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Shuttle to help put Big Sur back on tourist map

By CHRIS COUNTS

MUCH OF Big Sur has been cut off from visitors for more than two months after storms caused serious damage to Highway 1, putting a significant dent in the area's economy. But an ambitious plan to establish a shuttle service is in the

works, and by summer, it could give people from out of town easy access to popular destinations like the landmark Nepenthe restaurant, an aide to 5th District supervisor Mary Adams told The Pine Cone Thursday.

Although crucial details still need to be worked out, the shuttle service would transport people from a temporary parking area at Andrew Molera State Park to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, where they could walk along a recently constructed pedestrian trail to reach the south side of the Pfeiffer Canyon Bridge project. It would cost \$10 to park at Molera, and only those who pay the fee would be able to use the shuttle.

The bridge failed in February, preventing motorists from driving more than 26 miles south of Carmel, and probably won't be reopened until September.

Once visitors reach the south side of the bridge, they could take another shuttle and visit isolated businesses like Nepenthe, the Phoenix Shop, Hawthorne Gallery and the Big Sur Taphouse.

Crafting the plan is the Big Sur Economic Recovery Task Force, which was formed by Adams and features representatives from the Big Sur Volunteer Fire

Rental scammer on the lam

■ Judge issues warrant, but Moffa's whereabouts unknown

By MARY SCHLEY

THE MAN accused of bilking a Carmel couple out of a \$3,000 deposit to rent a home that wasn't even his, and of scamming several others out of deposits and rent, will be arrested — as soon as authorities find him.

Monterey County Superior Court Judge Carrie Panetta issued a \$10,000 arrest warrant for Chris Moffa late last month — but prosecutor Jeannine Pacioni said this week that authorities don't know where he is.

Moffa has been charged with one felony count of fraud for allegedly taking off with the security deposit he took from a couple under the auspices of renting them a house on Guadalupe Street in February. But he suddenly told them they couldn't move in and canceled the lease at the last minute, according to chef Soerke Peters and his girlfriend, Amy Stouffer, who had been packed and ready to make the move. Shortly after, he disappeared with their cash.

More than two months later and still out the money, Peters filed a complaint in small claims court against Moffa April 19.

That same day, Sandra Meyrose, who owns the Guadalupe Street residence, also filed a lawsuit against him for money he owes her. In February, Stouffer told The Pine Cone that Meyrose said she'd been trying to evict Moffa, who owes her several thousand dollars.

The court hearings for both cases are set for June 29.

Meanwhile, Kinshasha Baclig, who rented the same resi-

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Despite weather delays, roundabout taking shape

■ Goal is to have it open by Concours

By KELLY NIX

THE ROUNDABOUT under construction on Holman Highway is not quite finished — and new delays for motorists are expected during the remaining construction — but some drivers are already rolling through the intersection.

Motorists traveling through the construction zone at highways 68 and 1 have seen big changes recently, with a lane reconfiguration and work involving heavy machinery on the southern part of the intersection.

"The current lane configuration, including the "No Left Turn" from the Pebble Beach Highway 1 gate toward Highway 68, will be in place for five weeks," transportation planner Grant Leonard told The Pine Cone.

Additional congestion is expected eastbound on Highway 68 because the dedicated right turn lane toward the southbound Highway 1 onramp has been eliminated for work purposes.

But if you're heading west to Pacific Grove from southbound Highway 1, you'll no longer have to stop at a traffic light. That's because traffic from the off-ramp now merges with cars that are already on Highway 68.

On the unfinished portion of the roundabout, work crews are performing excavation, electrical, concrete and drainage work, which is the same type of work that had been occurring on the northern side.

"Generally speaking, the work now is very similar to what has been happening on the northern side of the intersection for the last few months, except now the crews are working on the other side," Leonard explained. "The work involves

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Website finds pen pals for MoCo convicts

By KELLY NIX

MEET ROBERT — He's physically fit, loves children and pets, and is looking for someone who is trustworthy and has an open heart. He also beat a young model to death with a hammer and dumped her body into a vat of acid.

Then there's Jonathan, a 35-year-old Libra with "teddy bear brown eyes" who's looking for a strong woman of any race. Though his online profile doesn't say it, he's serving life in prison for murdering his girlfriend's 4-year-old son.

The men are among dozens of prisoners serving time in the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad and Salinas Valley State Prison — many of them for heinous crimes — who are seeking pen-pal connections with women on the out-

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Congressman's office inundated with phone calls and inquiries

By KELLY NIX

PRESIDENT DONALD Trump's provocative tweets, concerns over immigration and the future of Obamacare — plus the usual problems people often have with federal benefits and programs — are prompting constituents of U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta to flood his three offices with an extraordinary number of phone calls and requests since he began the job in January.

Panetta's predecessor, Congressman Sam Farr, who retired late last year, reported receiving a total of 47,800 phone calls, emails and letters in 2016. But in just the first three months of being on the job, Panetta's set to easily crush that figure.

"In the first 100 days — from Jan. 3 to April 13 — we

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POPS ORCHESTRA BRINGS MOZART AND BEETHOVEN TO THE SALINAS VALLEY

By ELAINE HESSER

WHEN YOU think of King City, what comes to mind? Ranchers? Blistering summer heat? How about historic architecture or classical music?

Believe it or not, King City has a beautiful theater and concert hall that's part of its high school. The theater was designed by Carmel architect Robert Stanton, with sculptures by Jo Mora, and it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

And Carl Christensen, conductor of the Monterey County Pops, likes playing there.

Best known for its concerts on the lawn at Colton Hall on Memorial Day and at the Golden State Theatre for Independence Day, the orchestra has been traveling to Salinas and

King City for several years. Not only do they perform, but they work with kids — most of whom are Hispanic — to augment their music education.

Although you're likely to hear a lot of Mexican pop or mariachi if you take a spin through the radio dial in the Salinas Valley, that doesn't mean orchestral music isn't part of Hispanic culture.

Christensen was a trombone player with Mexico's national symphony for 10 years and said the country has a rich musical tradition. "In all Latin cultures, music is a very big deal. The virtues of live music are recognized," he said.

He has toured all over South America and

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When the Monterey County Pops takes the stage Memorial Day, they'll be joined by a rondalla — a youthful guitar and voice ensemble — from the Alisal Center for the Fine Arts in Salinas.