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How'd they make the plane crash seem so real?

■ Director's near-death experience lends verisimilitude to hit movie

By PAUL MILLER

CLINT EASTWOOD'S latest film, "Sully," which opened last week, is turning out to be a mega-hit, not only with the audiences who have already spent almost \$60 million to see it, but with critics who have praised its "powerful realism" and "unshakeable authenticity."

But how was such a realistic portrayal of the crash landing of a passenger jet into an icy river pulled off?

The latest computer graphics were involved, of course — especially during the scenes when US Air 1549 collides with a flock of birds, loses power, and heads for New York's Hudson River.

So is the fact that the producers of the film bought a retired airliner and partially submerged it in a lake on the back lot of Universal Studios in Hollywood to recreate the scenes of passengers scrambling for safety and being rescued before they froze to death or drowned.

But another very important factor was that the director himself once survived a wintry crash landing into water.

Eastwood has played all types of tough guys in the movies, but was just a 21-year-old wet-behind-the-ears private in the U.S. Army when he had the near-death experience in 1951.

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Pvt. Clint Eastwood



The Douglas AD: A plane like this that lies at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean off Pt. Reyes almost took Clint Eastwood with it when it sank in 1951.

Plaza restaurant plan raises commissioners' hackles

■ Disputed house also denied

By MARY SCHLEY

THE SAN Diego Company that wants to open a 300-seat restaurant and marketplace in the space that formerly housed Homescapes in Carmel Plaza received a resounding denial from the planning commission toward the end of a six-hour meeting Wednesday night that also included another hearing for a new home proposed on Scenic Road north of Eighth Avenue.

The house, which had been appealed to the city council by a neighbor and was subsequently kicked back to the commission for further design work, received a unanimous denial, as well.

The Patio Carmel

Despite publicity disseminated by The Patio Group and American National Investments that had some media reporting the new Patio Carmel restaurant as if it were a done deal,

Lucius takes aim at Panetta's qualifications

■ Nepotism is reason for his popularity, she says in TV commercial

By KELLY NIX

THE GLOVES are off.

In a new TV commercial and an interview with The Pine Cone, Republican congressional candidate Casey Lucius alleges that Democratic rival Jimmy Panetta is not qualified for the job and is running a campaign based on nepotism and insider deals.

But Panetta, 46, who is endorsed by presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, responded strongly to the accusations, saying he's eminently qualified for the 20th District seat, and called Lucius' "attacks" on him a "desperate attempt" to attract voters, who overwhelmingly chose him for the congressional seat in the June primary. The general election is Nov. 8.

A famous father

Lucius' 30-second political ad, which began airing Monday night, conveys what many of her supporters have long whispered: that Panetta's popularity is mostly due to his famous father, Leon Panetta, the former CIA director, secretary of defense and congressman, and not his own accomplishments.

"This election cannot be about political connections and dynasties," Lucius, 40, tells viewers. "This election is about opportunity. It's about believing in our country and our community. I haven't been handed anything. I've worked hard. And I want to work for you."

The commercial, which features black and white photos

Fire burns miles of fence at one park, closes another

By CHRIS COUNTS

MORE THAN 14 miles of fences at Palo Corona Regional Park were destroyed by the Soberanes Fire, creating a major challenge for a park that depends on cows to help keep invasive plants in check — and is home to a cattle grazing tradition that dates back more than a century.

Replacing fences is just one task the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District faces as a result of the fire, which has burned more than 107,000 acres and destroyed 57 homes since an illegal campfire started it July 22.

Besides the loss of an estimated 75,000 feet of cattle fencing, Palo Corona also suffered damage caused by bulldozers cutting about 20 miles of firebreaks. In Palo Colorado Canyon, the park district's Mill Creek Redwood Preserve is closed indefinitely after the fire swept through it. And at another park district property, an archaeological site was

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of Panetta, contends, "Washington is broken because of people who want to be someone, not do something. Because of a corrupt system based on who you know, not what you can do."

And in the interview Wednesday, Lucius, a Pacific Grove city councilwoman, U.S. Navy veteran and former Naval Postgraduate School professor, was even more explicit in her new message, saying that while "everyone admires Leon and appreciates his service" to the country, the congressional seat — to be vacated by longtime incumbent Sam Farr when he retires in January — is "being treated like a family heirloom."

As evidence that Leon Panetta is helping his son get the job, she pointed to a big-ticket Sept. 13 fundraising event in Washington D.C. for Jimmy Panetta in which Leon was listed as a special guest. Individuals were asked to pay \$1,000 to attend, while political action committees were asked for \$2,500.

"People keep saying that I'm a good candidate, but that

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FLANDERS COULD BE BACK ON COUNCIL WORK LIST

By MARY SCHLEY

AFTER DECADES of discussions and debates, and ideas raised and dismissed, as well as two lawsuits, an invalidated election, two environmental impact reports, countless studies, and more than a million dollars in taxpayer money spent, the Jason Burnett-led Carmel City Council decided a few years ago to let Flanders Mansion languish, with only minimum maintenance and upkeep.

At a workshop Monday, however, a new city council seemed receptive to the idea of taking up the fate of the battered historic property again, with Melanie Billig once more raising the idea of having someone live in and restore it.

The topic of the house, which the city purchased in 1972 but has never managed to put to public use, arose during the council's discussion of goals and projects it might pursue in the coming year.

'An interested family'

City administrator Chip Rerig "has received a letter from an interested family that wants to do a conservatorship up there," Billig said at the Sept. 12 workshop. "It would involve the family living in the property and doing a restoration of the property. I would encourage you to ask Chip to review the possibility of that to see if it's a good thing for the city, if it's a good thing for the mansion, if it's a good thing for all of you."

Mayor Steve Dallas surmised that some of the previous council's expectations when it came to leasing or selling the mansion were unrealistic, which is why a plan failed to take hold, and councilwoman Carolyn Hardy echoed the sentiment. "I feel the previous council set the bar way too high on Flanders, and I feel like we can get it done with this council,"

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the proposal for an upscale food hall reminiscent of Mario Batali's Eataly in New York, with 200 indoor seats and 100 outdoors, a 16-seat bar, and individual stations for charcuterie, pizzas, coffee and bakery items, oysters and tapas, as well as a wine store, kitchen shop and "chef's pantry grab-and-go" of prepared foods, failed to gain traction among commissioners.

With several restaurants in Southern California and more projects underway elsewhere, The Patio Group/ANI proposed to remodel the 11,750-square-foot retail area in Carmel Plaza to accommodate its latest restaurant concept. Because it would be different from The Patio's other restaurants in terms of menu and layout, acting planning director Marc Wiener told the commission it wouldn't violate the city's ban on chains, and he recommended approval.

"Although the particular development company owns multiple high-quality restaurants throughout California, this restaurant will have a unique menu and design to differenti-

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PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

Could the prospect of a family living in and restoring the historic — but vacant and deteriorating — Flanders Mansion be on the table again?