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SPCA: We'll wait for the antlers to fall off

■ Deer tangled in stake from construction site

By KELLY NIX

A YOUNG buck who stands out like a sore thumb because he has a 3-foot wooden stake caught in his antlers appears to be healthy, though wildlife officials have different opinions on what to do with the animal.

Amazingly, the deer has been able to drink and eat and get around despite the extra appendage, which the animal acquired in July after getting caught up in construction fencing in Pacific Grove's Asilomar neighborhood.

"We are fielding 10 calls a day about the deer with the board in his horns," said Elizabeth Conti-Yeo, P.G.'s animal control officer.

The buck seems to be healthy and not in distress, according to SPCA for Monterey County Wildlife Center acting supervisor Dawn Robles.

"He has complete mobility of his neck and head, and he can lower down and drink water and eat," Robles said. "He definitely can get around fine."

In a Keystone Cops-like escapade three months ago, the buck was scratching or sharpening his antlers outside a home on Sunset Drive when they got caught in construction materials, Conti-Yeo said.



For three months, a handsome buck has been wandering the Pacific Grove dunes with a 3-foot-long construction stake and several feet of rope tangled in its antlers. Wildlife officials say the deer should be left alone until it sheds the antlers — and the stake — this winter.

"I got a call about a buck who was tangled," she said.

When Conti-Yeo arrived at the house, she found the animal's head was caught in rope used to fence off the house. The rope was attached to the stake.

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Public schools rank higher statewide

■ CUSD score 14th highest of 389 California K-12 school districts

By MARY BROWNFIELD

STUDENTS AT three local public schools did much better on statewide tests last spring than they did the year before, according to superintendent Marvin Biasotti, with the greatest gain at Tularcitos, followed closely by Carmel Middle School.

According to the California Academic Performance Index scores released last month, the district's collective score increased by 12 points to 881, making it the 14th highest performing K-12 school district in the state.

Carmel High School's score grew by 15 points, to 840; the middle school's increased by 22 points, to 894, and Tularcitos' jumped 24 points, to 928. All of those scores represented personal bests for the collective student bodies at those campuses.

"For the third consecutive year, all of our schools scored above 800, the state's definition of a high-performing school," Biasotti added. All but Captain Cooper School in Big Sur placed in the mid-to-high 90th percentile in compar-

See **SCORES** page 27A

Voter-backed bonds much cheaper than expected

By MARY BROWNFIELD

AMIDST ALL the horrible economic news is at least a little relief for property owners within the Carmel Unified School District. The \$21.5 million in construction bonds they approved three years ago will be less expensive than predicted, due to lower interest rates and higher assessed property values, according to district business official Rick Blanckmeister.

When bond proponents prepared information for voters in 2005, they estimated the 25-year cost to taxpayers for the bond's principal and interest would be \$10 a year for each \$100,000 of assessed property value. In actuality, the number is closer to \$6.75 per year for each \$100,000, Blanckmeister told The Pine Cone last week.

See **JEFFERS** page 27A

See **BONDS** next page

Month-long tribute to Carmel's greatest poet

By CHRIS COUNTS

EVERY LANDSCAPE seems to have a specific writer whose words not only describe it, but define it. Just as John Steinbeck's books illuminate the Salinas Valley, Robinson Jeffers' poems lay bare the beauty of Carmel and the Big Sur coast.

Local actor and poet Taelen Thomas will read Jeffers' poetry Friday, Oct. 10, in the Tor House Garden, kicking off an ambitious month-long celebration that pays tribute to Carmel's greatest literary figure.

Now considered an icon of the environmental movement, Jeffers lived in Carmel from 1913 until his death in 1962. His

popularity reached its peak in the 1920s and 1930s, when his poems — often written in the epic style of the ancient Greeks — earned him critical acclaim and a devoted following. His commentary on man's relationship with nature, which came at a time when a growing number of people were becoming disenchanted with an increasingly mechanized world, struck a chord with readers.

Jeffers' popularity declined in the 1940s, no doubt a result of his staunch opposition to the U.S. involvement in World War II.

According to Carmel Highlands poet Elliot Ruchowitz-Roberts, nearly a half century after his death, Jeffers' words are as relevant as ever.

"Jeffers' poetry speaks so much to our everyday experi-



PHOTO/COURTESY TOR HOUSE FOUNDATION

Robinson and Una Jeffers with one of their sons on a treeless Carmel Point in 1919. An extensive series of events beginning Friday will pay homage to his poetry and love for Monterey County's natural wonders.

Judge says sinkhole didn't cause \$200,000 damage

By KELLY NIX

FOLLOWING A three-week trial, a judge found there was no evidence a failed storm drain maintained by the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea undermined the foundation of a woman's house, or even that it was damaged at all, though the judge did find it partially collapsed her porch.

In a civil lawsuit filed against Carmel, homeowner Noel Beutel sought more than \$200,000 for repairs she says need to be done to the foundation of her two-bedroom house on 10th and Junipero after a drain failed and caused a sinkhole during a winter storm in 2005.

Monterey County Superior Court Judge Susan Dauphine ruled Sept. 29 that the faulty storm drain dam-

aged Beutel's porch, but she did not find it was "a substantial cause" of the damage to the home's foundation.

"We are seeking damages for her front porch and for the loss of value to her home," Beutel's attorney, Bob Rosenthal said Wednesday.

The trial ended Sept. 24. At another court hearing scheduled for Nov. 17, Dauphine will determine, in part, how much the city will have to pay Beutel for the damage to the porch.

Stan Linker, an attorney hired to represent Carmel, said he estimated the cost to repair the porch at about \$4,000, while Rosenthal said it would be significantly more.

See **DAMAGE** page 26A