

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Invasion of the plein aire painters

By ROSE EVERS

FROM THE Rec Trail along Monterey Bay, to Steinbeck's Pastures of Heaven off Highway 68, Monterey County was flooded with more than 800 impromptu painters this week as a plein aire convention — sponsored by PleinAir Magazine — came to the Monterey Conference Center. Amid the workshops and lectures of the four-day conference, the artists took the chance to put what they were learning into practice by capturing some truly scenic local vistas.

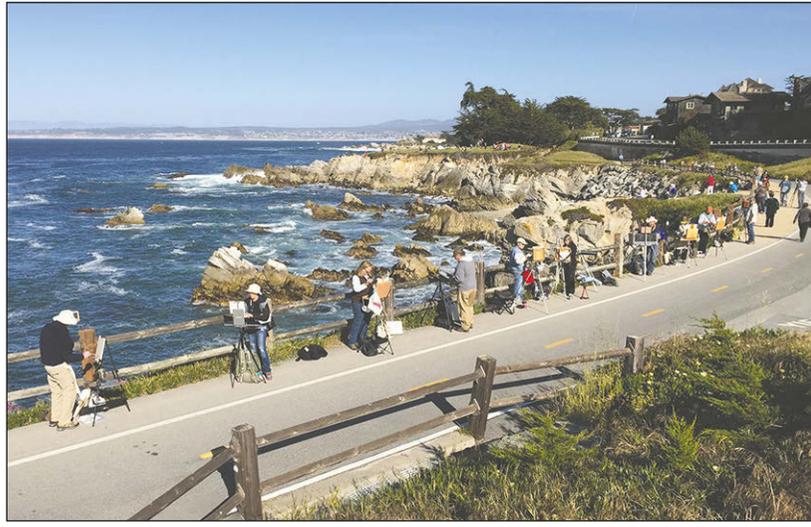
Wednesday afternoon, several hundred of them lined the hiking trail in Pacific Grove, even as harbor seals were giving birth on the beaches below, and humpback whales were spouting and feeding in the kelp just offshore.

Early Wednesday morning, four artists from Oregon even found a spot on Corral Del Cielo Road, overlooking a scenic easement filled with grazing cattle and clucking turkeys.

"We're here to capture the light and get the essence of daybreak on the rolling California hills," said artist Brenda Boylan. "We watched it ripple across the hills — it's just beautiful."

The four had been painting the

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It was standing room only along the Rec Trail Wednesday afternoon as plein aire artists seemed to occupy every available vantage point (top), while earlier in the day, off Corral de Tierra Road, Brenda Boylan (right) had the pastoral view almost to herself.

PHOTOS/ROSE EVERS (RIGHT), PAUL MILLER (ABOVE)



## Grand jury gets personnel files

Quick compliance with judge's ruling

By MARY SCHLEY

PERSONNEL FILES the City of Carmel fought to keep secret were delivered to the courthouse in Salinas Wednesday afternoon after Monterey County Superior Court Judge Lydia Villarreal ruled that the civil grand jury had proved its need to review them as part of its investigation of former city administrator Jason Stilwell.

In a March 24 decision following a hearing on the city's effort to quash a subpoena from the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury demanding the personnel files of several employees, Villarreal said the jury must show cause for why it wanted to review the documents, which city attorney Don Freeman argued are protected under the right to privacy afforded in the California Constitution.

### Sealed declarations

Jury foreman pro-tem Louis Panetta submitted two sealed declarations to Villarreal, who concluded "that the grand jury has demonstrated good cause for its review of the records that are the subject of the subpoena" served on the city in late February. Therefore, she said, the city's order to quash the subpoena was denied, "and the city is hereby directed to produce the records described in the subpoena forthwith." In the April 8 order, she gave the city a week to deliver the files to Department 1 in the Salinas courthouse.

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## Schmitz filling jobs, refining contract rules

By MARY SCHLEY

CITY ADMINISTRATOR Doug Schmitz said last week he's making progress on his efforts to fill several vacancies in city hall, including the position of IT manager.

When Schmitz was hired last October, he took charge of a depleted organization. On Friday, he reported he is close to filling a half-dozen positions.

Regarding the IT manager, he said, the Carmel Police Department's background check of the top candidate should be finished this week, "and an offer will be made at that time, if no issues arise as a result of the investigation." The job pays between \$82,080 and \$99,768 per year, according to the city's published salaries for 2014.

Last Friday was the filing deadline for the job of human resources manager, and Schmitz said 14 candidates applied for the position. The HR manager "plans, manages and coordi-

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## Council asked to cover COTA permit fees

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CONCOURS on the Avenue has lost more than \$138,000 over the last three years — money that event organizers Doug and Genie Freedman say has come out of their pockets — and the city shouldn't add to this year's losses by charging them more than \$29,000 for permits and other fees, the community activities and cultural commission decided Tuesday.

The city council is set to consider the recommendation at its May 5 meeting.

The Freedmans created the event and have been hosting it for eight years, bringing about 200 historic cars to Ocean Avenue during the Tuesday of Concours Week each August. Its revenues have never exceeded its costs, they say, which have always included the payment of a small fee to the city for help from a couple of police officers, but nothing for other municipal expenses usually associated with private events that close streets and occupy parks.

This year, when the community services department processed the Freedmans' application to stage the event, the city decided they should pay almost \$30,000 in fees, including \$6,902 for six police officers working 58 hours of overtime at \$119 per hour, \$8,400 for the use of Devendorf Park for three days, \$6,570 for closing 18 blocks for the day and \$1,676.65 for portable toilets.

But in a letter to the city council, the Freedmans asked to not be charged anything, citing the benefits the city has

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## MST facing 50 percent cuts

By KELLY NIX

MONTEREY-SALINAS Transit could be forced to lay off dozens of employees and cut bus service by 50 percent if the federal government doesn't commit to giving the agency \$4.5 million within a few weeks.

"We are currently estimating a reduction in force of about 70 positions in order to make up for the loss of federal [tax] funds," plus the complete cancellation of more than a dozen routes and reductions in others, MST general manager Carl Sedoryk told The Pine Cone Thursday. The agency has about 220 employees.

The snag is the result of a row between the transit workers union and the U.S. Department of Labor over California's Public Employees Pension Reform Act (AB 340) of 2013. The union contends the act is illegal because it violates transit workers' collective bargaining rights, as outlined in the Federal Transit Act.

"While the Federal Transit Administration is ready to hand over \$4.5 million to MST for its operating expenses,

See CUTS page 14A

## Equestrienne on her way

Sara Tuck, 14, is very good at jumping her family's thoroughbred, Joubert. But will she do as well on a strange horse she'll have to ride at a competition in Florida? See page 15A.

