

# The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 99 No. 46

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

November 15-21, 2013

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## Drug runners land at Monastery Beach

By MARY SCHLEY

A SMALL boat carrying drug smugglers and their contraband apparently landed at Monastery Beach under the cover of early morning darkness Monday, with its cargo unloaded and carted off in a truck, according to authorities.

And the smugglers' work might never have been discovered if they had successfully ditched their boat.

Instead, a California State Parks maintenance man arriving at the beach around 7 a.m. noticed the empty boat running backward in circles several hundred feet offshore, and after also discovering a pile of wet clothes near the bathroom, he alerted authorities, thinking the boaters may have been in some kind of trouble, acting sector superintendent Sean James told The Pine Cone



The small vessel between two Coast Guard boats off Monastery Beach Monday was used by drug smugglers to land contraband, which was then carried to an unknown destination in a truck, officials said.

PHOTO/CLAYTON SHEMPER

Tuesday.

The call triggered a full coastal incident response, with sheriff's deputies, firefighters, paramedics, state parks life-

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## Burch's resignation letter condemns city administration

■ Planning commissioner calls treatment of employees 'brutal'

By MARY SCHLEY

CITY ADMINISTRATOR Heidi Burch's resignation letter, submitted Oct. 28, was brief and to the point. The reason it gave for her quitting was an equally brief, and very blunt, condemnation of the way city hall is being run under new city administrator Jason Stilwell.

"My resignation from the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea, though a very difficult decision, comes as the result of my extreme discomfort with current management practices," she wrote. "I can no longer ethically or in good conscience remain part of the city administration."

While her decision to leave the city became public at the end of October, and she cleaned out her office and walked out of city hall Oct. 29, Burch's letter wasn't released by the city until Nov. 8, after The Pine Cone filed a Public Records Act request to get it.

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## DESAL TEST WELL DELAYED AT LEAST NINE MONTHS

By KELLY NIX

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN Water's plans to install a test well in Marina to gather data for its proposed desalination plant have been set back at least nine months because it has to wait for the end of the nesting season of the snowy plover — a shore bird which is found on many of the beaches of Monterey Bay.

Though Cal Am hoped to begin drilling the seawater source well in February 2014, Marina officials have determined that before the city issues a permit for the well, six additional studies are necessary that could take several months to complete.

And because the small, protected shorebird's nesting season is from March to Sept. 30, Cal Am will have to wait until the fall of 2014 before breaking ground.

"We had wanted the test well [plans] to be reviewed by the

California Coastal Commission this January, so we could begin drilling in February," Cal Am spokeswoman Catherine Stedman told The Pine Cone. "But it now appears that we will be unable to meet that timeline."

Because of the additional studies, the coastal commission isn't expected to approve the test well until November 2014, the earliest Cal Am could begin drilling, according to the water company.

The North Marina location where the test well is to be located — and where the full desal plants wells will be — happens to be one of the most suitable nesting sites in California for the snowy plover. Earlier this year, a representative from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service outlined the agency's concerns about Cal Am's facilities being in the middle of prime plover habitat.

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## Restaurant can keep counter service by improving ADA access

By MARY SCHLEY

CARMEL BELLE, the popular restaurant in the Doud Arcade, has a permit for 75 seats, even though it hasn't offered that many.

But when owners Jay and Chloe Dolata received planning commission approval for changes to their layout to accommodate the maximum number of seats, they were told that approval would mean they could no longer let customers pay at the counter — a practice that started in that particular restaurant space decades ago, but which has since been prohibited by a city ordinance to prevent fast-food restaurants from opening downtown.

According to city law, when a new ordinance creates a nonconformity at a business, it will be allowed to contin-

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## Spanish royalty honors founder of Carmel Mission



Their Royal Highnesses Prince Felipe and Princess Letizia of Spain visited Carmel Mission Wednesday afternoon in honor of the 300th anniversary of the birthday of Junipero Serra, who founded the Mission in 1771. During their visit, they received a tour of the Basilica from Monterey Diocese Deacon Nick Pasculli (at right in photo), laid a wreath at Serra's cenotaph, and greeted numerous local dignitaries. Among them was Carmel Mayor Jason Burnett, who chatted with the royal couple for five minutes before they began their tour. "They were interested that the mayor of Carmel's term is two years, and we joked that the prince has a life term," Burnett said. They also talked with Burnett about the things that make Carmel unique, such as small homes, no sidewalks and no streetlights. Burnett also presented them with flowers and a gift basket of local goods. Included in the basket: A high-heel permit for the princess, who, Burnett noted, was wearing otherwise illegal footwear. "I'm glad we didn't have to arrest her for wearing high heels," he said. The couple's entourage included two buses full of aides and representatives of Spanish news media, who turned out to bear quite a resemblance to their brethren on this side of the world. "I was dismayed and surprised by their rude and unprofessional behavior," said Pine Cone photographer Kerry Belser.

PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

## Some P.B. voters received wrong ballots

■ Error could impact MPUSD election result

By KELLY NIX

A COUNTY spokeswoman Thursday conceded that there were voters in Pebble Beach who were issued ballots that incorrectly asked them to vote for Monterey's school district trustee candidates, but said the error may not have an effect on the outcome of the election.

When The Pine Cone told county elections office registrar Claudio Valenzuela Thursday morning that two Pebble Beach residents' ballots on Nov. 5 incorrectly gave them the option of voting for the Monterey Peninsula Unified School District election, he said the elections office was aware of the issue.

He also said it was "premature to report on it" and refused to disclose how many wrong ballots had been issued.

However, county spokeswoman Maia Carroll said later Thursday that numbers she obtained from Valenzuela show

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