

JANUARY IN REVIEW

TOP LOCAL STORIES

A presidential candidate visit, NOAA building up for sale

- Mike Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York City and a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination paid a visit to speak, shake hands and get his photo taken with locals at an organizing event at Cooper Molera in downtown Monterey. Less than two months later he dropped out of the race.
- The former Southwest Fisheries Science Center adorned with a colorful mural at 1352 Lighthouse Ave. right before it ends at Ocean View Boulevard in Pacific Grove was put up for sale. The Public Buildings Reform Board, charged with determining what federal installations should be sold off, recommended that the building once once operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration be sold.
- Ron Rivera, a former Seaside High multi-sport star, was named head coach of the Washington NFL team. Rivera had been fired by the Carolina Panthers on Dec. 3. In August he announced that he had been diagnosed with a “very treatable and curable” cancer. He continues to coach the team.
- The Pacific Grove City Council OK'd the city's Local Coastal Program after years of negotiations with the California Coastal Commission. The program allows the city to make most land-use permitting decisions within the Coastal Zone, a swath of land running the length of Pacific Grove's oceanfront. The move will, among other things, allow the city to make repairs to infrastructure within the Coastal Zone, everything from as simple as repairing a broken fence to the maintenance of beach armory such as rip-rap.
- District 3 Supervisor Chris Lopez, 34, became one of the youngest county supervisors in Monterey County history is taking the helm of the Board of Supervisors. Marc Del Piero, who was elected to the board at age 27 in 1981, was the youngest board chair, taking over for the first time in 1982.
- The city of Marina and its groundwater sustainability agency sued the state Department of Water Resources and its director Karla Nemeth, Monterey County along with its Board of Supervisors and its groundwater sustainability agency, and the Salinas Valley Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency and its board of directors over the right to manage the 450-acre CEMEX site located within the city's limits. The site is where California American Water proposes to construct its desalination project well field.
- About 500 participated in the 34th annual Martin Luther King Day march in Seaside. A diverse array of groups, from bikers to unions and church leaders, all led chants, played King's speeches and held signs to show support. ... Local aerospace company Joby Aviation announced Toyota Motor Corp. invested in and partnered with the company to develop its electric vertical takeoff and landing vehicle for commercial air taxi service, much of that work being done at Marina Airport. Joby Aviation raised \$590 million in its that round of funding. ... Thanks to the generosity of The Herald's readers, Operation Christmas Cheer raised \$35,835 for Salvation Army clients.
- District Attorney Jeannine Pacioni announced her office would be working with police departments throughout the county to check hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts and see if they have a human trafficking notice posted in public view, in compliance with state law.

TOP STORY

Projectile suspect arrested

By Tom Wright

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Editor's note: The arrest of Charles Lafferty brought a renewed sense of safety to many commuters and travelers passing through the Prunedale area, as nearly a year-long string of incidents where projectiles were hitting passing cars in that major transportation area ended. Lafferty's case, delayed by coronavirus restrictions, continues to wind its way through the courts.

SALINAS >> California Highway Patrol officials announced officers arrested Charles Kenneth Lafferty, 52, in connection to a string of projectiles striking vehicles that date back to February 2019.

The CHP said it has investigated 69 incidents of vehicles traveling on Highway 101 and Highway 156 in the Prunedale area dating back to Feb. 19, 2019. Four adults and one child suffered minor injuries as a result of the projectiles. According to CHP Coastal Division Chief LD Maples, the CHP was able to identify the suspect's vehicle as a GMC Sonoma pickup shortly after the last reported incident on Jan. 5.

“Through a multifaceted investigative process, we were able to quickly link the GMC Sonoma to several of the incidents,” Maples said during a news conference. “After maintaining very close surveillance of the vehicle's location, our task force was able to identify a driver.”

The CHP and the Monterey County Sheriff's Office executed numerous search warrants on residences in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties as well as the GMC Sonoma and arrested Lafferty. Maples said the CHP believes Lafferty had one or two residences in Monterey County and worked miscellaneous odd jobs in the area.

“Mr. Lafferty has ties to several communities inside and outside



A projectile struck the Carmel High football team's bus on Highway 156 in Prunedale in November 2019. (Courtesy Carmel High)

of Monterey County,” he said. “We believe Mr. Lafferty used a slingshot as well as glass marbles to commit these crimes. Mr. Lafferty is currently in custody in the Monterey County Jail on \$250,000 bail.”

Officials booked Lafferty on 10 counts of felony assault with a deadly weapon, 10 counts of throwing an object at a moving vehicle and one count of felony possession of a silencer or a silenced weapon.

“There's no indication at this point that a firearm was used during any of the 69 incidents,” Maples said. “Although Mr. Lafferty has been booked, this investigation is still ongoing.

Further analysis of our evidence will likely allow us to add charges as we link Mr. Lafferty to more victims.”

Because the investigation is ongoing, Maples said he could not comment on what broke the case open earlier this month, any possible motive or on Lafferty's mental health. He said at this point, the CHP believes Lafferty acted alone. Maples said the CHP believes Lafferty was driving while he was firing the projectiles.

“The evidence suggests he found a way, as he was coming towards oncoming traffic, to launch the projectiles, striking vehicles,” Maples said.

At this point, the CHP believes the attacks were random. “In the incidents that the CHP did investigate, the primary locations of the attacks did occur on the drivers' sides of the vehicles,” said CHP Cmdr. Kyle Foster.

The CHP didn't provide details of the arrest, with Foster saying “Mr. Lafferty appeared to be surprised.”

As the attacks continued, the CHP joined with the Sheriff's Office to create a task force investigating the projectile strikes.

“We felt it was only a matter of time before someone seriously got hurt,” Maples said.

JAN. 21, 2020

Annual Women's March in Monterey

By Eduardo Cuevas

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MONTEREY >> More than a thousand people took to Monterey streets as part of the fourth annual Women's March, an international movement seeking to promote unity across social movements including reproductive care, immigrant rights and environmental justice.

The procession gathered outside city hall before marching along downtown streets, sidewalks and alleys. The event also marked a century since women's suffrage in the United States.

“There's power in unity,” said Esther Hobbes, the lead organizer for Women's March Monterey Bay, the organization run by women that has created the local march which began the day after President Donald Trump took office in 2017. “I really think that coming together becomes a sacred space. We're all together for a common cause and there's a lot of energy and power and joy in that.”

Organizers estimated at least 2,000 people demonstrated. Thousands more were expected to rally in more than 180 cities, according to the Associated Press.

As the event took shape on the lawn near Colton Hall, the site of California's first Constitutional Convention, Sacramento parents Anil and Stacey Shandil made signs with their 7-year-old daughter, Lakshmi.

Having attended the state capital's Women's March before, this was the Shandils' second year going to the Monterey rally as they celebrated Stacey's birthday.

“It's important to bring our

daughter out and to teach her so she exercises her voice,” Stacey said as she looked at her daughter coloring a cardboard sign. Anil added, “It's important for dads to support their daughters, moms and sisters to make sure their rights are conserved.”

The Sacramento family said this election year they are also concerned about rights for immigrants — including Anil — as well as voting rights, universal health care and removing Trump from office.

“My mother always said if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything,” said Stacey. “That always rings (true) for me because you have to stand up and you have to have a voice and there are people that are afraid ... It encourages people and empowers people to have a voice and stand up.”

Carmel resident Nancy Green, 88, dressed in all white as an ode to the suffragette movement that occurred just before she was born. A 50-year member of the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan civic organization, it was Green's first time participating in the Women's March. She said today women's rights must finally be considered human rights.

“It's long overdue that we're considered equal and able to participate not based on gender. I'm encouraged by what is occurring today,” Green said looking at Saturday's crowd, “and we're on our way.”

Guest speaker Bianca Tonantzin Zamora, a CSU Monterey Bay social justice educator, said the march must continue advocating in both small moments and larger political movements, especially



More than a thousand people participated in Saturday's fourth annual Women's March in Monterey, coinciding with the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the U.S. (Eduardo Cuevas--Herald correspondent)

for those most marginalized. She pointed to lower life expectancies for transgender women of color.

“We have to think about those that are the most vulnerable, because when we do that in our movements, in our actions, in our words, we can then strive for liberation,” Zamora said. “Because if it's just for this very singular goal, singular movement, you are reinforcing power structures, and that's not about multiple communities' liberations.”

CSUMB graduate Eros Gonzalez, 22, was glad to attend the march alongside his girlfriend Malia Bumanlag, a 22-year-old San Francisco State University graduate, to broaden his

perspective of others fighting for equality.

Gonzalez pointed to his own status with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program implemented by the Obama administration allowing young immigrants living in the country illegally who were brought here as children to remain in the U.S. He said, “It kind of in a way reminds us that we're not just alone, you know? We can all kind of have a voice together and speak louder.”

The couple emphasized the need for young people to be active as well.

“I just think it's really important to remember that you have a voice,” Bumanlag said. “It's easy to forget.”

TOP LOCAL STORIES

Getting ready for COVID-19, changes at Moss Landing

- Local hospitals appeared to be gearing up to handle coronavirus cases as the Monterey County Emergency Medical Services Agency said it was empowering dispatchers to ask additional specific travel and exposure questions of patients. “These simple precautions are important to keep responders as safe as possible,” said the memo. Meanwhile, pharmacies couldn’t keep up with the demand for surgical face masks, despite the fact the CDC wasn’t recommending people who weren’t sick wear face masks. ... Specimens that tested positive for the novel coronavirus that has sickened two people in San Benito County were processed through the Monterey County Health Department.
- A second battery energy storage project was approved by the county Planning Commission for Moss Landing, positioning the longtime site of a huge power plant as a global leader in the shift to renewable energy. Located on a 4.5-acre portion of the PG& E substation off Dolan Road and Highway 1, the project will include the installation of 268 Tesla-manufactured Megapack lithium-ion battery units in 17 modules resembling metal storage containers with the capacity to store up to 730-megawatt hours of renewable energy sources during off-peak hours.
- Pacific Grove banned pedicabs on its portion of the Recreation Trail. New city limits signs had to be put up on the Rec Trail to help riders understand where Monterey ends and Pacific Grove begins.
- Pacific Grove City Manager Ben Harvey presented to the City Council his perspective on the criticism leveled against him following the city agreeing to costs associated with the Holman Building, a temporary site for the Pacific Grove Library while it is undergoing a multi-million-dollar renovation. The costs were for tenant improvements to a suite at the newly renovated building on Lighthouse Avenue to accommodate the needs of a library.
- There were cost overruns that were paid out to the developer that elected officials were not made aware of until after Harvey had OK’d payment.
- Pure Water Monterey finally secured a critical final state approval and to begin delivering potable recycled water to the Seaside basin. After an all-day inspection of the \$126 million recycled water project’s advanced water purification facility by a nine-member team on Tuesday, the state Division of Drinking Water signed off both verbally and by email.
- Setting a new mark, the Community Foundation for Monterey County increased its grant-awarding in 2019 to more than \$19 million providing funding to 890 nonprofits in the region, the organization announced.

AT&T PEBBLE BEACH PRO-AM

By Carly Mayberry

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PEBBLE BEACH>> While there were plenty of prized golf shots during this year’s AT& T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, there were also a bevy of special moments and recalled memories for those at this year’s tournament.

Winner Nick Taylor showed nerves of steel down the stretch despite being matched with fan favorite Phil Mickelson and afterward he was able to share his moment of victory with his wife Andie and their 3-month-old son Charlie. The weather was cool and clear most of the week. Although Sunday afternoon got pretty windy, it was a nice change from last year’s rain and hail. The new fan amenities were well appreciated. But most of all, the scenery was once again spectacular and shared with a national television audience.

On Saturday, the crowd at Club 15 that gathers every year to support the amateurs and raise money for cancer, was serenaded with an impromptu riff by singer/songwriter Kelley Jones.

Goodwin, who has come to the tournament for 55 years, remembered a time he followed Dean Martin on the course back in the days of The Crosby Clambake.

“He hit the best shots I ever saw in my life with a Persimmon wood,” laughed Goodwin, who also recalled singer John Denver out on the green strumming his guitar as Crosby crony Phil Harris enjoyed himself a little too much.

“When the CBS newscaster noted Harris’ inclination to imbibe and inquired as to what his favorite drink was, Harris replied ‘The next one!’” said Goodwin.

A registered nurse and volunteer Luis Zepeda who was driving the special needs shuttle this week was happy to be at Pebble Beach too.

“The best moments are when I can help people that didn’t know they needed help,” said Zepeda, who lives in Lathrop and was there to shuttle those with disabilities who might have trouble walking.

“I do it to just give back,” said fellow volunteer Kyle Robertson, 31 from Fresno. “I know this can’t be possible without the volunteers and players and the celebrities show appreciation by performing.”

While Zepeda and Robertson were giving their time by the ropes, artist and designer Lee Wybranski was out on the course painting a picture of the sixth hole.

Wybranski painted the official poster for this year’s AT& T as well as last year’s U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. In addition to creating office artwork for major golf tournaments, he also creates official logos for the Open and PGA Championships. This year he partnered with the Monterey Peninsula Foundation on an Instagram contest where the winner received his painting.

While Wybranski and others acknowledged Pebble Beach Resorts’ evolution over the years to include more viewing venues than ever before, it’s still the scenery, which Wybranski’s paintings

reflect, that keeps people roaming the greens in awe.

“I love the Bing Crosby and Clambake history of it and the venue being Pebble Beach — there’s nothing quite like it,” said Wybranski.

The same was voiced by players and celebs alike this week.

“Obviously I love the golf courses here,” said PGA Tour pro Jason Day, taking the time to note how special the Monterey Peninsula was.

From Josh Duhamel and Clay Walker to Jake Owen and Ray Romano, the celebrities seemed to voice the same, with some of them expressing it’s their favorite week of the year.

In the case of Romano, he didn’t even seem too worried about playing Sunday if he were to make the cut, despite having a date with his wife at the Academy Awards.

CBS commentator and Pebble Beach resident Jim Nantz noted the same this week as he often does while bantering with fellow co-host and well-traveled Nick Faldo.

“I’ve never seen a prettier place,” said Nantz.

As the 30-something James put



Nick Taylor held off defending champion Phil Mickelson in the final round to win the 2020 AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. (Photos by David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent)



Nick Taylor holds the trophy in the air after winning the AT& T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. (Photos by David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent)

it before playing for the first time in this year’s tournament, “The Monterey Peninsula for me is just one of those (special) spots on planet Earth.”

Or as young Scott Mc-Nealy, who was playing with his dad Maverick this week said, “Any day at Pebble Beach is an amazing day.”

For me, the week rekindled the years watching televised golf tournaments played at Pebble Beach with my dad.

“There’s no course like Pebble Beach,” I remember him saying as we watched players such as Tom Watson, Jack Nicklaus and Johnny Miller. “It’s one of the most beautiful places in the world.”

Grab Your Moment

Local businesses are offering deals and specials you can grab now for use throughout 2021. Treat yourself to take-out (you deserve it) and give your friends and family gift cards this year – for unforgettable moments just waiting to be had. Together we are #MontereyCountyStrong.

Grab your moment at [SeeMonterey.com/Locals](https://www.seemonterey.com/locals)

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TOP LOCAL STORIES

The days leading up to the stay-at-home order

- On March 2, the county Board of Supervisors heard a report from officials with the county Health Department, county-owned hospital Natividad, and the Office of Emergency Services on plans and preparations for handling an outbreak of COVID-19.
- A visit by the cruise ship MS Amadea the first weekend in March caused concern among several locals, worried its passengers were carrying the coronavirus. Monterey officials noted the ship's last port before dropping anchor in Monterey was San Francisco and it would be in Monterey for just one day before getting underway en route to Santa Barbara. The ship's prior itinerary included stops in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Mexico and other ports in Central and South America—no travel in the recent past were in any high risk for coronavirus destinations. "We take the current health scare very seriously," said Monterey City Manager Hans Uslar. "We are taking proactive and appropriate steps with guidance from the CDC and Coast Guard to assess cruise ship visits during the current COVID-19 outbreak." Another ocean liner, the Royal Princess, was due into Monterey Bay on March 31. Monterey then requested cruise ships not visit Monterey Bay.
- On March 5 the Sea Otter Classic cycling festival postpones from April to October. It is the first major Monterey County event to move because of coronavirus risks. As the pandemic grows worse, it is eventually canceled for 2020.
- On the weekend of March 7-8, shoppers overwhelm grocery outlets such as Costco, leading to long lines outside various stores. Supplies of bottled water, sanitizing and paper products were soon depleted.
- On March 10, Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey announced it was suspending in-person classes, stopping visitors to the Monterey campus locations, canceling all events and Middlebury-sponsored travel among other restrictions. It is the first of the local schools to do so.
- On March 11, the Grand Princess cruise ship unloaded passengers, many of them with COVID-19, in Oakland. The state decided to send some of those passengers to Asilomar for quarantine as officials in Monterey County said they were not given an option to refuse them. The 12 passengers who arrived on the Monterey Peninsula were screened by medical professionals, and because they had mild symptoms that do not require hospitalization, they could not be quarantined at Travis Air Force Base in Solano County, according to a press release from the California Office of Emergency Services. The passengers were restricted to a specific area at Asilomar and that area was guarded by U.S. Marshalls.
- Hospitals in Monterey County, including Salinas Valley Memorial Healthcare System, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, and Natividad hospital, set up medical tents to triage COVID-19 cases in preparation for a possible surge of patients. CSU Monterey Bay suspends all classes from March 13 through March 19 and announces it was going to "alternate instructional delivery, including virtual classroom meetings" after that through April 24. Hartnell and Monterey Peninsula college soon follow suit.
- On March 16, many popular Monterey Peninsula restaurants were saying they were staying open while others will temporarily close in reaction to Gov. Gavin Newsom's call to close bars, pubs, wineries, and restrict restaurants, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Following confirmation of the first two local coronavirus cases, Monterey County officials issued a shelter in place order on March 17.

CORONAVIRUS

County issues shelter-in-place order

By Jim Johnson

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SALINAS>>> Following confirmation of the first two local coronavirus cases, Monterey County officials issued a shelter in place order March 17.

The mandatory legal order issued under the authority of state law is enforceable by a fine or jail and will last for three weeks starting at midnight and extending until April 8.

Similar to orders issued by several Greater Bay Area counties, including neighboring Santa Cruz County, the order is designed to limit all activity, including travel and business functions, to the "most essential needs," according to the order issued by county Public Health Officer Dr. Ed Moreno and announced during a news conference.

"Temporarily making these drastic changes to our lives and routines may be frustrating but it is critical to slowing the spread of this virus," Moreno said. "We must weigh the loss of some freedoms we enjoy with the ability to separate healthy people who may not show symptoms from those at risk who may be inadvertently exposed."

Described as a "more rigorous form of social distancing," the order dictates that people stay at home unless they need to get food or medical care or supplies, care for a relative or friend, conduct essential business and government functions, and the like. People are allowed to go outside provided they don't congregate in large groups and stay 6 feet away from others.

Government services will remain open as will gas stations, grocery stores and other food supply sources, pharmacies, banks, and more essential service providers. Dine-in restaurants, bars and nightclubs, other entertainment venues, and gyms and fitness studios will be closed.

The county announcement called the order part of a "critical intervention to reduce harm from the spread of coronavirus in our community," and a "necessary step to prevent a worsening situation."

"The patterns of the virus around



One of the auxiliary tents set up at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula in anticipation on a run of COVID-19 patients. (Courtesy of CHOMP)

the world, and in our own state, tells that moving right now to maximize social distancing and restrict people gathering is the best way to fight the virus and save lives," the announcement read.

Anticipating lost business, jobs, and pay due to a sweeping response to the coronavirus, the Board of Supervisors agreed to place limits on residential and commercial evictions in the unincorporated county until May 31.

The county board also agreed to send a letter to Monterey County Superior Court requesting a similar suspension in the entire county during the same time period, and request financial institutions declare a moratorium on foreclosures.

Citing Gov. Gavin Newsom's executive order issued Monday suspending state law restricting local governments from using police

powers to "impose substantial limitations" on evictions, the county board adopted a resolution doing just that.

The resolution read "there is an urgent need for the County of Monterey to enact such substantive limitations to protect the health, safety and welfare of its citizens in light of the emergency declared regarding the COVID-19 pandemic."

Supervisor Luis Alejo noted that the move to suspend evictions due to economic losses suffered as a result of the disease is necessary because local residents are being advised to stay home as much as possible and holding off on evictions is a way to protect families, while Supervisor Jane Parker said she believed the suspension should be extended past May.

County Counsel Les Girard noted the eviction suspension

does not remove the obligation to pay rent nor restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due, and only applies to evictions for failure to pay rent due to the pandemic.

According to the resolution, the evictions suspension only applies to nonpayment of rent or foreclosure "arising out of a substantial decrease in household or business income" due to the coronavirus and local, state and federal government response, including as a result of layoffs, a decrease in paid hours of work, a reduction in open hours or consumer demand, or substantial out-of-pocket medical expenses, all of which must be documented.

The resolution also requested all financial institutions in the county implement a moratorium on foreclosures and related evictions for the same reasons.

CHRISTINA WILLIAMS CASE

Holifield found guilty in 1988 murder

By Jim Johnson

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SALINAS >>> Judge Pamela Butler found Charles Holifield guilty of kidnapping, raping and killing Christina Williams, more than 21 years after the 13-year-old disappeared while walking her dog in a military neighborhood in Seaside.

"The defendant will spend the rest of his life in prison with no relief," Butler said to the courtroom after sentencing Holifield to life in prison without the possibility of parole. She said the evidence showed the death of the girl was clearly a homicide and "the DNA evidence is overwhelmingly convincing and persuasive."

Holifield was a suspect early in the investigation and was interviewed repeatedly. Witnesses testified Holifield grew up in Fort Ord and knew the area well. He would go fishing in a pond not far from where Christine Williams was kidnapped. While Holifield denied having any involvement in the disappearance and death of the girl, he could not provide an alibi.

A year after the crime, his girlfriend's mother provided an alibi that Holifield was at her home watching TV the night of the crime. His girlfriend later provided that same alibi and gave it during the trial, though she recanted in 2011 saying she only provided it before out of fear of Holifield.

Christina Williams' father, Michael, sat in on the trial with his wife, Alice. He said they think about Christina and miss her every day. Williams said to reporters after the verdict was read that he was expecting a guilty verdict.

"What's really nice is the fact that it's over," he said. "This is the end and no appeals. So this is the last we're going to

hear about this case and the last we're going to hear about Charles Holifield."

His wife fought back tears to read her prepared statement in court. Alice Williams said Holifield should be locked up forever so no more innocent children are murdered.

"Our lives have changed forever," she said.

Michael Williams said the family is ready to move on after the guilty verdict.

"In that 20 years, we have kind of went back to our lives," he said. "We still remember Christina all the time, but we had gotten back to it and now we were taken back 20 years."

Christina Williams, a Fitch Middle School student, disappeared about 7:40 p.m. June 12, 1998, while walking her dog near her home on Fort Ord. Her mother spotted the dog walking alone with the leash still attached within 45 minutes. Despite massive searches of the area, it was not until seven months later that a plant surveyor stumbled upon Christina's remains hidden under branches near Imjin Road.

"Christina went missing around the time that my family moved to the area," said Lindsey O'Shea, one of the prosecutors. "We moved to Fort Ord, the CSUMB housing, so this hit us hard then. ... I just hope this does something to alleviate the pain of the family."

The Monterey County District Attorney's Office filed first-degree murder charges with special circumstances for kidnapping and sexual assault in the death of Christina Williams against Holifield in April 2017 after a Monterey County cold case team requested items of physical evidence be retested after looking for new leads and re-examining crime scene evidence in 2016.



Charles Holifield in court in 2017. (Monterey Herald file)

Jeannine Pacioni prosecuted the case in the early stages before being elected Monterey County district attorney in 2018. She said the evidence supported the verdict.

"I'm saddened he won't get the ultimate penalty, because I do believe it's justified in this case," she said. "I'm hopeful the family can try and move forward now."

The DA's Office said it would pursue the death penalty in 2018. But then in March 2019, Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order creating a moratorium on the death penalty. Although prosecutors kept the death penalty on the table, the DA's Office later spoke with the Williams family, who expressed a desire for closure and finality of the matter. In December, the DA's Office announced it would drop the potential of capital punishment in the case in exchange for Holifield waiving his rights to a jury trial and his rights to writs and appeals, which terminated the appellate process resulting in a swift and final judgment.

Holifield, 59, is currently serving a third-strike sentence of 25 years to life in prison at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad for attempted kidnapping and making criminal threats against a woman in September 1998. Holifield was convicted of sexually assaulting or raping two teenage girls, and he was suspected of raping a third, between 1979 and 1983.

His two previous sexual assault convictions involved him attacking, strangling and raping teenage girls walking alone on the Monterey Peninsula. Both victims provided testimony at the trial.

After sticking up his middle finger to the members of the media and the public gathered at his arraignment in 2017, Holifield was far more subdued during the trial. He showed little emotion as the verdict was read. When the judge asked him if he wanted to speak, Holifield shook his head and softly replied: "No."

The two sides provided their closing arguments in the morning before Butler went into her deliberation and returned.

TOP LOCAL STORIES

Monterey County announces COVID plan for Fairgrounds

■ The County announced its plan to use the County Fairgrounds in Monterey to house people who are COVID-19 positive and have been released from hospitals but cannot return to their former living areas because the density or other conditions would create a high threat of infecting others.

■ The Monterey County Office of Education announced it would close all school facilities for the rest of the school year, committing to distance learning. The Monterey Peninsula Unified School District then moved to pass/no pass grading for the rest of the school year. In an effort to bridge the digital gap, MPUSD started parking school buses in parking lots as makeshift Wi-Fi hotspots for its students and staff to stay connected for distance learning during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order.

■ Monterey joined scores of tourist destinations to tell sightseers they're loved but to stay away. Said Monterey City Manager Hans Usler, "The message is stay home." Monterey also issued a strong advisory for people to stay off the Recreation Trail unless they are commuting to or from essential employment.

■ The Big Sur Land Trust acquired 83.5 acres of property atop Patriarch Ridge in Carmel Valley, which sits adjacent to the Big Sur Land Trust's Mitteldorf Preserve land and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Joshua Creek Ecological Preserve, with a smaller border against the Santa Lucia Conservancy's Santa Lucia Preserve.

■ Churches across the county were empty Easter Sunday because of coronavirus restrictions, but many, including locally, moved to worship on online.

■ A Carmel couple made a gift of \$500,000 to Montage Health Foundation, challenging others to support health-care workers. "This is the greatest health crisis of the last 100 years," said Paul Baszucki who contributed along with his wife Helen. "With this gift, we are letting the entire medical team know that we support them and appreciate their hard work."

■ The Monterey Regional Airport received more than \$12 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funds for airport capital expenditures, airport operating expenses including payroll and utilities, and airport debt payments.

■ An auction featuring the estate of legendary Hollywood star Doris Day, including many personal items from her beloved Carmel home, raised nearly \$3 million for the Doris Day Animal Foundation.

TOP STORY

Aquarium lays off workers

By Dennis L. Taylor

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EDITOR'S NOTE: In one of the first major indicators of the economic toll of the pandemic on the area, the Monterey Bay Aquarium announced layoffs. Although at one point there was a date set for a summer re-opening of the Aquarium, a new shelter-in-place order prevented that. Further layoffs had to be instituted.

MONTEREY >> The Monterey Bay Aquarium, a top driver of tourist dollars in the county, has announced to employees that some workers are being either laid off or furloughed.

A call placed to the aquarium's media office was not immediately returned Wednesday but it did provide a short emailed statement. "While there are going to be announcements later this week about the Aquarium's staffing as a result of our closure, we are not able to offer any specifics at this time as we haven't notified all the impacted employees," the statement read. "We will share more information on our website once those conversations have taken place."

Among those specifics is the total number of employees affected. The aquarium employs 575 fulltime and part-time workers.

Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard said in a letter to employees dated Monday that it tried to avoid layoffs but the revenue shortfall in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic is now projected through the end of the year at \$40 million — a 60% drop. That figure is based on what Packard said is an optimistic plan to re-open July 1.

"I'd like to be able to tell you we're more certain about that date, but I don't have a crystal ball," Packard wrote to staff. "We all read the same news and what we're seeing is continuing uncertainty about when and how restrictions on gatherings and travel will lift."

Monterey City Manager Hans Usler said he was not aware of the layoffs, but that the Aquarium has been under the same pressures that all businesses have experienced since the shelter-in-place order was issued.

"It's significant in that it amplifies the extent the pandemic is having," Usler said. "The aquarium has the role of being the center anchor of tourism in Monterey along with Cannery Row and Fisherman's Wharf."

The Aquarium closed March 14 and immediately started reducing non-wage expenses while maintaining essential spending like utilities, information technology services, animal food and essential repairs. It dropped non-essential expenses like travel and supplies related to being open. In total, those actions accounted for about \$14 million in savings.

"Unfortunately that isn't enough to cover the revenue loss we're experiencing and we do have to reduce staff," Packard said.

In addition to the layoffs, senior staff will be taking pay cuts. There was no statement regarding the status of the sea life at the aquarium, but following the



The Monterey Bay Aquarium closed in March and had to reduce its workforce in April. (Monterey Herald file photo)

March 12 closure, a statement was issued indicating a limited number of essential staff would be providing animal care, as well as the facilities life support and security teams.

"I know I speak for all of us in saying this is the most challenging time in the Aquarium's history," Packard wrote in the letter. "These decisions are painful and difficult, and trust me when I say that your senior management members and I have anguished over them."

OTHER IMPACTS ON RECREATIONAL TOURISM

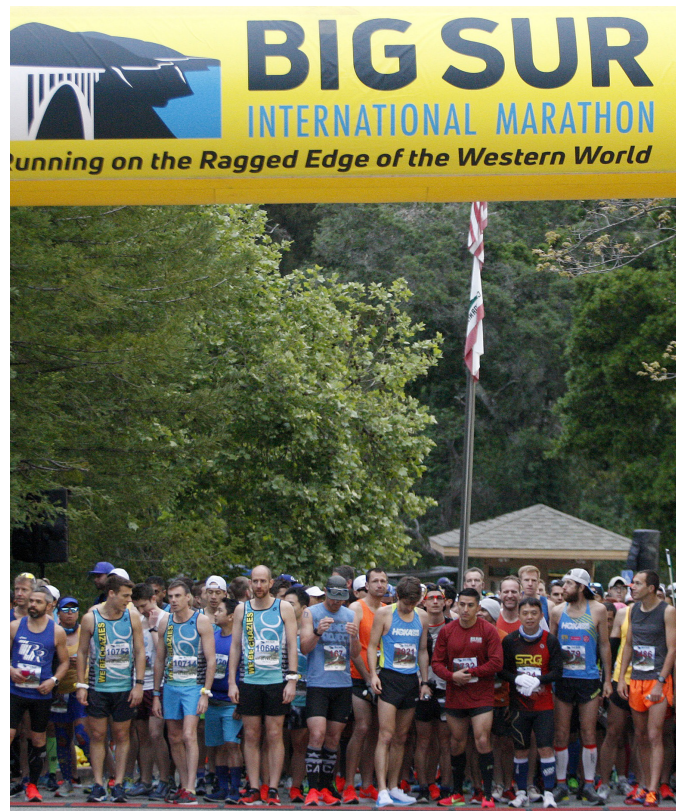
CLASSIC CAR WEEK: The Concours d'Elegance, the anchor event during Classic Car Week on the Monterey Peninsula in August, was canceled due to the pandemic. The show, which was scheduled to celebrate its 70 anniversary, had just been canceled one other time, in 1960 over a scheduling conflict.

"In this case (the decision to cancel) was the sooner the better for entrants and restorers struggling to finish restorations and finalize their plans for travel and shipping," said Sandra Button, the event's long-time chairwoman.

"Participants were making hard decisions regarding whether to pull their car as they were worried for their safety but felt this was their Olympic moment."

Like a row of tumbling dominos, Classic Car Week events along the Monterey Peninsula were canceled in the wake of the Concours announcement.

BIG SUR MARATHON: A month after it was postponed because of the coronavirus, organizers of the Big Sur International Marathon announced the 35th edition would be part of a revamped version of an area traditional running weekend in November. The



The Big Sur International Marathon was canceled in 2020 and 2021. (Monterey Herald file photo)

marathon, originally scheduled April 26 was postponed to Nov. 15. The Monterey Bay Half Marathon, originally scheduled Nov. 15 on its traditional course in Monterey and Pacific Grove, was moved to Nov. 14. Both races were later canceled.

The non-profit Big Sur Marathon Foundation wound up canceling all its 2020 in-person events and the JUST RUN youth fitness program due to the pandemic. In addition, 70-percent of the organization's staff was laid off in an effort to shore up finances. The organization announced that it wasn't expecting to hold any events

in 2021 either.

BACH FEST, RODEO: For the first time since World War II, the Carmel Bach Festival canceled its summer schedule of music and events and the California Rodeo Salinas scheduled for July 16-19 was postponed to October because of the pandemic. It was later canceled as well.

LAGUNA SECA: With the cancellation of the Detroit Grand Prix in late May due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Firestone Grand Prix of Monterey was scheduled to include a second race Sept. 19. It was to join the previously scheduled race Sept. 20. Both races were later canceled.

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TOP LOCAL STORIES

Non-COVID patients stay away from hospitals

Like their counterparts across much of the U.S., local hospitals were reporting a major slowdown at their facilities during the coronavirus lockdown even as they were expected to be prepared for a potential surge in COVID-19 hospitalizations. A halt to elective and non-urgent procedures and modification or suspension of other health care services, as well as a reluctance by many to seek treatment at hospitals during the outbreak and the county's shelter-in-place order, has all led to large drops in hospital occupancy, activity, and revenue.

California State University Monterey Bay has received a legacy endowment gift that, along with other scholarships, could help every freshman entering CSUMB from Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Benito counties with a 3.2 or more grade point average to attend debt free for four years. The gift, made by Robert Darwin, a Monterey Peninsula resident for many years, is projected to generate more than \$1 million annually in interest according to school officials. Although the amount of the gift wasn't disclosed, the school's announcement said it is the largest gift ever made to the school. ... At a CSU meeting it was revealed the system and its affiliated operations had suffered more than \$300 million in revenue losses and unanticipated expenses as students left campus in the spring and classes switched to online.

Rather than tossing their caps at the end of their graduation ceremony, the Monterey Peninsula's class of 2020 followed the pace car past a waving checkered flag at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca in several COVID-style graduation ceremonies.

The city of Marina sued the CEMEX owners and California American Water to halt Cal Am's proposal to draw feeder water from the CEMEX sand mining plant for its planned desalination project.

Monterey County's shelter-in-place order eased restrictions on construction, golf, child-care centers, summer camps and gardening, but extended through the end of the month. A coalition of business interests submitted its recommendations to Monterey County leaders as Gov. Gavin Newsom outlined his steps for allowing some retail businesses to open.

Norm Costa, who won more than 200 games as Palma High School's football coach starting in the 1970s and ending after the 1999 season, died from lung cancer at 79.

Nearly 100 at-risk homeless residents and farmworkers who had tested positive for the coronavirus were put up in local motels courtesy of Monterey County and the Grower Shipper Association.

RESTAURANTS

Carmel restaurant defies orders

By Dennis L. Taylor

dtaylor@montereyherald.com

Editor's note: As one restaurant was making news for defying the shelter-in-place order, others were getting ready to re-open under a revised order.

CARMEL — A Carmel restaurant owner has been charged with three criminal counts of willfully defying Monterey County's health order by opening The Tuck Box restaurant to patrons without regard to any of the protocols set down in the order.

Jeffrey LeTowt is facing misdemeanor charges for allegedly violating the state of California's Stay-at-Home order and Monterey County's Shelter-in-Place order.

Deputy District Attorney Emily Hickok said LeTowt was providing table service to patrons and allowing customers to eat inside while failing to wear a face-covering while patrons are present and failing to implement protocols such as maintaining 6-feet of space between individuals who are not part of the same household.

Each of the three counts carries the possibility of up to a \$1,000 fine and/or six months in jail. (In June, LeTowt agreed to pay up to \$35,000 in civil penalties).

LeTowt was warned by three different agencies to stop violating the health order before being cited, including the Carmel Police Department, the District Attorney's office and the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. He allegedly declined to halt the illegal practices, Hickok said.

District Attorney Jeannine Pacioni said the community is facing an unprecedented public health threat that needs to be taken seriously. "I want to commend all the individuals and businesses who are sacrificing so much to protect our community from this disease," Pacioni said. "While so many are doing



The Tuck Box restaurant in Carmel defied health department orders.- (Monterey Herald file)

their part, we cannot allow a business to defy these emergency public health orders and risk the progress that our community has made."

Meanwhile, restaurants operated by Monterey's Shake family plan to opened at the end of the month, following extensive retraining of their staff, while other restaurants were hiring back staff with their sights set on reopening in the near future.

Chris Shake, who operates Old Fisherman's Grotto, Scales and The Fish Hopper in Monterey, hired restaurant safety consultant Abraham Wilson, a nationally recognized food-safety expert, to devise train-

ing sessions in both English and Spanish for the restaurants' supervisors and staff.

Shake and his brother Sabu Shake own a total of four restaurants, the fourth being another Fish Hopper in Hawaii. Combined the businesses employ more than 300 workers.

"It was important to my brother and me to have our 308 employees trained and certified before we reopen by taking a course with (Wilson) to educate them on the importance of understanding the difference between a virus and bacteria and how it can spread and how to prevent it in our workplace," Shake said.

Shake said his restaurants are

following state COVID-19 guidelines published by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which total 12 pages and include everything from providing patrons with hand sanitizers and wipes to dispensing disposable menus and suspending use of shared food items such as condiment bottles, salt and pepper shakers. Instead, condiments need to be provided in single-use containers or sanitized after each use.

Shake said the restaurants are implementing 6-foot table spacing, requiring that employees wear masks and gloves, and cleaning and disinfecting the tables, chairs and booths after each guest turnover.

GRADUATIONS

Peninsula high schools celebrate at Laguna Seca

By Tom Wright

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MONTEREY >> Rather than tossing their caps at the end of their graduation ceremony, the Monterey Peninsula's class of 2020 followed the pace car past a waving checkered flag at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Superintendent PK Diffenbaugh said district and school officials visited the raceway four times to try and make the drive-thru ceremony as smooth as possible.

"Our kids really deserve a chance to be celebrated for all they've gone through, for all they've overcome, for their resiliency," he said. "We think this will be a special way to do it. I was telling my wife that I think the class of 2020, when they are telling their grandkids about their graduation, they will have a story to tell that's unique and different."

Pacific Grove, Marina, Seaside, Monterey and Central Coast high schools, as well as the Life Char-

ter School all held their ceremonies at Laguna Seca.

Graduating seniors arrived at Laguna Seca in a vehicle with their immediate family, with one vehicle per graduate. Other friends and family were able to watch the ceremonies via livestream, which included prerecorded speeches from the principals and students.

"Everyone has to have a seatbelt, meaning you can't cram in 20 people to one van," Diffenbaugh said before the ceremonies.

Like in a traditional graduation ceremony, the students received a chance to walk across the stage individually, albeit with a mask or face covering. Only the graduating seniors were allowed to leave the vehicles and they were allowed to remove their face coverings briefly as pictures were taken.

"The biggest challenge in terms of the logistics is for a senior class like Monterey High School, which has 300 graduates," Diffenbaugh said before the ceremonies. "Each of those



Pacific Grove High was one of the Monterey Peninsula schools to celebrate graduation at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. (David Royal -- Herald Correspondent)

graduates is going to have to get out of their car, go across the stage and get in the car safely and in a timely manner. So we've been really trying to be proactive in communicating with our graduates, communicating with our parents the logistics of the day so it goes smoothly and safely."

Officials from the districts and the schools worked with Health Officer Dr. Edward Moreno, the Monterey County Office of Education, the Sheriff's Office, the California Highway Patrol, local police departments and Laguna Seca officials to make the ceremonies happen. Diffen-

baugh said MPUSD listened to the graduating seniors and their parents as well throughout the process.

"We've gotten really positive feedback from the parents in the community," Diffenbaugh said. "Some (parents were) obviously disappointed it can't be a more traditional setting but given the circumstances, the feedback has been really positive."

Graduates picked up their diploma from a table, rather than having their principal give it to them and shake their hand while maintaining 6 feet of social distance.

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TOP LOCAL STORIES

Salinas mayor Joe Gunter dies suddenly

Salinas mayor Joe Gunter died suddenly June 29 at the age of 73 after a long public service career, including nearly two full terms as mayor of Monterey County's largest city. Mr. Gunter died at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, reportedly due to heart disease and complications from cancer. A retired homicide detective, Mr. Gunter became the first police officer elected as the city's mayor in 2012. He was known for his law enforcement career, and decades of community involvement, even before being elected mayor.

After serving as president and publisher of the Monterey Herald for 13 years, Gary Omernick announced his retirement.

Monterey laid off 74 workers and Carmel six as the new budget year began and cities faced the challenge of decreased revenues because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mounting costs and limited funding prompted the Board of Supervisors to downsize the long-delayed and over-budget new Juvenile Hall project. The county board agreed to reduce the juvenile justice facility by about a third, shrinking the number of beds from 120 to 80 and eliminating two buildings that have yet to be constructed as part of the two-phase project.

The 2019 Monterey County Crop Report was released showing overall production value of the agriculture industry in the county was up 3.5% to \$4.4 billion. Leaf lettuce was the top crop followed by strawberries, head lettuce, and broccoli rounding out the top four in the main report. It also included, for the first time, a supplemental Cannabis Production report that showed the overall production value of cannabis at \$449,688,000 in 2019, putting it fifth in line of top crops.

The Monterey County Superior Court suspended planning for proposed court facility projects in Seaside and Greenfield as COVID-19 budget cuts led to the governor pulling funding for new courthouse construction while adding it hopes to reopen the old King City Courthouse in 2021, according to a letter the court sent to Supervisor Luis Alejo.

For the first time, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District formally expressed opposition to the California American Water desalination project, backing the proposed Pure Water Monterey recycled water project expansion instead as a replacement and not just a backup.

A trio of some of the most recognized restaurants in the region was sold to a Carmel husband-and-wife team with deep backgrounds in business operations and hospitality. Montrieo Bistro, Tarpy's Roadhouse and Rio Grill were sold by a three-partner restaurant group in Monterey to Ken and Mona Donkersloot.

The Del Rey Oaks Citizens Action Group teamed up with Safeway to giveaway 50 gift cards, each with a \$50 value, to Del Rey Oaks residents in need.

When the predicted local surge of coronavirus cases failed to materialize, Joby Aviation switched it's mega-tent at Marina Airport back to business operations. It was planned to accommodate up to 350 acute care hospital beds for "overflow" coronavirus patients exceeding local hospital capacity, along with other related services.

Robert Fish, whose photos brought stories in The Herald to life across four decades, died of cancer in Nova Scotia at age 73.

GEORGE FLOYD KILLING

Protests erupt throughout the nation

By Dennis L. Taylor

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Although this protest happened on May 30, it was the first of many throughout the county during June.

MONTEREY — Gail Ellis stood out in a light rain Saturday morning in Monterey, choking up at times as she described what went through her mind as she watched George Floyd die under the knee of a white police officer in Minneapolis.

The African-American resident of Seaside expressed sadness and frustration as she joined more than 300 other protesters on the lawn of Window on the Bay. Like Ellis, most of the protesters had seen the now ubiquitous video of Floyd, an unarmed Black man, taking his last breath with the police officer kneeling on his neck. "I had to be here," Ellis said. "I've become more and more depressed at home watching the killing of George Floyd. It's the first time in my life I've seen a life snuffed out."

Ellis has, however, seen first hand what happens when police action triggers a riot. She was 18 when a 1967 raid on an after-hours bar in a predominantly Black neighborhood of Detroit erupted into a riot that left 43 people dead, 1,189 injured and more than 2,000 buildings destroyed.

It started when police stormed an after-hours bar where people were celebrating the safe return of two soldiers from Vietnam. The justification was that the bar was unlicensed.

Protests in the U.S. over the killing of Floyd have spread to more than 30 cities with violence and destruction reported in many areas. But in Monterey, while the protesters were loud, they were also peaceful, chanting "black lives matter" and listening to speakers that included Monterey City Councilman Tyler Williamson, Seaside City Councilman Jon Wizard and Monterey County Supervisor Luis Alejo.

"The murder of George Floyd showed we are long overdue for a change to happen," Williamson said. "Things should be getting better but they are getting worse."

The crowd was diverse, reflecting the mix of races and ethnicities along the Monterey Peninsula. Many of the white protesters said it was important to show solidarity with people of color, including the Revs. Elaine and Axel Gehrman of the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Monterey Peninsula, both of whom are white.

"It's important for white people to stand up and address what's going on in this system," said Elaine Gehrman, who had a "End White Supremacy" button on her shirt. "I hope this inspires further action. A lot more has to be done to change the system."

"When something like this happens it diminishes our humanity and other people's lives," she said. Speaking to the crowd, Alejo cited other instances of police brutality against people of color, including the beating of a 14-year-old Black boy by a white police officer in Rancho Cordova in late April. "'I can't breathe' is happening over and over and over again," Alejo said. "If there is injustice there there is injustice everywhere."

Wizard, the Seaside councilman, questioned the need to spend \$40 million between Seaside and Monterey on police departments buying "rifles and tear gas."

"We need to stop funding police and invest in our communities," Wizard told the crowd. Williamson held up a bar graphic on a cell phone while describing where cuts are being made to the city of Monterey's budget. The library, recreation and museums



Protestors march along Monterey streets.- (Photos by David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent)

far outstripped any cuts to the police budget, which are minuscule. He warned the crowd that silence is often louder than words, and asked what would happen if a crowd of this size showed up at a city council meetings.

"We cannot wait for white America to solve these problems," he said. "We have to stand up for ourselves. The messages were being delivered to young and old and every age in between. Peninsula resident Dilan MacHardy brought his two young children, Luna and Finn.

"I saw the video and I just can't stand for that anymore," MacHardy, who is white, said. "It's really upsetting and the images are disturbing, but I've talked to my kids about it and I'm not shying away."

Meanwhile, Ellis, the Black Seaside resident, said that media coverage is important because it brings more intimacy to tragic events like the killing of Floyd. It reminded her of the 1960s when atrocities were happening daily in the south and most whites were complacent because they weren't seeing it. "But with the advent of TV, that all changed," she said. "After that, black and white united. It's my hope this protest will do the same."

Another major Monterey protest in June

On June 9, hundreds of protesters filled the lawn in front of Monterey City Hall with a unified message: enough is enough.

The peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstration filled the lawn area and forced scores of protesters across Pacific Avenue to find places to stand. But describing it as peaceful in no way belies the anger of people who represented an ethnic cross-section of Monterey County — blacks, whites, Asians and Latinos all carried signs decrying police brutality that most recently ended in the killing of George Floyd, a black man who died when a white police officer knelt on his neck for nine minutes.

Robert Daniels, a young black man from Seaside, said that without that kind of unity, nothing



Monterey police keep watch on a peaceful protest.- (Photos by David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent)

ing will change.

"We all need to come together," he said. "We need solidarity and interracial support." Support was exactly what Christine Riso turned out for. The white Monterey mother wore a T-shirt that read "He can't Breathe," slightly different from the now ubiquitous phrase "I can't breathe," which Floyd voiced as he was dying.

"As a Caucasian woman I'm here to support the Black Lives Matter movement in the background," she said, adding that people of color should be the ones everyone needs to listen to, but also whites can no longer stand by silent.

"If our neighbors are oppressed, it affects us all," she said.

None of the protesters the Herald spoke with singled out the Monterey Police Department, except to question why so much money is going to police instead of social services.

The police presence was minimal. Only four officers on bicycles were visible, although there was an additional police SUV parked about five blocks away on El Dorado Street. The bicycle officers said they had a very clear understanding of their role at the protest.

"We're here to help facilitate people to express their First

Amendment rights," one officer said. "We are not the enemy; we're here to help."

One unusual turn at the protest was a series of speakers, all dressed in black, who declined to identify themselves to the protesters and told the press not to bother asking them questions because they would not comment.

Hundreds of signs were held by protesters, reading everything from "No Justice, no Peace" to "Skin is Not Reasonable Suspicion." Many black protesters, while calling for racial unity, also said whites need to understand their privilege before they can understand what blacks face in America.

Willette Jones is a black woman who lives in Corral de Tierra. She's a small business owner, a mother of a son and a grandmother of two. She said she fears for her husband and son when they go out. She has taught her son that when he gets pulled over by police, and in all likelihood he will, he needs to be submissive and show absolutely no sign of resistance for his own safety.

"This can be a catalyst for change and it's heartwarming to see all these people, but it's also got wrenching that we are still having to deal with this," Jones said. "A mother shouldn't have to fear for her son. It's just time for this to stop."

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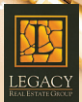
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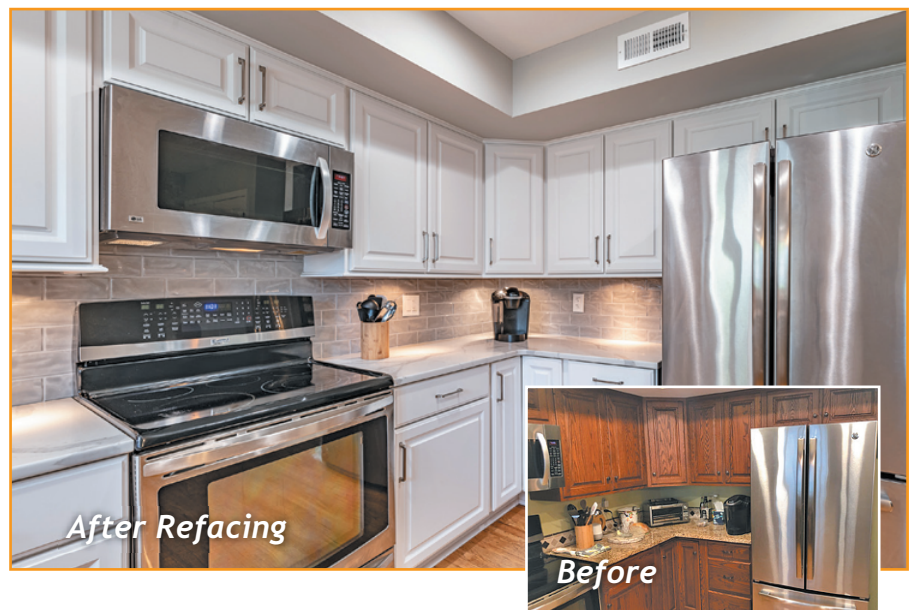
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TOP LOCAL STORIES

Sea Otter Classic one of first big events to cancel

As the pandemic began to raise its head, the Sea Otter Classic, the annual multi-discipline festival of amateur and professional cycling, became one of the first big events to adjust, postponing its mid-April event to October. But by July, and a new shelter-in-place order, it became apparent all would not be well come October. The Sea Otter Classic pulled the plug on this year's event. Similarly, the California Roots Music and Arts Festival that had been postponed to the fall from Memorial Day weekend was canceled as was August's Sand City's West End Celebration. Meanwhile, The Panetta Lecture Series was also delayed until the fall, but moved online.

Just days before its planned reopening, the Monterey Bay Aquarium had to postpone opening its doors following a new state mandate July 2 that requires certain sectors to remain closed.

Ralph Rubio had battled with liver cancer since mid-2014 but went on serving the city of Seaside as mayor for two more terms after that. At age 69, the life-long Seaside resident died.

The U.S. Small Business Administration released data from the Paycheck Protection Program showing businesses and nonprofits that received loans with most providing estimates of jobs retained. About 4,000 businesses in Salinas and on the Monterey Peninsula received about \$133 million in relief.

Unable to reach a deal with an association of former raceway volunteers, Laguna Seca management formed its own volunteer department and reached out to hundreds of people willing to help support the Weathertech Raceway Laguna Seca's major event season.

A little over two months after opening an alternate housing site for COVID-19 positive individuals, Monterey County closed the fairgrounds facility in Monterey.

The California Interscholastic Federation, the state's governing body for high school athletics, announced the fall sports season would be delayed until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic. A few days earlier, the California Community College Athletic Association Board of Directors had made a similar ruling for community college fall sports. Members of a state multi-agency COVID-19 enforcement "strike team" tasked with helping enforce business compliance with state health order guidelines came to Monterey County. The team made unannounced visits to local businesses, focusing on compliance education first with potential enforcement action afterward.

The Monterey County Office of Education announced all schools in Monterey County will start the academic year under distance learning in response to Gov. Gavin Newsom's guidance.

FOURTH OF JULY

Beaches close, parties change

By Dennis L. Taylor and Tom Wright

PACIFIC GROVE >> Monterey County closed all beaches in the county Fourth of July weekend following a coordinated effort among officials from local cities, the county and the state. And despite an influx of tourists coming to the Monterey Peninsula who were met with COVID-19 related beach closures over the extended Fourth of July weekend, law enforcement officials reported that there were no major issues.

Tourists and locals did have other options for Independence Day in town, including a drive and dine event Pacific Grove featuring live music, and a virtual fireworks show and drive-in movie at the Monterey Fairgrounds.

The cities of Pacific Grove, Carmel, Monterey and Pebble Beach Co. along with State Parks made the decision to close beaches due to health concerns about anticipated crowds, which traditionally visit local beaches during the holiday. The county said such crowding is a danger and can increase the spread of coronavirus in the local community and for people coming to visit and then returning to their communities. The decision came in the wake of a meeting involving County Administrative Officer Charles McKee, Monterey County Supervisor Mary Adams, the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, the California Highway Patrol and officials from other jurisdictions.

According to Acting Assistant Chief Mike Bruno, the Monterey Police Department issued no citations to people for not wearing face coverings and one person was cited Saturday evening for violating the city's beach closure. Monterey City Manager Hans Uslar said three people were cited over the weekend by nonsworn code compliance officers for violating the face-covering order. "In general, I think this was a very successful weekend with respect to the beach closure and the enforcement," Uslar said. "Over the three-day weekend, our code compliance team contacted more than 300 people or businesses. Most of the contacts we made were to warn people they weren't wearing their mask correctly or they had to put it back on after they had food in a restaurant or outdoor dining."

Uslar said many members of the public expressed gratitude to the code-compliance team for keeping them safe. Community service officers at Fisherman's Wharf and Cannery Row reported close to 100% compliance with the face-covering order. They handed out a little over 20 masks over two days. In addition to the nonsworn officers, five additional police officers were on duty Saturday and Sunday to enforce the beach closures. "I think the reporting on Friday about the incident in Carmel probably helped spread the word that the Monterey Peninsula is serious about beach closure enforcement and I think that probably helped to achieve almost 100% compliance over Saturday and Sunday," Uslar said. Carmel Police Chief Paul Tomasi said Santa Clara resident Jay



Because of COVID-19 restrictions the Independence Day celebration in Pacific Grove had a different look, with participants socially distanced and wearing masks (Photos by David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent).

Endsley, 59 was charged with resisting arrest and unauthorized access to an emergency area and Theresa Buccola, 54, of Carmel was charged with unauthorized access to an emergency area on Friday.

"Considering how busy it was and with the closure of the beach, Saturday and Sunday were pretty mild," Tomasi said. "As busy as it was Friday with people not understanding the beach closure, a little bit frustrated by it and people kind of going on the beach, once we got that under control by about 5 o'clock at night (Friday), the rest of the weekend was pretty mellow."

Carmel police got a couple of reports of illegal fireworks being shot off but none at the beach. In Pacific Grove, no citations were issued to people violating the beach closure or for any other violations related to the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order. Police responded to 13 calls for violations related to the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order such as the closure of the city's beaches and Lovers Point Park. Officers responded to 39 calls for illegal fireworks, as well as 12 parking complaints along Ocean View Boulevard and the nearby neighborhoods.

"It sounded like there were a lot of people here this weekend," said police services manager Jocelyn Francis. "State Parks had employees out enforcing the Asilomar area and the parking over there."

Brent Marshall, the Monterey District superintendent for State Parks, praised the cooperation among officials on the federal, state, county and city level in the area to keep the Peninsula safe over the holiday weekend. He said Supervisor Adams coordinated a multijurisdictional call to prepare for the weekend.

"We all got together and were coordinated to the best of our abilities," Marshall said.

Marshall said rangers gave warnings about the beach closures and State Parks did issue "a handful" of citations in the area over the weekend, but he did not have specific numbers. State Parks



(Monterey Herald file)

employees conducted over 250 preventative contacts to inform people thinking about getting into the water of the beach hazards advisory issued for the weekend, which warned the public about the likelihood of sneaker waves, strong rip currents and longshore currents running parallel to the beach. There were no critical incidents in the water over the weekend.

State Parks helped out on Highway 1 with vehicle code violations as well, Marshall said.

"I got down in Big Sur early, but coming back it was pretty crowded," he said. "There were obviously a lot of people from outside the area that did not listen to the governor's order to recreate locally." Marshall echoed Uslar's thinking that actions by Carmel police Friday helped spread the word about enforcement.

"I think that kind of set the tone for folks that there were areas that people could have limited activity and then there were areas that weren't available and people were a little more compliant," he said. "For the most part, it was a very different Fourth of July than people would expect but that's just the world we're living in right now."

Uslar noted tourists weren't the only ones being warned about the weekend's beach closures.

"We had two ATVs with two officers driving up and down Del Monte Beach and what they reported was that on Friday or Saturday they had more locals on the beach," he said. "Locals were saying, 'We thought this was just for out-of-towners,' of the beach closure. When patrol officers advised them this applies to everyone, they left the beach and were very compliant."

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TOP LOCAL STORIES

Monterey Conference Center became a temporary evacuation center

- Roughly 200 cots were set up in the Monterey Conference Center as it became a temporary evacuation center during the River and Carmel fires. Very few of those beds were used as people forced to leave their homes were able to be placed in local hotel rooms. Hans Uslar, Monterey city manager, added that many evacuees found housing with family and friends.
- The Dolan Fire burned through remote terrain in Big Sur and destroyed pens, a research building and other facilities used to release California condors for the past 23 years, a significant setback for the decades-long effort to restore the population of the endangered birds. The fire wiped out the 80-acre condor sanctuary run by the Ventana Wildlife Society, a nonprofit group based in Monterey. The site has been used since 1997 to release condors that have been raised in zoos and captive locations back into the wild. No condors or people were at the facility at the time of the fire, said Kelly Sorenson, executive director of the organization.
- With a new water supply delayed by state regulatory agencies and political infighting, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District board asked the state water board not to impose Carmel River water reductions due to an inevitable violation of an approaching river cutback order milestone and to start talks on extending the Dec. 31, 2021 deadline for full implementation of the order.
- Small businesses in Seaside affected by the COVID-19 pandemic were able to apply for loans from \$2,500 to \$5,000 through the city's business micro loan program. With no interest accruing, or payments being required until 90 days after the end of the COVID-19 Statewide Emergency Order all loans would have a 36-month repayment period with no penalty for prepayment or early payment. Interest would be a fixed rate of 3%.
- Carmel-based Friends of the Sea Otter, founded more than five decades ago by environmental pioneer and Big Sur resident Margaret Wentworth Owings, announced it has been absorbed into Defenders of Wildlife, a national nonprofit based in Washington, D.C. The long-time nonprofit advocate for sea otter preservation along the California coast closed its operations.
- Three cities along the Monterey Peninsula -- Monterey, Pacific Grove, Carmel -- adopted regulations requiring face coverings that will be enforceable by the equivalent of a traffic citation. As the school year starts, the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District announces it will offer free child care for teachers, staff.
- The city of Monterey launched an \$800,000 renter's assistance program.
- The Lightfighter Village project at the Veterans Transition Center in Marina has been awarded \$7.3 million by EAH Housing to help with the construction of the veteran-housing development. State officials reported the data glitch that caused the backlog of up to 300,000 test results, many of them for COVID-19, was fixed, but because of that Monterey County's coronavirus situation report data should be interpreted with caution.
- The Naval Postgraduate School announced it is part of a new \$42 million partnership to develop unmanned robotic apparatuses for the Department of Defense. Amid reports of large children's parties and planned wedding receptions as confirmed COVID-19 cases continued to rise, Monterey County's health officials and District Attorney's Office issued warnings about the use of bounce houses during parties and the prohibition on wedding receptions.

A WILD WEEKEND

Lightning, heat wave and wildfire

‘We haven’t seen lightning storms like this since 2008’

By David Kellogg
@dkellogg66 on Twitter

Editor’s note: By late August it seemed like all Monterey County was on fire or chocked with smoke. The River, Carmel and Dolan fires combined to burn about 182,000 acres. The River Fire was ignited by lightning on a Saturday night from a very eventful weekend in Monterey County.

MONTEREY >> From blackouts to lightning strikes to wildfires, Monterey County experienced quite a Saturday night and early Sunday morning the weekend of Aug. 16-17. At about 6:30 p.m. Saturday much of the Monterey Peninsula lost power as the state's grid operator directed PG& E to initiate rolling blackouts to save power as demand began to outpace supply. Power began to return to several local areas shortly before 8 p.m. The outages were expected to affect about 220,000 customers according to a release from PG& E. At around 1:30 a.m. Sunday, lightning could be seen off the coast and the system moved across the county, with lightning strikes presumably starting at least one fire in the area. National Weather Service meteorologist Steve Anderson said there were about 2,500 lightning strikes recorded during the Sunday storm. "It's very unusual to have this kind of lightning activity," Anderson said. "Thunderstorms usually roll through here in a matter of hours but this has been going on for hours ... We haven't seen lightning storms like this since 2008." By Sunday afternoon the county was again experiencing high temperatures and firefighters were working to contain the River Fire, at the end of Pine Canyon Road, about 5 miles south of Salinas near Toro Peak. Cal Fire received a report of the fire at 3:14 a.m. Sunday. By midmorning they had the 20-acre fire about 20 percent contained. According to a Cal Fire press release, the fire was ignited by a lightning strike. Power outage



Reader Guy Churchward watched the early morning electrical storm from Tehama as lightning illuminated the skies over Pebble Beach, Monterey, Pacific Grove and Del Rey Oaks. The storm ignited the River Fire. (Guy Churchwald -- Special to the Herald)

The California Independent System Operator declared a Stage 3 Electrical Emergency at 6:28 p.m. Saturday, "due to increased electricity demand, the unexpected loss of a 470-megawatt power plant, and loss of nearly 1,000 MW of wind power. The load was ordered back online 20 minutes later at 6:48 p.m., as wind resources increased," according to an ISO press release Saturday night. During a Stage 3 emergency, grid operators need to tap electricity reserves to balance the grid. Rotating power interruptions of about 470 MW were initiated across the state. Extreme heat throughout the West had increased electricity usage, causing a strain on the power grid. "We know how important it is to have access to reliable power during these times, and we are doing everything we can to limit

the impacts," Michael Lewis, interim president of PG& E, wrote in a news release. "Our team is working diligently to keep these rotating outages as short as possible, so that there is no further impact to the grid. We appreciate our customers' patience as we work to restore power to everyone this evening. We urge all of our customers to take immediate steps to reduce their power usage." About 220,000 customers in the Central Coast and Central Valley, including Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Joaquin counties, were expected to be impacted, PG& E said. The utility promised customers would not be impacted overnight, and said it had already restored power to some homes Saturday evening. The latest disruption comes after PG& E shut off power to 220,000 customers Friday, ini-

tiating state-mandated rotating outages for the first time since the 2001 electricity crisis that cost then-Gov. Gray Davis his job. On Saturday, PG& E pleaded with customers to conserve power through Wednesday. "We really need everybody to pitch in and do their part to adjust their use of energy," said PG& E spokeswoman Angela Lombardi. "So that means adjusting your thermostat to 78 degrees or higher, or turn it off when you're away. Draw the drapes. ... Avoid using electric appliances and devices and vacuuming until maybe 6 p.m." Severin Borenstein, faculty director of The Energy Institute at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business, worried whether the state will have enough power to meet continued high demand in the coming week. "Monday is definitely looking like a real concern," he said.

HEALTH

Smoke creates unhealthy conditions

By Tom Wright and James Herrera
Editor’s note: Wildfire smoke first became a problem in the wake of the River, Carmel and Dolan Fires breaking out, but then again because of changing weather patterns in early September the sky turned a strange orange color and air quality turned to worse in the following days.

SALINAS >> As the River Fire continued to burn near Mount Toro and another wildfire broke out a few miles from Carmel Valley Village, the Monterey Bay Air Resources District issued an air quality advisory warning people in the Monterey Bay area that air quality has been degraded. Richard Stedman, the air pollution control officer at the air resources district, said the air quality in Carmel Valley was into the unhealthy category. "It's sort of unusual considering how far the fire is from there but what's happening is the air pollution is making its way into the valley and it can't get out, so it's starting to build up over time," he said. "Typically, we see dispersion. It usually goes down south of us to San Luis Obispo, and it's pretty well dispersed by then, but in valley areas it concentrates and that's what we're seeing." Air quality in Carmel Valley dipped into the very unhealthy category. That probably was compounded by the Carmel Fire, which started in the area of Carmel Valley Road and Cachagua, about 3.5 miles southeast of Carmel Valley Village. "I imagine it's quite unpleasant in Carmel Valley right now," Stedman said. "That's stuff that Beijing probably sees on a regular basis but for us that's really unusual. We don't see air quality getting into the unhealthy levels except during wildfire events, the last being the Soberanes Fire."

The Soberanes Fire burned 132,127 acres and destroyed 57 homes in 2016. Like during that fire, people have reported ash falling from the sky in Carmel Valley and as far as North Salinas. The Monterey Bay Air Resources District has live data at air.mbard.org. Stedman said the monitors are set up for regulatory purposes and not for the detection of smoke from wildfires, so many areas do not have monitors. "The best advice that our advisory says is that if you see smoke, if you smell smoke and you're concerned about it, not to go outside and exercise or exert yourself outdoors," Stedman said. "Keep your children in, they shouldn't be playing outdoors." When indoors, you can limit exposure by closing your windows and turning on the air conditioner or an air filtration system. Don't vacuum, as that stirs up particles already inside your home, and don't smoke. "It's especially important that people avoid the smoke if they have COVID- 19 symptoms because this will only exacerbate any kind of restrictive airway disease," Stedman said. The air resources district is asking people to avoid adding more pollution to the air by limiting activities such as wood burning, driving, lawn mowing and leaf blowing, as well as limiting driving your car. **Smoke returns** The skies over the Monterey Peninsula and Salinas area Sept. 8 were an eerie orange hue, not surprising given the many wildfires raging throughout the state. Remarkably, though, air quality remained relatively good for both areas at first. "The smoke will limit daytime warming today," said Roger Gass, National Weather Service



A burned home in Pine Canyon in rural Salinas, a victim of the River Fire. (David Royal -- Monterey Herald correspondent)

meteorologist at the time. "The smoke keeps (the marine layer) from burning off or dissipating and is keeping it cooler." Though the landscape was covered with the blanket of cool, humid air with a thick mass of smoke stretched above that, the acrid smell of fire was absent. "In general the air quality is pretty good," said Richard Stedman, Monterey Bay Air Resources District air pollution control officer. "What we're probably seeing is there is a third dimension to the atmosphere and that's the level of pollution we measure toward the ground." Thanks to the onshore flow and marine layer, along with northerly winds in the upper atmosphere, the smoke from numerous Northern California fires were being kept aloft. The marine layer is kept from burning off due to the smoke layer above it and both work to obscure sunlight and tamp down temperatures. The onshore flow and lofty smoke leave people with good to moderate air to breathe. Gass said that even if the marine layer was taken out of the mix, skies would probably still be as dark from the thick blanket of smoke.

But with the blanket of smoke traversing high above the surface, its effects were seen and not smelled. "There is probably more pollution aloft and coupled with the heavy marine layer that we're getting we're probably seeing additional scattering or blockage of light so it looks pretty dark out there," said Stedman. "For the most part, the air that we are breathing is in pretty good shape." Stedman noted there have been times, as with the Soberanes Fire in 2016, when smoke was blown out over the ocean only to circle back onshore. That fire started in Garrapata State Park, raged for nearly three months, burning more than 130,000 acres. The U.S. Forest Service Air Quality Response Program said that communities along Highway 101 such as Salinas, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City, as well as Big Sur, Carmel Valley, and even Watsonville, could experience periods of unsafe-for-sensitive-groups air quality through Thursday. The Monterey Peninsula should experience good air over the same period.

TOP LOCAL STORIES

Thousands of people swarmed beaches

Thousands of people swarmed Monterey Peninsula beaches over Labor Day weekend, despite posted signs saying the shoreline was closed, resulting in exhausted staff and many police officers dealing with verbal abuse from the public. Carmel Police Chief Paul Tomasi said the scene there was “worse than Car Week,” with a rough estimate of 10,000 people converging on the seaside town.

Calling some findings by the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury “grossly inaccurate” and “outrageously false,” the city of Monterey hit back at the jury’s findings regarding sexual harassment training. Jurors aimed at how the city conducts its sexual harassment training for supervisors. It provided a half dozen findings that recommended the city take corrective action in the next 12 months. The city disputed all but one, and that one the city only partially agreed with.

The concerns of Pebble Beach caddies, as well as some other “gig economy” workers in California, over losing their independent contract classification, were officially calmed when Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law Assembly Bill 2257, legislation that modified previous law Assembly Bill 5, which attempted to determine whether certain workers were contractors or employees. The new modified version of the law not only officially keeps local Pebble Beach caddies as independent contractors, but also provides flexibility to those in employment fields ranging from freelance writers and translators to visual artists and musicians.

Crews broke ground on a CSU Monterey Bay student housing project in Marina that will include 12 townhomes offering a total of 68 new beds.

The legendary Monterey Jazz Festival put on a virtual version of the 63rd Annual festival on its YouTube channel featuring never-before-seen archival footage plus new performances made expressly for the event, interspersed with personal messages from the Festival’s family of artists, volunteers, patrons and board members.

Monterey Bay Community Power changed its name to Central Coast Community Energy as the agency expanded to include 33 jurisdictions ranging from Santa Cruz to Santa Barbara counties, including the addition of 11 entities such as Del Rey Oaks starting in 2021.

California State University decided classes will continue to be held online for the spring term that begins in January 2021, with fewer students living on campus than normal.

An estimated \$2 million in permit fees will be waived for property owners seeking to rebuild homes and other structures in the wake of the trio of wildfires that devastated rural areas of Monterey County.

WATER

Cal Am withdraws desal project permit

By Jim Johnson

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Editor’s note: Cal Am refiled a revised application in November which was subsequently deemed incomplete by commission staff in the latest setback for the star-crossed endeavor.

California American Water officials were worried they were headed toward losing a desalination project permit bid at the Coastal Commission when they decided to withdraw the permit application at the last minute before a scheduled special meeting.

But a top company official said Cal Am is not giving up on the project, which calls for constructing a 6.4-million-gallon-per-day desal plant and infrastructure as the central element of the proposed Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project aimed at offsetting the state water board’s Carmel River pumping cutback order.

Cal Am president Rick Svindland told The Herald that company officials decided they couldn’t risk losing based on the expressed levels of support and opposition for the desal project, and the prospect of an even lengthier delay.

“If we were to lose, it would add 10 years to the project,” Svindland said. “There was not enough comfort (in the outcome at the commission) to take a chance.” Instead, Svindland said company officials will try to reach an agreement with Marina city stakeholders and others who opposed the desal project addressing what he called the key issues — social and environmental justice — before re-submitting a desal project permit application, perhaps including a revised proposal, within a matter of months.

Svindland said the hope is to rely on the California Public Utilities Commission settlement process in an effort to resolve those issues among the key stakeholders and re-submit the application to the Coastal Commission within a few months. He said company officials have already called the CPUC, which approved the desal project in 2018, to ask for help in reaching out to all parties in the desal project settlement agreement to participate in talks.

It’s anyone’s guess whether desal project opponents will be receptive to any Cal Am overtures given the number of organizations and individuals lined up against the desal project proposal.

Marina city officials and the Public Water Now activist organization have both issued statements celebrating the desal project permit withdrawal and calling for Cal Am to pursue the Pure Water Monterey expansion proposal instead of desal. Cal Am notified Coastal Commission officials the afternoon before the hearing that they intended to withdraw the application after having given them a heads-up earlier in the day they might do so.

In a release, Svindland cited “many factors” in the decision



The CEMEX sand plant in Marina where slant wells are planned to feed a proposed desalination plant. (Photo courtesy of California Coastal Commission)

to withdraw the application including social and environmental justice issues involving the city of Marina and its lower-income customers, which commission staff had made one of the central focuses of its recommendation for denial.

“We recognize the social and environmental justice concerns and want to spend more time with Marina stakeholders on those issues, as well as with our own customers on our proposed enhanced customer assistance program. Because the commission must meet deadlines associated with the (state) Permit Streamlining Act, withdrawing and refilling our application is the best way to allow more time for these things to occur.”

Svindland added that company officials felt the decision to withdraw and refile is in the “best interests of our customers and increases the likelihood of receiving the permits necessary to construct the project.”

He added that company officials had already reached out to inform state water board officials about the move and argue that it “supports our intent to decrease pumping on the (Carmel River) as quickly as possible while ensuring our customers have an adequate water supply.”

Svindland noted that Cal Am officials had already notified the state water board that it would miss both the Sept. 30 milestone and the Dec. 31, 2021, deadline for the river cutback order, and argued that the delay was not the company’s fault.

He acknowledged that commission staff had first raised concerns last year about social and environmental justice issues, and had repeatedly advised Cal Am to withdraw its application to allow more time to resolve key desal project issues, but said it

only recently convinced company officials.

Svindland said Thursday that Cal Am could probably “squeak by” with enough water to supply its Monterey-area customers for the time being given the decrease in water demand even with the river cutback order, but said that assumes the Pure Water Monterey recycled water project is providing its full promised 3,500 acre-feet of water per year and includes the prospect of emergency rationing during parts of the year. He added that a parallel pipeline would also be needed to pump both recycled water and aquifer storage and recovery water simultaneously.

Pure Water Monterey, which began operating earlier this year, is not expected to be capable of reaching its promised 3,500 acre-foot per year capacity until the end of 2021.

Asked about pursuing the Pure Water Monterey expansion proposal, which is designed to offer an additional 2,250 acre-feet per year but is largely stalled after the Monterey One Water board narrowly declined to certify a supplemental environmental analysis for the project, Svindland said only “It has issues, too.” Cal Am officials have long argued the expansion would not provide an adequately sized and reliable supply. They would have to sign a water purchase agreement for the expansion project to ultimately move ahead to construction.

In its statement, the city of Marina praised the commission staff’s analysis of the desal project and its repeated recommendations for denial, arguing that the desal project didn’t qualify for required exemptions from the Coastal Act and the city’s Local Coastal Program due to the presence of a feasible alternative in

the recycled water expansion, and other reasons.

Marina Mayor Bruce Delgado said city officials knew Coastal Commission staff were closely examining the proposal on “issues of enormous importance to Californians” including environmental justice, water use, habitat protection, sealevel rise and public access to the coast, and found it lacking.

“It was obvious that the proposed groundwater extraction and desalination project is fatally flawed because of unacceptable impacts in those areas,” Delgado said, and called for Cal Am to instead “move forward quickly and coalesce around a more immediate, affordable, and environmentally acceptable water supply solution” in the Pure Water Monterey expansion.

Public Water Now noted that the commission had been inundated by “hundreds” of letters from Peninsula and Marina residents and organizations opposed to the desal project, as well as letters from state Assemblyman Mark Stone, Supervisor Mary Adams and 25 local elected officials.

Cal Am spokeswoman Catherine Stedman noted that Marina stakeholders in the past have indicated an interest in receiving a portion of the desal product water or owning a portion of the desal project. Stedman said Cal Am had already offered a customer assistance program as part of proposed conditions of approval at the commission that included a 50% discount for lower-income customers.

While the application withdrawal only affected a consolidated coastal development permit, and Cal Am’s appeal of Marina city’s denial of a coastal development permit for a desal project well field at the CEMEX sand mining plant site remains active, Svindland said the commission has effectively combined the issues into one.

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TOP LOCAL STORIES

Monterey County businesses cited for violating orders

Nearly a dozen citations were issued to Monterey County businesses by county health officials in October for violating the county's face covering order, but only after a lengthy "outreach and education" effort. Seven businesses were cited, some more than once, for failing to require staff and customers to wear face coverings in their establishments after multiple visits by county Environmental Health Bureau inspectors starting in September. Five of the seven receiving citations were restaurants and other food facilities, while a barbershop and a gym also were cited.

While the California Department of Public Health issued guidance and allowed playgrounds in the state to reopen, cities around the Monterey Peninsula took varied approaches to reopening play structures for children.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency published import requirements for romaine lettuce grown in the Salinas Valley in a move that perplexed local leaders because it wasn't clear why it was issued when there were no illness-related issues.

Monterey Bay Aquarium Executive Director Julie Packard testified to the California Assembly about the inequities in the state's tiered system of restrictions and the effect it was having on the Aquarium and Monterey County tourism.

After conducting interviews with five finalists, the Monterey Peninsula Community College District board announced Saturday it selected interim Superintendent/President David Martin for the permanent position.

County officials approved a general plan amendment with a community climate action plan with even stricter greenhouse gas reduction goals reflecting new state targets.

In a critical step for the proposed public takeover of California American Water's Monterey-area water system, the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District's board of directors certified the final environmental impact report for the effort.

Two iconic structures in the oldtown district of Salinas — the Dick Bruhn and Greyhound Bus Station buildings — were sold by Gerry Kehoe's Berkley Inc. to Bruce Taylor's Taylor Fresh Foods, for \$2.15 million and \$1.35 million respectively.

For 6-year-old Isabella Paredes, two of her favorite things in the whole wide world came true one day in October when three Monterey police officers dressed as princesses showed up in front of her house to wish her a happy birthday.

VETERANS

Military vets become vocal

By Dennis L. Taylor

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Editor's note: Several thousand disc golf players in the region started a petition in December asking the city to develop a temporary site use agreement with the Monterey Stinging Jellies disc golf club so play can continue at Ryan Ranch. The petition is also calling for a longer-term agreement as well for the city to rescind its demand to remove baskets and other equipment.

MONTEREY >> A group of military veterans — some disabled — is becoming vocal about what they perceive as the city of Monterey working to force them out of a controversial disc golf course above the Ryan Ranch office park.

In early October, 39-year-old James Bodine was hanging out at the disc golf course, sandwiched between Monterey Disposal Service and an office complex overlooking the ridgeline east of the Monterey-Salinas Highway. The former U.S. Navy gunner's mate has played disc golf, in part, as physical therapy following shrapnel injuries to his legs and a traumatic brain injury.

In 2004 he served aboard the U.S.S. Antietam, a guided-missile cruiser assigned to maritime interdiction off the coast of Iraq. The mission was to board vessels suspected of moving contraband in or out of Iraqi waters. Bodine's last boarding was onto an oil tanker designated as Alpha 117 that erupted into a massive explosion on the superstructure, leaving Bodine with shrapnel wounds and a brain injury from the concussion of the explosion.

"Back in San Diego my chiropractor got me into playing," Bodine said. "I just fell in love with it."

He's part of a disc-golf veterans' group called the "Outlaws." As he stood on the first tee with his Frisbee-like disc in hand he described what the course looked like several years ago, saying it "was the Pebble Beach of disc-golf courses."

Behind him, in what used to be a course parking lot, piles of sludge the city dredged from waterways in preparation for the upcoming rainy season were dumped in rows. A large front-loader was parked next to the piles. People wanting to use the course today tend to park along a driveway of the neighboring office building.

Monterey Community Development Director Kimberly Cole said the city is using the parking area to temporarily hold the sludge but it will be removed and taken to a landfill when the projects are completed.

"It is more efficient to use this approach and is needed to minimize future flooding," she said. The course used to be recognized nationally, particularly since 2011 when it hosted the Professional World Disc Golf Championships. Since then the course has been home to several



A group of veterans has been working to try and reopen the Ryan Ranch disc golf course. (Dennis L. Taylor — Monterey Herald)

official Professional Disc Golf Association tournaments.

Therein lies the problem. Play was suspended in the 75-acre park when the city learned the course and parking area was not in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The city became aware of the problem in 2017 when it wanted to put in a solar array on the property.

The city halted disc golf because it was a facility installed by a nonprofit group that was not accessible to persons with disabilities.

"We can't offer new programs without it being accessible," Cole said.

The city had been looking at funding upgrades through its Neighborhood Improvement Program, but this year the COVID-19 generated fiscal crisis along with significant budget cuts puts any improvements on the back burner until the economy climbs out of the hole.

"The city is liable for any program on city property that is not compliant with accessibility regulations," Cole said. "The club was also hosting periodic competitions that were not accessible."

The club Cole referred to is the Monterey Stinging Jellies, which called the park their home course, based on an informal agreement with the city Parks and Recreation Department. The lack of ADA accommodations, in turn, prompted a deeper look at what was needed



(Monterey Herald file)

for such a program to operate on city property.

The "Outlaws" golf club grew out of the Stinging Jellies, Bodine said.

Walking through the course it appears there are places, such as the third tee, that are so steep that short of an elevator it would be impossible to construct any sort of ADA compliant access without wholesale changes to the course.

Meanwhile, the course is falling into disrepair. Some of the metal netting and baskets that serve as "holes" for the discs are missing. Wooden stairs at

the third tee have been removed by the city and stacked behind the tee. Even signs that announce the name of the course are becoming weather-beaten with peeling paint and fading lettering.

There is another course in the area at CSU Monterey Bay. But it's closed as is most of the rest of the campus because of COVID-19. Besides, players say, that course had too many restrictions and does not have the layout and aesthetic appeal of the Ryan Ranch course. Back at the first tee, Bodine stands and points out over the verdant landscape. "It's simply beautiful,"

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RIBBONS

Trash

TOP LOCAL STORIES

Osio Cinema and Cafe Lumiere shut down

■ Despite gallant efforts and loyal followers, the Osio Cinema and the attached Cafe Lumiere in downtown Monterey were shut down, victims of the recession caused by wide-spread infection rates in Monterey County.

■ Waste Management’s upgraded smart garbage trucks started making their rounds in unincorporated areas of the county as well as King City photographing the contents of recycling and yard waste bins to document cases of overfilled bins and contaminated waste. Violators were then warned and would eventually be fined if violations continued.

■ The Last Chance Mercantile store at the Monterey Regional Waste Management District facility announced a reopening plan, and the district issued a request for qualifications to find an organization willing to partner in running it.

■ Seaside’s City Council suspended the ban on all types of fireworks after a referendum petition successfully gathered signatures against the city’s ordinance.

■ Residents in and near the impacted areas of the River, Carmel and Dolan fires, as well as many others throughout California, breathed easier as State Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara issued a mandatory one-year moratorium on insurance companies non-renewing or canceling residential property insurance policies.

■ The Thanksgiving Western Monarch Count began Nov. 14, but no monarchs were spotted at the Pacific Grove Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary before Thanksgiving. The diminishing number of monarchs counted in the west was expected to be particularly low in 2020.

■ Traditional Thanksgiving meal events for the homeless and others shifted from a sit-down meal to organizations offering pickup of feasts because of the pandemic.

■ A few days before Thanksgiving, a local private testing company and the Monterey County Health Department confirmed an increase in the number of people seeking COVID-19 testing, speculating that people wanted to make sure they test negative before visiting relatives.

■ CNN ran a feature on students from Palma School in Salinas working with inmates at the Correctional Training Facility, a state prison in Soledad, in a literature program. The filming occurred just before the onset of the pandemic.

■ A top State Water Resources Control Board administrator strongly encouraged Cal Am to “resolve disputes” and pursue water supply solutions for the Monterey Peninsula while pointing out that the Carmel River aquifer pumping cutback order deadline at the end of next year is approaching with no additional water supply project expected to be operational by then.

ELECTION

Local election follows early trends

By Jim Johnson, Dennis Taylor and James Herrera

Editor’s note: Almost 166,000 votes were cast in Monterey County, a more than 80% turnout. When the vote was certified at the end of November, the final results fell in line with the early results reported by the Herald election night.

MONTEREY -- Monterey Peninsula Unified School District board member and county supervisorial aide Wendy Root Askew continued to hold a substantial lead the morning after election day over Salinas City Councilman and small business owner Steve McShane in the race for Monterey County District 4 supervisor.

Out of 26,090 votes cast, Askew led by more than 1,800 votes, collecting 13,963 votes for about 53.5% to McShane’s 12,127 votes or about 46.5%. She had a slightly larger lead in the first returns on Tuesday night.

Incumbent District 4 Supervisor Jane Parker’s handpicked successor, Askew said she was pleased with the advantage.

“I’m feeling good; it was an incredibly competitive campaign,” Askew told The Herald Tuesday night, but declined to declare her lead insurmountable while saying that “every voter deserves to have their vote counted.”

The District 4 race was by far the most expensive in county supervisorial history as the candidates combined to raise more than \$1.4 million for their campaigns — most of it by McShane, the landscaping business owner who raised about \$987,000 by himself.

The 2016 District 4 supervisor race featuring another Salinas official challenging for the seat, Parker beat former mayor Dennis Donohue for a third term on the county board in a race that exceeded \$500,000 in combined campaign fundraising.

McShane told The Herald Tuesday night that he was still holding out hope that a strong get-out-the-vote effort targeting “lower propensity” voters would lead to a big enough edge in the remaining votes to be counted to lift him past Askew.

“I knew from the beginning it was going to be a nail-biter,” he said. “This race will take a while to finish.”

McShane said he was “very proud” of the campaign he ran and also praised Askew for sticking to what he called a positive contest.

Askew said she was proud of the number of volunteers and supporters backing her campaign, which she said made the difference, and told a dozen or so of them on an Election Night Zoom call that she would need their help at the Board of Supervisors “so our collective voices are heard.”

If Askew ends up winning, she will join a Board of Supervisors that has been divided on key issues in recent years, with her boss Parker often joining District 5 Supervisor Mary Adams on the short end of 3-2 votes against a regular majority voting bloc of



Election workers prepare ballots for counting (David Royal -- Monterey Herald file)

current county board chairman Chris Lopez, and Supervisors John Phillips and Luis Alejo.

In the March primary, Askew beat McShane by more than 10%, collecting 8,710 votes out of 19,122 cast for 45.55% compared to McShane’s 6,888 votes or just under 35%, with both advancing to a runoff in the presidential general election.

Monterey voters seemed pleased with the work the Monterey City Council is doing, returning two incumbents and the mayor for new terms.

Councilman Dan Albert, the top vote-getter in the field of five in early returns with 30.6% of the vote, said he believes voters saw what was going on with the pandemic and the council’s response to it, including the pounding businesses are taking with the county shelter-in-place mandate.

“Voters can see the current council is trying to get our city back on track,” he said. “And with the experience of this council, they know we are better able to do that.” Five council candidates were vying for two open seats.

Alan Haffa, who was returned to his third term on the dais after garnering 29% of the early vote — 14 points ahead of the next-place finisher Gabriela Chavez — said he believes voters saw him as part of a well-oiled machine that is making progress on daunting challenges.

“I believe it’s a statement that the public is pleased with the work of the council is doing,” he said. “People understand that COVID has affected the city and that the council has responded to it in as an effective way as possible.



Voting at the Monterey County Election Office. (David Royal -- Monterey Herald file)

People appreciate that we work together.”

Mayor Clyde Roberson easily won reelection with 62% of the early vote compared to challenger Timothy Barrett’s 38%. Roberson said he’s glad the three months of worrying is over and is grateful to voters, saying it was a referendum on how everyone on the council is working together. “I think it shows voters have confidence with our team, with Alan and Dan easily winning,” Roberson said Tuesday night. “Our teamwork showed that we are putting Monterey first before ourselves.”

Another big winner was Measure Y, which will increase the city’s hotel tax beginning Jan. 1. Measure Y was passed by a margin of 73.9% to 26.1% with very few ballots left to count. And it needed to win big. Measure

Y is considered a special tax because 16% of the revenue will go to a specific fund for neighborhood improvements, so it had to garner two-thirds of votes to win approval “I’m very grateful to voters,” Roberson said. “Measure Y cements our solvency once we get past COVID.”

The hotel tax — technically a transient occupancy tax — will increase the rate charged to hotel guests from 10% to 12% that would generate up to \$5.6 million for city coffers at a time when the city is scrambling to fill holes in its budget.

Carmel mayor Dave Potter and Seaside mayor Ian Oglesby also both won re-election races. Kimbley Craig won the race for Salinas mayor. Voters also approved an increase in sales tax in Pacific Grove and approved a bond for Monterey Peninsula College.



Pandemic. Recession. Wildfire. What more can be said about 2020, that hasn’t already been said? As I look back on the past year, I am less amazed at the mega events that rocked our nation, state, and local economy, than in how Monterey-Salinas Transit was able to rise to the challenges while providing essential mobility services and community support well outside of what we once considered normal. The elected officials who comprise the board of directors for Monterey-Salinas Transit and the committed professionals working behind the wheel, turning the wrench, or in front of a desktop workstation joined together to plan, implement, and deliver programs targeted to the recovery of the whole community.

The creativity, focus, and determination unleashed by Team MST in our response and recovery efforts was unparalleled. In fact, MST has received local, state, national, and international recognition for the many ways we stepped up and supported employees, passengers, and the community, installing protective barriers on all MST buses; providing Wi-Fi equipped buses to rural and underserved areas of our county to assist remote learning; donating buses to local nonprofits for uses as diverse as taking the homeless to shelters and services, or conversion into mobile COVID-19 testing stations for farmworkers; implementing a contactless fare payment option, and providing the safe evacuation of elderly and disabled members of our community threatened by wildfires.

Our team completed the financing and started construction of our South County Operations and Maintenance Facility creating hundreds of local jobs when they were needed most and continued the preliminary design of the innovative SURF! Busway & Bus Rapid Transit Project along Highway 1. And while all this was occurring, we continued to make good on our promise to deliver safe, dependable, and convenient mobility services throughout the region.

Really the only things left to say about 2020 is that I will be glad when it’s all over, and that I will look back in admiration and awe at the many accomplishments of Team MST during this strangest of years!

Stay positive and test negative.

Carl Sedoryk
General Manager/CEO



TOP LOCAL STORIES

Unemployment benefits fraud scheme

- According to local investigators, 72 local jail inmates are being actively investigated and more than 100 inmates are considered suspects in what they called a “widespread” unemployment benefits fraud scheme. Hundreds of thousands or even millions of unemployment claims under the state Employment Development Department’s pandemic relief program may have been paid to inmates or their accomplices who are not eligible to receive them. The investigation was triggered months ago by overheard phone calls involving local jail inmates talking about receiving unemployment benefits. The local investigation mirrors similar investigations of unemployment fraud involving thousands of state prison inmates and local jail inmates in dozens of California counties announced by a team of district attorneys.
- The California Interscholastic Federation announced it was postponing the return of high school fall sports until Jan. 1 because of the rising number of COVID-19 cases. Meanwhile, the California Collegiate Athletic Association, which includes CSU Monterey Bay, canceled its winter and spring sports seasons.
- A first phase of the long-awaited Highway 156 corridor improvement project is fully funded and ready for construction after being approved for \$20 million in state gas tax funding by the California Transportation Commission. The funding was part of a \$2 billion package approved for 56 projects across the state aimed at federally designated trade corridors of national and regional significance with a “high volume of freight movement” such as Highway 156, which supports the county’s \$4.4 billion per-year agricultural industry by serving a key route for truck traffic.
- New DNA evidence brought about the dismissal of a criminal case against a Carmel Valley man charged with causing an automobile crash that resulted in the death of a young Salinas mother. Results from a DNA analysis of the passenger-side airbag, pending since January, proved that Jacques Martine Clarke, 19, was not the driver of the car that caused the collision and death of Rosie Ann Figueroa, 38, who died of multiple blunt force trauma within minutes of the accident.
- Rep. Jimmy Panetta, D-Carmel Valley, was appointed chief deputy whip for the 117th Congress by Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-South Carolina.
- Spectators will not be permitted at February’s AT& T Pebble Beach Pro-Am because of COVID-19 restrictions. Tournament officials said decision needed to be made by early December because of construction needed to build infrastructure, such as grandstands, for the tournament.

CORONAVIRUS

Vaccinations begin on Peninsula

By Dennis L. Taylor
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MONTEREY >> The COVID-19 vaccination process began on the Peninsula Dec. 18 as Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula started to inoculate frontline health care workers.

The shots were being administered based on the risk level — doctors, nurses, respiratory therapists and other providers who are or could be in direct contact with patients being treated for COVID-19. All the hospitals were following state guidelines on administering the vaccines.

Community Hospital, Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital and Natividad hospital received an initial 975 doses each of the Pfizer vaccine, called Pfizer-BioNTech. Pfizer partnered with German company BioNTech to develop and test the vaccine. A clinical trial demonstrated that the vaccine has an efficacy rate of 95% against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

This particular vaccine requires two doses. Medical staff at local hospitals will need to receive a second dose in about three weeks.

When a person receives the vaccine, their body produces copies of a spike protein on the surface of the virus. The copies do not cause disease, but they trigger the immune system to learn to produce an immune response against the virus.

The Monterey County Health Department receives allocations from the state, said Karen Smith, a spokesperson for the department. Based on established priorities, the department will then decide where the vaccines go.

The county received an allocation of 2,975 doses of the Pfizer vaccine in trays of 975. Since this vaccine requires ultracold storage, the decision was made to have the Pfizer shipment go directly to the three hospitals with ultracold freezers.

The shipment comes directly from the manufacturer, Smith said.

Dr. Steven Packer, president and chief executive of Montage Health, said in a statement that he considered receiving the doses a “privilege” in light of the great need for vaccinations for high-risk individuals or those within essential businesses. Montage Health is the parent company of Community Hospital.

“We look forward to vaccinating most of our workforce so they can be protected and continue to care for patients in our community,” he said.

The decision to inoculate health care workers is born out in the numbers. To date, 94 members of Community Hospital staff have tested positive for COVID-19, according to Heather Bowers, the hospital’s infection prevention coordinator. This rate is lower than the general population compared with the county positivity rate, she said And like all hospitals in the state, Community Hospital’s patient load is up. As of Dec. 18, there were 34 patients being treated for COVID-19. Of concern statewide



Phlebotomist David Gonzalez receives the COVID-19 vaccine at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula Friday. (COURTESY MONTAGE HEALTH)

is the number of intensive care beds available for the sickest of the patients. According to the California Department of Public Health, only 2.1% of the state’s ICU beds remain available. Community Hospital has 10 intensive care unit patients and six open beds.

“Should we exceed capacity in the ICU, we have surge plans to treat ICU level patients in other areas of the hospital,” said Monica Scuito, a spokeswoman for the hospital, noting that those numbers fluctuate daily. “It is likely there is higher risk of COVID-19 exposure in the community as opposed to the health-care setting due to environmental controls, source control, ongoing education, proper use of appropriate PPE, and regular symptom screening of all who enter any facility.”

Community Hospital’s plan is to vaccinate its entire workforce based on a tier system that is prioritized according to the level of risk inherent in the different roles, Scuito said.

Over at Salinas Valley Memorial Hospital, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Allen Radner received the first of its 975 vaccinations Dec. 17 followed by emergency room nurses, respiratory therapists, nurses in the COVID-19 unit and physicians specializing in critical care and infectious disease.

And Dr. Gary Gray, the chief executive of neighboring Natividad Medical Center in Salinas, said its 975 dose allotment will begin wide-scale vaccinations for its



Vials of the Pfizer vaccine at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. (Courtesy CHOMP)

staff on Saturday. Salinas Valley Memorial Health-care System CEO Pete Delgado said receiving the doses was an important milestone in protecting front-line providers who “have put their own lives at risk” to care for patients.

“The vaccine provides relief and hope but we know there are months ahead in which masking and social distancing remain essential behavior to get us through this crisis,” Delgado said. “For now though, let’s celebrate the moment.”


Health care providers and

skilled nursing facility residents and staff are still being vaccinated said Karen Smith, a spokesperson for the county health department on Dec. 22. “Next will be more essential workers.”

Smith said the COVID-19 vaccination campaign has officially begun in Monterey County and is following a prioritized framework in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the California Department of Public Health guidance.

CARMEL GIVES 2020 WIN/WIN PROJECTS

- Worked with Carmel restaurants to deliver thousands of nutritious meals to the Carmel Unified School District which were distributed to families in need.
- Acquired a total of 400 - \$50 gift cards from 40 local restaurants which were distributed by the Monterey Fire Department to families displaced by fires.
- Made a significant donation to the family of a fallen Santa Cruz police officer.
- Funded four out-of-work local seamstresses who made 3,000 beautiful, high-quality “Made in Carmel-by-the-Sea” cloth face masks which were distributed at no cost through 20 local businesses.
- Acquired electric landscaping tools for the City of Carmel. This increased the productivity and flexibility of their crew following budget cutbacks.
- Donated to Rancho Cielo to buy 500 veggie boxes that were distributed to Boys & Girls Club families, the Carmel Foundation, City staff and first responders.
- Donated to the Weston Call fund for Big Sur to assist with the Dolan fire.
- Funded Carmel Cares volunteers and professionals to refresh the Forest Theater by cleaning and staining the seating area and landscaping, replacing an inoperable roll-up counter door and installing a completely new front gate.
- Acquired a John Deere Gator utility vehicle with 100-gallon electric-powered water tank to increase the productivity of the City’s forester and allow volunteers to water plants and trees. It can be filled in 60 seconds with the City’s free water supply.
- Funded a local designer to produce a safer and more attractive parklet design for local restaurants.
- Helped fund the mask and social distancing banners down Ocean Avenue.
- Funded acquisition of 300 pumpkins from a Farmer’s Market vendor to enable the City’s “Pumpkins on Parade” Halloween community event.
- Donated to Dentistry4Vets to support their efforts to provide free dental services.
- Donated to the Big Sur Fund for firefighters injured in the Dolan Fire.
- Funded professional landscaping companies to assist Carmel Cares to beautify areas around town using donations specifically given for that purpose.
- Funded Sunset Center’s Christmas Tree in their main lobby.
- Acquired 15 - iPhone 12 Pro mobile phones for the Carmel Police Department.
- Funded a large room divider at the Seaside Boys & Girls Club to create socially distanced classrooms.
- Acquired a sidewalk cleaning machine for the City of Carmel.
- Provided significant funding to the Carmel Chamber of Commerce as part of our partnership with them.
- Donated and received matching funds to the Boys & Girls Club’s Adopt a Family program.
- Created and funded a program for Carmel restaurants to provide nutritious meals to nonprofits, churches and other organizations on the Peninsula.



Your family's health
and safety are the most
important things right now

That's why
they are our
top priority

8 WAYS TO KEEP YOUR FAMILY SAFE

1. Stay healthy

Keep up with your regular appointments. Natividad and most clinics and doctors are offering video and phone appointments so you can get the medical care you need from home. To find out more or to make an appointment, call us at (831) 755-4111.

2. Get urgent care if you need it

Delaying emergency treatment could worsen symptoms or result in a life-threatening situation. Natividad is doing everything to keep you safe. People who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 are treated in areas separate from other patients.

3. Eat healthy

It is easy to turn to comfort food, but it is more important now to eat for health. Get your kids involved with easy recipes like making tostadas so the whole family can eat well together.

4. Talk with your children

Take a 20-minute walk with your children every day. This is a good time to listen and learn more about what they enjoy and any worries they might have. When they feel more secure, they may be less anxious or depressed.

5. Do physical distancing, not social distancing

You can stay in touch with your friends and family through phone calls or apps like FaceTime or Zoom. Let the kids have a virtual playdate – but don't let them browse the internet unsupervised.

6. Wear a cloth face covering or mask in public

Make sure to wash and dry reusable masks and dispose of single-use masks after using. Children under 2 should not wear masks. Do not touch your child's face with unwashed hands, and always wash hands before and after putting your mask on.

7. Get outside

Spend some time outside every day – you can play games like tag or hide-and-seek to move around. Regular exercise helps reduce screen time and gives you and your family a break.

8. Make your home safe

Safely store cleaning products or dangerous chemicals. Keep guns out of the home or be sure they are locked and unloaded, with ammunition stored separately. Other weapons like knives should be locked and out of children's reach.

NATIVIDAD CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE (831) 772-7365

As your partner in health, Natividad is always here for you.

If you have questions or think you need to get tested for COVID-19,
call us and speak with a bilingual nurse today.

