

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Photos reveal terrible state of Mehdipour house

By KELLY NIX

NEW PHOTOS of an oceanfront house in Pebble Beach at the center of a land-use debate show a decrepit structure that's being temporarily supported so it doesn't "fall on someone."

Silicon Valley tech mogul Massy Mehdipour's house — designed by Richard Neutra and built in 1958 — has

been at the forefront of a land-use battle for several years.

Though Mehdipour purchased the home, which is practically next door to the Cypress Point Club, intending to tear it down and build a much larger house in its place, preservationists, citing the significance of the architect's

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Because Massy Mehdipour's house on Signal Hill in Pebble Beach was falling into the dunes (left), she had a contractor shore it up with cribbing (above). While she wants to tear it down to build a new house, people in the neighborhood say she shouldn't be allowed to.

PHOTOS/COURTESY SATEEZ KADIVAR

## Backyard yields second body

■ Jailed killer in P.B. murder is prime suspect

By KELLY NIX and MARY SCHLEY

THE GRISLY discovery last week of a long-missing Seaside woman's decomposed remains at the home where a Pebble Beach woman was found murdered 32 years ago may finally bring resolution to an unsolved homicide in which the property's former tenant, Alfred Powell, has long been a suspect.

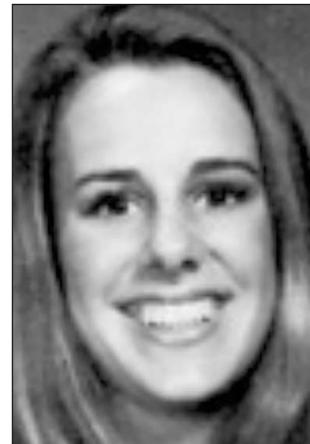
Currently serving a life sentence in Solano State Prison for the 1983 murder of 30-year-old former Pacific Grove High School student

Suzanne Kay Nixon, Powell is the prime suspect in the killing of 32-year-old Sandra McGee, whose remains were identified by the coroner's office this week, according to Monterey Police Lt. Jeff Jackson. McGee went missing in late 1982.

Shortly after a landscaper found the remains while working in the backyard Sept. 2, Monterey officers, along with members of the Monterey and Santa Cruz county coroners' offices, the sheriff's office and the FBI, arrived to begin searching the grounds.

"They found some remains and were not really sure exactly what they were," Jackson

See **KILLER** page 5A



The remains of Seaside resident Sandra McGee (far left) were discovered buried in the backyard of a home on Third Street in Monterey last week — 32 years after a man was convicted of the 1983 killing of Pebble Beach resident Suzanne Nixon (left) and hiding her body in a toolshed at the same home. McGee disappeared in 1982, and her whereabouts were a mystery until a landscaper accidentally found her Sept. 2. FBI investigators (below) searched the yard after the discovery.



## Pot shop proposed for Mouth of Valley

By CHRIS COUNTS

COUNTY PLANNING official Mike Novo told The Pine Cone this week that he has received an application to open a marijuana dispensary at the mouth of Carmel Valley.

If approved, the business would be located at 26555 Carmel Rancho Blvd., Suite 3. According to Novo, the applicant is Salvatore Palma. Calls to a Monterey man of the same name were not returned.

A nearby business owner who asked not to be identified confirmed a dispensary is going into the building.

"It's clear that they're moving in," the resident told The Pine Cone. "The building and the neighborhood seem unsuitable for such a business. It would be nice for the community to know about this so they can decide if they want it."

Monterey County 5th District Supervisor Dave Potter's aide, Kathleen Lee, said the county staff is "carefully reviewing" the application for the dispensary.

"We want to make sure any work is done with proper permits, and we want to make sure it fits the zoning," she said. "Staff is also looking closely at the application to see if it was submitted before the moratorium went into effect. We're anxiously awaiting to see the results of the review."

See **POT** page 12A

## Latest gas-line break reignites criticism of PG&E

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER A backhoe operated by a plumbing contractor struck a gas line on Santa Rita just south of Ocean Avenue last Thursday morning shortly before 10 a.m., PG&E took almost half an hour to get to the scene, according to city administrator Doug Schmitz — once again highlighting problems with the utility company's safety practices.

PG&E has been under heavy scrutiny since a gas main blew up in the City of San Bruno in 2010, destroying 38 homes and killing eight people. And last year, a small gas leak caused by a PG&E crew blew up a house in Carmel at Guadalupe and Third.

The continuing series of gas-pipe problems underscores the importance of the decision of the Public Utilities Commission two weeks ago to "initiate an investigation into the non-safety practices of PG&E," Schmitz told The Pine Cone this week.

On Aug. 27, the PUC launched its formal investigation "into whether Pacific Gas and Electric Company has corporate governance, clearly documented organizational goals and objectives, and work procedures that prioritize and improve safety."

In the Sept. 3 Santa Rita Street incident, PG&E's first truck arrived 28 minutes after the leak was reported, and the gas was shut off at 10:50 a.m., 53 minutes after the initial report, according to Schmitz.

He said that fell short of the pledge the company made last year to respond to incidents in Carmel as quickly as possible.

PG&E spokesman Nick Stimmel responded that, while sometimes the company doesn't meet its goal of a 21-minute

See **SAFETY** page 18A

## Stolen tote pops up all over the place — but where is it?

By KELLY NIX

THE THEFT of Monterey resident Carrie McWithey's belongings outside her apartment wasn't unusual — someone broke into her car and stole a large crocheted bag filled with handmade items. What's strange is what transpired afterward.

On Aug. 27 at about 3 a.m., someone stole McWithey's one-of-a-kind wool and mohair bag containing jewelry, crocheted hats and other items she makes and sells at local farmers markets. The merchandise was worth more than \$3,000.

See **STOLEN** page 15A