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McCloud's role in 'Argo' revealed

By PAUL MILLER

THE NO. 1 movie in the country last week was "Argo," directed by and starring Ben Affleck, which is a dramatic account of the 1980 rescue of six American diplomats from Iran by the CIA.

Sue McCloud, former Mayor of Carmel and a 30-year CIA veteran, hasn't seen it, but she knows the story very well.

"I was on the front lines on that one," she told The Pine Cone Monday.

Critics and audiences love "Argo," with Rotten Tomatoes giving it a 96 percent rating and calling it, "tense, exciting and often darkly comic" with "vivid attention to detail and finely wrought characters." According to USA Today, the movie is "an early leader in the Oscar race for best-picture nominations."

Even viewers who are too young to have any recollection of the Iranian hostage crisis, which riveted the nation from November 1979 until January 1981, seem to find the movie thrilling and highly relevant to current events in the Middle East.

But for McCloud, the story is just one of the tension-filled missions that marked her career with the espionage agency.

"I was CIA chief in Berne, Switzerland, when the Iranian 'students' took over the embassy in Tehran," McCloud recalled. Energized by the overthrow of the Shah a few months earlier — and outraged that he was allowed to come to New York for medical treatment — extremists overran the

American Embassy in November 1979.

In the chaos, which is chillingly depicted in "Argo," the mob took 66 diplomats and embassy employees hostage. But six happened to be outside the embassy grounds and managed to take refuge at the Canadian ambassador's residence. Their escape, and their hiding place, were kept secret from the Iranians and the world. But at the White House and the State Department, they knew it wouldn't stay secret for long.

"An exfil plan was sketched out at CIA headquarters," McCloud said, using inside terminology for

See **ESPIONAGE** page 27A



PHOTO/WARNER BROS. PICTURES

In a scene from the movie, "Argo," Ben Affleck briefs six Americans hiding in Iran on their cover stories for escaping the country. In real life, the safe house waiting for them in Switzerland was arranged by then-CIA agent Sue McCloud.

Defense seeks video to discredit victim in Bergstrom rape retrial

By MARY SCHLEY

THE WOMAN who accused Carmel doctor Carl Bergstrom of raping her in April 2009 has made false reports to officers and behaved bizarrely in police custody, according to Bergstrom's defense attorney, Richard Rosen.

A few days after Bergstrom was found guilty, she screamed "Rape!" as officers tried to take her into custody for a psychological evaluation, Rosen said Thursday.

He is representing Bergstrom in a retrial, now set for late January 2013, following an appellate court's overruling of the guilty verdict a year ago based on faulty jury instructions from Monterey County Superior Court Judge Russell Scott.

Bergstrom is accused of raping the woman at his Carmel home after an evening of drinking, and prosecutor Cristina Johnson, who won a conviction in the first trial in July 2009, is handling the retrial on behalf of the county.

Rosen has subpoenaed Carmel Police Department video footage he said will show Jane Doe falsely accusing police officers of trying to rape her, and the matter is set to be discussed in Monterey County Superior Court Judge Julie



Carl Bergstrom

See **BERGSTROM** page 11A

Activist group donates another \$37K to Del Piero

By KELLY NIX

THE NORTH County activist group that has been, by far, 5th District Monterey County supervisor candidate Marc Del Piero's biggest contributor has forked over another big sum to help him defeat incumbent Dave Potter, according to contribution statements released last week.

The North Salinas Valley Fund for Responsible Growth donated \$37,500 to Del Piero on Oct. 2, bringing the total of its donations to his campaign to a colossal \$132,500. The candidate has received a total of \$295,680.49 in contributions, his most recent campaign statements show, including more than \$42,000 from Del Piero and his wife.

Del Piero now leads Potter in campaign donations by

See **ACTIVISTS** page 10A

CEQA lawsuit filed over P.B. radio tower

By KELLY NIX

A GROUP of Del Monte Forest residents has filed suit over a 100-foot emergency radio tower the county approved on Huckleberry Hill, claiming the county failed to address environmental impacts of the tower.

In a suit filed Wednesday, residents Jameson Halpern and Sal Cardinale contend the permit for the tower violates provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The county also did not prepare an EIR for the project, something the lawsuit contends should have been done.

While the county has said the tower would "not significantly affect the scenic character" of the area, Halpern and other neighbors, who formed the Huckleberry Hill Neighborhood Association, contend it will be eyesore and hurt property values.

See **TOWER** page 26A

Pepe recounts Hurricane Sandy from inside the Big Apple

By MARY SCHLEY

DESPITE DIRE warnings filling the airwaves for days and evacuation orders being issued right and left, the wedding was important to him, and he figured the storm wouldn't be that big a deal, so restaurateur Rich Pepe kept his plans to fly to New York City Sunday.

When he and his wife, Sandra, landed at Newark airport, they realized the warnings were right.

"We got off the plane Sunday night thinking, 'How bad could it be?' and looked at the board, and everything else coming in was canceled," he said. "So we were one of the last planes to come in."

Sandy made landfall on the East Coast Monday, wreaking

See **PEPE** page 28A

How are our elected reps doing?

Community leaders speak out about Farr, Monning and Blakeslee

By MARY SCHLEY, KELLY NIX and CHRIS COUNTS

ELECTION DAY is Tuesday, and while everybody's attention is focused on the race for President of the United States, the competition for 5th District Monterey County Supervisor, and a host of hot-button state ballot measures, there are two candidates on the ballot whose candidacies deserve a closer look. Congress Sam Farr has represented the Monterey Peninsula in Washington since 1993. He's a shoo-in for reelection, but does he deserve it?

Likewise, our State Assemblyman, Bill Monning, has represented us in Sacramento since 2008 and now seeks a promotion to the State Senate. Should he get it? And what about our outgoing State Senator, Sam Blakeslee? He's not running for re-election, but it's still worth asking: What's he been

doing on our behalf?

We asked a host of community leaders for their assessments of Farr, Monning and Blakeslee, which will definitely be useful in making up your mind how to cast your votes.

■ Butch Kronlund

As president of the Coast Property Owners Association, Butch Kronlund has had an opportunity to work directly with Farr and Monning regarding several issues of great importance to Big Sur residents. And Kronlund likes what he's seen of both elected leaders.

Kronlund said Farr was instrumental in quickly reopening Highway 1 when the Alder Creek Slide closed it in May 2011. He also praised the congressman for backing Firescape

Monterey, a group that formed to help bridge the gap between rural residents trying to protect their homes from wildfire and environmental groups seeking to preserve biological diversity.

"Sam is a very good politician who's really in tune with his district," he said.

Kronlund said Farr is deceptively effective. "Some people call him the 'Sleeping Bear,'" he noted. "But don't poke the bear."

Monning, meanwhile, received high marks from Kronlund — not for what he did — but for what he didn't do. The assemblyman introduced in 2010 a bill that would have created a 920-acre State Wilderness Area in the eastern por-

See **LEADERS** page 8A