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Man risks neck to retrieve drone at Big Sur park

■ Helicopter called in for rescue

By CHRIS COUNTS

IN THE latest edition of crazy things people do in Big Sur that end with them needing to be rescued, a local man was cited Oct. 14 after a California Highway Patrol helicopter



A video taken from a helicopter shows a man (upper left) who needed to be rescued after swimming to an offshore rock to retrieve a drone.

crew retrieved him from a large offshore rock just a couple hundred feet from the famous waterfall at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park.

"He was attempting to recover a drone a friend had lost a couple days earlier," state parks ranger Dan Kraft told The Pine Cone.

The man, whose name was not released by state parks despite inquiries from The Pine Cone, not only ignored a fence and entered a closed area, but he risked life and limb to scale steep cliffs and swim to the offshore rock. Anyone familiar with the area knows that even a brief off-trail ramble there is dangerous, much less a swim.

Once the man made it to the rock, he apparently had second thoughts about safely getting off it on his own. He managed to get word to somebody that he was in trouble.

"He realized going back would be problematic," Kraft explained. "He communicated to someone and they called 911."

Fortunately for the man, there was a CHP helicopter in the area because it had responded to an earlier call.

Once the helicopter arrived on scene, the rescue took a lot of daring. Because there was no flat ground on the rock, the helicopter pilot was only able to land one of his skids on it while its crew brought the man to safety. He also suc-

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Woman says she spent \$40K in skincare scam

By MARY SCHLEY

AMONG THE latest in the ongoing complaints about aggressive sales tactics and other shady practices at Ocean Avenue's skincare stores is an allegation that a couple of salesmen conned a customer into spending more than \$40,000 on their products.

"They scammed me out of \$40,237 within a day and a half," Indian Wells resident Sharon Ferro told The Pine Cone. "They double-talked me for hours, or more appropriately, double-tagged me."

The pitch at Senselife started Aug. 21 with \$300 eye cream, according to Ferro. Once she committed to purchasing that product, the two salesmen talked constantly, flattering her and offering her a large glass of wine that she accepted even though she's taking antidepressants.

"I'm not sure they put anything in it, but I certainly didn't know what was going on after that," she said. "I barely remember walking home."

She ended up buying \$15,768 worth of skin creams and other products without realizing it, she said, because the salesmen covered up the receipt totals when she signed them, and some, she doesn't remember signing at all. On a Discover Card receipt for a \$10,331.25 charge, she said, "It's not even my signature."

One of the salesmen insisted on walking her home and car-

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Public Water Now again ordered to comply with law

By KELLY NIX

THE GROUP behind the ballot measure asking voters to OK a government takeover of California American Water was ordered by a Monterey County Superior Court judge this week to instruct its supporters to modify their "Yes on Measure J" yard signs to make them compliant with election law.

On Monday, Judge Marla Anderson ordered Public Water Now to place a newspaper advertisement directing its supporters who have a "Yes on J" signs in their yards to obtain "paid for by" Public Water Now disclaimer stickers from the group and affix them to their signs. The same ad, Anderson said, should tell homeowners who don't modify their signs with the stickers to remove them from their properties.

Anderson gave Public Water Now until Oct. 30 to put the advertisement in a local newspaper. The election is Nov. 6.

The row stems from Peninsula resident Jeffrey Gorman's Oct. 2 lawsuit against Public Water Now claiming its name, campaign materials, signs, Facebook page and website all violated the 1974 Political Reform Act because they failed to include disclaimers letting the public know that Measure J is paid for by Public Water Now. Gorman's legal bills are being covered by Cal Am.

While Public Water Now has already modified most of its

campaign materials, including billboards, to include the disclaimer, Gorman's attorneys, Stuart L. Leviton and Jennifer Pavlet, requested Monday that the group also be required to do more to comply regarding supporters' Measure J yard signs.

"We would ask for some remedy with respect to the signs on private property," Leviton told Anderson, who agreed that Public Water Now was not fully compliant with the law.

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This legally required disclaimer has been added to some of the signs in favor of Measure J, but many more must have it, a judge said.

City launches search for Flanders 'curator'

By MARY SCHLEY

IT NEEDS new electrical, plumbing and appliances. It might contain lead and asbestos, and it will have to have fire sprinklers. And you won't even really own it.

But it's a historic, 6,000-square-foot, 11-room house with seven bedrooms, 4.5 bathrooms and four fireplaces, and it's surrounded by park land. On Thursday, the city released its official "request for proposals" from people interested in repairing Flanders Mansion on their own dime and living in it for at least 20 years without having to pay rent.

After decades of fighting over what to do with the mansion taxpayers purchased in 1972, the city council this year unanimously voted in favor of a "curatorship" over leasing or selling the old house, as past councils have attempted unsuc-

See FLANDERS page 14A

Rare octopus charms and mesmerizes from depths of Monterey Bay

By KELLY NIX

IT RESEMBLES an octopus in a ghost costume, or maybe Dumbo impersonating an octopus. Whatever it looks like, a seldom-seen cephalopod belonging to the comically named genus *Grimpotooth* was caught on camera Tuesday slinking around at a depth of 11,000 feet in the Pacific, about 70 miles southwest of Monterey.

The ghostly white, roughly 24-inch-long sea creature with conspicuous ear-like fins was recorded by a crew aboard the 211-foot Exploration Vessel Nautilus during the first of a 10-day mission to explore the mysterious depths of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

The team uploaded a more than 2-minute video of its octopus encounter on YouTube this

week, and the comments are almost as charming as the animal they're documenting.

"Oh my God, is that a Dumbo?" an exuberant researcher says.

"Hey, big fella. So cute!" another crew member responds.

The researchers captured the octopus on camera using the remotely operated submersible Hercules, which was scanning an unexplored rocky outcropping near the Davidson Seamount — a region researchers say is known as "an oasis in the deep," with vast coral and sponge fields.

The crew was also able to measure the length of the octopus, commonly known as an umbrella octopus, by using "scaling lasers" on the sub-

Scientists operating a remote submersible this week came across a rare octopus, *Grimpotooth*, also called the Dumbo octopus, about 3,300 meters below the surface of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.



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