

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Water district GM says additional conservation on Peninsula is doable

By KELLY NIX

**TAKING SHORTER** showers and watering outdoor plants less are among the things Monterey Peninsula residents must continue to do in order to meet a state-ordered 8 percent reduction in water consumption, according to the general manager of the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District.

In May, California Gov. Jerry Brown ordered the state's 411 urban water suppliers to cut back water usage compared to 2013 by 8 percent to 36 percent, depending on how much those communities already conserve. The Peninsula has to conserve 8 percent.

Last year, the Peninsula saved 11 percent over its 2013 use. So if residents continue that same pattern of conservation — including limiting outdoor irrigation and their shower times — the target is attainable, general manager Dave Stoldt told The Pine Cone.

"If we do all the same things, we are going to make it," Stoldt told The Pine Cone.

However, Stoldt said there are some factors, besides watering too much and showering more, that could throw a

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## Gallery burns but 'heroic' effort saves art

By MARY SCHLEY

**A THREE-ALARM** fire badly damaged an art gallery on Dolores Street Saturday night, but a swift effort by firefighters to douse the flames — and to rescue as much of the artwork as possible — helped minimize the damage and avoid a conflagration that could have easily destroyed a downtown city block.

Their response began before the fire was even reported: A firefighter who happened to be on the rooftop deck of the Sixth Avenue firehouse around 7:45 p.m. noticed a plume of smoke rising from a building a couple of blocks away.

"He said, 'It looks like we've got something going,' and we started heading to the engine," recalled firefighter Mike Richardson. "The call came in as we were heading out the door."

By the time they arrived, smoke was filling the New Masters Gallery, and reports came in that a rear stairway was on fire. Blocked in by adjacent buildings and fences, the area was difficult to get to, and the fire began burning into the basement underneath the building, as well as up the back, blowing out windows in the four upstairs apartments and charring the eaves. A room added onto the back of the 1920s-era building, which is owned by Jody LeTowt, was

engulfed, as well.

"We had limited access, so we had to rethink our strategy,"

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PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

Investigators are still working to determine what caused a Dolores Street art gallery to catch fire on a busy evening. A bucket brigade saved many of its paintings.

## Commission calls for moratorium on artificial turf

By MARY SCHLEY

**ROBERTA** Miller said she'd prefer to let all her plants die rather than install artificial turf, and Carmel Residents Association President Barbara Livingston said the synthetic grass "can't be healthy for children to play on."

Their comments, and others opposing allowing any fake turf to be installed in town, were made to the planning commission Wednesday evening, when commissioners decided the city should not consider any applications for artificial turf until the council has established policies to deal with it.

No matter how bad the drought is, the city shouldn't allow property owners to install synthetic grass, even if it's a well made facsimile that allows water to drain through to the dirt underneath, the members of the planning commission decided. Carmel's guidelines already strongly discourage lawns,

commissioners pointed out, so fake lawns shouldn't be allowed, either.

"We're fixing one problem by creating another," commissioner Michael LePage said, referring to reacting to water rationing by installing artificial grass. "This is just a bunch of plastic material put on compacting. There are issues about how it's produced; there are issues about how you get rid of it. There are way more cons than there are pros."

Commissioners were discussing the topic at the request of planning director Rob Mullane, and the forest and beach commission was also set to talk about it this week.

"We have seen an increase in the requests for lawns, and especially artificial turf, in the city," he said. "They have been very popular over the last year or so."

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## Mullane moving to public works dep't.

By MARY SCHLEY

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR** Doug Schmitz' efforts to shore up the workforce continued this week, with his announcement that planning director Rob Mullane will leave that post to become public works director Aug. 1.

Although Sharon Friedrichsen occupied that post for a short while, and then Carmel Police Cmdr. Paul Tomasi helped run public works after Friedrichsen was put in charge of contracts in city hall last November, it's been mostly vacant since Jim Cullem retired in 2003. Schmitz said Mullane's "managerial strengths — establishing strong

See **MULLANE** page 10A

## Pigskin, BBQ and a friendship that's lasted 25 years

By ELAINE HESSER

**THE PIG** caught fire. Twice.

If you know Dominic Mercurio from Café Fina on Fisherman's Wharf, you probably associate him with chowder, pasta and pizza — not flaming swine on a spit. But Thursday night, that was one of the challenges as he prepared for the annual All-Madden Barbecue, a party for San Francisco radio station KCBS, at football legend John Madden's office in Pleasanton.

Madden, of course, has owned a home on Carmel Beach for many years, and is a well-known figure around town. He's also a familiar sight at Monterey's Fisherman's Wharf — and that's where Madden's friendship with Mercurio started more than 25 years ago, when he showed up at Café Fina for lunch and liked the chowder so much he kept coming back.

Now there's a table at Café Fina with a brass plaque declaring it's "reserved for John Madden." The table even has a little chalkboard — a tribute to Madden's habit of flamboyantly illustrating football plays with X's, O's, and swooping lines and arrows.

Madden was coach of the Oakland Raiders for 10 years and won a Super Bowl in 1977, and then he conquered the world of broadcasting by calling NFL games on all four major networks. But Mercurio says he's not a big football fan. So what do he and Madden have in common?

"John and I both love to eat," he said. And that, as they say, was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Friday's festivities had their origins 19 years ago, when Madden

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## Golfers robbed at Spanish Bay

By MARY SCHLEY

**A PACIFIC** Grove police sergeant who overheard reports of a robbery on the Spanish Bay golf course in Pebble Beach caught the suspects Saturday, after they ran from the scene and ended up at Asilomar Beach.

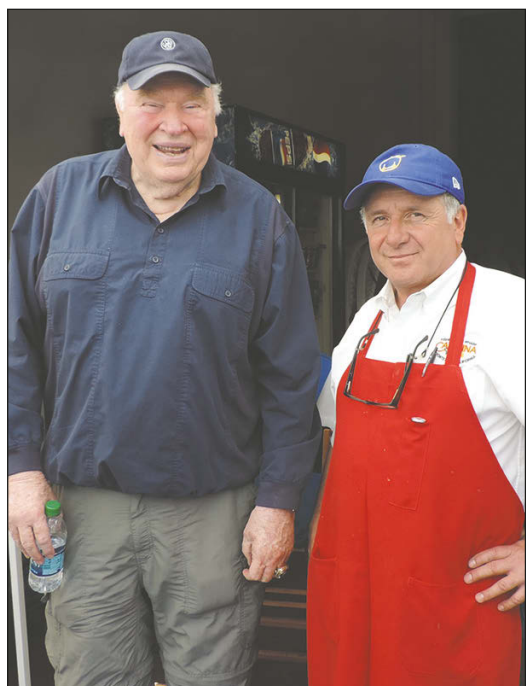
"By the time he saw them, they had slowed down and were walking, and he observed their clothing descriptions matched those of the suspects," explained PGPD Cmdr. Rory Lakind. "He detained them at that point and waited for the sheriff's office to come over, and they took custody of the suspects."

The two men — 18-year-old Aurelio Bautista, an unemployed man from Greenfield, and an unnamed 15-year-old student — "accosted four golfers at The Links at Spanish Bay and demanded money from them," according to Monterey County Sheriff's deputy Albert Ainuu.

One of the victims fought with the suspects, sustaining a small cut to his ear, but the two teenagers escaped with a \$350 Bushnell Tour 2 golf rangefinder, a laser device used to calculate distances to targets on a golf course, according to the sheriff's office.

The victims were identified as Jerry Walker and a 17-

See **ROBBERY** page 8A



PHOTO/ELAINE HESSER

Catering to a legend: John Madden enjoying a moment with his old friend, Dominic Mercurio, who prepared a feast for the All-Madden Barbecue last Friday.