

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## City prepares to respond to grand jury

By MARY SCHLEY

MAYOR JASON Burnett and the special committee he created to address the Monterey County Civil Grand Jury report released June 19 will get together next week to begin formulating responses to the report's findings and recommendations, he told The Pine Cone Thursday.

"We'll develop some preliminary drafts that will be brought to the city council and the community later on this summer, and we will then make any modifications to it based on information received," he said. The city has 90 days to respond.

"I've talked with folks about it, but we'll take our first formal review this coming week," he said.

The report, created by a grand jury committee headed by Lou Panetta, blamed the mayor, the council, the media and the residents for conditions that led to the ouster of former city administrator Jason Stilwell and administrative services director Susan Paul last fall. The numerous firings and other departures from city hall and the botched investigation of Steve McInchak weren't their fault, the grand jury said, and neither were the contracts they signed that went over their spending caps.

According to the grand jury's findings, the mayor and council failed to exercise proper oversight, while one-sided reporting in The Pine Cone that favored the "Old Guard" and opposed the "New Administration" incited residents who

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## Parking kiosks on the way out

By KELLY NIX

THE PAID-PARKING kiosks on Ocean Avenue that alleviated parking congestion but were confusing to operate



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Tina Barfield of Monterey gets ready to pay for parking at a kiosk on Ocean Avenue Thursday. Soon, she won't have to, because the kiosks are about to be removed, Mayor Jason Burnett announced this week.

and considered by many to be a visual blight will be removed soon, according to Mayor Jason Burnett, who made the announcement at a parking workshop Tuesday night.

Burnett told a group of more than 50 people at the meeting that next week the city council will vote to "send a letter to the kiosk provider to remove the kiosks," which were installed last November. At the July 7 meeting, the council will also weigh numerous parking options, including enforcement, permits and other ideas.

The announcement came as a surprise to the audience at the meeting, and with the kiosks no longer an issue, there was broad discussion by residents and the council members as to how to better manage downtown parking. A good portion of it focused on business community-parking, and how to get shopkeepers and their employees from taking up spaces that could be used by visitors.

"We have too many parking spaces that are regularly used in the core of town by the business community," said councilman Ken Talmage, who hosted the meeting.

He proposed the idea of issuing parking permit stickers to the business community, allowing store owners and employees to park in dedicated lots so as not to take up visitor parking.

"That way, we can get the business cars out of downtown, they know they're going to park someplace for the full day, and they know there's going to be available parking," he said.

Todd Tice, who owns The Club clothing stores on Ocean, said his employee handbook states that workers should not park in the business district. He also has a three-strike rule

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## Mail Mart abruptly closes, leaves customers in lurch

By MARY SCHLEY

THE SUDDEN closure of Mail Mart on Dolores Street this week left clients wondering how to get their mail, and even the new owners of the building don't know what to do about it.

"The owner of Mail Mart apparently had some personal issues and reasons for closing," said Joseph Shabani, whose family's Southern California company, Optimus LLC, purchased that building and three others downtown for a total of \$13,586,000 in late May. "He informed us that he will close but was supposed to make arrangements with his clients. We are investigating the matter further."

Scott Bogen, who lives in Big Sur and runs a small business, has had a post office box at Mail Mart for 16 years and was shocked to find the storefront dark when he came to town to collect his mail.

"Tuesday morning, when we went to check for mail, there was a cheesy handwritten sign on the window saying 'Closed for business, out of business,'" he said. "I walked around to the back windows and peered in and could see my box, and there's mail in it."

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## Lawson Little, Quail Lodge exec, dies at 67

By MARY SCHLEY

A GAMBLER who savored the thrills of deal making — a talent that carried over nicely to his career in real estate. A guy who was ambivalent about vintage cars but truly enjoyed the people connected to them. A longtime local and son of a golf star who grew up to be devoted to local history and the valley he loved. Lawson Little III, who helped run Quail Lodge for three decades, died unexpectedly Monday after being hospitalized in Las Vegas with intestinal issues last week. He was 67.

"I knew Lawson for 37 years," said Gordon McCall, who launched the immensely popular Quail Motorsports

Gathering and the lower-key Quail Motorcycle Gathering with Little's blessings years ago. "He was always the level-headed, unflappable, kind, caring guy, and that carried through everything, whether a nasty contract dispute with a vendor, or a member issue. He was a resounding voice of reason."

The son of professional golfer Lawson Little Jr., the younger Little spent years in his father's shadow and was also dedicated to the game, though he never reached his father's level. Instead, he directed his energies toward pursuits of his own.

"He still managed to become an excellent golfer," McCall said. "But what he ended up doing, real estate, was a very important thing to him, and I think he felt this obligation as a custodian of the land."

But it also played into his gambler's heart. "He loved gambling," McCall said. "And isn't that really what contracts are all about?"

Little was a highly regarded card player, to the point where friend Dennis Miller posted on his Facebook page in

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Lawson Little III

## Jazzin' up the Fourth in Washington, D.C.

By ELAINE HESSER

PAUL CONTOS, Monterey Jazz Festival's director of education, was looking for a good gig for the Monterey County All-Star High School Band and the High School Jazz Vocal Ensemble.

The students in each group are hand picked annually from public and private schools throughout Monterey County by a group of professional musicians. Contos directs the band and Rob Klevan directs the vocal ensemble.

To idea is not only to bring some of the county's best young musicians together to make beautiful music, but to take them on the road to give them an education in what it's like to be a pro.

"We try to give them an experience as close as we

can to what it's like being on tour," said Contos.

For the 32 musicians and their directors, that includes schlepping instruments around, sleeping on buses and planes, and unloading and loading equipment and music at each location — along with the fun of performing at notable venues, events and festivals.

As he pondered destinations for the groups this summer, he remembered taking the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra — a group of 21 outstanding high school jazz musicians selected from all over the United States — to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., in 2009, and he decided to contact the center again about having the two Monterey

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PHOTO/JIM STONE

From the Monterey Jazz Festival's NextGen festival to the Kennedy Center, Monterey County All-Star High School Band is ready to tackle any stage.