

# The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 101 No. 45

On the Internet: [www.carmelpinecone.com](http://www.carmelpinecone.com)

November 6-12, 2015

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## French bulldog dies after eating toxic mushrooms

By KELLY NIX

THE OWNERS of a French bulldog puppy who died last week after eating infamous death cap mushrooms in the front yard of their Carmel Woods home are warning other pet owners to watch out for the toxic fungus.

Georgie, who was only 4-and-a-half months old, died less than 24 hours after ingesting *amanita phalloides*, mushrooms commonly known as death caps. Death caps often grow near



As the bowtie suggests, Georgie was a "little gentleman," according to his family. But the French bulldog puppy succumbed to mushroom toxicity last week after ingesting death caps in his Carmel yard.

oaks, but have are also found under pines and other types of trees.

Georgie "was a shining light in our family and the sweetest little gentleman," Georgie's owner, Robin Bates, told The Pine Cone. "We are left shocked and heartbroken. He enjoyed saying, 'Hello,' to just about everyone walking on Carmel Beach the past two months."

Not long after the French bulldog ate the fungus in the

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## Schmitz resigns, Calhoun steps in as temp head of city

By MARY SCHLEY

CITING JOB- and family-related stress, city administrator Doug Schmitz abruptly resigned on Halloween, which was also the City of Carmel's 99th birthday.

"I'd already been discussing with the mayor and vice mayor about retiring sometime in the first half of 2016, and after visiting with my physician last week, we decided to move the timetable up," Schmitz told The Pine Cone this week.

## Council draws line in sand over beach fires

### ■ Declares them a 'public nuisance'

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER MORE than four hours of comments and discussion — including nearly an hour's worth of testimony from air pollution control board manager Richard Stedman on the ills of wood smoke — the Carmel City Council on Tuesday voted 3-2 that only propane fires should be allowed on the beach.

By the same tally, it adopted a broad ordinance describing beach fires as a public nuisance — a designation that will give the city more muscle in its fight with the California Coastal Commission, which doesn't want fires banned.

Council members Carrie Theis and Steve Dallas dissented both times.

The ban is a significant change of direction for the council, which had earlier decided to limit fires to 26 rings, and then to ban them on weekends.

The dividing line fell between the majority, which has come to believe any number of beach fires is too many, since the smoke they emit could be considered poisonous for some, and the minority, which wanted more data on the dangers and amounts of wood smoke before endorsing a ban.

The Nov. 3 hearing drew a standing-room-only crowd,

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At a special meeting Nov. 2, the city council voted to accept Schmitz' resignation, which he tendered in a letter to Mayor Jason Burnett, and to appoint Carmel Police Chief Mike Calhoun as interim city administrator until the council hires a permanent replacement for Schmitz.

Burnett remarked that Schmitz had stepped down from his job as city manager of Los Altos in 2012 and was happily retired when the mayor called him 14 months ago to ask him to help lead the city in the wake of the upheaval created by former city administrator Jason Stilwell and administrative services director Sue Paul. During their tenure, several long-time employees were fired, expensive contracts were signed in secret, and other actions undermined many residents' and business owners' trust of city hall.

Schmitz, who had been city administrator here from 1983 to 1992, agreed to help, arriving in October 2013, just as Stilwell departed.

"And every day that we had him here was a blessing for the community and for me, certainly, and the organization is in so much better shape than it was 13 months ago," Burnett told The Pine Cone. "It is night and day, and thankfully, he was able to help as much as he was."

While on the job, Schmitz instigated new policies and procedures to make the city's financial dealings more transparent, moved key department directors into positions that better tapped into their talents and abilities, and rehired the three city workers whom Stilwell and Paul had fired. He also resumed the annual shoreline assessment that had gone undone for decades and took other measures to continue



Doug Schmitz

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## A chair for the ages



PHOTO/ELAINE HESSER

Sure, it looks funny, but so would you if you'd been soaked in creosote and left at the bottom of Monterey Bay for a year. See page 9A.

## GUV'S DECLARATION CLEARS WAY FOR TREE REMOVAL

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER GOV. Jerry Brown last week declared a state of emergency over the fire risk posed by California's massive number of dead or dying trees, a Carmel Highlands resident says the proclamation should make it easier for him and his

## Water board outlook unchanged by election

### ■ Evans wins seat held by Markey

By KELLY NIX

AN ENGINEER who has the support of a longtime water activist and a county supervisor has won a seat on the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District board over a stockbroker whose endorsements included realtor and hospitality groups, former mayors and others.

On Tuesday, voters in water district Division 3, an area that includes Del Rey Oaks and part of Monterey, cast 762 votes for Molly Evans and 641 votes for Jeff Gorman. The two competed for a seat held for a dozen years by Kristi Markey, who did not seek reelection.

While both candidates said they supported a permanent and sustainable water supply for the Monterey Peninsula, they had distinctly different supporters.

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neighbors to clear such trees from their properties.

"We've got thousands and thousands of trees that need to be removed," Dan Keig told The Pine Cone. "You can see dead trees all over. We have a really big problem."

To speed up the work of removing dead or dying trees, Keig would like to see the permit process streamlined for property owners. Instead of obtaining a tree-removal permit from the county, he would like to see that oversight transferred to the county's fire marshal. "We need a permissive attitude and not a restrictive attitude to deal with this," he suggested.

The Carmel Highlands is just one of many communities throughout the state that are filled with trees killed by drought and disease. In the proclamation, Brown cites statistics indicating that millions of trees throughout the state are dead — and many more will be soon.

"This tree die-off is unprecedented in modern history," Brown declared. "It worsens the wildfire risk across large regions of the state."

Increased fire risk isn't the only problem caused by dead and dying trees. Brown said "rural, forested communities" also face "safety risks from falling trees" and "the threat of erosion."

To address the problem, Brown said state and local agencies need to "to protect the public health and safety," and "remove dead or dying trees in these high hazard zones that threaten power lines, roads, critical community infrastructure and other existing structures."

The proclamation also calls for expanding the practice of controlled burns, and directs two state agencies to "work

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