

The Carmel Pine Cone

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Rock slides cleared from Highway 1 in Big Sur

By CHRIS COUNTS

HIGHWAY 1 in Big Sur was reopened late Wednesday afternoon after wet weather last weekend triggered several rock slides that closed parts of the scenic route for five days. But motorists can expect delays of up to 10 minutes at one critical site where Caltrans workers are making repairs.

By Sunday, the highway was closed between Grimes Point and Ragged Point, a distance of roughly 30 miles. But by Monday, only a 2-mile stretch, from Big Creek to Dolan Point, was off-limits to vehicles.

According to Caltrans, the closure was necessary "to allow for crews to clean up storm debris and repair damaged rock netting."

'Areas of concern'

Geotechnical engineers arrived Dec. 5 to assess the damage. An initial assessment Sunday revealed "dozens of areas of concern" along "the entire length of the closure area."

Road workers were also on site, to repair a damaged rock barrier, and removed rocks and debris from the pavement.

The National Weather Service's Monterey office reported that over the past month, 7.31 inches of rain fell in Big Sur Valley, while 8.63 inches were recorded atop Anderson Peak. Monterey airport reported 1.57 inches during the same

period.

More moisture is on the way. According to the National Weather Service, rain is expected to fall throughout this coming weekend.

"We have two rounds of rain coming through Friday and Saturday, with Saturday's being bigger," meteorologist Roger Gass told The Pine Cone.



PHOTO/COURTESY CALTRANS

A bulldozer clears rocks from Highway 1 in Big Sur, where slides from recent rains closed a portion of the scenic route. The road reopened Wednesday.

Police station remodel back on back burner

By MARY SCHLEY

DESPITE THE urgency council members expressed in March to make the 54-year-old police station livable for the officers and staff who work there — and the allocation of more than \$3 million to the remodel — the council decided Tuesday to set the whole thing aside and appoint a committee to take another look.

Several years of push-pull over the project and its scope through various iterations of the council led to plans finally being approved in November 2019, only to have construction bids come in over budget in June 2020. With the coronavirus pandemic in full swing, the council scrapped the project along with almost all other capital work planned for that year.

Plans resurrected

But in March, the council resurrected the 2019 plans, including removing asbestos, installing an ADA-accessible restroom, turning a "marginally used restroom" into a copier and office-supply area, replacing furniture and equipment in the dispatch area, installing new evidence lockers, and reconfiguring the emergency operations center in the basement as a multipurpose room and command center. Heating, ventilation, electrical, boiler and "air handling" systems would be brought up to code, and new fire sprinklers would be installed. Council members then asked for a new emergency operations center, renovated locker rooms and EV charging stations, too.

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CAL AM WON'T SIGN OFF ON PWM EXPANSION

■ Says PUC will not let it recoup costs

By KELLY NIX

THE GROUP advocating for a government takeover of California American Water blasted the company this week for refusing to help pay for the expansion of a wastewater recycling project near Marina. But Cal Am said the

terms of the deal would prevent it from recouping the cost to deliver water from the plant to its customers.

The California Public Utilities Commission on Dec. 1 OK'd an expansion of Pure Water Monterey, a project near Marina that transforms wastewater into drinking water for Cal Am's Monterey Peninsula customers. But on Tuesday, Cal Am informed the CPUC that it would not agree to the augmentation plan. Expanding the project would allow it to produce more than 40 percent more water for Monterey Peninsula customers.

'Urgently needed'

Cal Am's refusal to agree to the expansion, which cannot proceed without its signature, angered Public Water Now, an anti-Cal Am group that wants a takeover of the investor-owned company's local system.

"Everyone wonders if Cal Am will ever sign this agreement," Public Water Now managing director Melodie Chrislock said Wednesday. "Cal Am's greed is the

See **PWM** page 19A

Why'd they remove the mailboxes?



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

REGULAR USERS of the U.S. Post Office on Via Nona Marie were startled at the end of November to discover that the three blue mailboxes that enabled motorists to drop off mail were gone.

"Do you have any idea why the three mail collection boxes outside the post office location on Via Nona Marie have been removed?" one reader wrote to The Pine Cone. "Now, to drop off mail, you must exit your car and go inside the post office."

The reader speculated that the boxes were removed as a cost-saving measure, but Kristina Uppal of the U.S. Postal Service said that wasn't the case. Instead, the boxes were destroyed by an errant driver.

"A semi backed into and severely damaged the three collection boxes," Uppal reported.

Thankfully, one collection box has already been replaced, and the others are on the way.

Stevenson School names new president

■ Still no explanation why Hicks left

By KELLY NIX

LESS THAN four months after Stevenson School's president, Kevin Hicks, was placed on administrative leave because of "employee concerns," the private Pebble Beach boarding and day school announced Wednesday it had appointed someone new to lead Stevenson.

Stevenson hired Hicks — an alumnus from the Class of 1985 — in 2015 to replace longtime school president Joseph Wandke. On Aug. 26, however, David Colburn, the chairman of the school's board of trustees, told parents in an email that Hicks had been put on temporary administrative leave, "and that the school had launched an independent inquiry into certain employee concerns that were voiced to the board."

This week, Stevenson — which has been tight-lipped

See **STEVENSON** page 13A

Tax break for home raises concerns about 'equity'

By KELLY NIX

THE OWNERS of a home located at one of Pebble Beach's most coveted locations will receive a big break on their property tax bill in exchange for spending a lot of money to restore and maintain the house, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors decided Tuesday.

The supervisors voted to approve a Mills Act contract with Chase and Ashley Simmons, who own a home at 3080 Bird Rock Road, that will allow them to restore, maintain and preserve the Spanish-style home while also getting a reduction on their taxes.

'Master architect'

"The home was built in 1930 and is eligible for listing on the local register as a good example of the Spanish-eclectic style architecture in Pebble Beach and the work of master architect William Otis Raiguel," county

See **EQUITY** page 12A



PHOTO/MONTEREY COUNTY

The owners of this Pebble Beach home are eligible for a tax break in exchange for restoring it, but a county supervisor brought up "equity" as a concern and questioned who benefits from the deal.

POLICE

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But Kasavan architects later pulled out of the project after receiving some \$200,000 for the design work so far, according to public works director Bob Harary. In his Dec. 6 report to the council, he proposed hiring the firm of Wald, Ruhnke & Dost to take a look, salvage

whatever plans possible, and return to the council with a comprehensive review of site conditions and updates to the plans so they comply with new building codes and the recently approved climate action plan. The fee would be \$89,115.

Form a committee

He also warned the costs of fixing the station would be higher, now, due to supply chain, labor shortages and other issues.

But the council opted for another track

entirely.

“The police force is in dire need of a facility. There’s no question that something needs to be done,” councilman Jeff Baron commented at the meeting, before Harary and project manager Fred Meurer presented their report. “My only qualm is whether we’re on the right path or need to take a step back.”

He suggested taking a broader perspective looking at options for the Vista Lobos building and parking lot, the public works building and other city-owned property in the northeast corner of town as possible locations for a new police station.

While Mayor Dave Potter and councilman Bobby Richards were open to the idea, councilwoman Karen Ferlito said she wanted to hear more from Meurer and Police Chief Alan Ward about the deficiencies of the station.

There are many, they said. The station’s short-term holding cell doesn’t comply with current guidelines and was subsequently turned into storage. The lockers aren’t ventilated, so sweaty ballistic vests and boots have to be kept elsewhere when officers are done with their shifts.

Crime victims are interviewed in the lobby, a public space. Evidence rooms don’t comply with state standards, and there’s nowhere to safely handle dangerous substances like fentanyl and blood. The doors aren’t reinforced against someone trying to kick them down.

“I’m just touching the surface,” commented Ward, who told the council that when he was hired in June to become police chief, he was most surprised by the shabby condition of the police station. “I have a whole list of things.”

At issue is whether to do work now to bring the building up to the minimum necessary to make it functional — which could trigger requirements for ADA upgrades and other costly changes, too — or to step

back and consider longer-term solutions that would result in a contemporary station that will hold up for a half-century.

The station doesn’t meet state standards for police agencies, according to Meurer, but is grandfathered in for now.

“Anytime you start working on an old building like this, you start tripping over the code,” he warned.

Mission creep

Councilwoman Carrie Theis worried that forming a committee and taking a broader look would lead to a long wish list of additional upgrades that would make it harder to get anything done.

Alissandra Dramov, who will replace Theis on the council starting next week, supported appointing a committee and taking a broader approach, perhaps moving CPD to a new facility at Vista Lobos and turning the old station into housing.

And Carmel Cares founder Dale Byrne urged the council to get on with it.

“At some point, we have to stop doing studies and start actually doing some of these things,” he said. “I really challenge you to finally pick a project and get it done, rather than studying it, because we’ve spent a lot of money on studies that we’ve never acted on.”

The sad state of the police station is a disservice to the men and women who protect the city, he said. “Let’s attack this and get this done.”

Ultimately, the council set aside the proposed contract with Wald, Ruhnke & Dost and unanimously voted to form a committee of Potter and Baron to work with the city’s staff to develop a “feasibility analysis” exploring various options, including tearing down and replacing the police station, or building the station somewhere else and repurposing the existing building. Potter and Baron are set to return with a report to the full council in March.

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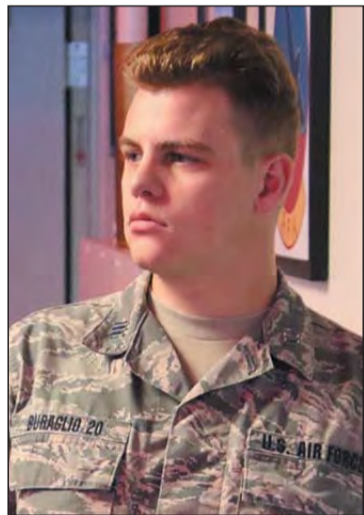
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DOMINIC CLAYTON BURAGLIO

July 22, 1998 - November 22, 2022

Our hearts are broken in announcing the passing of Lieutenant Dominic Clayton Buraglio, an Air Force officer raised in Carmel Valley, California, during his active duty assignment at Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, Louisiana. He was a compassionate, thoughtful, and humble soul who had a positive impact on the lives of many during his short time on Earth.



Dominic attended Tularcitos Elementary, Carmel Middle School, and Carmel High School before earning an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy, where he graduated in 2020 with a degree in computer science. He was serving at Barksdale AFB as a Cyber Defense Technician, overseeing a team responsible for maintaining a \$34M weapons system network. Dominic is survived by his parents, Donald and Tiffany Buraglio, his sisters Sophia and Giana, aunts Trina Clayton and Christine (Brian) Nicks and family, and grandparents Sue and Doyle Clayton, Francie and Michael Gundzik, and Rockne Buraglio. He was preceded in death by his grandmother Barbara Buraglio.

From his earliest days, Dominic had a passion for science and technology, and an inquisitive drive to understand the mechanics of how complex systems operated. His childhood love of heavy machinery and trains morphed into a lifelong passion for intricate Lego constructions, which in turn developed into mastery of robotics and drone operation. Dominic was the captain of the Carmel High School robotics team, and active with Remote Piloted Aircraft (RPA) programs at the Air Force Academy. His analytic and methodical mind was a perfect fit for his career in military computer operations and security.

Dominic had an intensely compassionate heart, and a continual desire to serve others, particularly those who are typically overlooked or marginalized in society. At an early age he proposed and organized relief efforts in the wake of natural disasters. He spent every spring break of his high school years performing service work in Mexico, helping to construct shelters and showing love to people in extreme poverty. He was a strong advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, and an opponent of social injustices that harmed groups who are frequently oppressed. His commitment to service fueled his desire to pursue a career in the Air Force, where he hoped to leverage his natural gifts to serve his country, both in protecting our nation from harm, and being a positive influence within the culture of the military. Dominic’s mission ended far too soon, but his sense of duty and his willingness to put others before himself never faltered.

Among other interests, Dominic appreciated the beauty of nature through numerous hikes in the mountains, especially Yosemite National Park. He was supported by a loyal friend group who enjoyed trivia nights, movie marathons, Dungeons and Dragons gatherings, and nighttime adventures in Hastings Preserve. He cherished his sisters and grandparents, and he looked forward to every military leave as an opportunity to spend time with the family he loved. Those are the times we’ll miss the most deeply, but we’re blessed and grateful beyond words for his presence in our lives for 24 years.

Farewell and Godspeed, Dominic. We love you to the moon and back.

**

Memorial services will be held at Barksdale Air Force Base for Dominic’s military squadron on Dec. 13, and also at 1 p.m. on Jan. 3 at the First Presbyterian Church in Monterey for family, friends, and community. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the Human Rights Campaign, the Read to Me Project in Monterey County, or the Yosemite Conservancy.

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DAN McNAMARA

Dan McNamara died on November 22, 2022 at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. He was 84 years old and longtime resident of Carmel.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Jacquie; daughter Molly; son Joseph Patrick (Gloria); and grandchildren, Robbie, Cathryn, Judson, Daniel and Camila. He was predeceased by his daughter Jennifer. He delighted in the time spent with his grandchildren.



Dan was a graduate of UC Berkeley and a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon. He founded his own company in 1975 and worked there until retirement. His career included international travel to New Zealand, the Philippines, Malaysia, China and Australia. Listening to opera recordings was one of Dan’s favorite pastimes. Through the years he had the pleasure of attending opera performances at many of the world’s premier opera houses.

He also enjoyed fishing with favorite destinations ranging from Alaska, Mexico, New Zealand, Chile, Norway and Iceland.

Special thanks to his doctor Georgina Heal and caregiver Beverla Miles. Those wishing to make memorial gifts are encouraged to give to the Ryan Seacrest Foundation that provides a place in children’s hospitals where patients facing serious illness can forget about their medical treatments and procedures through music and broadcast media. (IMO-Dan McNamara)