

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## In battle to make neighborhoods fire safe, state takes off gloves

By CHRIS COUNTS

AS PART of Gov. Gavin Newsom's push to speed up fire prevention efforts on an emergency basis to combat the increased threat of wildfire throughout the state, Cal Fire is launching three ambitious vegetation-reduction projects in Monterey County, including one this week.

The effort even includes mobilizing the National Guard.

The scale of the work is far beyond anything that's ever been attempted here — or would have been allowed by state law before the Camp Fire destroyed more than 18,000 structures and killed 85 people five months ago. In response to the Camp Fire and other destructive wildfires — as well as public sentiment — Newsom declared an emergency and issued an executive order in January to fast-track what have been deemed the state's most important fire prevention projects.

Thirty-five projects have been prioritized, including three in Monterey County that will reduce vegetation along more than 100 miles of ridges and roads. Work is set to begin Monday on the first of the three, the Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads Project. Two others — the Palo Colorado Fuel Modification Project and the Laurel Springs Fuel Modification Project in Upper Carmel Valley — could start as early as May.

The bulk of the work involves creating wide fuelbreaks, where much of the vegetation is cut until it's just a couple

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## 'My plan was to attract people who had money to invest'

In 1915, Samuel F.B. Morse began liquidating the Pacific Improvement Company's vast real estate holdings. While he continued working for that company for decades, he also took a personal interest in the property the company owned in Monterey County and in 1919, at age 33, he formed Del Monte Properties Company and purchased the nearly 20,000 acres for \$1.3 million. While his employment kept him based in San Francisco until 1924, he immediately brought new management and vision to the Monterey holdings centered around Hotel Del Monte, which had been unprofitable for several years. He also began thinking of ways to make the best use of the beautiful real estate we now call Pebble Beach ....

### PART IV

VERY EARLY in my association with the Pacific Improvement Company and my study of the Monterey Peninsula, I determined that the hotel business was essential to the proper development of the region, and the ultimate objective was the development of the real estate in the area. The hotel was a big one and a delicate operation at best — and we had to make it profitable. However, the main objective always was to bring the right kind of people to

## The Morse memoirs

the Peninsula, and then to interest them in living here.

Mr. H.R. Warner was the manager of Hotel Del Monte. Immediately after I took charge, I went with Mr. Warner through all of the various departments of the hotel. I made one suggestion after another, and it was obvious that none of them appealed to Mr. Warner. When we went back to his office I said, "Mr. Warner, my job is either to make the properties that we own profitable, or to dispose of them." I added, "Apparently you are completely satisfied with this operation. I have either got to close the hotel and tear it down, or sell, if it is possible

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## Commission favors ban on vacation rentals

### ■ Expiration date on existing permits?

By MARY SCHLEY

THE PLANNING commission took the predictable step Wednesday of recommending the city council adopt an ordinance banning short-term rentals downtown and in apartment buildings. Renting out single-family homes for less than 30



An upstairs apartment on Dolores Street south of Ocean Avenue (left) is beautiful inside and out — and rents for several hundred dollars a night to vacationers, a practice that may end soon. An Airbnb map shows short-term rentals available in and around town later this month.

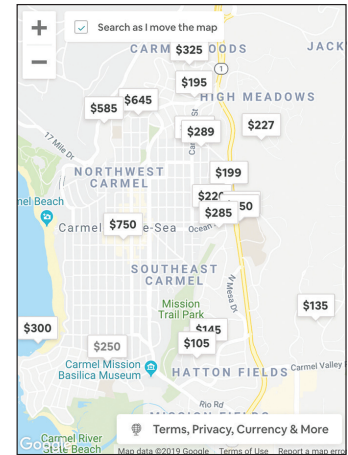
days at a time has been illegal in the city for 30 years, but no restrictions exist in the commercial and multifamily-residential districts.

In fact, many property owners didn't even realize short-term rentals were legal downtown until the city started cracking down on illegal rentals and trying to collect business license taxes and transient occupancy taxes from the legal ones. Over the last 14 months, the planning department approved

24 permits for 33 short-term rentals, planning director Marc Wiener told the commission April 10 — many of them in the past few months.

In March, the city council decided vacation rentals downtown are bad for the city, because they can replace long-term rentals, which bring in far less money and can therefore be more affordable for people who live and work in town. Wiener

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## BEACH FIRES TARGETED FOR EVEN MORE RESTRICTIONS

By MARY SCHLEY

WOOD FIRES on Carmel Beach — a century-old tradition allowed with few restrictions until three years ago — may be going the way of the dinosaurs. On Wednesday, the planning commission voted 4-1 to recommend that the city council forbid them altogether and allow only propane-fueled fires for a year.

Following a busy summer in 2015 when hundreds of wood fires filled the beach and generated smoke many found intolerable, the city council banned wood fires except in a handful of city-owned pits south of 10th Avenue. The council also decided to allow propane fires as long as they're 25 feet from the bluffs. The program was implemented in 2016 and later extended to 2020.

But at this week's hearing, the usual anti-beach-fire crowd lined up to testify and also sent letters asking for a ban on wood fires. While aesthetics are no longer an issue, since the sand is white again with the elimination of burning directly on the ground, they said wood smoke still threatens the health and safety of nearby residents and those who visit the beach.

In his April 10 report, planning director Marc Wiener said results from three air monitors installed near the beach show

the average amounts of particulate matter in the air from wood fires are well below what's considered dangerous.

But any smoke at all could be deadly, according to Scenic Road resident Christy Hollenbeck. "The fine particulates and toxins we are being forced to breathe are well known to raise blood pressure, trigger heart attacks, stroke, asthma attacks, breathing problems, headaches, premature aging, cancer, birth

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PHOTO/KATHY BANG

Charcoal, burned soda cans — and even a fire extinguisher — littered the beach in 2015, when unlimited wood fires were allowed. Planning commissioners want only propane fires used there now.

## Two more arrested in murder of doctor

### ■ Model faces new criminal charge

By KELLY NIX

TWO ADDITIONAL suspects, including a former Caesars Palace casino worker, have been charged with killing Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula psychiatrist Thomas Burchard, whose body was found stuffed in trunk of a Mercedes on the outskirts of Las Vegas last month. He was beaten to death.

On March 7, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police officers investigating an abandoned vehicle discovered the body of Burchard, 71, in a 2017 Mercedes C300 owned by former Salinas resident Kelsey Turner, 25, a model Burchard was helping financially.

Two weeks later, Turner was arrested in Stockton and charged by Nevada prosecutors with murder.

Police now say Turner had help. On April 5, Clark County, Nevada authorities issued arrest warrants for Diana Nicole

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## Guilty plea in DUI death

By MARY SCHLEY

THE CARMEL teenager who drove drunk and crashed on Carmel Valley Road last July, killing her 16-year-old passenger and seriously injuring the woman driving the car she hit, pleaded guilty in a Salinas courtroom Tuesday to one count of vehicular manslaughter while under the influence and one count of driving under the influence causing injury, according to Monterey County deputy district attorney Meredith Sillman. Margot McNally, 18, will be sentenced next month to an agreed-upon four years in state prison.

In front of Monterey County Superior Court Judge Carrie Panetta April 9, McNally admitted to killing Carmel High classmate Anabelle Vandenbroucke and causing serious injury to Carmel Valley resident Sarah Coleman.

On July 12, 2018, Sillman said, McNally and Vanden-

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# GLOVES

From page 1A

of inches above ground, thereby reducing the fuel that can feed a blaze. The fuelbreaks will create “defensive space around structures and road networks in order to slow the spread of fire and reduce their intensity,” Jonathan Pangburn of Cal Fire

told The Pine Cone. Pruning and limbing will be done as well to make it more difficult for trees to catch fire.

Not only will the breaks be created in new areas, they’ll be much wider than they’ve been before — as much as 600 feet. And the environmental review process will be far easier.

“Our standard used to be 100 feet, but the fires we have now are exhibiting behavior that is significantly different than what we used to see,” Pangburn explained.

Not only will vegetation-reduction projects help protect

nearby homes from wildfires, they will make it easier to bring in firefighting equipment.

Despite all the work Cal Fire plans to do, Pangburn said it’s still essential for residents to clear 100 feet of vegetation from around their homes. He said it’s not only good sense — but a state law.

While the work on the the Palo Corona-White Rock Fire Roads Project gets underway this week, the other two projects are on hold until fire officials can work out liability and access issues with property owners.

It’s unclear precisely how much the three local projects will cost, but Pangburn said \$2.1 million is available to pay for private contractors and their heavy equipment. By using the National Guard and contractors, Cal Fire will be able to continue fire clearance work during the summer — and free up personnel to fight fires.

## Fire clearance ‘on steroids’

For those who already clear brush to protect homes in rural areas, the new Cal Fire projects are cause for celebration.

“They’re taking what we were doing, and they’re putting it on steroids,” said Mid-Coast Volunteer Fire Brigade Chief Cheryl Goetz, whose firefighters help protect those who live in the Palo Colorado area and beyond. “Everybody I’ve talked to is very excited and supportive.”

According to a Cal Fire report, 25 million acres in California are facing a “very high or extreme fire threat.” The threat has worsened over the past two years as fire behavior has become more erratic, fire officials say. As a result, they’re focusing their efforts on places like the Palo Colorado area, where the Soberanes Fire in 2016 burned down 57 homes and killed a firefighter.

“While restoring forest health and resilience will take decades to achieve, the actions recommended in this report can immediately begin to protect our most vulnerable communities,” the report adds.

# BAN

From page 1A

argued that prohibiting short-term rentals would “preserve the city’s downtown housing supply,” even if that housing is still far more expensive than comparable rentals elsewhere on the Monterey Peninsula.

He suggested the commission support the ban but allow people who already have permits to keep them indefinitely.

A few people who own short-term rentals supported that idea — as long as their vacation rentals can continue in perpetuity. Mary Carl, who has four apartments on Mission south of Fourth, operates one as a short-term rental, and she supported the effort to restrict them.

## Not so sure

Carl doubted banning them would mean more workers living in town, though. “We’ve never rented to a teacher or a fireman, as much as we’d like to,” she said. “I’m not so sure taking short-term rentals away will provide more affordable housing.”

Realtor Alex Heisinger, who also manages short-term rentals, said just 3 percent of the units downtown are used for vacation stays. He also supported Wiener’s proposal, as long as existing permits are honored forever.

Commissioner Stephanie Locke said she favors a ban. “It’s near and dear to my heart that we support workforce housing, and if it’s affordable, all the better. We need people who live in town, work in town, shop and eat in town,” she said, adding

that as a renter here, she knows how difficult it is to find reasonably priced long-term rentals in Carmel. “I definitely don’t want to see more short-term rentals in town,” she said. “They are needed by the people who live here.”

Commissioner Christopher Bolton worried there would be a rush on permit applications before the law takes effect several months from now. He wondered if the city could prevent people from applying. It can’t, so he argued for having the permits expire rather than allowing them to remain in effect forever.

“I’m concerned we’re going to have a lot more than 33 units by the time we have a rule,” he said.

Commissioner Gail Lehman said she’d like a sunset clause, too, whether after five years, or 20.

“I think if there’s a gold rush on permit applications, we have to consider a sunset,” commissioner Julie Wendt said. “Permits are going to be valuable.”

Chairman Michael LePage said having the permits expire will still “protect people who made investments,” like Vince and Denise Brigantino, who bought a building on Mission Street south of Seventh and remodeled it specifically with the intent of running short-term rentals.

Commissioners unanimously voted to recommend the council impose a ban and have any existing permits for short-term rentals expire after a certain amount of time. The new law would also prohibit people from advertising their vacation rentals.

Assuming the council approves the ordinance next month, it would have to do so again in June, and the new law will also have to be approved by the California Coastal Commission. It’s likely to face a challenge in court.

## Richard Arthur Mueller

May 25, 1936 - April 6th 2019  
Carmel Highlands

Dr. Richard Arthur Mueller, died peacefully on April 6th, at his home surrounded by his wife, his children, their spouses and his grandchildren. His health had been in decline for some time, though it took a turn and his loved ones came from near and far to offer their loving farewells to a relationship they treasured.



Dick was the youngest child of Arthur Raymond Mueller and Irene Theresa Lanz Mueller. He was born in Glendale, California and grew up in Long Beach where he attended Saint Anthony High School. Dick then went on to study at Loyola University (Loyola Marymount University) in Los Angeles, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), in Mexico City and the University of California, Los Angeles’ School of Medicine. His medical specialty was Pathology, but an emerging field of emergency medicine and trauma surgery was developing. Dick jumped at the opportunity to help develop the new emergency room at Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz.

Dick’s career in medicine was exemplary, but the outdoors and time spent with his family was most important to him.

A trip to the Mueller Ranch, now the Arroyo Seco Ranch in Greenfield, California was memorable to all. From wild boar hunts to river rafting, hiking, and camping, good times were had by all. Dick enjoyed them thoroughly on his Appaloosa, named “Horse,” not to be outdone by his Springer Spaniel, “Bullmarket.” A talented athlete, long distance running became a passion. He ran several Big Sur International Marathons and Western States Three Steps.

A private, quiet and humble man, his faith was important to him. Dick was a member of the Third Order Carmelites Discalced Secular and celebrated daily mass with the Carmelite Monastery community until he could no longer.

Dick was predeceased by his parents. He is survived by his wife, Dianne Lee Taylor Mueller, his children: Gretchen Mueller Burke (Justin J. Burke) of Carmel, California, Richard Andrew Mueller (Ellen McCarthy Mueller) of Antigua, Guatemala and Ingrid Mueller Angier (Kent A. Angier) of Medina, Washington and his grandchildren: Isabelle, Oliver, Maximilian, Ryan, Andrew, Caroline, Bridgette, Annaliese and Catherine who all remember him for his incredible wit, and his loving disposition. He is also survived by his sister, Charlotte Mueller Murphy Bannan of Pasadena, California and numerous nieces and nephews.

The Funeral Mass will take place on Friday, April 12 at 10 a.m. at the Carmel Mission Basilica, 3080 Rio Road, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93923.

Memorial gifts in honor of Dr. Richard A. Mueller may be made to the Carmelite Monastery of Carmel, 27601 Highway 1, Carmel, CA 93923.

Condolences may be written  
to the family at  
[www.bermudezfamylfunerals.com](http://www.bermudezfamylfunerals.com)



## Rachel Amy Lynn

September 17, 1969 - March 31, 2019

Our beloved Rachel Amy is free of her earthly bounds. She was taken from us far too soon and is missed beyond words. She is survived by her mother and father, Susann and Michael, sister Shosannah (Shosie), brother Chad, and a large, and very loving, extended family. She is also survived by her two precious kitties, Bruno and Avi.

Rachel was a loving, generous and fiercely loyal soul who touched the lives of many. She cared deeply for animals and had a special place in her heart for horses. She began volunteering to help animals as a teenager and continued throughout her life.

A private, family memorial will be held. Rachel’s family suggests that memorial donations be made to Animal Friends Rescue Project, at [animalfriendsrescueproject.org](http://animalfriendsrescueproject.org), or, the Endometriosis Foundation of America, at [endofound.org](http://endofound.org).

MY GIRL IS A FREE BIRD NOW

FLYING HIGH IN THE SKY,  
SINGING WITH ABANDON,  
JOY RIDING ON THE BREEZE,  
AND WARMED BY THE SUN.

MY GIRL IS A FREE BIRD NOW.

I LOVE YOU, MY FREE BIRD.



CONDOLENCES MAY BE WRITTEN  
TO THE FAMILY AT  
[WWW.BERMUDEZFAMILYFUNERALS.COM](http://WWW.BERMUDEZFAMILYFUNERALS.COM)