

Construction damages senior housing next door

By MARY SCHLEY

THE LARGE construction project at Dolores and Fifth that has languished since March has damaged The Carmel Foundation's low-cost senior apartments next door, according to executive director Holly Zoller, including cracks, settling and shifting walls. With construction of the expansive underground garage, commercial space, condos and apartments halted, and developer Leidig/Drapper Properties searching for someone to buy the land or finance the project, Zoller said this week she wants the issues at Haseltine Court, a former hotel that the foundation purchased in 1964, addressed before any money changes hands.

'Cracking and separating'

"I was just over there looking at everything," she said Thursday morning. Of greatest concern to her is the concrete cracking, separating and sinking at the back of the complex, apparently because the soil beneath it has washed away due to its being exposed by the demolition and excavation next door.

"There is an ever increasing gap," Zoller said. The broken section is "sagging toward the pit. That whole part is separating from the building. It's significantly different from the last time I looked at it, though I can't remember when that was."

Zoller also said an exterior post holding up part of an

upstairs apartment had to be shimmed because the concrete floor below it is dropping.

The construction next door also required an exterior staircase to an upper apartment at the back of the complex at Lincoln and Fifth to be narrowed and walled off

See **DAMAGE** page 19A



PHOTO/MARY SCHLEY

Supports and a retaining wall in the giant pit at Dolores and Fifth are not doing a good job supporting the adjacent, Carmel Foundation-owned apartments, according to the foundation's director.

COUNCIL WANTS TO SHUT ROYAL BEE SKINCARE SHOP

By MARY SCHLEY

A BUSINESS billing itself as a theme store selling bee and honey products but which was in fact peddling cosmetics and skin lotions is on track to lose its license after the city council unanimously voted Tuesday night to deny owner Erez Chen's request for a permit.

Royal Bee, located on Dolores south of Ocean, received a business license in February and opened in late May, planning director Marc Wiener told the council at its Nov. 5 meeting. Subsequently, a city inspector visited and found the shop was selling cosmetics and skincare products and had several makeup stations set up inside.

"And they were also standing by the doorway handing

out cosmetics," he said. Hawking products from the stoop or sidewalk and calling out to passersby is a common practice at three similar skincare stores on Ocean Avenue, and visitors and residents frequently complain about them to the city.

"It is standard business practice for cosmetic stores operating this way," Wiener continued. "It's really been a consistent code compliance issue in which they've been going out on the sidewalk, handing out merchandise, and calling out to people passing by. We've routinely had to monitor it."

'Detrimental to the city'

During his report, Wiener showed a photo taken in August by the city's code enforcement officer of a Royal Bee employee who chased after a shopper heading into a neighboring business and diverted the customer by offering samples.

Because the store has cosmetics and skincare products

See **SKINCARE** page 23A

Next for historic preservation: Shopping center?

By CHRIS COUNTS

A CONSULTANT hired by the Carmel Valley Association is suggesting that the former Mid-Valley Center should be protected by state and local laws as an historic site, a move that would make it more difficult for its new owner to renovate it.

The opinion stands in contrast to a report by a county-approved historian that contends the site isn't historic, which could pave the way for the owner's renovation plans.

The contention that the center is historic was made by a consulting firm, Page & Turnbull, which submitted a letter Oct. 29.

"Page & Turnbull's preliminary opinion is that the Mid-Valley Shopping Center appears to possess sufficient significance and integrity to be eligible for listing in the California Register because of its architectural style and association with architect Olof Dahlstrand," the firm said in the letter.

The company also recommends "additional research and evaluation" to demonstrate the shopping center's eligibility for local and state historical designations.

But according to county-approved consultant Anthony Kirk, the center, which opened in 1966, should not be deemed historic.

In his report, which was released in September, Kirk said he evaluated the site for "architectural

Consultant: Cal Am takeover would mean lower bills

■ Water company disputes findings

By KELLY NIX

A GOVERNMENT takeover of California American Water's Monterey system appears to be economically feasible, and Monterey Peninsula customers would likely see lower monthly water bills after the acquisition, according to a long-awaited report released Wednesday that put the value of the system at \$513 million, about half of what Cal Am says it is.

A spokeswoman for Cal Am called the report "not serious" and warned that it grossly underestimates the costs of a takeover.

The "Preliminary Valuation and Cost of Service Analysis Report," prepared by Raftelis Financial Consultants and released by the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District, follows Peninsula voters' decision in November 2018 to acquire Cal Am if it was found to be financially feasible. The analysis indicates that it likely would be, assuming the company can be purchased for the amount put forth by the consultant.

"Based on the information and estimates summarized in this report, which are reasonable considering the currently available information, the acquisition of the Mon-

See **TAKEOVER** page 16A

Coastal commission postpones desal vote

By KELLY NIX

IN A surprising move, the California Coastal Commission said it would not make a decision next week on Cal Am's proposal to build a desalination plant near Marina.

The commission, which meets Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in Half Moon Bay, said it would probably consider the desal permit in early 2020.

On Wednesday, the coastal agency posted an update on its website indicating that the Nov. 14 meeting would still be held but that commissioners would only take testi-

See **VOTE** page 17A

First mention —

Crooner worked his way from ads to news

By ELAINE HESSER

BING CROSBY'S name first appeared in The Pine Cone in February 1932 — long before he recorded "White Christmas." The mention was an ad for the Carmel Theatre (originally the Theatre of the Golden Bough) on Ocean Avenue near Monte Verde, which was showing "I Surrender Dear," a 1931 short subject in which Crosby sang the song of the same name.

Two years later, the young crooner made his first personal appearance in town, The Pine Cone reported, when Crosby and husband-and-wife actors Richard Arlen and Jobyna Ralston, "drove up from Hollywood for a brief holiday in and about Carmel."

Evidently, Crosby liked what he saw, because he became a regular visitor. In 1936, The Pine Cone said



Bing Crosby in the 1930s

See **CROSBY** page 18A



PHOTO/WALD, RUHNKE & DOST ARCHITECTS

This hardware store is part of an "historic" shopping center, according to a consultant hired by the Carmel Valley Association.