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BURNETT PRAISES PUC DECISION TO INVESTIGATE PG&E

By MARY SCHLEY

IN LIGHT of the gas leaks, explosions — including the destruction of a Carmel home in March 2014 — and other accidents that have occurred since eight people died in a gas-line explosion in San Bruno in 2010, the California Public Utilities Commission is set to vote Aug. 27 on whether its safety and enforcement division should investigate PG&E's "safety culture and record of operation and performance," as well as the roles its corporate culture and leadership might have played in the accidents.

The CPUC "is committed to strengthening its safety efforts," and "expects the same from the utilities it regulates," according to PUC spokesperson Terrie Prosper.

"PG&E has publicly stated that it is committed to improving the safety of its operations, but accidents and events affecting the safety of its customers, the

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Commission doesn't want candy store to be so touristy

By MARY SCHLEY

A PERMIT for a new chocolate shop on Dolores Street is set to be considered next month after the proprietor submits plans more in keeping with Carmel standards than with those of Fisherman's Wharf and other tourist spots.

Hariom & Sons Inc., owner of the Monterey Chocolate Factory on the Wharf, wants to open a Carmel Chocolate Factory in the former location of Hildegunn Hawley Antiques, but the planning commission stopped short of approving the permit last week, instead asking the applicant to return with revised plans for the store's layout.

"I find this barrel presentation formulaic," commissioner Michael LePage said of the plans calling for rows of barrels filled with various candies and chocolates, as found at the Wharf shop and other similar candy stores. "I see that in what I would characterize as the most intensive, the most blatantly tourist-exploitive type of areas."

Carmel, on the other hand, should command a

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The perfect place to be *en pointe*



PHOTO/ALICIA STIRLING-JULIAN

The graceful lines cut by ballet students at the Carmel Academy of Performing Arts aren't what's supposed to draw your attention in this photograph. You're supposed to notice the floor. See page 25A.

Showdown over canine center

Final EIR released; Aug. 26 hearing set

BY CHRIS COUNTS

JUST IN time for an Aug. 26 Monterey County Planning Commission hearing, the final Environmental Impact Report for the Carmel Canine Center was released last week. The proposal has been the subject of heated debate in Carmel Valley.

County planning commissioner Martha Diehl and two partners want to establish a private dog-training facility on a 45-acre property located at 8100 Valley Greens Drive, near Quail Lodge. Besides open fields and runs, facilities at the dog park would include an 800-square-foot office trailer, a 600-square-foot restroom trailer, a 600-square-foot clubhouse trailer and a 400-square-foot electrical room. Also included are a 1.2-acre pond and 200 parking spaces.

Opponents say bringing dog owners and their families to the area would increase traffic and noise. They have been particularly critical of a plan to host up to 24 special-event days a year and bring in as many 70 RVs and 250 people at a time.

A Big Sur resident, Diehl noted that her project has received more public comments than the Ferrini Ranch proposal to build 185 homes on 870 acres along Highway 68.

She also urged anyone who has any questions about the impacts of the dog park to look at the EIR.

"There's lots of information in there," Diehl said. "There's

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'We believe we've designed a project that respects the community's values'

Police: Concours Week traffic plan worked

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER THE traffic mess during Concours Week last year, city officials and police revised their strategy for dealing with the hordes of visitors, and everything worked out much better this year, according to Cmdr. Paul Tomasi.

"We had great success with the changes," he said.

The new plan included shutting down Mountain View Avenue near Ocean Avenue so traffic at Junipero and Ocean would flow better, shuttling employees and spectators between the Carmel Mission and Sunset Center during the Tuesday Concours on the Avenue and the Thursday Concours Tour d'Elegance, putting up temporary signs directing motorists to Highway 1 via the north-

ern and southern routes out of town rather than having them drive up Ocean, posting no-parking signs along several narrow streets and roping off the center islands on Junipero.

"The shuttle was well received by the public," Tomasi said. "We had a lot of riders park at the Mission and take the shuttle into town, which seemed to greatly reduce the number of vehicles parking in the city." He estimated that over the two days the vans were operating, volunteers helped park about 400 cars and transported around 600 people. Taxpayers footed the bill for the 12-person vans that ran about every 10 minutes, but community volunteers from the Carmel Host Lions, the Carmel Youth Center

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A tree grows in the river — lots of them, actually, and farmers are spooked

By ROSE EVERS

A PROJECTED monster El Niño rain year might bring welcome downpours to drought-parched California, but along the Salinas River, some fear that one natural calamity may just be replacing another.

The Salinas River is so choked with overgrowth and sediment that if El Niño rains hit hard and fast, the water may have nowhere to go but over its neglected levees.

Long overdue cleanout work on a nearly 100-mile stretch of the river is at a standstill because the complex permitting process for the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program isn't expected to be completed until October 2016.

"Overall, it's frustrating. We know something needs to be done," said Norm Groot,

director of the Monterey County Farm Bureau. "But we have to have a disaster before we can get anything done."

From the Highway 68 bridge, the dry riverbed looks more like a corridor of tall trees than a channel capable of diverting winter rains, let alone a possible deluge. Property owner Chris Bunn, who runs the organic farm stand near the bridge, says the river has been swallowed up by flora.

"You can't even walk from Highway 68 down to Davis Road. It's just a forest. There are trees growing in the river," said Bunn. "It's a mess."

Bunn says it used to be a pretty simple job for landowners to go in and keep the river channel clear, but "the goal posts have

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As shown in this aerial of the Highway 68 crossing, the Salinas River channel is choked with trees and shrubs, and presents a serious flood danger if heavy rains come this winter, farmers say.