

The Carmel Pine Cone

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Post office deemed unsafe after car crashes into it

By MARY SCHLEY

A 74-YEAR-OLD Pebble Beach woman escaped injury when she crashed her Tesla into the front of the Carmel post office during the lunch hour Wednesday, narrowly missing a pedestrian before smashing into a brick planter with enough force to break the windows and damage the



PHOTO/JERMEL LAURIE

A Tesla Model S driven by a Pebble Beach woman turned an entrance to the Carmel Post Office into twisted metal, broken glass and rubble Wednesday

structural integrity of the building.

According to Carmel Police Sgt. Michael Bruno, the woman, Rebecca Rousso, was parked in the handicap stall in the off-street post office parking lot directly across from the front doors on Fifth Avenue when she said the Model S “took off, sped forward about 40 feet out of control, missed a pedestrian in the crosswalk by approximately 1 foot and crashed into the front of the post office,” causing severe damage to the building and the car.

Rousso was not injured, nor did she appear to be impaired, and the pedestrian she nearly hit was shaken but also unharmed, according to Bruno.

Last week, too

The crash occurred a week after an elderly man ran his car into a wall at the Normandy Inn on Ocean Avenue when his foot slipped off the brake and hit the accelerator, totaling the Toyota Avalon he’d been driving and causing minor injuries to his wife, who was in the passenger seat.

But in this case, Bruno said the woman did not say she’d mistaken the gas pedal for the brake. “She was older and had some mobility issues and couldn’t really explain

See **CRASH** page 14A

Rebuilding slow after major wildfires

Just three applications for permits since 2016 Big Sur wildfire

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE DEVASTATING impact of wildfires on Monterey County’s rural communities was made clear Wednesday when the county planning commission weighed in on a report detailing the damage to homes since 2015 — and the efforts to rebuild them.

The report comes in response to a request made by planning commissioner Martha Diehl, who was trying to identify where “rebuilding hurdles may exist.” Diehl lives in the Palo Colorado area, where 57 homes were lost during the Soberanes Fire in 2016.

The report focuses on what the county has done to make rebuilding easier — and what it can do to improve upon those efforts. Over the past nine years, four major wildfires — the Soberanes Fire and the River, Carmel and Dolan fires in 2020 — destroyed 134 homes and burned down an additional 56 structures throughout the county. Of those 134 homes, 53 of them either have been rebuilt or are in the process of being rebuilt, the report indicates.

Hurdles exist

According to county records, 94 construction permits have been processed relating to the River, Carmel and Dolan fires. The River Fire burned 48,000 acres of between Salinas and the Carmel River, the Carmel Fire scorched 6,900 acres in upper Carmel Valley, and the Dolan Fire burned 148,000 acres in Big Sur.

“Of the 77 homes destroyed in these fires, 50 homes have been or are being rebuilt,” records show. “The remaining 44 permits were for repairs or replacement of structures other than the main dwelling.”

Unfortunately, such information isn’t available for

See **PERMITS** page 13A

Court limits reach of housing mandate law

By KELLY NIX

A SOUTHERN California judge has ruled that a 2022 state housing law that requires California municipalities to ministerially approve applications to split single-family residential lots and allow up to four housing units on each doesn’t apply to charter cities. The ruling could eventually have implications for several such cities in Monterey County, including Monterey and Pacific Grove.

SB9, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2022, dramatically lowered the bar builders face to subdivide property and exempts many housing projects from the rigid California Environmental Quality Act. The law was intended to alleviate the severe shortage of housing in the state.

But on Monday, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Curtis A. Kin ruled in favor of five Southern California charter cities that filed suit against the state and Attorney General Rob Bonta alleging that SB9 is unconstitutional and invalid against charter cities.

Charter cities

“After extensive briefing and two hearings” in a Los Angeles courtroom, “the court ruled in favor of the five charter cities,” according to Aleshire & Wynder, the law

See **COURT** page 11A

Man guilty of killing animals at high school

By KELLY NIX

A SOUTH County man who illegally entered a high school in the early morning hours and stabbed numerous farm animals belonging to students has been found guilty of the attack, which killed two lambs.

Jose Jesse Marquez, 31, was found guilty in a Salinas courtroom April 17 of four counts of felony animal abuse with a deadly weapon, and resisting a police officer, and burglary, also felonies.

Prosecutors say that Marquez rode his bicycle to Gonzales High School just before 2:30 a.m. on Feb. 18, 2023, and entered the school to steal a tool. He went to the school’s barn area and held down numerous animals that Gonzales High students had raised since birth and stabbed them.

Marquez “repeatedly stabbed them eight to 10 times in



Jose Marquez

See **GUILTY** page 14A

Winds could delay May 27 highway reopening

By CHRIS COUNTS

CALTRANS REPORTED Wednesday that repairs to Highway 1 at Rocky Creek in Big Sur are moving forward at a steady pace, and May 27 remains the target date for reopening the road to tourist traffic.

But a spokesperson said the state roads agency is hesitant to move the date up, due to the likelihood of high winds, which could delay repairs, and the wear and tear the work is taking on heavy equipment.

“We’re holding to a May 27 estimate for the reopening,” Caltrans spokesperson Kevin Drabinski said. “Part of that reason is that we have experienced delays due to

Sunday’s Big Sur Marathon will have an out-and-back route. See page 9A.

wind and likely will continue to experience delays due to wind.”

Drabinski observed that those working over the side of the road in a basket must adhere to stringent safety standards — they had to stop last Saturday and Sunday due to high winds.

Photos tell story

“We have a 25 mph wind limit,” he explained. “When you’re drilling off of a crane-held basket over the side of the roadway, it’s challenging.”

Equipment failures could also slow progress, Drabinski warned. “We have experienced, and will continue to experience, some breakdowns in equipment,” he conceded.

Drabinski described what has been done so far in an

effort to stabilize the site, where a large chunk of pavement in the southbound lane collapsed March 30.

“To date we’ve been able to install a series of vertical

See **HIGHWAY** page 10A



PHOTO/CALTRANS

Workers install vertical dowels this week to help support the pavement along the Highway 1 near Rocky Creek Bridge in Big Sur.

Fields of fluffy white cotton are less fun than snow-covered hills

MAYO AND Karlene Ryan's home near Mission Trail Park is for sale, and they know they can trust the realtor. Their son, Mark Ryan — of Carmel Realty's Brocchini and Ryan team — is on the job, and he thought Pine Cone readers might want to know about his dad's remarkable history as a skier. Turns out there's more to his story than snow-covered slopes, but it's as good a place as any to start.

go to St. Ignatius to be closer to the young lady, and they agreed. The relationship didn't last, but Ryan got his diploma and went to college at the University of San Francisco and Fresno State. He majored in agronomy and was a running back on the football team and president of his chapter of Sigma Nu fraternity. Ryan completed a hitch in the Army Reserves; he took basic training at Fort Ord and completed further training at Fort Hunter Liggett.

Skiing remained his favorite sport, and he enjoyed competing. As a college freshman, he was named Most Outstanding

Skier at the Fresno State Winter Carnival, winning the downhill and the slalom. Ryan raced in slalom, giant slalom and downhill competitions well into adulthood at Badger Pass, Squaw Valley, Dodge Ridge, Mammoth Mountain and other resorts.

Sweetheart of Sigma Chi

In 1956, he saw Karlene — then in high school — walking down the steps outside St. Therese Catholic church in Fresno, and they got acquainted. Once she went to college, "She was the homecoming queen, and the sweetheart of Sigma Chi. It was hard to date her," he said. But he managed, and they married in 1961. Karlene is an artist and author who's written many inspirational and children's books, Ryan noted, as well as a talented interior designer.

Their four children, Mayo Jr., Mark, Tara and Timothy (who died in an auto accident when he was in college), came along in 1963, '64, '65 and '66. When Ryan took over his father's cotton farm, he continued to ski in the winter, when things were quieter at work. He took his family, and his kids all learned to love the sport as much as their dad.

During hot Fresno summers, they vacationed in Carmel, renting a house on Scenic Drive for \$400 a month. Ryan purchased a home on Carmelo between Ninth and 10th, where a path led straight down to the beach, and then had a house on Santa Lucia. He and Karlene continued to visit regularly, even as their "nest" gradually emptied.

Ryan said that farming got him involved in water use, and he served as secretary, treasurer, tax collector and assessor of the

See LIVES page 25A

Great Lives

By ELAINE HESSER

Mayo Ryan — whose first name was his mother's maiden name — was born in 1935, the third child of a homemaker and a John Deere tractor dealer-turned-cotton farmer in Fresno who had 4,000 acres to his name.

Ryan attended Bullard Elementary School, and, at age 12, he and some classmates were invited to go skiing at Badger Pass Ski Resort in Yosemite National Park. It turned out to be the beginning of a lifelong love affair with the sport and a way to celebrate his birthday each winter. This year, at 89, he hit the slopes again at a favorite spot — China Peak Mountain Resort, northeast of Fresno — and has the photos to prove it.

"I never missed a year skiing in 77 years," he said proudly. Amazingly, he didn't break a bone until he was 84. "It was my own fault," he said. "I was skiing off the beaten track at China Peak all alone, and hit a patch of ice. I went up in the air and broke my arm when I landed." He called for help and the ski patrol got him safely off the mountain.

Ranch in Carmel Valley

Ryan said he attended Fresno High School for three years but transferred to St. Ignatius high school in San Francisco for his senior year. His older brother had attended there, but Ryan's move was all about a girl.

His father had gotten him a summer job working for a family friend on a cattle ranch in Carmel Valley, and Ryan liked spending his free time at Seabright Beach in Santa Cruz. He met a girl who was attending a Catholic school in Marin, and they started dating. When he got back to Fresno, he told his parents he wanted to

Longtime real estate broker Mayo Ryan pauses on the ski slopes at China Peak Mountain during an outing to celebrate his 89th birthday in January.



PHOTO/COURTESY MAYO RYAN

GALLERY OWNER, BUSINESSMAN, PROBLEM-SOLVER — HE PAINTS, TOO

TO EXPLAIN how his Carmel gallery has survived 35 years through four serious economic downturns, Chris Winfield bows toward his artistic father, who never met a challenge he feared.

"My dad was a really good teacher (26 years as a college art instructor), and one of the things he taught was creative problem-solving," said the proprietor of Winfield Gallery, which opened in the Crossroads shopping center in 1989 and relocated in 1994 to its current location on

in 2008), studied at the Chicago Institute of Art and became an artistic woodworker.

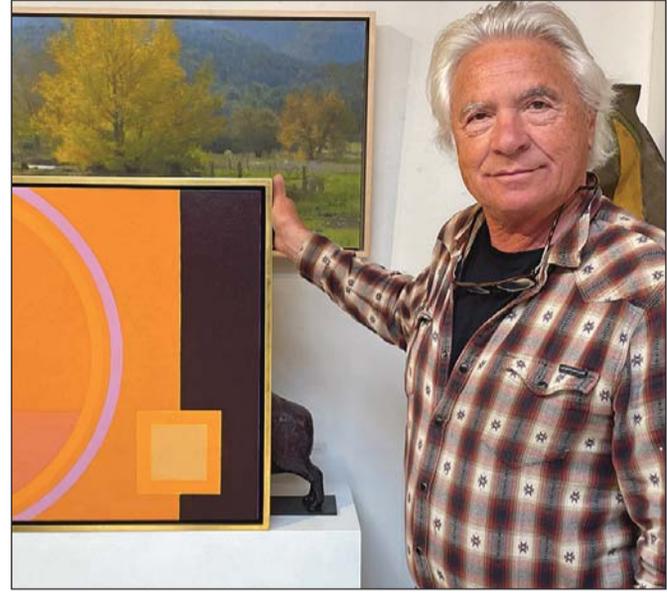
'You and my sister ...'

Their little sister, multimedia artist Robin Winfield, majored in fine arts at Smith College in Northampton, Mass., (Class of '79), and moved to the Monterey Peninsula with her parents in 1994. Since 2009, she has owned and operated the Robin Winfield Gallery off Ocean Avenue, between San Carlos and Dolores, just steps from her brother's business.

Chris, 74, created jewelry and developed his signature flat-plane abstract paintings in St. Louis, New York City, Provincetown, R.I., and Cape Cod.

He was living in Wellesley, Mass., in 1982 when he began dating a coffee-shop waitress, Leslie Johnson (now a Sotheby's real estate agent in Carmel Valley), who told him, "We don't have anything in common, but you and my sister would hit it off."

Leslie's sister, Andrea Johnson (Carmel High '72) married



PHOTO/DENNIS TAYLOR

Chris Winfield, known for colorful flat-plane abstract paintings, owns Winfield Gallery, which celebrates 35 years in business this year.

Dolores Street between Ocean and Seventh avenues.

The city's oldest galleries are the Carmel Art Association (founded in 1927), New Masters Gallery (1974), Weston Gallery (1975) and Photography West (1980). Winfield Gallery ranks No. 5 on the list, thanks in part to a school of thought passed down from father to son.

The Space Window

"Dad would be working some commission, and somebody would say, 'You can't do it this way,' and his reaction always was, 'Oh, yes I can.' And I'd see him figure out a way to do it. That's what I learned from him," said Winfield, who was born in Paris, where his father was studying with artists Leo Katz and Stanley William Hayter.

Rodney Winfield (1925-2017) was a celebrated American designer, painter, sculptor and jeweler, best known for the spiritually themed stained-glass artwork (often three-dimensional) he created for churches and synagogues throughout the country.

Among his most famous pieces is the Space Window, a stained-glass commemoration of the Apollo 11 moon landing. He installed it at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. in 1974.

Chris, 24 at the time, helped create that piece and many others as an apprentice in his father's St. Louis studio.

The firstborn of Rodney and Betty Winfield's three artistic children, Chris thrived as a youth in the family's creative environment, then earned an art degree in 1973 from St. Louis-based Washington University.

A younger brother, David (who passed

Chris Winfield 42 years ago and brought him to the Monterey Peninsula in 1988. He opened his first gallery in the Crossroads the next year.

"I had no business background, no clue what I was doing. I was just making stuff up as I went along," Winfield confessed.

What he did have was the "creative problem-solving" model his father had instilled throughout Winfield's apprenticeship. He wasn't afraid to ask questions of experienced people in the industry — dealers, museum directors, other gallery owners — and parlay their advice into his own solutions.

He commissioned a freelance writer and professional photographers to create feature stories about the artists he repre-

Carmel's Artists

By DENNIS TAYLOR

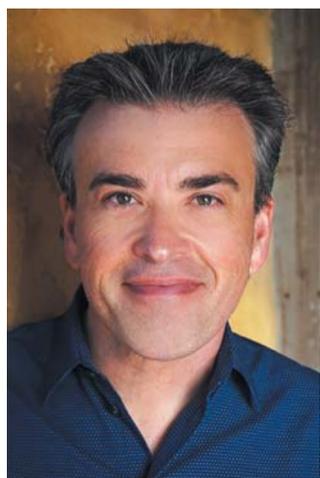
presented, several of which landed in influential magazines — some as cover stories. He pitched his artists to museums and scheduled shows. If necessary, he personally helped the venues set up exhibits he had arranged.

Economic storms

He also was innovative when the economy dipped into recessions in 1990 and 2001 (eight months each time), 2007-2009 (18 months) and in 2020, when the U.S. economy experienced a 19 percent decline in gross domestic product during Covid.

"The scariest time for me was between 2008 and 2009, because I had just hired

See ARTIST next page



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ARTIST

From previous page

an assistant for more hours, more days and more money than any employee I'd ever had," he said. "When the economy crashed, she pretty much said, 'You can't afford me anymore,' then moved to Southern California to take care of her mom, who had early-onset Alzheimer's. I wound up working seven days a week for the next eight or nine months."

When the pandemic forced businesses to lock their doors in 2020, Winfield Gallery survived through a combination of good fortune and innovation.

The luck? Winfield shares the front part of his 2,500-square-foot gallery with a wine-tasting bar, which, because of its agriculture permit, was permitted to keep its doors open to sell bottled wine.

"Consequently, some of my longtime clients were able to sneak into our gallery, and we were back there working, sending out email blasts to clients on our mailing list, trying to make everything as easy as possible for them," he said.

'A breath of fresh air!'

One impact of the pandemic was that art-seekers became more interested than ever in shopping online. Winfield typically sold three or four pieces per month through his e-mail promotions — sales that helped keep the business afloat.

"We were also getting messages from people all over the country, telling us, 'Oh, I love getting your blasts ... what a breath of fresh air! They're so uplifting!'" he remembered.

The artwork at Winfield Gallery has always been a menagerie, untethered to any specific theme or medium. Winfield, whose bachelor's degree is in multimedia, embraces all types of paintings, from photographic realism to abstract, ceramics and sculptures, large and small, from Old World traditional, to playfully oddball, and jewelry.

Roster of 60 artists

The roster of nearly 60 artists he represents is national and international, but also rich with celebrated local luminaries like David Ligare, Pamela Carroll, Warren Chang, Annette Corcoran and Mari Klooppel. And the gallery's

collection includes one or more pieces from about 80 other artists.

A recent email blast from Winfield Gallery humorously reminded its recipients that, "Chris Winfield also paints!"

"I loved art school — I loved using my eyes and my hands," said the artist, who favors geometric figures in his vibrantly colorful abstracts. "I came out of Washington University with a very strong background in drawing, color theory ... very good fundamentals.

"My brother, a couple of years younger, went to the Art Institute of Chicago, where their approach was more like, 'Hey, man, just do your own thing.' He never got that basic training, because everybody there was doing a free-for-all."

Artists who influenced him as a painter included Josef Albers and Hans Hofmann.

Winfield laughs aloud as he describes the studio where he paints — a "tiny junk room" in his Corral de Tierra home.

"The bike is in there, and the kitty litter ... all kinds of stuff," he said. "I set up a lazy susan that allows me to spin all of my paintings, so I don't have to move them."

'There's no money in art'

Winfield's art is part of the collections at Triton Museum (Santa Clara), Crocker Museum (Sacramento), Monterey Museum of Art, Santa Cruz Art Museum, Berkeley Art Museum, Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula, National Steinbeck Center, and multiple other venues.

With help from his indispensable assistant gallery director, Molly Cybuck, Winfield still finds time to paint several days a week, but most of his energy goes toward the gallery he loves.

Chris and Andrea are parents to three adult daughters, Laramie and Lauren, both large-animal veterinarians, and Sienna, a Salinas nurse.

"None of them are artists. They all told me, 'Dad, there's no money in art,'" he said with a smile and shrug.

Andrea Johnson, who specializes in nature-themed acrylic and watercolor paintings, shows her work at the gallery and is also a member of the Carmel Art Association, as was her mother, Barbara Johnson (1927-2021), who was an abstract expressionist painter and printmaker.

Visit winfieldgallery.com for additional information, and to view images of the artwork created by the artists exhibited there.

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— every week in the Real Estate Section.

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