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Handgun suicide at a playground

By KELLY NIX

IN A Pacific Grove park, as young children played nearby, a 34-year-old Stockton woman shot herself to death in a public restroom last week.

Alicia Austin used a handgun to end her life at about 8:05 p.m. in a bathroom at George Washington Park, according to Pacific Grove Police. Numerous young children and teenagers were in the park at the time.

A body discovered

"We received a call of a shot heard in the area of George Washington Park," said police Cmdr. Tom Uretsky. "As one of our officers was responding to that, he saw some juveniles running out of the park. They had gone into the restroom and had found the victim there."

Austin, who Uretsky said was "very mentally ill and despondent," had been visiting the Peninsula for a family reunion. The location of her suicide was apparently chosen arbitrarily.

"She didn't know George Washington Park from Asilomar Beach," he said.

Uretsky said it took a couple of days to track down Austin's husband to notify him of his wife's suicide.

Although the bullet didn't travel outside the restroom,



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

A Stockton woman shot herself in a restroom at Pacific Grove's George Washington Park last Friday while children played nearby.

Uretsky said the incident was potentially dangerous to those in the park at the time because of the possibility of ricochet. The restrooms at the park are next to the playground.

A woman told The Pine Cone her 6-year-old son and 5-year-old daughter were playing in the park with their friends — two boys ages 6 and 7 — and the boys' father,

See **SUICIDE** page 13A

Leadership void looms for CFD

By MARY BROWNFIELD

IF THE Monterey Fire Department takes over Pacific Grove Fire, and P.G. firefighters become employees of the City of Monterey, Carmel will lose the services of fire chiefs it has had under a contract with Pacific Grove for more than three years, according to Monterey Fire Chief Sam Mazza.

He anticipated the takeover could be in place in October, by which time Carmel will have to have a plan for fire department leadership.

The city has a \$135,000 contract with Pacific Grove for the services of chief Andrew Miller, assistant chief Dave Brown and a fire marshal, and also pays MFD \$20,000 annually to have its supervisors respond to major emergencies in town.

"We are probably not interested in providing similar services long-term to Carmel," Mazza said of the chief contract.

Instead, he would rather the city fully join Monterey and Pacific Grove to form a single Peninsula fire department, as contemplated in a study commissioned by the three cities that was released last summer.

Alternatively, Carmel could contract with Monterey, in

The end of supervision by another town's chief?

See **FIRE** page 14A

Bath House to get major re-do

By KELLY NIX

THE Pacific Grove City Council Wednesday gave its stamp of approval for a complete remodel of the Old Bath House Restaurant — a landmark vacant since 2005 — and a revitalization of Lovers Point Park.

Asking few questions, council members unanimously approved the plan, which includes increasing the eatery's capacity, installing new public restrooms, leasing a recreational space downstairs and making the restaurant and park compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"We think we have come up with a good plan," said Robert Enea, the developer who presented the concept to the council.

The Danville developer, who recently reopened the Lighthouse Cinema, told the council he's negotiating with the popular

P.G. restaurant Passionfish to operate the Old Bath House eatery.

The plan also calls for expansion of the restaurant from 92 to 128 seats, the addition of a 570-square-foot outdoor seating deck and ADA improvements within the restaurant, including a wheelchair lift, bathrooms and seating configuration.

"There are certain connections from the street to areas of the park that we will be working on" for ADA access, Enea told The Pine Cone.

In 2003, a woman sued the restaurant over the accessibility of the building and other city properties for disabled people.

Eliminating an eyesore

The concept also includes demolishing the Lovers Point public restrooms, which mayor Dan Cort called an "eyesore," and installing new ones on the first floor of the restaurant.

Council members liked the proposal. Councilwoman Susan Nilmeier said she was glad to see the public restrooms demolished.

"I love this concept," said councilwoman Lisa

See **BATH HOUSE** page 12A

C.V. incorporation drive faces new lawsuit threat

By CHRIS COUNTS

OPPONENTS OF the drive to make Carmel Valley a town warned the Monterey County Local Agency Formation Commission this week that any attempt to put the incorporation issue on the ballot without updating financial studies and resolving boundary disputes will result in legal action.

Attorney Frank Lunding and others made the threat at this week's LAFCO meeting in Salinas. The opponents' comments came in response to a decision May 2 by Monterey County Superior Court Judge Lydia Villarreal that incorporation of the valley does not require an Environmental Impact

Report.

"LAFCO has a responsibility to bring honest and timely numbers to the voters," Lunding explained. "If they just proceed ahead without those numbers, they're not doing their job."

Lunding also insisted the proposed boundaries of incorporation — based on the Carmel Valley Master Plan and stretching about 11 miles from the mouth of the valley to Carmel Valley Village — must be revised as well. He argued that the Barnyard and Crossroads shopping centers are included only to generate revenue.

"You can't include an area in the new city if the sole reason is for its economic benefit," he said.

SUNSET CENTER MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LEIDIG

A PUBLIC memorial service for Ted Leidig will be held in the theater at Sunset Center at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, May 29. The Rev. Norm Mowery of the Church of the Wayfarer will lead the service, which will take place at Sunset to accommodate the many people expected to pay their respects to Leidig, a longtime Peninsula resident, prominent Carmel property owner and restaurateur, and generous supporter of numerous charitable efforts. Leidig, who is survived by his adult children, wife, young daughter and twin toddler sons, died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound while in the family's cabin in a remote area of Carmel Valley late last Wednesday morning. A private service has already been held.



ENEJA PROPERTIES

The side of the Old Bath House facing the beach will get a row of glass-fronted shops, as shown in this architect's elevation.