

The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 101 No. 26

On the Internet: www.carmelpinecone.com

June 26 - July 2, 2015

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

Potter calls for investigation of 'vandalism' at landmark P.B. house

By KELLY NIX

A MONTEREY County supervisor Tuesday called for the district attorney's office to open an investigation of vandalism that was reported in February to an historic Pebble Beach house that's at the center of a dispute between its wealthy Silicon Valley owner and a group of preservationists.

In comments made at Tuesday's board of supervisors meeting, 5th District Supervisor Dave Potter said whoever damaged the Richard Neutra-designed house at 1170 Signal Hill owned by Massy Mehdipour should be "criminally prosecuted."

Mehdipour is trying to get approval to raze the 1958 mid-century modern house and replace it with a new one, but preservationists and neighbors are trying to stop her.

Though Mehdipour reported to sheriff's deputies that vandals had badly damaged the house, Potter rejected the claim. He also called the condition of the structure "unbelievably alarming."

"This is not traditional vandalism," Potter said. "It's actually an attempt to further degrade a piece of property that's been in intentional deterioration for a while."

Potter cited structural members that had been cut in half, load-bearing beams that had been drilled through, and timber that had been cut and oddly stacked afterward. He noted there was no graffiti, and said that things of potential value, such as copper wiring and plumbing, "seem to have been left

untouched."

"What I saw last week was to the point where there should be some criminal prosecution on this," Potter said. "And I hope the district attorney's office gets involved."

See **DAMAGED** page 16A



PHOTO/KELLY NIX

No, it isn't in a slum, but this landmark house in Pebble Beach has become an eyesore as its owner, Massy Mehdipour, seeks permission to tear it down. A county supervisor says the house hasn't been damaged by vandals, however, and he wants the perpetrator investigated.

Grand jury blames city's problems on Pine Cone, residents, mayor and council

By MARY SCHLEY

A REPORT that was widely expected to condemn the actions of former city administrator Jason Stilwell and second-in-command Susan Paul instead lambasted longtime employees, The Carmel Pine Cone, the mayor and the city council for the problems that plagued Carmel City Hall during the past two years.

The Monterey County Civil Grand Jury's report on the city's governance — a review requested by Mayor Jason Burnett and a group of residents led by Richard Kreitman — shocked almost everyone in town.

"If Stilwell and Paul were such heroes, why did our problems seem to disappear as soon as they were gone?" asked Carolyn Hardy, who assisted with an investigation of some of the contracts they signed. "And then we turned the corner and were on the mend."

"To say I was disappointed is just scratching the surface," said Carolina Bayne, who organized a march on city hall and circulated petitions calling for Stilwell's resignation last August. "It sounds like they got a snow job from Stilwell and Paul and believed every word of it. They insulted everyone who signed the petition, like we're a bunch of idiots."

"Ultimately, I have no respect for any of it, the grand jury, Stilwell and Paul, or the council that tolerated and encouraged bad behavior," said former longtime city councilwoman Paula Hazdovac. "I guess my only comment would be to ask Steve McInchak how he thinks the city was being run. Oh yes, you can't — he's dead."

At the other end of the spectrum, Kreitman and Carmel Residents Association President Barbara Livingston praised the civil grand jury.

Kreitman said the report was mostly correct and agreed that the council and mayor failed to exercise proper control over the administration.

"Their conclusion was the mayor and city council vacated

Everybody was at fault — except Jason Stilwell and Susan Paul

See **GRAND JURY** page 13A

Paid parking results don't sway vocal opponents

By MARY SCHLEY

A PRESENTATION by Steffen Turoff of Walker Parking Consultants on the effectiveness of the city's pilot paid-parking program didn't change a lot of minds at a workshop in the Carmel Woman's Club Wednesday evening. Business owners, residents — and even a few longtime visitors — took the opportunity to condemn the concept, saying it's bad for business and counter to the town's character.

In April 2014, after decades of discussion about parking congestion downtown and the problem of employees taking up all the spaces that might otherwise be used by shoppers, the city council voted to give paid parking on Ocean Avenue a try, while opening up more spaces on nearby streets to pro-

vide free all-day parking for people who work downtown. When that vote was taken, it was greeted with applause in the council chambers.

Free all-day parking in the Sunset north parking lot and along Junipero began July 1, 2014, and paid parking was launched early last December.

Since then, parking-space occupancy during business hours has dropped on Ocean to around 85 percent, meaning one to two spaces are usually available per block, while side streets have become more congested, and the newer all-day parking areas are routinely full. Most of the people paying for parking on Ocean are one-time visitors, according to data collected by the police department.

But most of the people who spoke at Wednesday's meeting just wanted to know when the meters would be removed.

Sheree Smith, owner of Carrigg's of Carmel, said she sent an email to downtown merchants asking for their thoughts on parking. Only two respondents said they want the parking kiosks to stay, she said, and those don't have businesses on Ocean Avenue.

"There were many comments on how much it's hurt our business," she said, adding that whatever revenue the city has

See **PARKING** page 12A

78th Bach Fest promises 'Bach, Bohemia & Beyond'

By LISA CRAWFORD WATSON

A CENTURY ago, a creative group of like-minded people who practiced unconventional lifestyles involving musical, artistic and literary pursuits created this Bohemian community. How fitting, then, that in this 78th season of the Carmel Bach Festival — and on the eve of the town's centennial — artistic director and principal conductor Paul Goodwin and his musicians will take audiences through "Bach, Bohemia & Beyond."

"Every program I create to be something spicy, interesting and unusual," Goodwin says. "The festival programming will be peppered with Bohemian music, which many people will have heard, and many will have not. I like narrowing the possibilities in the program a little bit and delving into interesting areas. People will have an unexpected pleasure ahead of them."

Each year, Goodwin selects a focus to complement the works of the master. He introduces composers who were significant in their era, and presents them in the context of a larger theme. The music of Bohemia — which today is a region of the Czech Republic — had an enormous influence

on the baroque and classical periods, particularly through wind virtuosi and folk music.

In keeping with the theme, the festival will begin with "Fireworks and Harmony." The opening night concert, to be introduced by festival dramaturge David Gordon, will feature George Frederick Handel's "Royal Fireworks Music," Bach's cantata "Sleepers Awake," and Joseph Haydn's "Harmony Mass."

"The pairing of 'Fireworks and Harmony' enables us to introduce different colors in our performance," says Goodwin. "We have absolutely fantastic wind players, and 'Fireworks' was written for a whole raft of wind instruments, expressing the bright, exciting colors in Handel's music."

The "harmony" portion of the concert comes from the German "harmonie," meaning "wind ensemble" — hence, Haydn's "Harmony Mass." Handel's "Royal Fireworks Music" is a wind ensemble suite composed in 1749, under commission by George II of Great Britain, to accompany the fireworks in London's Green Park. And, perhaps the best known of Johann Sebastian Bach's cantatas, "Sleepers

See **BACH** page 23A

On the edge



PHOTO/LEOR PANTILAT

Big Sur has seen its share of explorers over the years, but two remarkable athletes have ventured into the backcountry this year and literally gone where no man has gone before. See story page 6A.