

The Carmel Pine Cone

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CONVALESCENT HOSPITAL SALE ENDS CONDO PLAN

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER PAYING \$3.7 million last week for the former Carmel Convalescent Hospital, a Los Angeles investment firm said Thursday it plans to turn it back into an assisted liv-

ing facility.

The sale apparently puts an end to a previous plan to convert the land into condos and homes, an idea that generated a firestorm of opposition in the neighborhood.

Dylan Investment Properties purchased the hospital from Rider and Victoria Knight-McDowell, the creators of the popular but controversial nutritional supplement, Airborne.

Three years ago, a plan to build 46 condominiums on the hospital site drew fire from residents and was ultimately rejected by the Monterey County Planning Commission. Traffic, water and the density of the units were cited as chief concerns.

But Dylan Investment Properties spokesman Mike Panich drew a sharp distinction between the condo proposal and what his company hopes to create.

"We think our plan is going to be a huge plus for the neighborhood," Panich told The Pine Cone.

Panich said the new owners are intent on preserving the historic features of the facility, which was built in 1929 and first known as the Grace Deer Velie Metabolic Clinic. It became the Peninsula Community Hospital in 1934. Many local residents were born there before



PHOTO/M.J. MURPHY COLLECTION

The former Carmel Convalescent Hospital (above) was known as Peninsula Community Hospital when this aerial photo was taken in 1949.

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Planning department employee fired for giving info to newspaper

■ Coworker also fired; appeals planned

By MARY SCHLEY

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATORS Leslie Fenton and Margi Perotti, who were placed on leave last October pending investigations into "misconduct," received notice from the city last week that they have been fired, according to their union attorney, J. Ocean Mottley.

Fenton was fired, in part, for giving information to The Pine Cone that it was not supposed to have, according to Mottley, referring to the city's accusation.

"Providing you with public information is part of the charge against Leslie, although they characterize it differently," Mottley told The Pine Cone. "They claim Leslie gave you information you were not entitled to."

But he also said she had done no such thing. Everything Fenton provided to The Pine Cone was public information,

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Judge orders changes to Measure O ballot

■ Proponents' arguments were 'misleading'

By KELLY NIX

A JUDGE determined Thursday that some of the ballot arguments for Public Water Now's June measure that seeks the public takeover of California American Water's local system were misleading, and he ordered them to be stricken or modified, while he chalked up other bold statements by the activist group as "campaign rhetoric" that should be allowed to remain as is.

During a three-hour hearing, Monterey County Superior Court Judge Thomas W. Wills carefully weighed Public Water Now's ballot arguments, which taxpayer advocate Rick Heuer alleged in a lawsuit last week were "false and mislead-

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PG&E: No more work on lines until study

By MARY SCHLEY

PG&E REPRESENTATIVES told the Carmel City Council Tuesday that when replacement of gas mains resumes, PG&E workers — not outside contractors — will be doing the work. Other than that, they didn't have much to offer in terms of an update regarding the gas leak and subsequent explosion that destroyed a house at Guadalupe and Third March 3.

"If we see PG&E workers around town, they are doing normal business, and they're not doing any tapping work?" councilman Ken Talmage asked representatives of the utility at the meeting.

"Tapping" is how new gas mains and service lines are connected to existing gas pipelines — and was the source of the explosion when utility workers drilled into a main and inadvertently let natural gas flow into a house, where it accumulated and reached a pilot light on a stove.

PG&E confirmed that all gas-line tapping in the Carmel

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Council sets moratorium on wine tasting rooms

By MARY SCHLEY

GIVEN THE recent influx of tasting rooms and an increasing number of applications, the city council called a halt to processing new proposals until the planning commission figures out what the rules for tasting rooms should be.

The 45-day wine-tasting moratorium, which the council approved Tuesday, took effect immediately and can be extended for up to two years by subsequent council votes.

Also Tuesday, the council voted to return Dan Tudor's application for a tasting room at the Court of the Fountains to the planning commission for a rehearing. The commission denied his application last month, and he filed an appeal with the council, but revisions to the proposal prompted the council to remand it back to the group rather than vote to approve or deny it.

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Bergstrom will face 'Jane Doe' in civil trial

By KELLY NIX

CARL BERGSTROM — the former Carmel doctor who was convicted in 2009 of sexually assaulting a woman before his conviction was overturned two years later, and who then pleaded guilty to felony sexual battery rather than face a second trial — is set to square off against the victim in a June civil trial nearly five years after she filed a lawsuit against him.

Bergstrom is scheduled to appear in a Monterey courtroom to face allegations from "Jane Doe 1" that he sexually assaulted and battered her at his home on April 14, 2009. Doe is seeking an undisclosed amount in damages from Bergstrom in the June 9 trial.

Doe's lawsuit alleges that the then-physician plied her with alcohol and slipped her a date-rape drug when she was in a "state of semi-conscious or unconsciousness" before he sodomized her. The assault, Doe contends, left her with severe physical and mental injuries and caused her to lose her

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Late Garden Club founder personified 'dignity'

By MARY SCHLEY

LONGTIME RESIDENT Carol Stratton, who launched the Carmel-by-the-Sea Garden Club with close friend and fellow gardener Jean Booth Mitchell more than 30 years ago, died Friday at the age of 83.

"She singlehandedly is responsible for so many great things in town," said Mitchell's daughter, Hallie Mitchell Dow. "Civic improvement was her passion."

Dow met Stratton shortly after Stratton moved to Carmel with her husband in the 1970s.

As former members of garden clubs in other areas before they came here, Mitchell and Stratton began wondering if they could put together a Carmel club that would meet Garden Club of America standards, according to Dow.

Their first, and perhaps most drawn-out, effort involved turning a

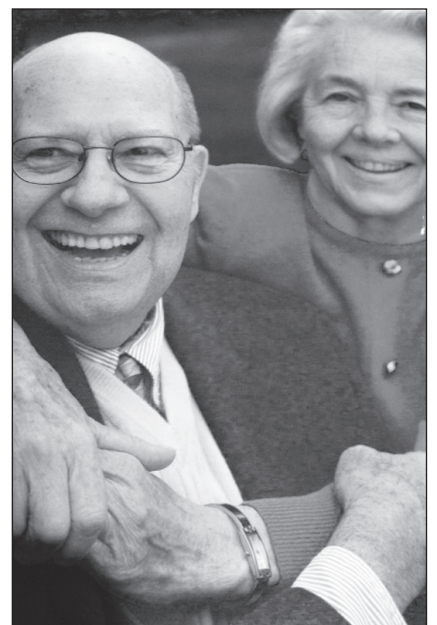
4,000-square-foot patch of weeds on Dolores Street into a park the city's residents and business people would be proud of.

"Piccadilly Park was the cause célèbre of the Garden Club from the very beginning, in 1979, but took years and several tries to get it truly established as a 'park,'" Dow said. "Nobody thought these little old ladies in tennis shoes could do it, but when they got shot down, they kept coming back with a new idea and a new plan."

Finally, after several iterations, the park was transformed into its current version in the mid-to-late 1990s, and club members are still responsible for its maintenance and upkeep.

Stratton and the club also developed, planned and cared for the grounds in front of Harrison

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PHOTO/COURTESY HALLIE MITCHELL DOW

Garden Club cofounder Carol Stratton with her husband, Tom.