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Storm surprises plein air painters, soaks art fest

By CHRIS COUNTS

JUST AS she often does during the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am in February — but usually restrains herself from April to November — Mother Nature turned on her faucet and drenched last weekend's Carmel Art Festival.



PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

Between periods of heavy rain, wind and even thunder and lightning, the sun warmed last weekend's 26th annual Carmel Art Festival in Devendorf Park.

More than a dozen contestants in the festival's Quick Draw competition were just getting started Sunday morning when a loud crack of lightning was followed by a downpour.

"I saw a thunderbolt overhead," the festival's Hella Rothwell told The Pine Cone. "Then there was driving rain — it was unbelievable."

Despite weather conditions Rothwell described as "horrific," the contestants didn't back down from their task, which required them to find a subject and painting it. Instead, they braved the elements and completed their pieces.

"I can't give the artists enough credit," Rothwell said. "One woman did her painting inside her car."

Inspires winning piece

While the wet weather created practical challenges, it also offered creative inspiration.

"The clouds from a painter's standpoint were amazing," Rothwell continued. "They kept changing."

Several of the artists who won prizes at the festival incorporated the weather into their pieces, including Sally Jordan of San Diego, who won this year's People's Choice Award. That means her piece, "Twilight Showers," will be used

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Measure J study might not be done by deadline, water district says

By KELLY NIX

A STUDY to determine the feasibility of a government takeover of California American Water's Monterey Peninsula system might not be completed by the deadline mandated in the November 2018 ballot measure that spurred the effort, the general manager of the water district told The Pine Cone this week.

On Nov. 6, 2018, Peninsula voters passed Measure J, which calls for a public takeover of Cal Am's system through eminent domain if it's determined to be financially "feasible" for water customers. A study to settle the question is supposed to be finished within nine months.

But Stoldt said it's possible that the consultants hired to perform the study will not be done in time for him to write his summary of the feasibility report by Aug. 23, the date it's supposed to be turned in to the district's board of directors.

Stoldt is expected not only to summarize the experts' findings, but explain how the water district would carry out a government takeover of Cal Am, if it's deemed feasible, or alternatively, how a takeover would not benefit Cal Am water customers.

The timeline is an issue, Stoldt said, because the Public Utilities Commission has not yet complied with several Public Records Act requests for information needed for the study.

Interim report

If the consultants' study is delayed, his summary report will be as well, and the district would need an extension to finish the work.

"If the data at that point is incomplete and it will take another two months to finish, then the report is likely to say 'Here's where we are at right now, and in two more months we will bolster the conclusions,'" after the consultants get the data from the PUC, Stoldt told The Pine Cone Monday.

If the experts present an incomplete study, Stoldt said he would issue an interim document and set a date for the release of a final report.

Stoldt's report will likely address the takeover of Cal Am, ownership of the system, and the management of Cal Am's

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Supes OK Big Sur engineering firm's new site

By CHRIS COUNTS

OVER THE vehement objections of a group of neighbors — and despite the threat of legal action — the Monterey County Board of Supervisors voted 5-0 this week to approve plans for a business, Blaze Engineering, to move its operations to a property it owns in Big Sur.

Although vote was unanimous, four of the five supervisors expressed reservations due to the limitations of the new site, and proximity of neighbors.

"Honestly, this has been one of the most difficult things that I've experienced since I've been on the board," 5th District Supervisor Mary Adams said before making the motion to OK Blaze's plan.

The site is located along a dirt road that begins across Highway 1 from the Big Sur River Inn.

'Noise and traffic'

The road is also home to several residents who say the engineering business will bring noise and traffic to their neighborhood. But because Blaze has played such a key role in maintaining critical infrastructure in Big Sur for decades, the move also has many backers, including Congressman Jimmy Panetta, former Congressman Sam Farr and some of Big Sur's most prominent residents.

Blaze Engineering operated on a site nearby for many years before its lease expired last year. Since then, it has been storing its equipment at various locations.

At this week's hearing in Salinas, Blaze's attorney, Aengus Jeffers, asked supervisors to support the move.

"Big Sur doesn't have a lot of places set aside for these types of businesses," Jeffers said. "Traffic along Highway 1 won't increase and water use won't increase. All improvements will be screened from Highway 1."

Jeffers also urged the supervisors not to require that an expensive environmental impact report be done. "Requiring an EIR would set a dangerous precedent," he added.

But Christine Kemp, who represents neighbor Matt Donaldson, noted that the proposed property is zoned for a visitor-serving business.

"Blaze is not visitor-serving," Kemp insisted.

The attorney said the business would also cause blight.

See **BLAZE** page 20A

SELLING ONE HOTEL AND MAKING UPGRADES AT ANOTHER

After World War II, Morse enjoyed a resurgence in the national economy and an influx of cash from the sale of the Hotel Del Monte. In the first few years after the war, the company hosted two USGA championships, the relaunch of the Crosby Pro-Am, two visits of the new LPGA Tour, and the beginning of the Pebble Beach Road Races and Concours d'Elegance. While all of these added to the publicity and the local economy, Morse didn't dwell on them in his memoirs. He instead focused on the company's continuing resort and real estate operations.

PART X

WITH THE end of the war we were faced with the serious problem of whether to re-establish the hotel business or to sell-out to the Navy. We were informed that the Navy was looking for a place for which to move the U.S. Navy

Morse memoirs

Postgraduate School.

The most important business in which we are engaged is real estate. We were in the hotel business largely because of its importance in promoting the area. If I were to write a treatise on hotel management and opera-

tions, I could go to great lengths on the subject, but it wouldn't be very interesting reading to the average person. The same is true with real estate development. I could write a technical

See **MORSE** page 16A



PHOTO/JULIAN P. GRAHAM PEBBLE BEACH CO. LAGORIO ARCHIVE

This 1952 aerial shows the initial expansion of The Lodge after World War II with new shops, office and conference center (lower left) and two guest room buildings (center) added east of The Lodge. Morse lived in the home just beyond the new guest rooms.

Injured dog still lost after Big Sur rescue attempt

By CHRIS COUNTS

A HIKER who was lost for several days in the Big Sur wilderness made it back to civilization, but he had to leave behind his injured dog, a 7-year-old golden retriever named Bently. A search operation to locate the dog was unsuccessful, although the man's father said another is being planned.

Steven Sanguinetti started a backpacking trip May 11 at a trail head across Highway 1 from Kirk Creek campground, about 53 miles south of Carmel. But two days later, he lost sight of what's called the Ojito Trail. As he and Bently tried to find their way back to Highway 1, they became isolated in a steep canyon noted for its difficult-to-get-around waterfalls. After an exhausting two days in what the hiker's father described as a "nasty gorge," the dog had an injured paw and was too tired to continue, so Sanguinetti made the difficult decision to leave him behind, intending to return for him after

See **DOG** page 13A