

Millions to save a 'threatened' fish that costs just \$17 to eat

By KELLY NIX

LAST WEEK, Cal Am asked the government for permission to spend \$49 million of ratepayer money to remove San Clemente Dam.

A week before that, the Sierra Club filed a lawsuit to stop a \$300 million hotel project in Sand City.

A desal plant in Marina will cost at least \$250 million. And millions of dollars more have been spent on various habitat projects in Carmel Valley.

All those Herculean efforts and impressive outlays of public funds are to protect the steelhead trout.

At Carmel restaurant La Bicycleette, however, steelhead is on the menu. Price: \$17.

"It's a great fish," La Bicycleette chef John Cox told The Pine Cone. "It has everything I like about salmon, but it has

a more delicate flavor."

For lunch this week, Cox pan-seared the steelhead and served it with garden vegetables and green salad. For dinner, the steelhead was prepared with an avocado purée and a chilled salad of heirloom tomatoes and trail of tears beans.

"We try to keep the flavors very mild, so it complements the fish," he explained.

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Art & Film Fest add venues, events

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER MAKING a splash in its debut last year, the Carmel Art & Film Festival is taking an even bigger plunge this year.

"Last year, we held just about all our events at Sunset Center," observed Tom Burns, director of the festival. "We've added a number of different venues this year. We've got some phenomenal films, and there will be tons of things to do. If you are an art buff or a film buff, you're going to be in heaven."

The list of venues hosting festival events includes the Golden Bough Theater, the Carmel Youth Center and Carmel Plaza. But the award for the festival's most interesting venue goes to the City of Carmel, which is permitting Burns and Co. to screen films in its city council chambers.

"I said to [city administrator] Rich Guillen, 'I'd love to use the city council chambers for the festival,'" Burns recalled. "In response, Rich said, 'That's a great idea. We're going to make that work.'"

The centerpiece of the festival is the screening of about 70 films. While most are domestic productions, the festival will also feature movies from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, France and

Austria. Festival volunteers screened hundreds of submissions before settling on a final lineup.

"I am so pleased with the quality of the films," Burns

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The Carmel Art & Film Festival will screen Carmel Valley filmmaker Jules Hart's film about women in the priesthood, "Pink Smoke over the Vatican," at city hall Saturday, Oct. 9.

New solutions sought for crowding at River School

By MARY BROWNFIELD

A FLOOD of new kids enrolled at Carmel River School this year, and administrators are wondering how to handle the influx. While principal Jay Marden continues to have confidence in the first-rate education his students are receiving despite enrollment reaching an all-time high of 506 kids, he said the Carmel Unified School District must develop a long-term strategy for contending with the growing population at the popular elementary school. The CUSD Board of Education is tentatively set to discuss solutions Oct. 6.

"I feel strongly that our district has to act," said Marden, who saw enrollment rise to 460 students in the 2008/2009 school year and then to 480 kids last year. When the issue first arose in February 2009, the rising number threatened

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S.F. attorney sues inn over bumped head

Alleges 'mental suffering'

By KELLY NIX

A SAN Francisco lawyer who stayed at a Carmel hotel in August is suing the business after bumping his head on a door frame, according to documents.

In a lawsuit filed Sept. 21 in Monterey County Superior Court by attorney Jacob P. Alpren — who is representing himself — Alpren targets the historic Lamp Lighter Inn & Sunset Suites on Ocean Avenue and Camino Real.

According to the suit, Alpren and his family checked into the Lamp Lighter Aug. 1. That night, Alpren went to the inn's office to "order breakfast for the following morning."

However, Alpren apparently had a mishap before entering the office.

"The door height to the office was no more than 5 feet 8 inches," according to the lawsuit. Alpren "did not notice the unusually low clearance and cracked his head against the top

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STILL NO TRIAL IN 2008 FATAL DUI WRECK

By MARY BROWNFIELD

THE CASE of two men accused of driving drunk and killing a Big Sur teenager on Highway 1 more than two years ago has been delayed, again — until next year. The complicated matter had been put off

several times, as attorneys prepared for trial and contended with busy schedules, but all three lawyers were finally ready to go when they met with Monterey County Superior Court Judge Terrance Duncan Sept. 23, according to deputy district attorney Doug Matheson.

Unfortunately, a busy court schedule, an impending move from temporary buildings back to permanent courtrooms, the judge's vacation, the holiday season and other factors neces-

sitated rescheduling the trial — which was supposed to have begun Monday — to February of next year.

By then, it will have been two-and-a-half years since 17-year-old Rachel Wiesjahn died on Aug. 28, 2008, around 2 a.m. She had been riding in the SUV driven by an allegedly intoxicated Christopher Tindall, who lost control of it on southbound Highway 1 after leaving a Big Sur bar, causing the vehicle to turn on its side in the middle of the road.

After the accident, according to authorities, Tindall fled, leaving behind his Chevy and his two passengers, a 26-year-old man and Wiesjahn. Moments later, Mark Hudson, also allegedly drunk behind the wheel of a Ford pickup, crashed into the Chevy. Hudson also reportedly fled the scene, with the help of another man.

Tindall turned himself in later that morning, and Hudson was arrested at the hospital, where he had gone for treatment many hours after the wreck. They are accused of vehicular

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Marine scientist takes students to an undersea dormitory

By MARY BROWNFIELD

AFTER A while, swimming seems natural while walking is foreign, it's difficult to conceive of a meal that doesn't involve reconstituting freeze-dried food in hot water, and the personalities of individual fish begin to emerge.

That's just part of life in the Aquarius Undersea Laboratory, the world's only underwater research station located on the ocean floor in the Florida Keys, according to Carmel resident James Lindholm, Ph.D, a professor of marine science and policy who will leave next week for his fifth mission in the lab.

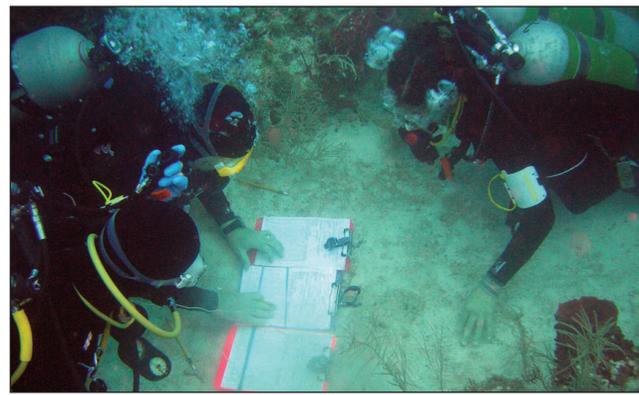
Lindholm, who is also the director of the Institute for Applied Marine Ecology at California State University Monterey Bay, is working with the National Marine Sanctuary Program and will take three CSUMB students to help study the "social foraging of coral reef fishes and its role in maintaining biological diversity." He dubbed his mis-

sion, "If Reefs Could Talk."

They will train Oct. 4-9, mostly on how to deal with emergencies while living underwater, since a person's body becomes saturated with nitrogen at such depths and requires 12 hours to surface safely. Then he and graduate student Jessica Watson will head to the station 60 feet below for their Oct. 12-21 undersea mission, while grad student Chelsea Parrish-Kuhn and undergraduate student Alexandra Davis will remain on the surface to collect data during dives in other areas.

Lindholm, who embarked on his first Aquarius mission in 2001 — and was underwater when terrorists struck on Sept. 11 — undertook subsequent research trips there in 2002, 2005 and 2008. He described the lab as a tube roughly the size of the International Space Station, 49 feet long and 19 feet in diameter, with six people inside at a time.

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PHOTO/COURTESY JAMES LINDHOLM

Students and scientist James Lindholm compare notes to ensure they are collecting the same type of data during their undersea research.