

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## Eastwood says his convention appearance was 'mission accomplished'

By PAUL MILLER

AFTER A week as topic No. 1 in American politics, former Carmel Mayor Clint Eastwood said the outpouring of criticism from left-wing reporters and liberal politicians after his appearance at the Republican National Convention last

Thursday night, followed by an avalanche of support on Twitter and in the blogosphere, is all the proof anybody needs that his 12-minute discourse achieved exactly what he intended it to.

"President Obama is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated on the American people," Eastwood told The Pine Cone this week. "Romney and Ryan would do a much better job running the country, and that's what everybody needs to know. I may have irritated a lot of the lefties, but I was aiming for people in the middle."

### Breaking his silence

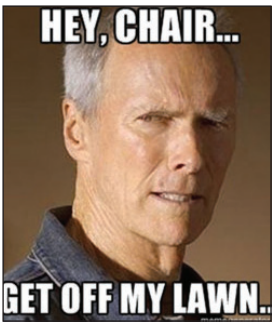
For five days after he thrilled or horrified the nation by talking to an empty chair representing Obama on the night Mitt Romney accepted the Republican nomination for president, Eastwood remained silent while pundits and critics debated whether his remarks, and the rambling way he made them, had helped or hurt Romney's chances of winning in November.

But in a wide-ranging interview with The Pine Cone Tuesday, he said he had conveyed the messages he wanted to convey, and that the spontaneous nature of his presentation was intentional, too.

"I had three points I wanted to make," Eastwood said. "That not everybody in Hollywood is on the left, that Obama has broken a lot of the promises he made when he took office, and that the people should feel free to get rid of any politician who's not doing a good job. But I didn't make up my mind exactly what I was going to say until I said it."

Eastwood's appearance at the conven-

See **EASTWOOD** page 22A



PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES (UPPER LEFT), TWITTER

Flanked by a teleprompter he didn't use, Clint Eastwood addresses the much-talked-about empty chair during his remarks to the Republican National Convention Thursday (upper left). Reporters and commentators in the national news media thought his presentation was appalling, but millions of people around the country loved it, and they took to the Internet to pay tribute, calling Eastwood a "genius" and a "true patriot," posting their own versions of the empty chair, and even adding their own renditions of some classic Eastwood toughness.

## Cop's stab wound may have been self-inflicted

■ Or maybe one of '30 to 40' girlfriends did it

By MARY SCHLEY

WITHIN DAYS of a Seaside police officer's report that he had been stabbed outside his Pacific Grove home shortly after 2 a.m. July 31 by a Hispanic male who fled in a silver Honda, questions about his story began circulating. Chatter increased after word spread the Monterey County District Attorney's Office had served a search warrant at Justin Gill's Forest Avenue home.

While D.A. investigator Ryan McGuirk told The Pine Cone a few weeks ago that his office routinely serves search warrants on crime victims, the extensive "statement of probable cause" submitted to the court Aug. 3 by DA investigator John Coletti and made public this week shows that officers investigating the alleged stabbing had immediate questions about the veracity of Gill's story.

The information was sufficient for Monterey County Superior Court Judge Pamela Butler to authorize the warrant Aug. 7.

According to Coletti, Gill, 29, told conflicting stories about the stabbing, was evasive about possible enemies who might want to harm him — including former girlfriends or their angry spouses — and was uncooperative with P.G. police attempting to investigate the incident. In addition, evidence, such as blood found throughout the home, seemed to contradict his description of events.

See **STABBED** page 13A

## Hours to build, seconds to destroy

By MARY SCHLEY

CARMEL'S GREAT Sand Castle Contest, sponsored by the city and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, will take place on Carmel Beach this Sunday. Fortunately for the day's contestants — whose theme will be "Bohemians & Beatniks" — resident Rusty Croft will be out of town.

Fortunate, because Croft makes his living sculpting sand, and he's good enough at it to win the U.S. Open of sandcastle competitions in San Diego last weekend. He also owns a sand-sculpting company called Sand Guys and hosts a Travel Channel show, "Sand Masters."

With his creation, "Home is Where the Heart Is," Croft took first place in the Masters division — which pitted the world's best sculptors against each other —

See **SCULPTOR** page 30A



PHOTO/COURTESY RUSTY CROFT

"Home is Where the Heart Is" won first place in a professional sandcastle competition in San Diego last weekend. Its creator lives in Carmel, but he's going to give everybody else a chance by not participating in the city's Great Sand Castle contest Sunday.

## Head-on Highway 1 crash injures five in Big Sur

By CHRIS COUNTS

FIVE PEOPLE were hospitalized Sept. 2 when a motorist tried unsuccessfully to pass a string of cars along Highway 1 near Soberanes Point and collided head-on with a truck driven by a Big Sur resident.

The woman — Karin Cumming, 66 — suffered a broken back and other injuries.

Harshad Mohammed of San Jose, 27, was driving a 2012 Mercedes GL450 northbound on Highway 1 Sunday at about 8:30 p.m. when he tried to make the pass. The stretch of Highway 1 Mohammed was traveling on — located about eight miles south of Carmel — is one of the few segments of the scenic route that allows drivers to pass legally, as long as they

can do it safely.

But before he could complete the pass, Mohammed's Mercedes crashed into a 2003 Toyota Tacoma driven by Cumming, according to California Highway Patrol spokesman Robert Lehman.

Cumming's daughter, Michelle, meanwhile, provided The Pine Cone with her mother's recollection of the accident. "My mom came around Soberanes Point and was coming down the hill when she saw a whole line of cars in the northbound lane,"

See **CRASH** page 6A

## Much ado over latest version of Ft. Ord's future

By MARY SCHLEY

A TOWN hall meeting presided over by Mayor Jason Burnett and 5th District County Supervisor Dave Potter in city hall Tuesday was intended to raise issues about Fort Ord's reuse specific to Carmel but mostly served as a venue for residents from the broader Peninsula — including Marina politicians — to vent their concerns about development on the old Army base.

The most important point for Carmel, Burnett said after the meeting, is the recent designation of Fort Ord as a National Monument, as it will benefit his city and all Peninsula jurisdictions by drawing more visitors. He also said the 15-year-old base reuse plan that outlines how the former base — which is roughly 45 times the size of the city of Carmel — should be

See **FORT** page 12A

A lipstick print on the airbag of her Toyota pickup shows where Karin Cumming's face impacted when she was hit head-on by a Mercedes Sunday. The accident happened as the driver tried to pass a string of cars.

PHOTO/COURTESY MICHELLE CUMMING