

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## City to hire auditor of hotels' books

By MARY SCHLEY

SINCE HOTEL taxes provide such a huge chunk of the city's budget, a consultant will soon be hired to go through the books of the city's 47 hotels, inns and motels over the course of three years to ensure they are paying as much as they should be.

Budget and contracts director Sharon Friedrichsen said three firms responded after city officials put out the word they were looking for an auditor to handle the job, and she's planning to recommend the city council hire one of them early next year.

"It's city policy to have the transient occupancy tax audited by an outside agency, so we're just getting back on track with that, knowing that TOT is such a large part of our revenue," she said this week.

The city's TOT rate of 10 percent is applied to stays in hotels, inns, motels and short-term rentals. This year, the tax is expected to bring in nearly \$6.4 million, or 28 percent of the city's total operating budget. The audit will make sure that taxes collected from visitors by the hotels and inns are accurately reported to the city.

Officials are looking for a company that will audit all of the establishments over a three-year period and then on a rotating basis for another two years.

### 'Accuracy and timeliness'

In diving into each hotel's books, the auditor would ensure the business paid the proper amount of tax on time during the fiscal years 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018, and trace the gross revenues recorded on the hotel's TOT returns to the figures recorded in its own ledgers, to verify the owners have

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## C.V. MAN ARRESTED FOR STABBING PARENTS, GRANDMOTHER

By MARY SCHLEY

A 23-YEAR-OLD man stabbed his parents and 80-year-old grandmother at a Quail Meadows home Sunday night, critically wounding his mother and injuring the others, before hiding behind a bush on the property, where he was found an hour later by a Monterey County Sheriff's dog, according to MCSO Cmdr. John Thornburg.



Jacob Lee

Jacob Lee was booked into Monterey County Jail on multiple felonies, including three counts of attempted murder, while his family members were taken to the trauma center at Natividad Medical Center. The motive for the stabbings is unknown.

### Major response

"We got a 911 call that turned out to be from the dad that a stabbing had occurred," shortly before 8 p.m. Nov. 25 at the home in an upscale gated area above Quail Lodge in Carmel Valley, Thornburg told The Pine Cone Tuesday. A Monterey County Emergency Communications dispatcher sent an ambulance and a fire engine to the house, telling them that the "son stabbed both mother and father."

She soon dispatched a second ambulance and advised all the incoming medics that there were three victims: a woman with stab wounds to the head and neck, another woman with cuts to her head and thumb, and a man with a nosebleed, among other injuries.

See **STABBING** page 19A

## Council pledges cooperation as Potter takes office

■ Richards named vice mayor; Baron, Theis also sworn in

By MARY SCHLEY

IN A city hall packed to overflowing, Dave Potter took the oath of office as the city's new mayor Tuesday afternoon, promising to "fulfill the public's expectations" and make sure



PHOTO/KERRY BELSER

(Left to right) Council members Jeff Baron and Carrie Theis and Mayor Dave Potter take the oath of office Tuesday. The three were elected Nov. 6. Potter had mother-in-law Jean Boediker and sister-in-law Rita Christiansen join him with the family Bible.

"the door is always open."

Also being sworn into office, new councilman Jeff Baron said he will strive to ensure the public is heard, and reelected councilwoman Carrie Theis said she will continue working "to keep Carmel the special place that it is."

Before the new officials took their places, the outgoing council unanimously adopted a resolution ratifying the final results of the Nov. 6 election — in which turnout among the city's 2,566 registered voters exceeded 83 percent — confirming that Potter received 1,207 votes, Baron got 1,284, and Theis, 947.

Outgoing councilwoman Carolyn Hardy made the motion, and after the vote, she took a moment to thank outgoing Mayor Steve Dallas and the council for appointing her after he was elected mayor in 2016.

"We have accomplished so much in this short time, and I'm extremely proud of our many successes," she said.

Hardy said she appreciated everyone's support while she mourned her two brothers and husband this year.

"One of the most rewarding gifts of my term has been the many friends that I have made along the way," she said, adding that she will continue to find ways to serve. "I never stay idle for long, as I always like the challenge of a new project. I will see you around, and I wish you all good luck."

In his farewell, Dallas noted that regardless of the competitiveness that comes out during a political campaign, "in the

See **SWORN** page 20A

## Last week, mountain lions, this week, coyotes

By MARY SCHLEY

COYOTES VENTURED down onto the beach and chased dogs, according to beach walkers and pet owners who reported the incidents to police Sunday night and Tuesday morning, but little more can be done than to keep an eye out for the predators and keep pets close, according to animal control officer Cindi Mitchell.

The reports followed on the heels of several sightings of mountain lions over the past couple of months.

"We had a report of a woman at the beach after dark, around 5:45 p.m. on the 25th," Mitchell told The Pine Cone this week. The woman told police she was walking her dogs on the beach below the homes being built north of Fourth Avenue when she saw two coyotes come down onto the beach from the Pebble Beach Golf Links.

"She reported two coyotes were following her, and when she noticed it, she took off and ran toward Del Mar," Mitchell said. "She had two dogs with her, and she was very scared."

Mitchell posted warning signs in the area of the Fourth Avenue boardwalk and stairs warning people of the coyotes' presence.

### Chasing dogs

Then, on Tuesday morning shortly before 9 a.m., a beachgoer reported seeing a coyote at Scenic and Ninth that went toward the water and then up the beach toward Fourth Avenue. According to the dispatcher, that coyote was also chasing dogs, and not long after, a woman on Carmel Way called police to report "a large wolf" in front of her house.

"There's a lot of construction also going on in that area," Mitchell added. "Our unit arrived, and the coyote was standing there in the roadway. It wasn't really scared of the car or the lights or anything — and then it went off into the bushes."

While daytime sightings of coyotes are fairly unusual, Mitchell said the animal looked healthy.

"At different times, some of us have seen coyotes in that area where the water pools," near the north end of the beach, she said. "They can go after some of the birds and things that land there, and there's a lot of coverage — it's very wooded, with food, water and shelter."

Mitchell contacted the California Department of Fish & Wildlife regarding the coyote.

"We're just going to watch the situation," she said.

Mitchell wondered if the increase in coyote activity is due to boosts in the populations of rodents, squirrels and other

critters.

"We're getting a lot of different types of animals — rats and squirrels, and then the food chain just goes on up," she said. "It looks really healthy, so hopefully it's just eating lots of rodents and not going after cats and dogs."

## Garbage truck burns

■ Threatens tree and restaurant

By MARY SCHLEY

DISASTER WAS averted Saturday morning when a small garbage truck caught fire and got lodged under an oak tree next to Vesuvio restaurant. But firefighters and an ongoing rainstorm prevented the truck from exploding, burning the tree and catching the restaurant on fire. Nobody was hurt during the ordeal.

At around 6 a.m. Nov. 24, a GreenWaste Recovery employee was driving the pickup — which had been customized with two waste compartments and a hydraulic system in the back

See **TRUCK** page 17A



PHOTO/JOE BOUCHER

A firefighter kept a steady stream of water on a burning garbage truck Saturday morning to keep it from igniting the building next to it.