

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Pipe break floods Cheese Shop, other businesses

By MARY SCHLEY

‘NOAH DIDN’T have as much water as we did.’ That’s the way Kent Torrey, owner of The Cheese Shop in Carmel Plaza, described the flood that hit his store after a



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

A broken pipe sent torrents of water into the Cheese Shop early Sunday, but things are drying out and the owner hopes to reopen in time for Memorial Day.

pipe broke on the upper level of the shopping center early Sunday morning.

The break also affected L’Occitane and the vacant space next to it on the second floor, as well as the Wrath tasting room, Impressions jewelry and part of Bistro Beaujolais on the ground floor, according to Torrey. The bistro’s kitchen wasn’t damaged, so it fortunately could remain open and serve guests on the outdoor patio, just not inside. Wrath and the Cheese Shop were the two spaces still closed Monday due to the leak.

“We’re effectively shut down,” said Torrey, who received a call from Carmel Plaza officials at around 7 a.m. Sunday about the pipe break and rushed down to find water pouring from above, with inches of it on the floor — even in the walk-in refrigerator where his large inventory of domestic and imported cheeses spends each night.

“It was literally raining in the store and was 2 to 3 inches deep in the back,” he said. The Monterey Fire Department was already on scene, having arrived around 6:45 a.m., and Torrey said the firefighters were “fantastic” in their help getting the water out of his shop.

While many of the shop’s cheeses, some of which sell for nearly \$60 per pound, escaped harm,

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## Desal EIR takes steam out of claims of harm to aquifer

By KELLY NIX

THE ENVIRONMENTAL Impact Report for Cal Am’s proposed desal plant in Marina says that it won’t have any impact on farmers’ groundwater supplies in the Salinas Valley, despite claims to the contrary in an agricultural group’s lawsuit.

In a suit filed last December, the Ag Land Trust alleges that Cal Am’s proposed full-scale desal facility in Marina, and even the test well operating now, will cause numerous adverse impacts, including irreversible seawater intrusion into the Salinas Valley. The suit asks a judge to compel Cal Am to shut down its test operation, and to block the future desal plant altogether.

“The test well project and desal plant could have multiple significant adverse impacts on the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin, including permanent contamination and taking of water from other users in the basin,” according to the group’s lawsuit, which was consolidated with a similar suit by Marina Coast Water District.

Furthermore, the suit claims that Cal Am’s desal plant,

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## Chief: Parking vouchers are not for workers

By MARY SCHLEY

GIVEN THE chance, some people will cheat — a fact Carmel Police Chief Mike Calhoun was reminded of when he discovered that some of the free-parking vouchers he gave to Ocean Avenue businesses for their customers were, in fact, being used by the employees and shop owners.

“It wasn’t a shock to me, but it was disappointing,” Calhoun said Tuesday.

The coupons are good for two hours of free parking, a value of \$4, and are intended to reward customers for shopping downtown and entice them to return. They’re part of the paid-parking program the city is testing on Ocean Avenue — a program intended to get downtown employees to park somewhere besides on the city’s main street.

Calhoun personally distributed 10 vouchers to each of the

roughly 60 businesses on Ocean Avenue.

“They have the opportunity to promote future business by paying for parking for their customers,” Calhoun said. “They were from the City of Carmel basically thanking the customers for coming into town.”

But some of the coupons weren’t being given to customers, Calhoun said. And, because the computerized paid-parking system logs license plate numbers and shows how often any particular car is parked in any particular location on Ocean Avenue, a report Calhoun ran a few weeks ago revealed that one employee used all of her shop’s vouchers for herself, parking right in front of the store where she works, and a business owner used three.

When Calhoun approached the first woman, she told him

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This photo from an online blog purports to show Marc Del Piero and an agricultural group’s water well, but experts say the device is actually a pump for a recycled water project.

## Laub makes case that she really is owner of Dametra

■ But judge leaves restraining order in place

By KELLY NIX

FACED WITH a restraining order that keeps her away from a restaurant she says she owns, Connie Dudley Laub this week rejected claims that she’s trying to abscond with Dametra Cafe from Bashar Sneeh and Faisal Nimri.

Laub and her attorney, Susan Goldbeck, were in court Wednesday to try to convince Monterey County Superior Court Judge Susan J. Matcham to reconsider the restraining order she issued against Laub last week. Matcham, though, rejected the motion and set a court hearing for May 28.

The order was granted after Nimri and Sneeh filed a 29-page lawsuit alleging that Laub has been trying to “steal” the restaurant from them.

Nimri and Sneeh also contend that Laub has tried to “extort rent and profits” well in excess of their contractual agreements with her, “dispossess” them from the property, and “abscond with the entire business.” To prevent Laub

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## The endless fascination of bees, hives and honey

By ELAINE HESSER

FROM A lavender farm in Carmel Valley, to a vineyard in South County, to rooftops and urban gardens, beekeeping is becoming increasingly common — and with good reason. Beekeepers have better gardens, contribute to



PHOTO/COURTESY SOERKE PETERS

No, it’s not Oh-Bee-Wan Kenobi — just chef and restaurant owner Soerke Peters rescuing some bees in South County.

a healthy environment, harvest honey and beeswax, and find their tiny charges endlessly fascinating.

John Russo, who owns Carmel Lavender on Tassajara Road, started keeping honeybees about nine years ago. He grows lavender and distills essential oils for various uses, and thought the bees would be a good, complementary venture.

He has 50 hives that produce about 1,000 pounds of honey annually. He’s utterly intrigued by the bees, particularly their organization and specialization within the hives.

There are three kinds of bees in a colony, starting with the queen. Her job is to lay eggs — lots of eggs. Up to 1,500 a day. Drones are the only males in the hive, and their sole function is to mate with the queen. (Insert a sexist joke of your choice.)

Female worker bees make up the rest of the colony. Some collect nectar and pollen and produce honey. Some just fan the comb where honey is stored to reduce the amount of moisture before sealing the honey for future use.

There are guard bees at the entrance that ensure only members of their own colony are allowed in, and bees that tend baby bees in the nursery. Russo said there are even “undertaker bees,” which remove dead bees from the

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