

CONCOURS WEEK

So many gorgeous cars & motorcycles ... so many events ... this week on the Monterey Peninsula!

Read all about them in our colorful special section this week!



The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 102 No. 33

On the Internet: www.carmelpinecone.com

August 12 - 18, 2016

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CITY EMAIL SYSTEM FAILS

By MARY SCHLEY

THE NEARLY simultaneous failures of two hard drives caused the City of Carmel's email system to crash last Wednesday, bringing the sending and receiving of messages to a standstill until IT manager Joel Staker managed to restore the system Friday evening.

A backup system also failed, complicating matters, but "we were able to, for the most part, save all of the users' data," Staker said this week. "We're still working through the process of restoring the individual mailboxes on the back end."

Email that had been queuing up since the system went down started flowing as usual Friday night, he added, so it didn't appear any critical messages were lost during the outage — but the three-day silence was unsettling.

"Our email servers crashed and died on Wednesday," city administrator Chip Rerig said in his Aug. 5 "Friday Letter" to residents. So email silence from city hall didn't mean incoming emails were being ignored, he explained. "We're just not receiving (or sending) email presently. City staff expects to restore the system this weekend. Please be patient with us for the next few days and call (rather than write) with any issues or questions."

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Smoke blankets Peninsula as fire's growth slows

By MARY SCHLEY

IN ITS third week of ravaging the wilderness and blanketing the Monterey Peninsula in heavy smoke, the Soberanes Fire grew by more than 16,000 acres, mostly in isolated parts of the



PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

This striking photo is as beautiful as it is tragic, showing a majestic grove of badly scorched, and very likely dead, trees in Rocky Creek.

Santa Lucia mountains, while slowly climbing to 55 percent containment as of Thursday morning. An outbreak that saw the fire grow nearly 10,000 acres between Sunday morning and Tuesday morning forced evacuation of residents and the closure of businesses in Big Sur, and fire officials twice closed Highway 1 overnight this week in anticipation of high winds and dangerous conditions. As of Thursday morning, the fire had consumed nearly 70,000 acres.

With the fire growing more slowly, evacuation orders for everyone except the few on a stretch of Coast Road north of Andrew Molera State Park were lifted this week, including in Palo Colorado, where residents were allowed to return for the first time since the fire was ignited by an illegal campfire in Garrapata State Park on July 22. The count of 57 houses and 11 outbuildings destroyed hasn't changed since July 30, and the number of structures threatened by the fire dramatically dropped from a high of 2,000 several days ago to 410 as of Aug. 11.

As people return to areas that have been off limits, Cal Fire officials asked anyone who finds abandoned fire hoses, pumps, gas cans or any other firefighting equipment to call the fire information cen-

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Firefighter grabs coffee cup to help injured bird

■ Rescued fire animals up to 226 at SPCA

By KELLY NIX

IT MAY be the first time a Starbucks cup has been used to help save a life, but a fledgling bird rescued in a coffee cup last week is none the wiser.

A Santa Barbara firefighter on the line near Old Coast Road in Big Sur discovered a tiny fledgling Pacific slope flycatcher in distress on Aug. 2. He grabbed the nearest Starbucks cup and placed the bird inside before taking it to the SPCA for Monterey County for care.

"He is doing very well," SPCA spokeswoman Beth Brookhouser told The Pine Cone Monday. "When the bird arrived, he was holding one of his eyes shut. We think it was probably because of smoke irritation."

SPCA wildlife workers are feeding the flycatcher a delicious pairing of mealworms and crickets. Brookhouser described the bird as "bright, alert and responsive." He is eating well from a syringe and is perching, both good signs.

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Locals mad about evacuations while tourists keep touring

By CHRIS COUNTS

BIG SUR residents criticized public officials this week after many were told to evacuate their neighborhoods Aug. 7 due to the threat of the Soberanes Fire — while at the same time, tourists were allowed to visit the coastline.

Residents living north of Deetjen's Big Sur Inn and south of Andrew Molera State Park were awakened by deputies Sunday in the early morning hours with mandatory orders to evacuate — presumably because the fire was headed their way. Yet when they packed their valuables, left their homes and drove to Highway 1 to flee north along the coast in the emerging light, some were shocked to discover that tourists were still driving up and down the scenic route.

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MISSION GETS SHINY, NEW QUADRANGLE AS \$2M PROJECT DRAWS TO A CLOSE

By MARY SCHLEY

THE GREEN fencing has come down in the Carmel Mission parking lot and construction crews are cleaning up the grounds following an overhaul of the historic property's courtyard and fountains — the first improvements in the \$20 million Phase II restoration project that also includes updating and upgrading the landmark's museums and other buildings. Phase I, completed in 2013, focused on the seismic retrofit and overhaul of the Basilica, and cost \$5.5 million. The funds have been and are being raised by the nonprofit Carmel Mission Foundation.

The foundation's president, Vic Grabrian, said Blach Construction and the other contractors working on the project were under the gun to finish it in time for the annual Carmel Mission Classic car show, held on the Wednesday of Concours Week — which some refer to as the Monterey Peninsula's "Holy Week."

"It was a tremendous effort to finish in time for the Carmel Mission Classic car show and Car Week," Grabrian said. "The foundation now has another suc-

cessful project behind us, as we proceed with preserving the Mission."

The work entailed removing the old, cracked concrete in the courtyard, and digging trenches to install new water lines, irrigation, electrical and communications equipment, and sewage and drainage pipes. New colored concrete and strips of bricks were reinforced with rebar and laid in the courtyard, which Grabrian said should withstand wear for the next century, "while retaining the Quadrangle Courtyard's original look and feel."

Strengthening and restoring

Overall, Phase II of the Mission renovation calls for seismically strengthening and restoring the property's five museums, California's first library, and the Orchard House, California's oldest adobe residence. The city's historic resources board approved the proposed upgrades earlier this year.

"Life safety issues are challenging continued use of

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PHOTO/VIC GRABRIAN, CARMEL MISSION FOUNDATION

The Quadrangle Courtyard at the Mission is a popular spot for private and parish events, not to mention contemplation. It just got a major sprucing up.