

# The Carmel Pine Cone

Volume 108 No. 25

www.carmelpinecone.com

June 24-30, 2022

TRUSTED BY LOCALS AND LOVED BY VISITORS SINCE 1915

## Heroes rush to save man attacked by shark

■ Victim 'doing very well,' wife says

By KELLY NIX

DESPERATE SCREAMS for help from a swimmer who had been attacked by a shark off Lovers Point beach in Pacific Grove Wednesday morning prompted several

people to rescue the man and bring him to shore, including a police officer and nurse from Sacramento who were in town celebrating their wedding anniversary.

Steve Bruemmer, 62, of Monterey, was swimming not far off Lovers Point beach when the attack occurred around 10:30 a.m.

Bruemmer had severe wounds, but help from the good Samaritans probably saved his life.

"The adult male swimmer sustained significant injuries from the shark bite and was transported to Natividad Medical Center by ambulance," the Pacific Grove Police Department said.

Fortunately, Bruemmer, who is in the intensive care unit at NMC, will survive. His wife, Brita Bruemmer, medical director for the Big Sur Health Center, told The Pine Cone Thursday morning via an office assistant that her husband "is doing very well. Everything is intact, and his recovery is going very smoothly."

### No hesitation

Paul Bandy, an officer with the Sacramento Police Department, and his wife Aimee Johns, a nurse at Sutter Health hospital in Sacramento, were on 12-foot paddleboards when they encountered Bruemmer.

"We heard this man screaming for help and slapping the water," Bandy told The Pine Cone. "We started paddling toward him, and as we got closer, we saw that he had some pretty traumatic and awful wounds, and there was a whole lot of blood in the water."

Bandy for a moment thought Bruemmer was

See **RESCUE** page 19A

## Peninsula's real estate market barely slowing

■ Sellers pricing to solicit lots of bids

By MARY SCHLEY

HOME SALES on the Monterey Peninsula may have cooled a bit from the frenzied fall 2020 week when a record 76 properties closed escrow as \$139,065,500 changed hands, but the market remains competitive, with houses continuing to sell for more than their asking prices, many bought entirely with cash, and some closing within days of being put on the market.

While sellers take several factors into account when pricing their homes — including comparables in the neighborhood, their perception of how hot the market is, and how quickly they need to sell — the bottom line is to get the highest price, and Adam Moniz, a real estate agent at Sotheby's International Realty who specializes in the Carmel market, said it's not uncommon to see a strategically low asking price.

"Certainly, in the Carmel market, some sellers select asking prices they believe could lead to multiple offers and ultimately result in higher purchase prices, sometimes by a very significant amount," he said. In particular, Moniz mentioned a house on Santa Fe he handled that listed for \$1,299,000 and received 10 offers, ultimately selling for \$1,825,000.

### Asking plus million

Among the more striking examples of this phenomenon is the historic two-bedroom, two-bathroom, 1,001-square-foot house on the southeast corner of San Antonio and Fourth that M.J. Murphy built in 1925. The seller, James Kelley, put it on the market on Nov. 23, 2021, for \$1,950,000 — and sold it a week-and-a-half later to Christopher and Adrienne Ludwick for \$3,026,000, \$1,076,000

See **MARKET** page 16A

## Supes OK private ownership of desal

By KELLY NIX

A LONGSTANDING Monterey County ordinance prohibiting private ownership of desalination plants was rescinded Tuesday by the county board of supervisors, meaning that for-profit developers can now build and operate such treatment facilities.

When the board on June 21 voted 4-1 to remove the prohibition of private ownership or operation of desal plants, it backed it up with a finding that doing so would not have a "significant effect" on the environment. Fourth District Supervisor Wendy Root Askew dissented.

See **DESAL** page 21A

## Hilltop home, ocean vu



PHOTO/VENTANA WILDLIFE SOCIETY

No, this isn't another luxury home being built down the coast. It's a condor release facility that's replacing one destroyed in the Dolan Fire two years ago. See page 5A.



PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

Heath Braddock, left, Aimee Johns, middle, and her husband, Paul Bandy, were the first to reach swimmer Steve Bruemmer, after he'd been attacked by a shark at Lovers Point Wednesday morning.

## If you think a house is ugly, the city wants to know why

By MARY SCHLEY

A CRITICAL piece in overhauling the city's design rules for residential and commercial development is finding out what people think — and not just city hall regulars. To that end, the planning and building department hosted workshops Tuesday and Wednesday evenings to coax feedback out of people who might usually keep mum.

The city's consultant, Noré Winter — who drafted the first Design Traditions Project two decades ago and was

hired in March for \$139,330 to handle the latest update — led the workshops alongside planning director Brandon Swanson. Assisting were staff from planning, building and code compliance, as well as the members of the Design Traditions steering committee established by the city council in April.

The first night focused on residential rules, while the second session had participants discussing commercial development.

### Pretty pictures

Four dozen people showed up to the first session June 21, with another two dozen participating via Zoom.

"We had the usual suspects, but we also had people that none of us had met before," Swanson said Thursday. "We were getting to talk to people who don't usually turn out to city events."

He attributed that to heavily advertising the workshops and to his repeated efforts to convince more constituents to participate in government affairs.

"I've been on this 'get involved' kick, and I think it's actually working," he said.

To suss out people's opinions and feelings without having them go into technical architectural terms or long-winded descriptions, the exercises at each workshop were largely image driven. In one, for instance, photos of houses were lined up along the top of a poster, with a gap for another home to be plugged in in the center. Below, several more photos showed different styles and sizes of homes that could be inserted there — including some that clearly did not belong.

"We put images in there that we knew were terrible so we could get a reaction. We wanted to hear, what is it about it that's terrible?" Swanson explained. "There's always going to be a difference of opinion. In these situations, the negative feedback is just as helpful as the positive feedback, as long as it's constructive."

### Which one doesn't belong?

Working in small groups at several tables, people indicated which images they preferred, which ones did not belong, and which they were divided over or undecided about. Swanson, Winter and others circulated to get feedback from each group and discovered there tended to be

See **DESIGN** page 13A

## Former P.G. employee denies sex with boy, gets reduced bail

■ Worked for schools, D.A. and police

By KELLY NIX

A PACIFIC Grove school aide and Monterey County District Attorney's Office investigator who pleaded not guilty last week to numerous felony counts of oral sex with a teenage boy posted bond and has been released from the Monterey County Jail, where he had been held since his arrest, according to jail officials.

Andrew Chyo, 26, was taken into custody by Pacific Grove police June 14 after his alleged victim reported in April that "sexual assault crimes" occurred in 2019 when he was 17 years old and Chyo was 22 or 23.

Chyo was being held in Monterey County Jail, but he posted a portion of his \$1.89 million bail this week and was released, officials told The Pine Cone Thursday.

The surprising news of Chyo's release comes after his attorney, Steven Rease, asked Monterey County Superior Court Judge Stephanie Hulsey and District Attorney Jeanine Pacioni to release him on his own recognizance, or that bail be reduced to an amount he "can reasonably be expected to post."

See **ACCUSED** page 8A

# MARKET

From page 1A

over the asking price, according to realtor and Monterey County records.

“At the end of the day, the buyers really are the ones who control the market by offering what they feel the property is worth to them and what they are willing to pay,” Moniz observed.

Lately, a lot of them have been willing to pay more than what the seller asked. During the six months ending May 31, 761 out of a total 1,396 property sales in Monterey County closed at prices higher than asking, according to data gathered by Adam Pinterits, government and community affairs director for the Monterey County Association of Realtors. Of those, 85 occurred within Carmel-by-the-Sea, ranging from just \$100 higher than the list price to a whopping \$2,825,000 over asking.

Paying more than what the seller initially sought doesn't mean the buyer is overpaying, according to Moniz, especially with Carmel sellers setting lower prices

to generate a lot of interest. “We have a sophisticated real estate market in Carmel, and market participants here are well educated,” he said. “Sellers and buyers usually know what they are doing,” including understanding that a full-price offer might be meaningless.

## All cash

Pinterits also said that 328 all-cash deals were completed countywide during the same period, with 218 occurring in the Monterey Peninsula, including 87 within the city limits.

“All-cash deals are very prevalent in the Carmel market, especially for sales above the \$2 million mark,” Moniz explained. “We often do not see financing for sales over \$2 million.”

An all-cash offer isn't necessarily better than one that requires financing, however, since a buyer who's willing to borrow may end up being comfortable paying more for a house, he noted.

Moniz attributed the abundance of cash transactions to the number of buyers who are using real estate as an investment. “They are moving cash out of one investment vehicle — the stock market or maybe the sale of a business

— and into another,” he said. An additional upside, of course, is that Carmel “is a lovely place to live.”

Regardless of the type of transaction, real estate sales in general have also been closing fairly quickly, according to Pinterits' data. The average number of days on market countywide was 23, while on the Peninsula it was 25, and in Carmel, it was 29. By contrast, during slow times, a house might be on the market for months.

While the exuberance of buyers took even veteran realtors by surprise when the numbers sharply spiked just as the first pandemic-induced shutdowns in spring 2020 were lifted — and continued as new restrictions were imposed — a look at the numbers reveals demand continues.

Becky Jones, vice president and brokerage manager for Sotheby's Monterey Bay office, observed that home sales in Carmel-by-the-Sea were stronger in May than they were in April, but were down from a year ago, while in the greater Carmel area, including the mouth of the valley and beyond, they continued to strengthen.

In Carmel-by-the-Sea, last month's median price was \$3,050,000, nearly 10 percent higher than April's, but 22

See HOUSING next page

# THE BEST OF HOME & GARDEN

## Acme Awning Co.

Lic. #8431548

Since 1933



- Awnings - Stationary/Retractable
- Recovers • Exterior Solar Screens
- Residential/Commercial

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1933

**831-372-3539**

210 North Main St., Salinas

[www.acmeawnings.com](http://www.acmeawnings.com)

## CATE ELECTRICAL

License No. 218160



- SERVICE • LANDSCAPE LIGHTING
- REMODELS • COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL
- ELECTRIC CAR CHARGERS
- DESIGN & INSTALLATION

Family owned and in Carmel since 1961

**(831) 624-5361**

Dolores & 7th, Carmel-by-the-Sea

2021

**BEST  
ELECTRICIAN  
13 Years!**

KNOWLEDGE • SERVICE • CONVENIENCE  
IS WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE MURPHY'S

*Celebrating 118 Years!*

*Helping to Build Monterey Peninsula  
since 1904*

STILL FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED.



**Wyatt Todd**  
Hardware Sales

Free Delivery Anywhere in Monterey County

**831-659-2291**

10 West Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley Village



*The Quick, No Sanding Solution To Beautiful Wood Floors!*

Serving: Monterey Bay to Silicon Valley

- Service is Clean, Efficient and contains no harmful chemicals
- Most jobs are completed in one day
- Significant savings over traditional sanding methods
- Details and more photos at: [www.MrSandless.com](http://www.MrSandless.com)



*Certified Green*

Jim Griffith - Owner  
(831) 747-7476  
[gmb@mrsandless.com](mailto:gmb@mrsandless.com)

100%  
guaranteed  
or  
you don't pay

## A-1 OVERHEAD DOOR CO.

With over 50 years experience in garage doors and openers, we have built a strong reputation for providing the highest quality work by giving personalized service to our clientele. It is our focus on quality and affordability that propels A-1 Overhead Door Co. ahead of the competition.



Monterey Bay Area's  
GARAGE DOOR SPECIALIST

We Provide Prompt, Reliable Sales,  
Repairs & Service of Garage Doors  
& Garage Door Openers

SALES • FREE ESTIMATES • REPAIRS & SERVICE

*Courtesy & Integrity*

**(831) 574-1132 • (800) 696-8821**

[WWW.AONEDOOR.COM](http://WWW.AONEDOOR.COM)

State License # 658346



## PENINSULA psts SEPTIC TANK SERVICE

*Celebrating 56 Years*

- SEWER & DRAIN LINE CLEANING
- HYDRO-JETTING • TELEVISED SEWER LINES
- GREASE TRAP PUMPING & MAINTENANCE
- SEPTIC SYSTEMS PUMPED, SERVICED, REPAIRED & INSTALLED

*Senior & Military Discounts*

**831-659-2465**

73 W. Carmel Valley Rd., Unit #28 | Carmel Valley 93924

St. Contr. Lic. # 494738

[www.psts.net](http://www.psts.net)



**\$15 OFF  
ONE  
PUMPING**

EXPIRES 7/1/22

# HOUSING

From previous page

percent lower than a year ago. The average sales price in May was \$3,968,333, up nearly 19 percent over April but down just shy of 4 percent from the May 2021 average price of \$4,130,500, she said. In unincorporated Carmel, the median price last month was \$2.8 million, up more than 57 percent from April and almost 11 percent higher than a year ago, while average sales price in May was \$3,532,653, a nearly 27 percent increase over April and more than 18 percent higher than a year ago.

Monterey County property records compiled and reported weekly by The Pine Cone show a similar picture on the Peninsula. During the week of April 12, 2020 — when businesses were closed and the coronavirus pandemic had everyone sheltering in place — just 13 homes on the Peninsula sold for a total \$11,929,000. Three months later, a record-breaking 72 houses worth a combined \$103,356,000 changed hands during the week of July 12, 2020, and for the week of Sept. 27 to Oct. 3, 2020, those numbers rose to 76 properties with a total value of \$139,065,500.

### Winter holidays

Since then, weeks showing nine-digit total sales figures have been few and far between — but many have still been consistently higher than they were before the pandemic. The difference is nowhere more evident than during what are typically slow times of year, such as the winter holiday season.

For the week of Dec. 23-29, 2018, for instance, eight houses on the Peninsula sold for a combined \$12,817,636. Three years later, Dec. 27 to Jan 2, 2021, 46 properties sold for \$92,756,500, and a year after that, Dec. 26 to Jan 1, 2022, 36 went for a total \$110,371,500, including one on 17 Mile Drive that sold for \$33,815,500 and land on Abrams Drive in Marina that went for \$21.5 million.

Every week, dozens of houses have changed hands in transactions totaling in the tens of millions of dollars, with no discernible dips in the Monterey Peninsula market.

And some homes bought during the last year or two are already being offered for sale again, including “Otters Den” at Carpenter and Second, which sold in June 2021 for \$1,810,000 after being offered for \$1.75 million and is now listed for \$2,295,000. The house was put on the market in mid-May and is in escrow.

In the week of June 5-11, 42 properties on the Peninsula sold for a total of \$86,429,000. The four houses in Carmel that closed escrow that week sold for \$2 million to \$3,635,000, while the four homes sold in Pebble Beach ranged from \$4,288,000 to \$12 million.

While the Carmel real estate market isn’t immune from cyclical shifts, Moniz said, “We live in one of the greatest places on earth and, as a result, have had consistent real estate demand in the past. And we have consistent real estate demand in the present.”

The market isn’t slowing, he said, it’s “transitioning and stabilizing.”

“And the reality for a seller is we can still sell their



This historic M.J. Murphy house at San Antonio and Fourth was offered for \$1,950,000 in late November 2021 and sold a week-and-a-half later for \$3,026,000.

property for them for the most amount of money in the history of forever,” he said. “That’s still a very powerful position to be in.”

Jones’ observations were similar. “The Monterey Peninsula has always been a desirable destination, and I don’t see that changing,” she said. “In general, I believe the market is normalizing and shows signs of representing a more stable market where typical negotiations between buyer and seller take place.”



**10% OFF**  
all current  
inventory

Until July 9th

[www.spasbythebay.com](http://www.spasbythebay.com)



2090 N. Fremont St, Monterey | 831-392-1111

Located on the corner of Fremont and Casa Verde

Open Monday through Saturday 10am-5pm

**We will be closed on the 4th of July**

2nd annual  
**Monterey County Pops!**  
at Devendorf Park



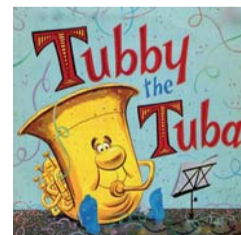
## “A Celebration of Freedom”

July 4, 2022 • DEVENDORF PARK CARMEL

Monterey County Pops! is pleased to celebrate July 4, 2022 2nd annual free live concert of pops and patriotic music “on the lawn”

**Open Rehearsal 10:00am - 12:30pm**  
**Concert 2:00pm - 3:30pm**

The program will include Alan Silvestri’s, *A Night At The Movies*, *Tubby The Tuba*, narrated by Reg Huston with Jim Paoletti on Tuba Huapango, *Prayer for Ukraine* and *Patriotic and Americana Favorites*



The concert will be streamed on AMP Channel 24 and on our website. Visit: [www.montereycountypops.org](http://www.montereycountypops.org)

**BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS OR PICNIC BLANKETS AND JOIN US!**

Monterey County Pops!  
[montereycountypops.org](http://montereycountypops.org)