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Board approves plan to reopen schools April 19

By MARY SCHLEY

THE BOARD of education enthusiastically voted Friday to reopen all Carmel Unified School District campuses for in-person teaching five days a week, beginning April 19. The vote came after interim superintendent Trisha Dellis and other administrators met several days earlier and

decided to go that route due to the state health department reducing recommended distancing between students from 6 feet to 3.

Carmel area schools, like most schools throughout the state, have been closed for more than a year.

The plan approved by the CUSD board still allows parents and kids to continue distance learning when other students return to the classroom. Parents were asked early last week to commit to a choice one way or the other for the remaining seven weeks of the school year.

Scarce info

During Friday's meeting, parent Mike Wecker worried about Covid cases rising in the schools when kids and teachers are back, and being asked to make a decision when information is scarce.

"The way we are required to respond to commit to the program before it is solidified is somewhat like writing a blank check," he said. "I caution the

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Panetta says accepting child immigrants is 'moral objective'

By KELLY NIX

DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSMAN Jimmy Panetta said this week that the Biden administration should have been better prepared for the flood of migrants to the southern border and done more to discourage them from coming here in the first place.

Panetta reached out to The Pine Cone this week after the newspaper on March 12 submitted numerous questions to him about the border crisis. He answered many of them in a telephone interview Wednesday.

The congressman's insight is important since Monterey County has one of the highest, if not the highest, population of undocumented immigrants in the state, many of whom work in its highly profitable agricultural industry.

And with a Democratic president in office, Panetta and his colleagues in the House of Representatives have more influence than they have had since Panetta was first elected in 2016.

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50 AND OLDER NOW ELIGIBLE FOR VACCINE

By KELLY NIX

RESIDENTS AGE 50 years and older are now eligible to get vaccinated for Covid-19, but demand still exceeds supply and appointment slots fill up almost as soon as they're posted, a Montage Health official said Thursday.

"I encourage everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated to schedule an appointment," Monterey County health officer Dr. Ed Moreno told news reporters Wednesday about those 50 and older.

While Montage Health spokeswoman Monica Sciuto said Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula began vaccinating people in that age group as soon as they were allowed to, the demand for vaccine still far exceeds its supply.

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Aquarium announces dates for members, public

By KELLY NIX

FANS OF the Monterey Bay Aquarium will be thrilled to know that it plans to reopen May 15 — after more than a year of being closed. And members can get in even earlier, it announced this week.

The long-awaited reopening plans for the aquarium, one of Monterey County's most visited attractions, were announced Tuesday after a closure that began March 12, 2020, because of the coronavirus pandemic. Advanced reservations via the aquarium's website are required, and tickets will have to be purchased online.

"We've missed welcoming our visitors to the aquarium and have been looking forward to this day for too long," executive director and co-founder Julie Packard said in announcing the reopening.

Gratitude to members

To thank members who have helped "carry us through this unprecedented closure," the aquarium is allowing them visiting the aquarium May 1 to 14 — before the general public is allowed in.

"Everyone can expect an outstanding experience that puts the well being of our guests, staff and volunteers front

and center," Packard said.

The aquarium will initially be open from Thursdays through Mondays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and will be closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays, with plans to be open seven days starting Memorial Day Weekend.

Of course, there will be numerous safety measures when visitors return, including face coverings and timed entry. The density and flow of guests will be regulated, and they will be directed through most of the aquarium's galleries on a one-way, linear path. The Ocean's Edge path is one of the two that visitors can take.

"On this path, you will find our iconic kelp forest, aviary, bat rays and our penguins," according to an aquarium promotional video.

The Open Sea path will take guests to see the aquar-

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P.B. CEOs: 'People are ready to travel again'

■ Stivers, Perocchi say bookings are 'strongest we've ever had'

By PAUL MILLER

THE MAN who will take the helm of the Pebble Beach Co. this summer says he's expecting the coronavirus pandemic to be followed by a boom in travel — and it's not just wishful thinking.

"Since this year's AT&T, we've had the strongest bookings from our individual guests we've ever had," said David Stivers, 59, who will become the P.B. Co.'s CEO July 1. "The public is very interested in getting back on the road, and since there was no travel last year, they may even be thinking of packing two years into one."

Stivers will succeed Bill Perocchi, who's been the P.B. CEO since Peter Ueberroth, Dick Ferris, Clint Eastwood and Arnold Palmer and a group of small investors bought the company in June 1999.

'Get everybody vaccinated'

Perocchi agrees that the resort business is set for a boom — if the virus cooperates.

"Our advanced individual traveler bookings for the month of March were an all-time re-

cord," Perocchi told The Pine Cone. "Absolutely, I think there will be a tourism boom and I think we are seeing indications of that now. We just need to get everyone vaccinated and make sure there is not a fourth wave."

Perocchi even said the outlook is so good, "we're at the point where we are getting close to being short of help, and

See **PEBBLE** page 10A

\$32K penalty set for damaging city pine

By MARY SCHLEY

THE FOREST and beach commission last month unanimously voted to make the owners of a property on 13th between Casanova and Camino Real pay more than \$32,000 after their contractor cut the major roots of a Monterey pine while excavating for a driveway in February. The large pine was mostly on city property.

At the March 11 meeting, city forester Sara Davis said she heard from "several sources" that digging was being done near the pine, and when she went to check it out, she found an excavator moving soil and roots "within the pine's critical root zone." She said a "root mass with a diameter of 55 inches was cut," and she found large roots in a pile near the excavation.

The damage to the roots made it "extremely likely" the pine would fall on a house and into the street, Davis

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PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

Dave Stivers (left) will become P.B. Co. CEO July 1, succeeding Bill Perocchi (right) who has occupied the top job at the prestigious company since 1999.