



**A doctor
with a
drum set**



**Painting
marathon for
a good cause**



**He waits patiently
outside the studio
— INSIDE THIS WEEK**

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Local surgeon honored by Poland 65 years after heroic uprising

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE CANADIAN author Robertson Davies once wrote, "Extraordinary people survive under the most terrible circumstances, and they become more extraordinary because of it."

Davies' words could accurately describe the life of a retired local neurosurgeon, Dr. Jan Belza. Well known on the Monterey Peninsula for his surgical skills, Belza will travel July 24, to Warsaw, Poland, where he will be honored as a hero of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944.

Born in Warsaw in 1925, Belza was a teenager in September 1939 when the Nazis invaded. A member of a patriotic family and trained as a Boy Scout, Belza joined the Polish Home Army Underground resistance movement when he was just a teenager.

German rule was brutal and merciless, particularly where the city's sizable Jewish population was concerned. All of the country's universities were immediately closed and several hundred thousand Jews were herded into neighborhood that became known as the Warsaw Ghetto.

About to be massacred

In 1943, the Jews in the ghetto — starving and facing the knowledge they were about to be massacred — revolted against the Germans. Outnumbered and outgunned, Jewish fighters held out for nearly a month before nearly all were killed.

A year later, Germany's fortunes were declining and the Soviet Union's Red Army was camping on Warsaw's doorstep. Anticipating their moment of national liberation, Poland's government-in-exile encouraged the resistance fighters to stage the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, which was launched by surprise Aug. 1.

"There was initial enthusiasm to join the revolt and be part of it," remembered Belza, who turned 18 that year. "I was put on alert two days before the revolt. Not everybody had arms, but many obtained arms by attacking German soldiers. I had



This 1944 photograph is the only existing image that shows 18-year-old Jan Belza (far left) during the Warsaw Uprising. Belza explained that his fellow soldiers are smiling because they just emerged from a harrowing 20-hour slog through the Warsaw sewer system.

a pistol."

For nearly a month, the citizen army held its own against the Germans. "We fought them street to street, house to house and floor to floor," Belza explained.

Death camp

Despite the death and destruction surrounding them, the resistance fighters achieved small-scale victories. And, at one point, Belza's battalion reached a concentration camp on the edge of the city and freed about 300 Jewish prisoners, many of whom immediately volunteered to be part of the rebel army and eventually served on its front lines.

"They were about to be executed at any time," Belza said. "They were ecstatic to be liberated."

Eventually, though, as supplies dwindled and losses

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Former supe tops growing list of C.V. council candidates

By CHRIS COUNTS

FORMER 5TH District Supervisor Karin Strasser Kauffman and outspoken incorporation proponent Glenn Robinson are among a slate of candidates who entered the race this week for Carmel Valley town council.

The vote for town council will happen Nov. 3, the same day Carmel Valley residents will decide if they want to incorporate their community.

"I am frustrated with the Monterey County Board of Supervisors' consistent approval of poorly planned development projects in Carmel Valley," said Robinson, a professor at the Naval Postgraduate School, when asked why he's running for office. "As a council member, I pledge to work with the town council to control overdevelopment in the Town of Carmel Valley. The board of supervisors and out-of-town developers have too much influence over the land-use decisions in our community."

Also announcing their candidacy as members of the pro-incorporation slate were Larry Bacon, Amy Anderson, and Priscilla Walton.

Bacon, a local business owner and former senior officer with Wells Fargo and Chase banks, insisted incorporation makes good business sense. "I have been working to create the town of Carmel Valley because it is a wise and fiscally responsible approach to gaining greater local control over our community, without a tax increase," Bacon explained.

Walton, like Robinson, is worried about what she says is

**A slate of
candidates
who favor
incorporation**

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Prosecutor heads to Africa to do good

By KELLY NIX

A MONTEREY County attorney who has spent the past five years prosecuting those who abuse the elderly has a new calling in another part of the world.



Lisa Poll

As early as January, deputy district attorney Lisa Poll will leave her post as an elder-abuse prosecutor to travel to South Africa, where she will help orphans of AIDS victims.

"It's rewarding and challenging" prosecuting elder abuse cases, said Poll, 45. "But I felt that God was saying to me, 'There are people here to do this work, and the children need you there.'"

Five years ago, Poll and some members of her Aptos church went on a missionary effort to South Africa to help the humanitarian group, AFnet, or Africa Network Evangelism Task.

Among their tasks was visiting an AIDS orphan center, where they interacted with children and gave food and blan-

kets to those dying of AIDS.

"I just fell in love with Africa," Poll said. "I fell in love with the land and the people. It can't help but get to you. It has such a tremendously high level of poverty and disease, and yet the people have such joy for life. The children's smiles just melt your heart."

See **AFRICA** page 21A

Killed in Big Sur accident, sailor remembered by Navy

By CHRIS COUNTS

AN ILLEGAL pass by a motorcyclist along Highway 1 in Big Sur turned deadly Saturday when his passenger — a 27-year-old Florida woman who was serving in the U.S. Navy — was thrown from his bike and killed.

Drew Edmonson, a 26-year-old resident of Guntersville, Ala., was driving north about 5 p.m. along Highway 1 between the Coast Gallery and Deetjen's when he attempted to pass a slower-moving RV over a double yellow line.

See **NAVY** page 16A

Tiny project, big obstacles

By KELLY NIX

WHEN WILLIAM Edwards decided to install two light posts to mark the driveway of his 17 Mile Drive home, he thought it would be a simple enough task.

An engineer, Edwards figured he would design the posts and hire a contractor to install them.

Little did he know his bid to install two light posts would be a convoluted 10-month odyssey involving administrative nitpicking, detailed archeological and architect reports, and nearly \$9,000 in permitting fees.

Edwards' tale is a glaring example of how county-level bureaucracy can hamstring what should be the simplest of homeowner projects.

"The law has effectively removed the freedom of citizens to take some responsibility for their own homes, and for civil servants to make sensible decisions," Edwards said.

Edwards' saga began April 2008, when he decided to place two 6-foot posts, each with one light attached, to mark the driveway of his home on 17 Mile Drive.

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