Volume 101 No. 36

LOCALS AND

What does a world record sound like? 'Bzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

By ELAINE HESSER

On AUG. 27, a small group of people — including a Pine Cone reporter — left the relatively cool, breezy comfort of the Monterey Peninsula and headed to the southern limits of the county. After a 90-minute drive on Highway 101,

World-record-setting team: Headed by Dr. Tim Chung (holding drone labeled "50") of the Naval Postgraduate School, this group braved the heat at Camp Roberts for hours to launch 50 drones in an autonomous swarm last week

media folks were met by an escort at the gate to Camp Roberts in Bradley.

Then there was another 15-minute drive, first on narrow paved roads, then on gravel, and finally on a short section of rutted dirt road onto the remote McMillan Airfield. The temperature was triple digits under a relentless midday sun. At

least it was a dry heat.

"Why?" you might well ask.

To witness the launch of the largest autonomous fixed-wing drone swarm ever - at least as far as anyone knows.

OK, that's more than a little nerdy, but Naval Postgraduate School assistant professor Tim Chung was so excited, it was hard not to get caught up in his enthusiasm. His team is also believed to hold the previous world record — 30 drones — set in June.

Chung teaches in the Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and loves hands-on learning. He's also very into robots. McMillan Airfield is the home of NPS' Center for Interdisciplinary Remotely Piloted Aircraft Studies, the perfect place for his experiment.

An autonomous drone swarm is pretty much what it sounds like. A bunch of drones "talk" to each other via a Wi-Fi network and follow a decision tree, or algorithm. It's not strictly program-

See DRONES page 27A

City responds to civil grand jury

By MARY SCHLEY

THANK YOU, but you're wrong — mostly," could summarize the City of Carmel's response to the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury's June report condemning the city council and the public for mismanaging city hall and being unduly influenced by reporting in The Carmel Pine Cone.

The city's detailed, 12-page response, which was drafted by a committee that included Mayor Jason Burnett, Vice Mayor Ken Talmage, city attorney Don Freeman, treasurer David Sandys and city administrator Doug Schmitz, refuted many of the grand jury's findings and rejected many of its recommendations. It was unanimously approved by the council at its Sept. 1 meeting.

As for the few grand jury recommendations it agreed with, the city said it had already taken action on those before the grand jury even released its report June 19.

"We appreciate the extensive work the CGJ undertook to produce its June 2015 report. We are well aware, due to the amount of materials which were requested and researched, that it was a monumental task," Burnett wrote in the cover letter to Monterey County Superior Court Presiding Judge Marla Anderson. "As you will see from our attached responses to the findings and recommendations, there are matters on which we concur; there are others where we profoundly disagree. Thus is the nature of public life and public institutions."

The letter goes on to list several "corrective actions" city officials took to "right our ship of state" nine months before the CGJ issued its scathing report on Carmel's governance –

See RESPONSE page 13A

Cal Am agrees to guarantee success of test well

By KELLY NIX

CARMEL MAYOR Jason Burnett Wednesday praised a decision by California American Water to take on the risk for its \$10 million slant test well in Marina so Peninsula water customers won't have to pay for the project if it doesn't work.

On Aug. 14, Burnett asked Cal Am to consider shouldering the cost of the test well if it's unsuccessful, and only recover costs if the slant-well technology works. Cal Am did just that this week, agreeing Tuesday to let the public off the hook for the cost if it fails.

"If the slant well doesn't work," Cal Am President Rob MacLean said in a two-page letter addressed to Burnett,

Teen sentenced to two years for raping, sexually assaulting girls

By KELLY NIX and MARY SCHLEY

 $H_{\rm IS}$ VICTIMS may have emotional scars for the rest of their lives, while the then-17-year-old Carmel High School student who admitted to forcibly raping a classmate and committing an "unlawful sex" act on another girl will spend one year in juvenile detention, a judge decided Tuesday.

Monterey County Superior Court Judge Timothy Roberts sentenced the unidentified teen to 730 days in Monterey County juvenile hall, but suspended half of that time behind bars. The teenager was arrested in May after the girls — both of whom are younger than he is — reported being assaulted.

"The probation department actually recommended that [the teen] be released today after serving 128 days in custody," Monterey County Deputy District Attorney Aaron Brown told The Pine Cone. "I think the court's decision to impose more time was a sound one."

The first incident occurred in February at a friend's house outside Carmel city limits when the teen, now 18, made sexual advances toward a younger girl as they watched a movie. After the girl rebuffed him and asked to be taken home, the

See TEEN page 31A

"California American Water is willing to bear the costs."

Burnett told The Pine Cone that Cal Am's concessions are "major win for the community."

"Cal Am basically gave what we asked for, and I'm confident we can work out a couple of the differences between our request and Cal Am's response," Burnett told The Pine Cone Wednesday.

Specifically, while Cal Am will accept the physical risks of the test well, the company did not agree to guarantee the "permitting risks," because permitting requires "a tremendous amount of community and political cooperation and support," according to MacLean.

Cal Am had been testing the feasibility of slant wells for its proposed full-scale desal plant until the utility shut off the operation June 5 when nearby groundwater levels dipped. According to the water company, data show that the well didn't cause the drop in the groundwater, and it is hoping the California Coastal Commission will allow Cal Am to resume testing of the slant wells at its October meeting.

Burnett figures that the probability of slant wells working is "greater than 90 percent." And MacLean told Burnett that the company is also confident the technology will work, saying the test operation in Marina has provided "excellent results and information."

The coastal commission, which opposes tradi-

See WELL page 26A

Settlements reached on two Stilwell-era contracts

■ Council authorizes payments totaling \$117,066

By MARY SCHLEY

HE CITY council agreed Tuesday to pay some of the remaining money owed to a Santa Barbara law firm and a computer consultant hired by former city administrator Jason Stilwell, after reaching agreement with them. Both were the subject of controversy and an official city investigation that revealed the computer consultant billed the city in excess of its contracts and the law firm billed taxpayers for work the

The law office of Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth which Stilwell brought on to advise him on personnel matters, employment and the California Public Records Act — had outstanding bills of \$256,889.91, Freeman told the council at the Sept. 1 meeting.

The investigation of several questionable contracts,

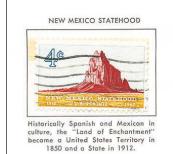
See CONTRACTS page 10A

GIRL SCOUTS

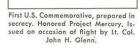
Tiny pieces of paper that can take you anywhere

1962

Whether it's New Mexico or outer space, fighting malaria or making s'mores, stamps can bring the world — and even the universe — right to







your kitchen table. And, yes, people still collect them – including at a store on Mission Street. See page 12A



Issued for the World Health Organi-zation (an activity of the United Nations) to publicize the need for stamping out malaria. Hailed the 50th anniversary of found-ing of the Girl Scouts of America, a famous organization, by Juliet Low in 1912.