

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## P.B. Co to replace smashed guardhouse in weeks

By KELLY NIX

THREE WEEKS after a giant Monterey pine tree demolished one of the gates into Pebble Beach Company, the county planning department has issued a permit for the tiny structure to be rebuilt. And residents who have had to detour to other gates to get into Del Monte Forest won't have to wait long to use it.

Powerful winds during a Feb. 13 storm caused the tree to fall on the Country Club Gate guardhouse and two vehicles, one of them occupied by a Pebble Beach mom and her 5-year-old son. While the two residents and the female gate guard were uninjured, the gate closure has been a headache for those who live on that side of the forest.

"Recognizing the urgency to reopen the gate as quickly as possible, our plan is to rebuild the gatehouse like it was before," Pebble Beach Company spokeswoman Katie Denbo said Thursday in a statement to The Pine Cone.

"We have accelerated construction and now plan on being done by the end of March," she said.

Freda Escobar, with the Monterey County planning department, said the Pebble Beach Company submitted an emergency application to rebuild the 87-square-foot

shack and that the county department OK'd the plans.

The "plans show no changes, just restore and replace," Es-

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PHOTO/KELLY NIX

A small guardhouse was positioned at the end of this stone flowerbed until a tree flattened it in February. The structure will be rebuilt in a few weeks.

## Council wants citywide ban on vacation rentals

By MARY SCHLEY

WHILE RENTING out homes for short stays has long been illegal in Carmel's single-family neighborhoods, the city never forbade the practice in its commercial and multifamily-residential districts. But that's about to change, according to a unanimous vote by the city council Tuesday.

When the city started cracking down on illegal vacation rentals in single-family-residential neighborhoods a couple of years ago, officials also began pursuing owners of legal short-term rentals in apartment buildings and the commercial districts so they could collect the business license tax and the transient occupancy tax, which is 10 percent of the per-night fee. The resulting publicity also awakened other downtown property owners to the fact they could legally operate short-term rentals.

"Over the last year, it has come to the attention of the general public that the prohibition on transient rentals only applies to the R-1 District, and as such, the city has received a number of inquiries and applications to establish transient rentals in the downtown," planning director Marc Wiener told the council March 5.

"Since February 2018, the community planning and building department has issued 16 permits, authorizing a total of 23 units." An application for another three rentals is being processed, he added, and the department receives inquiries daily from people interested in capitalizing on the lucrative market.

A 2,218-square-foot, three-bed, three-bath "penthouse" with rooftop patio on the northwest corner of San Carlos and Seventh, for example, was fetching an average of \$1,138 per night through VRBO.com last November.

But the problems, Wiener said, are that long-term rentals downtown are being replaced by their short-term counterparts

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## Missing man on bail for multiple sexual assaults

By MARY SCHLEY

THE VISITOR from Scotland who was reported missing at Monastery Beach last week — supposedly having disappeared after going for a swim while wearing only shorts — has been charged with 24 counts of sexual assault in his home

country and may have tried to fake his own death, according to Monterey County Sheriff's Capt. John Thornburg.

Kim Gordon (who has several aliases, including Kem Gordon, Kem Avis-Gordon and Kem Vincent) and his 17-year-old son traveled from Scotland to Los Angeles and then made their way north to the Monterey Peninsula. At around 5:30 p.m. last Monday, Gordon told his son he was going for a swim, but the teen never saw him go in the water and called authorities after 7 p.m. when his father hadn't returned. Extensive searches by dive teams and helicopters that night and for two more days yielded nothing, and a California State Parks official expressed doubt the missing man had ever entered the water.

### Story falls apart

Deputies were also immediately skeptical, according to Thornburg.

"We interviewed the kid, and the stories started falling apart," he said. "He said they hitchhiked, then said they rented a car. That they stayed in a hotel, but they didn't stay in a hotel. That they were camping, but they had no camping gear.

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The Scottish man reported missing by his son Feb. 25 is supposed to be in Edinburgh court Monday on 24 counts of sexual assault.

## Assemblyman Stone seeks ban on prisoner co-pays

By KELLY NIX

ASSEMBLYMAN MARK Stone has introduced legislation that would prohibit California prisons and county jails from charging prisoners anything for medical, dental and vision care — a move he said would ultimately save money.

That bill, AB 45, would permanently prohibit the California

Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from collecting copayments for medical and dental services and charging for things such as eyeglasses, prosthetics and dentures. The bill, if approved, would also prevent all county jails from collecting even token copays from inmates.

"Copayments have long been viewed as impediments to getting medical services," Stone, who represents the 29th Assembly District, which includes Monterey County, told The Pine Cone this week. If inmates can't afford the copays, he said, "then they avoid those services, and that creates a much more dire situation for them."

Stone — who called the \$5 prison and \$3 county jail copayments "unjust" and "punitive" — said removing them will mean inmates get medical services earlier and avoid costly procedures and hospitalization due to complications. It will also cut down on inmates seeking medical services "on an emergency basis," he said.

The state prison system healthcare program is called Complete Care Model, which the agency said is "based on a preventative and comprehensive approach to patient care."

"Early detection and preventative health care align with most public and private health care organizations and can prove to be fiscally prudent," the corrections department says on its website.

While the agency already said last month it would remove the copay requirement, Stone's bill would prevent it from being reinstated later on. The bill would also mean that county

See PRISONERS page 16A

## Parker to retire as supe

■ Says aide should succeed her

By KELLY NIX

THE MONTEREY County supervisor who has represented Seaside, Marina and Del Rey Oaks since 2008 said this week she does not intend to seek another term, and has endorsed a member of her staff to fill her seat.

Supervisor Jane Parker, 65, announced Monday she would retire at the end of next year and said she wants Wendy Askew, 41, her legislative aide and a board member of the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District, to take her place.

"As my legislative county aide for the past decade and your elected MPUSD board member, Wendy is uniquely qualified and ready to hit the ground running as our next supervisor,"

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## Adams and colleagues in D.C.



PHOTO/FACEBOOK

Supervisors Luis Alejo, Mary Adams and Chris Lopez with Congressman Jimmy Panetta (second from left) this week in Washington D.C. Why'd they make the trip? See Page 9A.

## PENINSULA GETTING RECORD RAINFALL

CHRIS COUNTS

DURING WHAT'S being called the wettest year on record in the United States, the rainfall totals in Big Sur and the Monterey Peninsula just keep climbing.

The mountains in the county regularly get more rain than anywhere else, and this year has been no exception. On Big Sur's Anderson Peak, which stands about 4,100 feet high, 71 inches of moisture have been recorded since October 1, National Weather Service forecaster Spencer Tangen said. Since March 1, it has received more than 9 inches of rain.

Much closer to sea level at Big Sur Station, which is located next to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, 35 inches of rain

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