

IT'S NOT YOUR USUAL KIND OF HOLIDAY CRAWL

PINE CONE STAFF REPORT

PUB CRAWLS are common. Santa-themed pub crawls are even more common this time of year. But a crawl to places selling used books? Who'd have thought that was a thing?

Turns out, it is. The Holiday Used Book Crawl set for Dec. 4-7 will offer bibliophiles plenty of chances to find the right gifts for their kind at venues in Carmel, Monterey, Marina and Pacific Grove. The event benefits local public libraries.

"Shop gently used books in popular genres for adults and children," organizers said. "Enjoy seasonal nibbles

and pick up gift certificates — perfect for holiday giving."

On Dec. 4 from 3 to 5 p.m. and Dec. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Sunset Center book room, which is run by the nonprofit Friends of Harrison Memorial Library and is located at San Carlos and 10th, will be open for shopping, and the Friends of the Marina Library will hold its sale in the library at 190 Seaside Circle, Dec. 5-6 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

On Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the community room in Monterey Public Library at 625 Pacific St. will have books for sale, and Pacific Grove Library's supporters will set up shop in St. Mary's by-the-Sea at 146 12th St., Dec. 4-5 from 10 a.m. to noon and Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



- CARPET
- AREA RUGS
- HARDWOOD/ LVP
- VINYL
- CORK
- UPHOLSTERY
- SAND & REFINISH
- MOTORIZED SHADES
- FABRIC
- VALANCES

GRAND AVENUE FLOORING & INTERIORS
314 GRAND AVE, PACIFIC GROVE

831-372-0521

Support The Pine Cone by supporting our advertisers!

P.G. hires outside firm to find ways to make \$\$

By KELLY NIX

THE PACIFIC Grove City Council has approved paying a consultant more than \$140,000 of taxpayers' money to come up with ways to collect more from taxpayers.

Pacific Grove is seeking to boost its funds and reduce expenses due to what it says are lower-than-expected revenues and projected deficit spending. The city and council are eyeing ideas, including a ballot measure, to make up for the shortfalls.

On Nov. 19, the council hired consultant Props & Measures to poll P.G. residents and conduct a "feasibility study" to determine citizens' "tax tolerance," their priorities for public funding, and how the economy might affect the city's chances of passing a ballot measure seeking more tax money.

If the study and polling show that a revenue-generating ballot measure is a good idea, Props & Measures, with help from subconsultant True North, would "build broad community consensus" for the measure and "mount a strategic advocacy campaign to secure the votes needed to win on Election Day," Props & Measures promised.

The consultant will also find out how the "projects" the council wants to fund — including infrastructure and public safety — "stack up versus residents' priorities."

'Especially concerning'

In a report to the council, city finance analyst Nick Cina pointed to polling — similar to the type Props & Measures will undertake — that Pacific Grove conducted in 2007 and 2016.

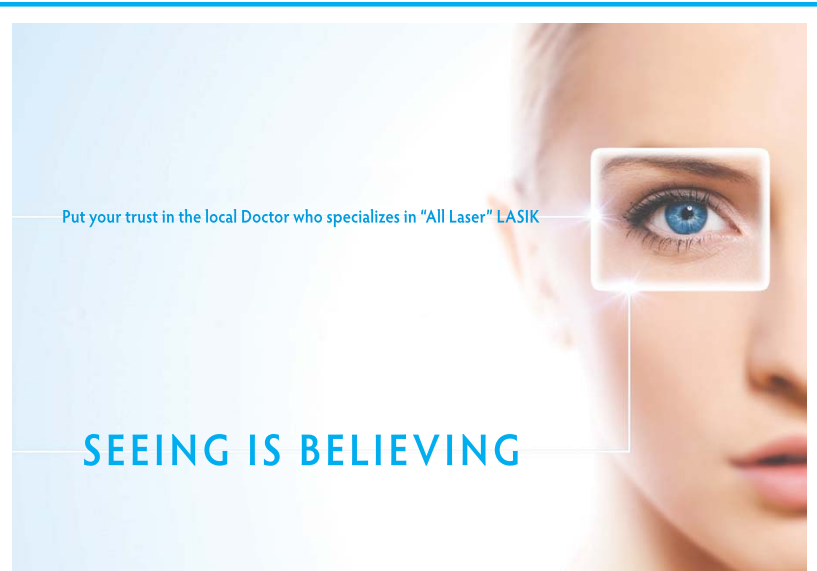
"That information was very valuable in understanding what residents value and view as needed in P.G.," Cina said. "The input was used when the city council considered later efforts to allocate budget funds and seek additional revenue opportunities to meet the community's desires."

The consulting services will cost taxpayers \$141,530.

Props & Measures also promised to ask citizens about raising the pay for the city council. But after councilmembers in May gave themselves a 130 percent pay hike to significant public criticism, the group Transparent Pacific Grove led a successful citizen referendum to challenge the raise — something noted by former city councilman and group leader Luke Coletti in a Nov. 29 letter to the city.

"As you know, Pacific Grove voters recently rejected

See **MONEY** page 29A



Put your trust in the local Doctor who specializes in "All Laser" LASIK

SEEING IS BELIEVING

"ALL LASER" LASIK is one of the most popular eye correction surgeries in the world, designed to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism using a combination of two different lasers. Selecting the right eye care professional for your eyes is an important task especially when it comes to surgery. **DR. PHILIP PENROSE** at Eye M.D. Monterey is the most experienced local

doctor to perform "All Laser" LASIK surgeries. He will do a complete assessment of your eye health to determine your vision needs and if you are a good candidate for this procedure. **EYE M.D. MONTEREY** provides an intimate setting, providing compassionate, high quality eye care. We also carry a large selection of designer eyewear and sunglasses. **Come see for yourself.**

Committed to the Health of Your Eyes

EYE M.D. MONTEREY at Ryan Ranch
21 Upper Ragsdale Dr. / Suite 201
Monterey, CA 93940
831.324.4730



eyemdmonterey.com

EYE M.D. MONTEREY on Cass
880 Cass St. / Suite 105
Monterey, CA 93940
831.373.0183



EYE EXAMS | REFRACTIVE CATARACT SURGERY | LASIK | PRK | GLAUCOMA TREATMENT | COUTURE VISION OPTICAL

Private Caregiver/CNA

10 years experience

Former career in Neurology,
Oncology, Pain Management

Alzheimer/Dementia Certification
from Alzheimer's Association

College Educated
CPR/First Aid Training

Linda Hindemit, CF member

920-840-1395

Monterey



Welcoming New Customers

Carmel Drug Store

- No Long Waiting Time
- Prescriptions Filled in 15 minutes*
- Accepting Most Medicare Part D Plans
- Same Day Delivery • Accepts Tricare
- Pet Prescriptions

Over 100 Years of Service
Still Locally Owned & Operated

CARMEL DRUG STORE
Ocean Ave. & San Carlos, Carmel
831.624.3819
www.CarmelDrugStoreRX.com
Pharmacy Hours: 9am-6pm Mon-Fri
Store Hours: 8am-10pm • 7 Days a Week

RERIG

From page 18A

Lloyd, similarly thanked Rerig, and Graeme Robertson, representing the Carmel Residents Association, praised his “collaborative, collegial and kind approach to both opportunities and challenges,” and noted his “keen eye to the future and deep respect for the past.”

“He has been the steady hand of reason during the pre- and post-pandemic periods, enabling us all to enjoy the quality of life we cherish today,” he said.

Personally, Robertson noted, he and Rerig have known each other for nearly three decades and have learned they can “agree to disagree, and still be friends.”

“Your leadership, not only here in Carmel-by-the-Sea, but in Monterey, is something for us all to be proud of.”

Many hugs and photos ensued, and back at the dais, Rerig said a person’s observation that his impending retirement and move “must be a little bit like walking a tightrope” didn’t resonate with him at the time but now rings true.

“It’s exhilarating and a little bit nauseating,” he said, especially when he’s awakened at 2 a.m. by the many thoughts running through his head. “I’m not as elated as I thought I would be — there’s a little bit of melancholy.”

He talked about the highs and lows of working for Carmel-by-the-Sea and likened it to raising his children.

“There’s joy, but also heartache,” he said. “I’ve learned through the heartache.”

Rerig, 59, said he “is going to miss this village very much.” And he offered these parting words: “Don’t be too fearful of incremental change and evolution.”

Because he’s been a public employee for so long, Rerig is eligible to receive state taxpayer-funded retirement for the rest of his life. He estimated the annual pay will begin at around \$170,000.

Swanson contract

With Rerig working his last day Dec. 22, Swanson — who came to the city as director of planning and building in 2021 and was promoted to assistant city administrator in February 2024 — will step into the top job the following day. For the first year as acting city administrator, Swanson worked in both capacities, as the search for a new planning director took far longer than anticipated.

After Rerig announced his plans to retire, Byrne appointed councilmembers Hans Buder and Bob Delves to negotiate the terms of Swanson’s contract, which city attorney Brian Pierik presented. He noted Swanson’s

qualifications and recommended the council approve it.

The 13-page agreement outlines Swanson’s base pay and other benefits, including deferred compensation totaling \$23,500 annually, health coverage, and vacation, sick, executive and bereavement leaves. The contract has a six-month term but notes, “Upon successful completion of the duties of this position during that six-month term, the city council will enter into good-faith negotiations to consider permanently appointing the acting administrator as city administrator.”

No one objected to the deal.

“I want to extol the virtues of Brandon in all of his collaboration with us residents,” Carmel Residents Association board member Nancy Twomey said, complimenting Swanson for his responsiveness and thoughtfulness. “He has been phenomenal in all of his work with us on the housing element. He has been amazing, and if that’s representative of where he will take his new acting role, he’s more than deserving of this.” She said putting him in the position “is the right thing for the community.”

Councilman Jeff Baron moved to approve the contract, Delves seconded, and it passed unanimously.

MONEY

From page 14A

[the pay raise] through the referendum process, clearly expressing opposition to increasing council compensation,” Coletti wrote. “This makes the inclusion of council stipends within a taxpayer-funded consulting contract especially concerning.”

A stipend increase — which councilmembers contend is necessary and reasonable because the part-time positions have not had one in more than two decades — would cost taxpayers more than \$50,000 annually.

Coletti said Props & Measures’ plan also contains elements “that fall into the category of prohibited campaign activities,” including “shaping the message, narrative, framing, or appearance of a ballot measure for the purpose of increasing voter support.”

“These are precisely the types of activities that [state law and a California Supreme Court ruling] prohibit public agencies from funding,” he said.

In a letter to the council a couple days before the November meeting, resident Andrew Kubica suggested that if the city is in such dire financial shape, it shouldn’t give city employees annual 3 percent raises nor spend “\$141,530 on a consultant.”

“If a survey is needed, have staff perform the work in-house,” Kubica said.

Among the things Kubica suggested doing to raise revenue was to raise the city’s 12 percent transient occupancy tax — the fee paid by visitors who stay in P.G. inns — to 14 percent.



Fleurs du Soleil

You're Invited to Our Holiday Open House

December **5** From 10am-4pm

598 FREMONT AVE.,
MONTEREY CA 93940

*Join us for a joyful
celebration of the season!*

Sip bubbly, savor light refreshments, and explore our curated collection of holiday treasures, home accents, and stunning floral design.

Draw for a special discount and discover gifts that sparkle with style and heart.

We can't wait to welcome you!




**MODERNEYES
OPTOMETRY**

ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS

At **Modern Eyes Optometry**,
Dr. Maureen Hong, O.D.
and her team is dedicated to
providing high-quality eye care
for the whole family.
Personalized care with
modern technology.

**Proudly serving the Monterey
Peninsula for 20 years**

CONTACT US TODAY TO
SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT
(831) 641-7848
www.moderneyesmonterey.com

550 Camino El Estero, Suite 205
Monterey, CA 93940
moderneyesmonterey



MOLLIE O'NEAL

Where your future finds its foundation

Sales Associate | DRE: 02098681
831.277.5971
mollie.oneal@sothebys.realty | mollieorealtor.com

Sotheby's
INTERNATIONAL REALTY