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Seaside teens with gang ties suspected in P.G. crime spree

By MARY BROWNFIELD

AFTER THREE suspected car burglars ditched their Chevy Blazer in the middle of a Pacific Grove street and ran from the officer who had been chasing them early Sunday morning, police found one of them hiding between two parked cars in Pacific Grove, the second walking on the recreation trail, and the third in his Seaside apartment, PGPD Cmdr. John Nyunt said Wednesday. The teenagers were arrested and taken to Monterey County Jail on numerous felony charges of possession of stolen property.

Officers are still searching for victims of the widespread burglaries and thefts, which involved dozens of cars that were ransacked for valuables that could be quickly fenced, according to Nyunt. Most occurred in the western area of the city, near the Methodist Church on Sunset, around Washington Park and near the ball-park at Pico and 17 Mile Drive.

"We elicited some kind of cooperation from one of the suspects that led us to believe we potentially had 30 victims, and Monterey also had victims," he said. "These individuals were checking for unlocked vehicles." Nyunt estimated they looked at about 200 cars.

The men's contact with police began when Pacific Grove officer Ryan Anderson noticed a white 1990s Chevy Blazer driving erratically on eastbound Lighthouse Avenue in the downtown area shortly before 4 a.m. Oct. 24. Intending to stop the SUV,

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HE LOOKS AS IF HE'S SMILING, BUT HE'S NOT



PHOTO/WILDRESCUE

This young roseate spoonbill was covered in oil when it arrived at a Louisiana rehabilitation center. The bird — along with many others — was cleaned up with help from a local couple. See story page 3A.

General plan nobody likes finally adopted

■ C.V. unit cap back to 266

By CHRIS COUNTS

AFTER HAGGLING over the details for more than a decade, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the new Monterey County General Plan Tuesday.

Despite the long-awaited decision, there was no jubilation in the supervisors' chambers. While the plan was adopted, it could take years to implement its many details, which will guide growth in the county's unincorporated areas over the next 20 years. And there's also no guarantee the plan will survive legal challenges, which seem likely.

For Carmel Valley residents, the biggest news to come out of Tuesday's hearing was the unanimous reversal of a decision supervisors made just two weeks ago to reduce the number of new units that could be created in Carmel Valley over the next 20 years from 266 to 200. Developer Alan Williams had complained that the Oct. 12 decision was made without adequate public comment, which 5th District Supervisor Dave Potter addressed at this week's hearing.

"I didn't realize the reduction would cause that much anxiety," conceded Potter, who suggested the cap reduction at the

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DISPUTE OVER OCEAN VIEW GETS UGLIER

■ Trees, 'spite fence' spur lawsuit

By KELLY NIX

A MAN involved in an ugly property dispute with his neighbors on San Antonio Avenue has filed a lawsuit against them alleging they're blocking his ocean view, made slanderous comments and installed a camera to watch him.

In a suit filed Oct. 22, Dwight G. Nelson alleged the neighbors, Kathleen Correia and Stephan Evans, blocked his ocean views by refusing to trim their trees. He also said the couple later erected a "spite fence."

Nelson, who hired prominent land use attorney Tony Lombardo to represent him, claims the couple also defamed him by making false statements to their friends, set up a video surveillance camera to peer into his property and installed power lines under his house without his permission.

He claims his neighbors' alleged actions were intentional and malicious, and that he's suffered humiliation, anxiety, "severe emotional distress" and other medical problems, which have required him to seek treatment.

Nelson, who identifies himself in the lawsuit as a building

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PHOTO/PAUL MILLER

This home just on the Carmel side of the Pebble Beach gate would have a wonderful view if a neighbor would keep her trees out of the way, according to a lawsuit.

SCUBA diver blames county, state for ear infection

By KELLY NIX

A SCUBA diver who said she got a severe ear infection after diving in the waters off Lovers Point is suing Monterey County and the State of California for not warning her of the risk of contaminants in the ocean, which she says state law required them to do.

In a lawsuit filed Oct. 21, Theresa Raglen, who claims she became seriously ill after diving off Lovers Point on Sept. 20,

2009, contends the county tested and found elevated levels of human and animal waste six days earlier, on Sept. 14, 2009, but failed to post signs to warn the public of the potential danger.

"No effort was made to warn members of the public of the potential risks of entering the water at Lovers Point Beach," the lawsuit said. "The lack of sufficient warnings was a substantial factor in causing" Raglen to become sick.

The county often posts signs warning the public of high levels of pollutants in the ocean off Lovers Point — warnings that are often ignored by swimmers, surfers and divers.

Five days in the hospital

Raglen said that while diving at Lovers Point, bacteria entered her ears, resulting in "bilateral otitis externa and mastoiditis," which then "spread into her jaw and skull," according to the lawsuit filed in Monterey County Superior Court. "As a result of this incident, [Raglen] was severely injured and was hospitalized for five days and treated with extremely high doses of antibiotics for weeks."

The lawsuit said Raglen's ear drums ruptured and that "she suffers constant pain."

Raglen says Monterey County officials discovered high levels of enterococcus — bacteria from human intestines — and coliform and fecal coliforms — which can come from humans and animals, including dogs and birds.

Named in her lawsuit are the Monterey County Pollution Control Agency, the Monterey County Health Department, the State Department of Health Services and the State Water Resources Control Board.

County counsel Charles McKee told The Pine Cone Thursday he couldn't comment on the lawsuit, because he hadn't yet seen it.

But he said, "The health department is out there frequently testing and posting [signs] and warning people. We want to make sure they are as safe as possible."

The agencies' fault

Raglen's lawsuit, filed by her San Jose attorney, Anne Kepner, claims the county and state agencies were "negligent

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Waves claim one life, spare another

By MARY BROWNFIELD

ONE WOMAN drowned while her friend survived after they were swept into the ocean at Carmel River Beach Monday afternoon as they walked along the edge of the surf. High tides and strong currents swept the women, both reported to be in their 60s and visiting the area from England with their husbands, into the chilly, rough water.

Firefighters located the first victim in less than half an hour, and a California State Parks lifeguard swam about 100 feet out to her, according to Cal Fire Battalion Chief Jude Acosta. A crew from the Carmel Highlands fire station picked the woman up in the department's Zodiac inflatable boat and brought her to shore in Whalers Cove at Point Lobos.

She was in good condition and taken to Community Hospital of Monterey Peninsula for evaluation.

But another hour had passed before the second woman, later identified as 63-year-old Ann Hauffe of West Sussex, England, was found floating in the water far south of the river mouth near Monastery Beach,

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