

The Monterey Peninsula is home to hundreds of small businesses, including many owned and run by dynamic, entrepreneurial women whose success stories are an inspiration to us all.

Read all about them in this issue of The Carmel Pine Cone

The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 105 No. 14

On the Internet: www.carmelpinecone.com

April 5-11, 2019

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

SERIOUSLY ILL FEMALE SEA OTTER FOUND ON BEACH

By MARY SCHLEY

THE PERSON who found a sick sea otter curled up on the sand at the north end of Carmel Beach Tuesday morning did the right thing by leaving it alone and calling the police department, but the otter, sadly, was too ill to save.

When Carmel P.D. animal control officer Cindi Mitchell arrived shortly before 11 a.m. April 2, “some very good people were standing by helping to keep people’s dogs away,” she said. “The otter was just kind of lying there curled up, alive but not really responsive, not alert, and not vocalizing — and after a while, it seemed like it was shaking or seizing.”

Mitchell immediately called the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and sea otter field response coordinator Karl Mayer and one of his staff members arrived soon after. Mitchell helped them get their equipment down to the beach to retrieve the otter.

Mayer said Thursday that the adult female otter had just weaned or prematurely lost a pup and was suffering from “end-lactation syndrome,” including emaciation and mating injuries on her nose. He said she also had “significant neurologic impairment.”

“On the beach, she was minimally responsive to capture and handling, with tremors in her head and upper body,” he said.

Back at the Aquarium, the decision was made to euthanize her.

See OTTER page 13A



PHOTO/CINDI MITCHELL

Specialists from the Monterey Bay Aquarium carefully moved a sick sea otter found on Carmel Beach Tuesday morning so they could take her in for care.

Short-term rental ban put off due to conflicts

By MARY SCHLEY

ONE COUNCIL member owns a short-term rental, and two others run hotels that would benefit from banning them, which means only Mayor Dave Potter and councilman Jeff Baron don’t have conflicts of interest when it comes to prohibiting short stays in the city’s commercial and multifamily districts. Two of those council people with conflicts would have to be allowed to vote on a proposed emergency ban on the rentals — since it requires a four-fifths votes to pass — so, fearing that would get the city sued, interim city attorney Jon Giffen recommended the council take the ordinance off the agenda at Tuesday’s meeting.

Drawing straws

State law “prohibits a public official such as a city council member from voting on or otherwise participating in any decision-making with respect to any matter in which he or she has a financial interest,” Giffen said at the April 2 meeting. And while an exception allows the council to “continue to function and not be paralyzed if a majority of the council members are faced with conflicts of interest,” Giffen said he was reluctant to use it to bring back two council members to vote on the

See RENTALS page 19A

DRAGNET TO SEARCH FOR DANGEROUS PATHOGEN

By CHRIS COUNTS

THERE’S A killer loose in Carmel Valley and volunteers will set out Saturday to try find out how far it’s spread.

The culprit is a water mold, *Phytophthora ramorum*, which causes Sudden Oak Death, and it’s killed millions of trees throughout California since it was first reported more than two decades ago. Now it’s starting to affect trees in the Monterey Peninsula.

The local volunteers are part of nationwide effort to map the spread of the disease, which has devastated tanbark oaks in Big Sur and other forested parts of the coast. While the impact of Sudden Oak Death in Carmel Valley has been minimal, that could change — just last year, researchers announced they had found the pathogen in Carmel Valley Village and north of Carmel Valley Road for the first time.

See SEARCH page 16A

Model arrested in gruesome death of psychiatrist

By KELLY NIX

A MODEL who has posed for Maxim and Italian Playboy was arrested last week on suspicion of murdering Thomas Burchard, 71, a longtime psychiatrist for Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula whose body was found stuffed in the trunk of an abandoned Mercedes outside Las Vegas.

Kelsey Nichole Turner, 25, was arrested on March 21 by the FBI in Stockton in coordination with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

The Clark County District Attorney’s Office charged Turner with “open murder,” a Nevada designation for murder that does not specify the degree, such as first- or second-degree murder.



Kelsey Turner

Turner, who used to live in Salinas and knew Burchard before moving to Las Vegas, is being held in the San Joaquin County Jail but is awaiting extradition to Clark County. Her next court date will be April 8 in a Stockton courtroom.

‘Foul odor’

A Las Vegas police arrest report released this week revealed chilling details in the case.

When police officers responded to a report of the abandoned 2017 Mercedes C300 about 30 miles outside Las Vegas, they opened the trunk to find it was filled with clothing and bedding.

“The patrol officers detected a foul odor,

See ARREST page 20A

Morse memoirs: Taking charge of a railroad’s property — and buying it

Following the death of Collis Huntington (the last of California’s Big Four railroad barons) in 1900, the heirs sold the Central and Southern Pacific railroads to E.H. Harriman of Union Pacific but retained their interest in Pacific Improvement Company, which had vast real estate holdings associated with their railroad. The company had been unprofitable since the 1906 earthquake, and in 1915, having proved his financial acumen while managing the Crocker ranch in Merced, S.F.B. Morse was hired to oversee liquidation of the Pacific Improvement Company’s multimillion-dollar assets. Morse was just shy of his 30th birthday ...

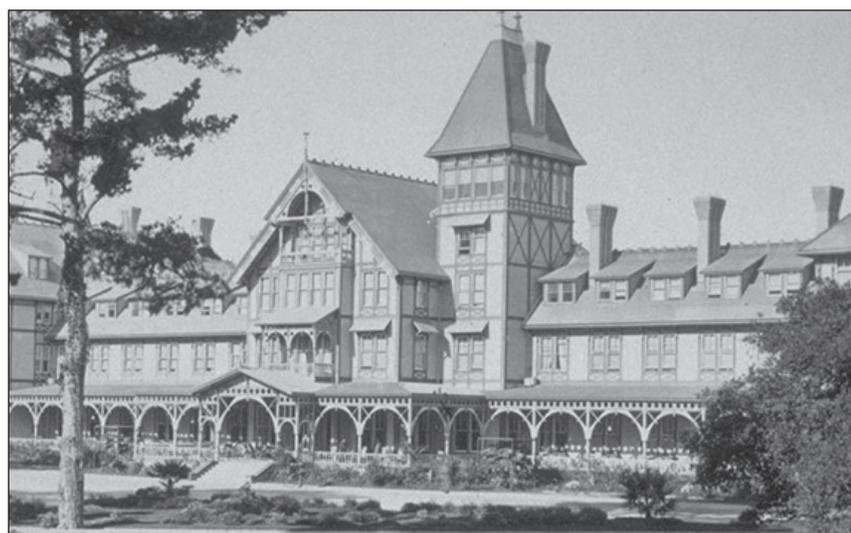
PART III

THE PACIFIC Improvement Company owned an amazing amount of property unrelated in any way to the operation of the railroad and unrelated to each other. There were 70 odd town-sites, in some cases nothing but

whistle stops, in some cases partially developed, and in other cases portions of prominent towns in the Central Valley, and a number of town-sites in Nevada. There were also some 15 ranches, three coal mines, including the Carbon Hill Coal Mine, an active operation, which I believe was the largest on the Pacific Coast.

There were a number of resorts, including Castle Crags, the Hope Ranch in Santa Barbara, and the Del Monte unit, which was the largest. There were industrial properties in San Francisco, quite valuable property in the city of Buffalo, N.Y., an interest in the Chevy Chase area outside Washington D.C., and the bonds of two railroads — one in Guatemala (the Guatemala Central), and the other the Pittsburgh, Shawmut, and the Northern. There was a coffee plantation in Guatemala. Also, the company owned what was known as the Alameda marsh in Alameda, almost 1,000 acres of marsh land on the estuary, and there were many other properties

See MORSE page 18A



The original Hotel Del Monte, built by the Big Four’s Pacific Improvement Co. as the Southern Pacific Railroad completed its branch line to Monterey in 1880. A young S.F.B. Morse was put in charge of most the railroad’s real estate holdings, including the hotel, in 1915.