



What time does the bluegrass start?



Toothpicks gain respect as artistic medium



Staying young while growing old — INSIDE THIS WEEK

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BLIND SINCE BIRTH, YOUTH FOOTBALL PLAYER RELIES ON DETERMINATION

By CHRIS COUNTS

LIKE any father, James Romeo never wants to miss a football game his young son plays in.

But when he attends this weekend's Monterey Bay Youth Football League Jamboree in Salinas, Romeo will watch a game his son can't see, but will play in anyway.

The executive chef at Casanova restaurant, Romeo never dreamed his son, who has been legally blind since birth, would be able to play football. But 7-year-old Rocco Romeo is one extraordinary boy.

Earlier this year, James Romeo approached a youth football official and suggested the possibility of his son trying out for Steinbeck Football, a Salinas-based group that enters teams in three divisions, Pee-Wee, Jr. Pee-Wee and Midget.

"We encountered no resistance," recalled Romeo, who took over as Casanova's head chef two-and-a-half years ago. "I wanted him to have the experience of trying out for the team. That was the goal, and then we'd be done with it."

Because youth football is so competitive, Romeo figured Rocco wouldn't survive the first cut. But to his father's surprise, Rocco made the first cut.

"He made it because of his will and determination," Romeo said.

Later, wearing full pads, Rocco impressed his coaches enough to make the roster of the Steinbeck Football Jr. Pee Wee team.

A lineman who plays both offense and defense, Rocco understandably lacks mobility, but he's surprising effective nevertheless.

"He listens intently to the quarterback and then feels the play out," Romeo



PHOTO/COURTESY JAMES ROMEO

He's legally blind and uses a cane, but seven-year-old Rocco Romeo will be playing football this fall.

explained. "Once the ball is snapped he pops up and makes the initial contact and drives his opponent back until the whistle blows."

Aiding Rocco is the one thing a coach can

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State agencies duel over Peninsula's water supply

■ PUC to SWRCB: Cutbacks would threaten 'health and safety'

By KELLY NIX

WHILE ONE state agency is considering imposing harsh cutbacks on the Monterey Peninsula's meager water supply, another state agency is warning it to back off.

The State Water Resources Control Board is considering a cease and desist order, proposed in January 2008 and

revised July 27, that would limit Peninsula customers to between 30 and 50 gallons per person per day, a tiny amount.

But in a dramatic, five-page letter sent Aug. 20 to the SWRCB, Paul Clanon, executive director of the California Public Utilities Commission, said if the order were finalized, it would be "severe for Monterey Peninsula residents and businesses."

The order "cannot be met except at unreasonable cost and with serious negative impact on the health and safety of

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Mental hospital for driver accused of school DUI killing

■ Confined while 'they try to make her competent for trial'

By KELLY NIX

ON THE one-year anniversary of the death of Pacific Grove resident Joel Woods, who was struck last September by a vehicle driven by a woman police say was under the influence of drugs, Woods' friends are calling for justice.

The young father was picking up his son, Jacob, in front of Pacific Grove Middle School Sept. 2, 2008, when Deborah King allegedly ran him down in her BMW SUV. Though she was arrested and later charged with murder and gross vehicular manslaughter, King has yet to face a trial.

That's because earlier this year, a Monterey County Superior Court deemed King incompetent to stand trial and com-

mitted her to Patton State Hospital in San Bernardino, where "they will try to make

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Potter loses seat on coastal body

By KELLY NIX

LOCAL LAND-USE attorneys said this week the loss of Dave Potter on the California Coastal Commission in favor of a Santa Cruz Supervisor — who has backing from the Sierra Club— casts an uncertain future for property owners in Monterey

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When Cronkite and Hewitt (and Miller) were in the house

Pine Cone publisher Paul Miller was an assistant foreign news editor for CBS News in New York from 1977 to 1981, when Walter Cronkite was the undisputed king of television news, and when 60 Minutes, the brainchild of producer Don Hewitt, was at the beginning of its long reign as the No. 1 rated prime-time news show.

Cronkite and Hewitt died this summer, which made the whole country nostalgic for the days when there was no such thing as MSNBC or Fox News. For Miller, the memories are mostly about airplanes crashing on an island in the Atlantic Ocean, hostages being held at the U.S. Embassy in Iran, and Japanese fishermen slaughtering dolphins

By PAUL MILLER

I WAS just 23 years old when I was suddenly elevated from copy boy to assistant foreign editor at the mighty CBS News, which was something like going from bat boy to starting shortstop for the New York Yankees.

Copy boys don't exist any more, because computers have made printed wire copy obsolete, but 30 years ago there were seemingly endless rolls of it piled up on ancient teletype machines, waiting to be delivered to news industry legends such as Douglas Edwards, Charles Osgood, Dallas Townsend and Hughes Rudd, not to mention Mike Wallace, Dan Rather

and Walter Cronkite. There were also phones to answer, typewriter ribbons to change, and videotapes to hustle. The newsroom was staffed 24 hours a day, so the hours could be strange. And the starting pay was minimum wage.

But the surroundings were unmistakably glamorous and

powerful, so even the lowest-level jobs were in great demand and regularly attracted the offspring of American royalty. During my years in network news, Harry Truman's grandson

See **CRONKITE** page 16A



(Left) Walter Cronkite at his anchor desk in the CBS newsroom in Manhattan in the late 1970s. Just a few feet behind him was the foreign desk, where Carmel Pine Cone publisher Paul Miller (above) was an assignment editor during Cronkite's era of preeminence in the world of television news.