and efforts are underway to hire his replacement.

In the meantime, outside contractors are doing the job, and their invoices have raised questions.

\$8,100 to oversee a railing

At their February meeting, council members railed against Eagle Project Management, which has been paid to oversee several city projects, including the new railing at Sunset Center they were considering at the time.

Councilwoman Carolyn Hardy said that what should have been a fairly simple project — replacing the metal railing along the ramp on the north side of the cultural center — has been made overly complicated.

While the project, which she said could have been handled by a metal fabricator, was initially estimated at around \$30,000, its costs had risen to \$61,000, including \$8,100 for

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