

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Peaceful protesters, mariachi band greet Sheriff Joe

By CHRIS COUNTS

WHILE SOME worried a talk Thursday by outspoken former Arizona sheriff and conservative speaker Joe Arpaio at Palo Corona Regional Park could spark a violent

protest, the demonstration against him looked more like a party.

A couple hundred protesters greeted people as they entered the park, welcoming them with loud chants and colorful signs — such as “Just say no to Joe,” “Lock Him Up,” “Racist Felons Not Wanted” and “Dreamers Deserve a Path to Citizenship” — while a mariachi band created a festive mood, and a food truck, Big Sur Taco, served lunch. Everybody seemed to be having a good time.

The same thing could be said inside the park’s banquet room, where nearly 200 people listened to the much-reviled Arpaio and a slate of conservative speakers which included writer and activist Charlie Kirk, Breitbart reporter Adelle Nazarian, local radio host Georgia Beardslee and conservative actress Julianne Davis.

With red, white and blue balloons everywhere — and many in the audience dressed in the colors of the American flag — the event was upbeat and celebratory. It was organized by a local group, Monterey Peninsula Republican Women Federated.

### Trump looms large

Warming up the crowd for Arpaio, Beardslee began her talk with a nod to President Donald Trump. “My fellow deplorables,” she greeted the audience, which elicited cheers.

While Arpaio was the featured speaker at the lunchtime event, Trump was clearly on the minds of many.

After he was introduced, to big applause, Arpaio repeatedly defended and praised the president, who pardoned him after he was found guilty in federal court of criminal contempt for ignoring a court order that directed his sheriff’s office to end racial profiling.

“It took me 75 years to find my hero,” Arpaio said. “He has courage. He’s very loyal and he has a heart. I love the guy.”

Arpaio’s praise of Trump drew cheers and applause from the audience.

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## Unanimous PUC OKs desal plant

By KELLY NIX

IN A decision for the history books, the state’s Public Utilities Commission Thursday approved a proposal by California American Water to build a \$330 million desalination plant it says will be a drought-free water supply for the Monterey Peninsula.

The five PUC commissioners at the agency’s meeting in San Francisco voted unanimously to grant Cal Am a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for its Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project, which would use underground slant wells to draw seawater from beneath the Pacific Ocean and purify it to drinking-water standards.

The decision “puts the Monterey Peninsula on the road to water security with water that will be safe, reliable and protect the community from drought,” PUC commissioner Liane M. Randolph said not long before she and the other four commissioners OK’d the permit.

The vote to approve the desal proposal protects ratepayers “against unreasonable costs” and the environment “against adverse impacts,” while also providing Cal Am “with the best opportunity to meet its customers’ needs at just and reasonable rates,” she said.

### ‘Protect from uncertainty’

Cal Am spokeswoman Catherine Stedman called the green light for the plant, which would be in North Marina, a “big moment for our community.”

“After so many years of work to develop a reliable water supply, we finally have approval of a project that will protect the Carmel River and our population from drought and water uncertainty,” she told *The Pine Cone* just after the PUC voted on the plant.

The commissioners’ decision follows the release in August of a “proposed decision” by three PUC judges, who concluded that Cal Am’s 6.4 million-gallon-per-day desal plant was the best water supply project to ensure Peninsula customers have a sufficient water source for lots of record and an expected increase in tourism, as well as a buffer against “uncertainties.”

Cal Am’s desal plant puts it in compliance with an order by the State Water Resources Control Board to come up with an alternative water supply to the Carmel River, the Peninsula’s primary water source, or risk heavy penalties.

Scores of Peninsula ratepayers, representatives from special in-

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PHOTO/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING

A mariachi band and about 200 protesters (top) gathered at Palo Corona Regional Park Thursday to protest Joe Arpaio’s appearance at a Republican group’s luncheon (above). The protests were peaceful and Arpaio’s appearance was uneventful.

## City wants ‘curator’ to move in and fix up Flanders

By MARY SCHLEY

IF YOU’RE willing to spend a minimum of \$60,000 per year for five years to repair a mansion, in exchange for living there rent-free for 20 years, the city wants to hear from you.

City council members voted unanimously Tuesday night

## Councilman, attorney at odds over disclosure

By MARY SCHLEY

TENSIONS ROSE at the start of the city council meeting Tuesday after a resident asked about a closed-session item that revealed councilman Bobby Richards is the subject of “anticipated litigation.”

In an unusual move, city attorney Glen Mozingo disclosed via an item on the agenda that a closed session before the Sept. 10 city council meeting would include a discussion of “Allegations of Tortuous and Illegal Conduct by a City Councilman.” The item not only seemed to be about Richards, it included more information than is usually made public about the city’s legal actions.

A review of dozens of previous agendas for closed sessions — including those that presumably included discussions of the sexual harassment allegations against Mayor Steve Dallas — revealed no descriptions of any sort. Generally, such agenda items only mention “conference with Legal Counsel — Existing or Anticipated Litigation” and cite

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to solicit proposals from people who would be willing and qualified to commit to a “curatorship” in the house taxpayers purchased along with part of what is now Mission Trail park in 1972 but have never been able to use.

At the meeting this week, budget and contracts director Sharon Friedrichsen outlined the two potential methods the current city council has favored for finally doing something with Flanders Mansion: curatorship, or a “sale and ground lease hybrid model,” where someone would buy the mansion and lease the land from the city on a long-term basis.

The benefits of a curatorship would be getting the taxpayers off the hook for restoring the mansion while keeping it in city ownership, Friedrichsen pointed out. Among the downsides would be missing out on the revenues the city could get from selling or leasing the mansion.

### A limited market?

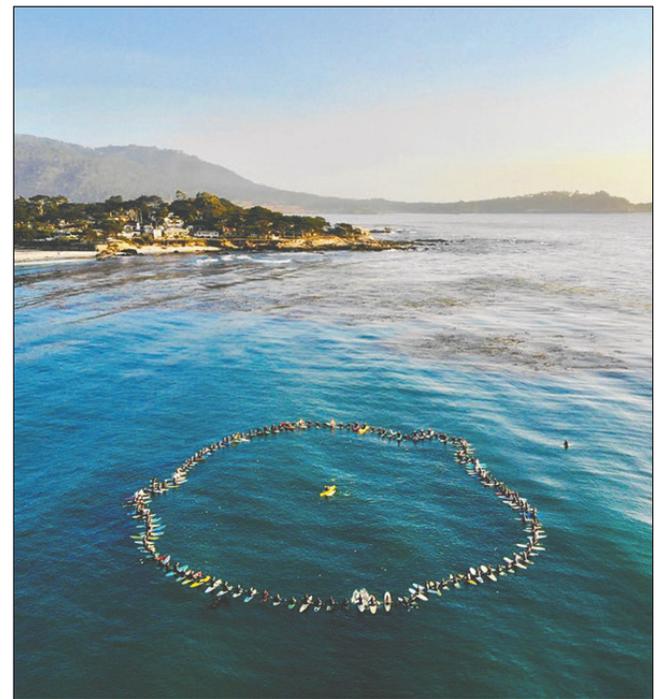
The alternative is the “sale and ground lease hybrid model,” under which the mansion would go to the highest bidder, who would then get a long-term lease, anywhere from 50 to 99 years, for the land. When the lease expires, the house — by then presumably restored — would revert to city ownership. But rules imposed on the new owner/lessee regarding parking, public access around the property and other issues might be difficult to implement, and there could be conflict between the buyer and the city regarding who is responsible for maintaining what, she said.

“Moreover, there may be a limited market for homeowners that are willing, and able to obtain financing, to buy the mansion but not own the land,” Friedrichsen said.

The sale/lease would also require extensive environmental review — just as previous efforts to sell the house did

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## SURFERS’ UNIQUE TRIBUTE TO ONE OF THEIR OWN



PHOTO/ADAM CAMPBELL

More than 150 surfers assembled in Carmel Bay Sunday to pay tribute to beloved Big Sur resident Weston Call, who passed away Aug. 12. Call was a fourth-generation Carmel native, a 2004 graduate of Carmel High School — and an avid surfer.