If you’re partial to dogs in Elvis costumes ... 

By MARY BROWNFIELD

IT’S THAT time, again: Costumed Cavalier King Charles spaniels will swarm Carmel Beach this weekend for the 8th Annual CKCS Beach Party, and many will bear an uncanny resemblance to The King. Benefiting the Animal Friends Rescue Project, the party — this year bearing the theme, “Cavaliers Rock ’n’ Roll” — will feature a costume contest with prizes, food and libation, and other fun.

Cavalier owner Janet McTurk is organizing the gathering, which will run from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 18, in the cove at 15th Avenue. “Rumors have it that there may be multiple Cavalier Elvis sightings, so you will not want to miss this one!” she said.

There’s no charge to attend, but McTurk suggested donation amounts of $15 per adult, $5 per child or $40 per family. All donors will receive raffle tickets, with additional tickets available for purchase.

The money will go to the AFRP, which offers the last hopes for dogs, cats, rabbits and other stray, abused and abandoned pets in need of safe and healthy homes. In many cases, the animals the AFRP helps might otherwise be euthanized.

“These hardworking people, mostly volunteers, do a great job of helping our friends from the government’s economic stimulus bill keep trickling into Monterey County. The government’s $787 billion stimulus bill, signed by President Barack Obama Feb. 17, includes vast sums of taxpayer dollars for healthcare, education, the environment, housing and other programs.

Forest Theater’s budget woes threaten summer season

By MARY BROWNFIELD

“SAVE ANNIE!" That’s the rallying cry of the Forest Theater Guild, which is set to stage the production at the outdoor theater in Carmel this summer but is struggling with a major financial short-fall. In order to put on the musical, which has dozens of young kids and teens in its cast, the nonprofit needs to raise $65,000 by May 1.

“It is essentially a plea for the community to rally to save the Forest Theater Guild’s season,” explained board vice president Safwat Malek.

A trio of troubles contributed to the guild’s financial situation: Ticket sales were 50 percent below expectations last year, memberships and donations declined, and foundation support dropped.

The most significant blow landed last December, when the major benefactor on which the guild counted for a third of its $300,000 budget pulled out. That money covered overhead, including the salary of executive director Jane De Lay. She was laid off March 24.

“Annie” is set to open May 30 and run through June 28, and contracts were already signed with the people who will help make it happen. Although the cast is unpaid, other expenses, such as costumes, sets, royalties, rent, music, musicians, the music director, the director, the stage manager, the choreographer, light and sound technicians, marketing, advertising and promotion. Rehearsals were stopped but should get under way again soon.

Sought by police in several California counties for a string of holdups that began in Carmel Valley last November, 54-year-old Michael Koselka of Aptos was arrested April 3 in Marysville, and Monterey County Sheriff’s investigator Mark Stevens believes he’s guilty of multiple local bank robberies.

Marysville police jailed Koselka — nicknamed the Sleeves Bandit because his disguises included long-sleeved shirts designed to make the wearer appear tattooed — after interrupting a bank robbery, according to Stevens. Confronted as he fled, the suspect led authorities on a high-speed chase, in which he reportedly crashed into squad cars.

In custody, he admitted to 16 bank robberies in the Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Madera, Monterey, Santa Cruz and Yuba County areas, according to Stevens.

“Mid-valley was the first one,” he said this week, referring to the Nov. 26, 2008, robbery of Washington Mutual Bank on Monterey County 5th District Supervisor Dave Potter said he initially believed the stimulus bill would provide for little more than a road project in the county.

Fed spends tax $$$ aplenty on Monterey County projects

By KELLY NIX

FROM REPLACING worn carpet in U.S. Army barracks, to helping Carmel schools assist disabled students, funds from the government’s economic stimulus bill keep trickling into Monterey County. The government’s $787 billion stimulus bill, signed by President Barack Obama Feb. 17, includes vast sums of taxpayer dollars for healthcare, education, the environment, housing and other programs.

Chefs on the links

Before they tackle the ovens and cutting boards this weekend, celebrity chefs hit the golf links for a good cause. For a complete guide to the Pebble Beach Food & Wine events, go to www.pebblebeachfoodandwine.com.