

# The Carmel Pine Cone

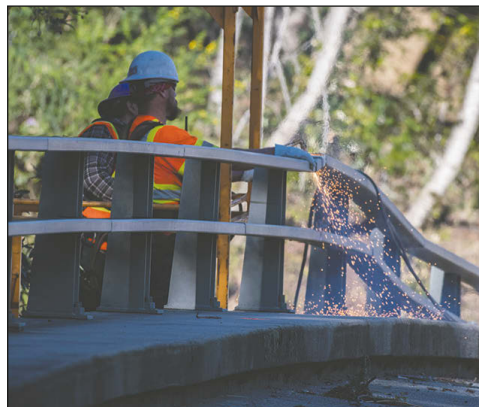
Volume 103 No. 11

On the Internet: [www.carmelpinecone.com](http://www.carmelpinecone.com)

March 17-23, 2017

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

## Crews working to bring roads back — but bridge refuses to cooperate



PHOTOS/KYLE EVANS, MICHAEL TROUTMAN DMT IMAGING

Workers (top left) remove the railing from the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge before they try to demolish it with a crane (above). And a crew (left) takes soil samples from the collapsed section of Cachagua Road.



### ■ One-lane solution may speed access to Cachagua

By MARY SCHLEY

CONSTRUCTION CREWS used drills and other heavy machinery to take soil samples at the Cachagua Road “slipout” Monday, in order to figure out the best way to fix the collapsed section of road that’s a main artery for the rural Upper Carmel Valley community.

During a fierce round of winter storms in mid-February, a large chunk of the narrow road about 1.5 miles up the hill from Carmel Valley Road cracked and then slid.

Kleinfelder crews conducted the boring and core sampling March 13, according to Kate Daniels, aide to 5th District County Supervisor Mary Adams.

“The soil testing that started earlier this week is what is needed for us to be able to decide whether or not it’s feasible for a one-lane, limited-access road while the longer-term repairs are in progress,” she said

See **CACHAGUA** page 10A

### ■ Wrecking ball making progress at Pfeiffer Canyon

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER MORE than three days of pounding by a wrecking ball suspended from a massive crane, the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge was still standing Thursday afternoon — but a Caltrans official was holding out hope the failed bridge could be brought down by the end of the day.

“We’re seeing evidence of the bridge showing signs of demolition,” Caltrans spokesman Jim Shivers told The Pine Cone.

On Feb. 11, the bridge, which is located just south of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, began to fail when the ground beneath a support column gave way. A few days later, Caltrans closed the bridge to all traffic, including pedestrians, and decided it had to be torn down.

To do that, the road agency brought in a crane that was delivered to the site in 11 loads over the last week. When assem-

See **BRIDGE** page 13A

## PENINSULA ENJOYS RECORD WATER STORAGE LEVELS

By KELLY NIX

WHILE MOST of the plentiful rain the Monterey Peninsula enjoyed this winter flowed right back to sea, making it not much use to humans, it’s also been a record year for capturing and storing excess winter water from the Carmel River.

Since Oct. 1, 2016, the Monterey Peninsula has received 28.06 inches of rain, or 182 percent of the long-term average, according to Monterey Peninsula Water Management District general manager Dave Stoldt. And a record amount of that rain has been pumped into the Seaside aquifer for use during the rest of the year.

“The diversion to aquifer storage and recovery exceeds 1,200 acre-feet — a new record — and that amounts 12 percent of local consumer demand for a year,” Stoldt told The Pine Cone.

Pumping from the Carmel River to the aquifer is “still going and may go until the end of May,” he added.

### Three years’ supply

In the entire system, Stoldt said, water storage is now at 106 percent of average and amounts to about three years worth of local potable water needs.

The generous amount of rain this year has also filled the reservoir behind Los Padres Dam, and Stoldt said it could stay that way into July, “allowing more releases later into the summer, and perhaps keeping the river flowing to the lagoon year-long for only the second time since 1998.”

The water district’s aquifer storage and recovery system diverts excess winter flows from the Carmel River, via

California American Water’s distribution system, to injection wells in the Seaside Groundwater Basin. The stored water is pumped out of the basin in the dry summer months.

“We are basically injecting drinking-quality water, and when it comes out, it gets zapped again with a little chlorine,” Stoldt explained.

He said the amount of water that can be diverted is constrained by the conveyance system, which Cal Am is updating.

See **STORAGE** page 10A



PHOTO/COURTESY MONTEREY PENINSULA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Near Gen. Jim Moore Boulevard in Seaside, water from the Carmel River as it’s “backflushed” to remove sediment before being stored underground. Behind it is an MPWMD water treatment building.

## Mullane resigns as public works director

By MARY SCHLEY

ROB MULLANE — who was hired by former city administrator Jason Stilwell in August 2013 as director of planning and building, and was then reassigned by Stilwell’s successor, Doug Schmitz, to run the public works department — resigned this week. His last day is March 17.

“I will miss working with my colleagues here at Carmel-by-the-Sea, as well as with the council, commissions and residents,” he wrote in his March 15 letter to city administrator Chip Rerig. “I will especially miss working with the staff of the public works department. They are a truly dedicated and hardworking group, and I am proud of how far the group has come in these last two years.”

City administrator Chip Rerig said Mullane told him last Wednesday that he would be leaving.

“He inherited a role while the city was going through a lot of rebuilding and healing, and he did a really good job, given his professional background and skillset,” Rerig said of Mullane, who holds an advanced degree in geology and worked in resource management, water issues, erosion, beach repair and other aspects of coastal development in Hawaii and other U.S. affiliate islands before coming to California. He also oversaw planning for the City of Goleta when it incorporated.

“It’s a very amicable parting between him and me,” Rerig

See **MULLANE** page 12A

## Aquarium’s mailbox may soon be packed to the gills

By ELAINE HESSER

‘DEAR FISH, you are the best fish ever. Some fish are thought to be scary. But you are great!’ So read a postcard addressed, “Attn: fish,” delivered to the Monterey Bay Aquarium in early March. It was unsigned, but came from Hawaii.

Patrick Webster, who handles the aquarium’s social media on sites like Facebook and Tumblr, said he got the card from the folks who work in shipping and receiving. They thought he might be able to use it on some of the aquarium’s myriad online accounts.

“It was just adorable,” he said.

He dutifully read the postcard to the inhabitants of the Kelp Forest, and put a photo of it, with the forest and a leopard shark in the background, on Snapchat and Instagram.

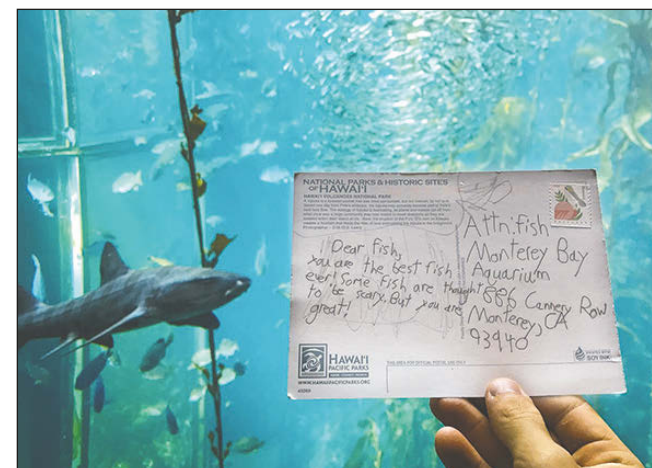
Then he put it on Facebook on March 4, thinking it was a “fun post for the weekend.” He added a caption inviting others to send fan mail to the aquarium’s denizens and promising to make sure they’re read to them.

He might need some help.

Reaction on Facebook went international, with more than 250,000 views by Monday, March 13. Some readers offered to send postcards from far-flung places like Paris and Switzerland. The aquarium responded to several readers’ comments with some dry humor.

From Meghan Sandoval, location unspecified, came this: “We need to write a postcard to every fish in the aquarium!” The aquarium came right back with, “We currently have 20,000 sardines. Hang on while we invest in Hallmark stock.”

See **FISH** page 17A



PHOTO/COURTESY MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM

Thanks to this postcard, a lot of the creatures at the aquarium are already feeling more love.