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Longtime coastal director Peter Douglas succumbs to cancer

■ Hero to many, villain to some

By KELLY NIX

HE WAS a hero to environmentalists for his passionate fight against development up and down the California coast for nearly three decades. He was also a formidable and greatly resented foe to some of those who sought permits to build near the ocean.

Peter Douglas, the longtime executive director of the California Coastal Commission, lost a 7-year bout with cancer and "passed peacefully" at his sister's home in La Quinta on Sunday, April 1.

Douglas, 69, was surrounded by family and friends, according to the coastal commission.

Monterey County Supervisor Dave Potter, who served on the coastal commission for 12 years, said he's never known a more dedicated and committed public servant than Douglas, who became executive director in 1985.

"I'm sad to see him pass," Potter told The Pine Cone Tuesday. "I know he had been fighting a good fight for a very long time, and I'm sorry to see him lose the battle."

Douglas offered an unparalleled level of devotion to coastal protection and coastal access, and his ability to articulate often complex environmental issues and the Coastal Act was impressive, according to Potter.

"I think there are many, many people on the coast of California who are going to say 'We can get to the beach because of Peter Douglas,'" he added.

Before Douglas took over as executive director, he helped write the Coastal Act, a detailed and powerful document that restricted development on the California coast while also providing greater public access to it.

See **DOUGLAS** page 26A



PHOTO/PETER DA SILVA, NEW YORK TIMES

Former coastal commission executive director Peter Douglas, who died Sunday, received plenty of favorable attention in the national news media during his tenure for his ardent environmentalism. This photo, along with a lengthy profile, appeared in the New York Times in May 2010.

La Playa announces reopening date, introduces GM

By MARY SCHLEY

WITH SOME 80 workers converging on La Playa Hotel daily — demolishing parts of the interior, installing high-tech wiring, erecting sound-proofing materials, laying tile and undertaking other aspects of the venerable hotel's extensive remodel — the property's new owners expect to reopen in early July, CEO Matt Crow told The Pine Cone Wednesday. The company will begin taking reservations Monday.

Crow also unveiled the hotel's new name — La Playa Carmel — and introduced its new general manager, Mary Crowe, who boasts two decades of experi-

ence in the hospitality industry, including as GM of the award-winning Villagio Inn and Spa in the Napa Valley.

Crowe attended Cornell University's highly regarded School of Hotel Administration, started her career at Sheraton Hotels and helped open Seascape Resort & Conference Center in Aptos, making her arrival in Carmel somewhat of a homecoming, she pointed out.

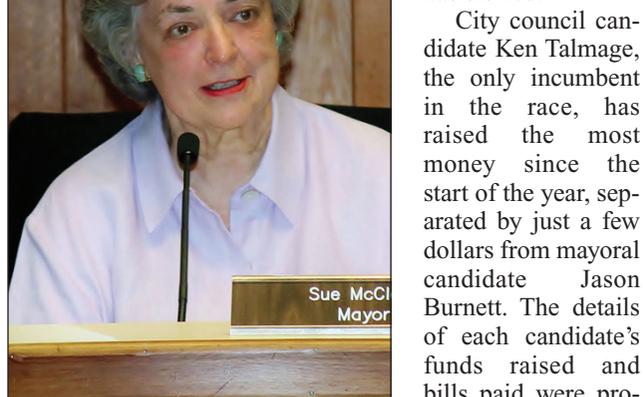
As La Playa's new GM, she is overseeing the relaunch and is already strategizing ways to develop the best workforce for the job.

See **LA PLAYA** page 20A

Talmage outpaces all others in campaign fundraising

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER AN election season that focused more on the candidates' experience and capabilities than their stands on community issues, the second round of campaign finance forms filed at city hall late last week show fundraising by the mayoral and city council candidates in the April 10 municipal election has slowed.



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

After 12 years in office, Mayor Sue McCloud presided over her last council meeting Tuesday. Her successor — either Rich Pepe or Jason Burnett — will be elected Tuesday and sworn into office April 17.

City council candidate Ken Talmage, the only incumbent in the race, has raised the most money since the start of the year, separated by just a few dollars from mayoral candidate Jason Burnett. The details of each candidate's funds raised and bills paid were provided in Form 460s

turned in to city hall late last Thursday afternoon. Here are the details for Talmage and

Burnett, along with mayoral candidate Rich Pepe and council hopefuls Tom Leverone, Bob Profeta and Victoria Beach.

■ Jason Burnett

During the second reporting period, from Feb. 26 to March 24, Burnett collected \$5,696 from his supporters. Since Jan. 1, he has raised \$13,798.

The most generous contributors included Jeff Brothers of Carmel Valley, Lacy Buck of Carmel and Lyman Hamilton, each of whom gave \$500, as did the California Real Estate Political Action Committee.

In spending on his campaign, he wrote checks totaling \$11,279.72, including \$2,139.17 for Monterey-based

See **FUNDRAISING** page 28A

Community party set for election night

POLLING PLACES for both Carmel precincts will be at Sunset Center Tuesday, and will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. as the city selects a new mayor and at least two councilmembers.

Ballots will be counted in the city council chambers shortly after the polls close, with the final tally available by 9 p.m. or so. And, beginning at 8:30 p.m., a community gathering to celebrate the election is planned for the lobby of Sunset Center. All the candidates have said they will attend, and wine and cookies will be served.

Trashcans trump planting projects in fight for city \$\$\$

By MARY SCHLEY

A DISCUSSION of whether the city should spend some of the money it gets from residents' garbage bills to buy new waste bins, rather than pay for habitat restoration efforts and

other projects, devolved into a kids-vs.-trashcans argument at the city council Tuesday night.

Ultimately, the council decided to split the difference by using \$20,000 it has received from Waste Management company, which handles garbage and recycling collection coffers in town, to begin installing new bins, leaving about \$18,000 available for other needs.

According to the April 3 report by assistant city administrator Heidi Burch, the city needs to replace 185 public trashcans, which have metal inserts and tops and are enclosed in wood slats, but its contract with Waste Management only calls for replacing 15 garbage cans each year.

"Council has indicated that replacing the trash cans and integrating recycling receptacles throughout the city is a high-priority project," she wrote. The town has few recycling bins, despite its emphasis on environmental stewardship.

New cans would cost from \$400 to \$800 apiece, and any design would be subjected to planning commission approval. Without allocating additional money and solely relying on WM to handle to the task, it would take 12 years to replace all the cans — and considerably longer to add recycling bins.

"With a possible cost of \$150,000 for the purchase of

See **DESAL** page 23A

See **TRASHCANS** page 19A

Cal Am may seek private ownership of desal plant

By KELLY NIX

WHEN CALIFORNIA American Water unveils its new water supply proposal for the Monterey Peninsula later this month, it will likely include a small desalination plant in North Marina.

But standing in the private water utility's way of owning its own desal facilities is a longstanding county ordinance that requires that desal plants be publicly owned, a ordinance Cal Am says it's trying to overturn.



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

The familiar lobby of La Playa Hotel is being transformed, along with its guestrooms and restaurant, in preparation for reopening this summer.