

The Carmel Pine Cone

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Highway 1 reopens after 14 months

By KELLY NIX

FIFTY-FOUR MILLION dollars later and ahead of schedule, Caltrans reopened Highway 1 at Mud Creek Wednesday, allowing drivers to travel through unimpeded and Big Sur businesses to start the process of recovering the revenue they lost during the 14-month closure.

Highway 1 has been closed near the Monterey-San Luis Obispo county line since May 20, 2017, after one of California's biggest landslides dumped about 5 million cubic yards of debris, rock and dirt on a quarter-mile portion of the road, destroying most of it.

On Wednesday morning, drivers passing over the redone highway honked their horns, yelled and waved in celebration for the benefit of cameras documenting the event. An official ribbon cutting will take place July 20 at Ragged Point.

Kirk Gafill, owner of Nepenthe Restaurant and president of the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce, said the mood of business owners ranges from "relief to celebratory."

"This opening allows businesses the opportunity to begin their recovery at the most important time of year, summer, and for our community to again have full freedom of access up and down the coast," Gafill told The Pine Cone Wednesday.

Mother Nature hasn't been too kind to Big Sur businesses over the past few seasons.

"It has been a long two years of historically impactful environmental events, from the Soberanes Fire beginning in July of 2016, to the last closure at Mud Creek being re-opened," Gafill said.

The extensive and expensive repair included the construction of a quarter-mile

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PHOTO/CALTRANS

These vehicles are among the first to drive over the new, \$54 million stretch of Highway 1 on the South Coast that had been obliterated by a landslide in March 2017.

One dead, two injured in teen DUI crash

By MARY SCHLEY

A 16-YEAR-OLD girl died after a head-on collision on Carmel Valley Road last Thursday night, and the cause was drunk driving by a teenage friend, according to the California Highway Patrol.

Annabelle Vandenbroucke had been undergoing treatment at Natividad Medical Center for brain bleeding, a lacerated liver and other injuries, according to law enforcement and schoolmates. She was a junior at Carmel High School.

Monterey County Sheriff's Cmdr. John Thornburg confirmed her death Thursday morning. She was declared brain dead at 9 p.m. July 18, according to the CHP.

The tragic crash occurred on westbound Carmel Valley Road just east of Country Club Drive at around 7:40 p.m. July 12, when 18-year-old

Margot McNally, at the wheel of a 2007 Nissan Pathfinder, ran wide in a corner, crossed into the other lane, and hit a 1996 GMC Suburban head-on, according to California Highway Patrol officer Oscar Loza. The cause was McNally's "high rate of speed and alcohol impairment."

After the crash, both SUVs came to rest in the eastbound lane, and the GMC's engine compartment caught fire, according to Loza. An off-duty firefighter who arrived moments later pulled 69-year-old Sarah Coleman to safety.

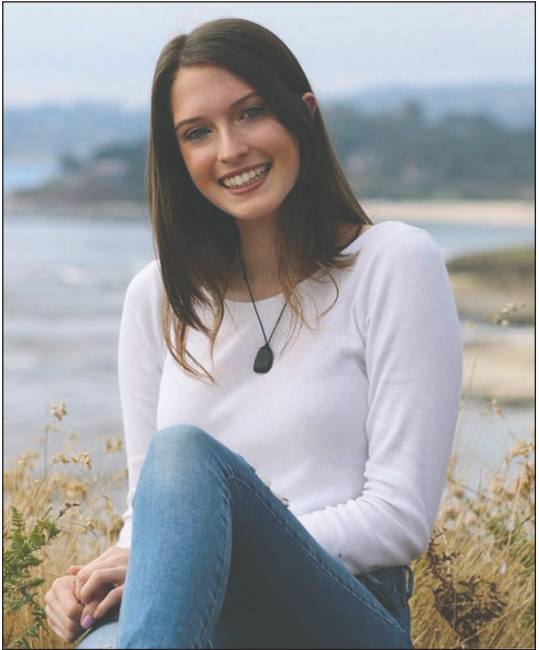
Vandenbroucke, a passenger in the car McNally was driving, was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash, according to law enforcement, and was unconscious and had internal bleeding. The driver of the car they hit was seriously injured, with a compound fracture to her

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PHOTOS/INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

Annabelle Vandenbroucke, 16, (above) died Wednesday night of injuries she sustained in a car wreck last Thursday. Her friend, Margot McNally (right) was allegedly driving drunk.



DECREPID JEFFERS CABIN STILL HISTORIC — BUT WILL BE TORN DOWN ANYWAY

By MARY SCHLEY

A 116-YEAR-OLD cabin on Monte Verde Street is so dilapidated it might collapse at any moment, and has even been ordered demolished by the city's building inspector, but the historic resources board voted this week to protect it, anyway.

As a result, Matt and Stacey Roy — who bought the Monte Verde Street lot and its deteriorating cabin once occupied by poet Robinson Jeffers and wife Una — may be forced to build a replica of the 600-square-foot house after it's demolished, rather than construct the home they want to live in. They bought the house for \$425,000 in May, according to the Monterey County Recorder's Office.



PHOTO/JOHN LEY

This ramshackle log cabin, shown in 1967, is 116 years old and was occupied by poet Robinson Jeffers for a few years, so the city decided it should be considered historic, even though it will be demolished.

During the course of the nearly two-hour hearing Monday — the second on the issue, after the board in May asked for more information — planning director Marc Wiener said that despite the age of the house, its unusual log construction, and its brief occupation by one of the country's more famous poets, it should be removed from the city's inventory of historic properties.

"In order for historic designation to be of value, a high standard should be maintained," he said. "None of the original building fabric can be preserved, and in staff's opinion, a replica log cabin does not meet the city's standards." He also noted that Tor House on Carmel Point is much more significant.

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Oregon woman found by hikers still recovering

By MARY SCHLEY

"I'M SITTING here in the hospital, laughing with my sister until she makes broken bones hurt," said 23-year-old Angela Hernandez as she recovered in the hospital from a harrowing experience at the bottom of a Big Sur cliff. "I've met some of the most beautiful human beings that I think I'll ever meet in my entire life."

Hernandez was found Friday near the wreckage of the Jeep she'd crashed 250 feet below Highway 1. "I've experienced something so unique and terrifying that I can't imagine that there isn't a bigger purpose for me in this life," she posted online.

Hernandez was on her way from Oregon to Southern California two weeks ago and was reported missing July 6 after her family lost contact with her, according to Monterey County Sheriff's Cmdr. John Thornburg. Monterey County officials started searching for her after a ping from her cell phone and surveillance images from the Carmel Highlands gas station showed her heading south on Highway 1 the same day.

But a week-long search by rescuers failed to find any sign of her, and it wasn't until July 13 that a couple hiking along a remote stretch of coastline not far from the intersection of Highway 1 and Nacimiento-Fergus-

son Road stumbled across a bumper, and then the rest of the mangled Jeep, around 6 p.m. It had come to rest heavily damaged but upright, partially submerged in the ocean.

"My husband ran ahead to see if there were any bodies," Chelsea Moore said in an interview with KION. "But there

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Angela Hernandez [left] said she spent a week stranded on a remote Big Sur beach before she was found by Chelsea Moore [right] and husband Chad.