

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Police nab suspect in downtown vandalism spree

By MARY SCHLEY

GRAFFITI MIGHT be considered a minor crime in a lot of communities — but not here. A Napa man who came to town for a wedding, got drunk and went on a vandalism rampage in the early hours of Oct. 23 ended up in Monterey County Jail more than a week later, after police used surveillance video from numerous businesses to identify him and then went to his home to arrest him.

Gabriel Walker, 27, painted the letters “KRMA” in roughly 15 places, including private and public buildings, garbage cans, railings, a van and a bar bathroom between midnight and 2:30 a.m. last Saturday, according to police.

As officers Greg Johnson and Brian Liddy investigated and traced the vandal’s path, they began

receiving videos from numerous downtown businesses. One showed Walker vandalizing a railing.



Gabriel Walker

The numerous bits of surveillance video also allowed officers to essentially track Walker’s movements through town, including a visit to Barmel with his brother earlier that evening, Johnson told The Pine Cone. “Through the staff and the owner, we were determined he paid with a credit card, so we were able to get his name,” he said. Walker also allegedly vandalized the bar’s bathroom.

### Wedding party

They learned Walker had been in town for a wedding, which Johnson said he was sure must have taken place at La Playa, since the hotel hosts weddings on Fridays. That turned out to be the case, and police were able to gather more information about him.

A DMV photo matched the image of the vandal on the video, and with Walker’s name and date of birth known, the next day, “our records department did a phenomenal job of locating him through various law enforcement databases,” Johnson said. Community services officer Dawn Almario discovered Walker was on probation from a DUI case in Napa County.

On Nov. 1, Johnson and two other officers went to Napa and watched his house until he showed up. Inside, they found the clothing he had worn in Carmel, notebooks with the same KRMA letters, spray paint and paint pens.

They also discovered more than 8 pounds of marijuana

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## Kids 5 to 11 eligible for vaccine, can get shots Saturday

### Mask mandate in effect Friday

By KELLY NIX

CHILDREN AGE 5 to 11 are now eligible to be vaccinated against coronavirus, and the Monterey County Health Department will start immunizing kids this weekend, officials said Wednesday.

On Oct. 29, the FDA expanded the emergency use authorization of the Covid-19 Pfizer vaccine to include children in that age group, and on Tuesday a CDC advisory committee also concluded the vaccine is safe. Children 12 to 17 can already get the jab.

On Wednesday, Monterey County physicians shared news of the immunization for young children and assured parents it’s safe.

“All that we are waiting on now is for the vaccine to arrive here in Monterey County,” Dr. Martha Blum with Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula said. “We are waiting on the deliveries, and hopefully we will see it given to children, certainly in the next few days or week.”

While more vaccine is expected to be issued to county providers next week, the Monterey County Health Depart-

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## Council lets parklets stay through mid-January

By MARY SCHLEY

WITH MONTEREY County’s mask mandate throwing a wrench in the works, the city council unanimously voted Tuesday night to let restaurants keep their outdoor dining in parking spaces through mid-January 2022, when it will take up the issue again. The council had been discussing the fate of the parklets, and extending them by 30 days, each month since its initial decision last summer calling for their removal in September.

As usual, several of the 26 restaurant and bar operators who have parklets argued for retaining them, while a handful of residents said they should go.

### Until restrictions are lifted

“Outdoor dining and eating and drinking is something that needs to stay,” Sade’s bar owner Parker Logan said, adding that with the county’s mask mandate kicking in

Nov. 5 and in place for an indeterminate amount of time, the parklets should remain at least until those restrictions are lifted.

Tim Twomey of the Carmel Residents Association reiterated his group’s position that the parklets need to go away and said the council should establish some criteria for when they must be taken down.

### Covid here to stay

More than half of the customers at Cantinetta Luca routinely ask to eat outside, according to owner David Fink. “Covid is not going away — it’s never going to go away,” he said. “It’s gotten better, absolutely, but we’ve got guests who just don’t want to eat inside.”

Resident Cindy Lloyd reiterated her opinion that the parklets “interrupt the architectural ethic of Carmel,” as well as the use of sidewalks, especially on the south side of Ocean between Monte Verde and Lincoln, where several parking spots are occupied by a parklet.

“I had the sense that I was walking through a restaurant,” with servers going back and forth between the restaurants and their patrons, she said. “I felt as though I were an intruder.”

She said she understands people want to eat outdoors and that the restaurateurs want the parklets, but she hopes

See PARKLETS page 21A

## Grease trap rule is sticky for hotel owner

By MARY SCHLEY

MARK STILWELL’S years-long effort to update the aging Carmel Lodge at San Carlos and Fifth that he owns with wife Susan hit another snag this week, when the city council failed to approve his application to install a grease interceptor in the sidewalk near the hotel’s restaurant, which has been mostly vacant since Kurt Grasing shut down his chop house there in March 2010.

Instead, council members told Stilwell to explore other options, even though he has said there are none that will work as well.

At issue is the Carmel Area Wastewater District’s requirement, due to the upgrades to the restaurant, that a new grease separator be installed to protect the public sewer system from dishwashing water. The utility prefers the grease interceptor to be onsite but will allow it on public property — with permission from the city.

### Gravity

Due to the slope of the hotel property, none of its outdoor areas would work without wastewater having to be pumped up from the kitchen, according to planning director Brandon Swanson. If it’s placed in the sidewalk, the equipment would be underground with a camouflaged maintenance cover, and Stilwell would have new landscap-

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## Will SB 9 ruin, fix or do nothing in C.V. Village?

By CHRIS COUNTS

WHETHER YOU love it or hate it, the new state law to open up single-family neighborhoods to oodles of additional houses and condos promises to bring major changes to almost every part of California. The law, SB 9, dramatically lowers the hurdles builders face to subdivide properties and exempts many housing projects from CEQA. But will the new law, signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in September, apply to Carmel Valley Village, where many say affordable housing is needed but anti-development sentiment remains strong?

Adding a new twist this week to the topic, opponents of SB 9 launched a petition drive for a ballot initiative that would allow local land use and zoning regulations to override conflicting state laws — something not only builders, but activists and environmentalists, could find reason to support.

See SB 9 page 14A

## County to target unvaxxed workers

By KELLY NIX

MONTEREY COUNTY will start taking “corrective action” against government employees who continue to disobey a county order that they get vaccinated against Covid-19, officials said Tuesday.

The Monterey County Board of Supervisors on July 30 voted unanimously to require all of the county’s roughly 5,500 employees to be vaccinated. The compliance deadline was Oct. 31. While 92 percent of the county’s workforce is fully vaccinated, compared to about 60 percent in July, there are still dozens who have not qualified for exemptions but are still not vaccinated.

On Tuesday, county human resources officials informed the Monterey County Board of Supervisors that 4,985 employees have shown proof they’ve been fully vaccinated,

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## TISCORNIA DIES AT 75



PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

Gary Tiscornia, who earned widespread respect and admiration during his 16 years as head of the Monterey County SPCA, died Oct. 14 in Tucson, Ariz. See page 8A.