

Marin Independent Journal

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INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Supervisors plan DA office study

Board backs grand jury concern over backlog of criminal cases

By Adrian Rodriguez
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Marin County supervisors agree with a civil grand jury rec-

ommendation that an independent consultant should be hired to analyze operations at the district attorney's office.

Supervisors approved a re-

sponse Tuesday to a Marin County Civil Grand Jury report in May that said the district attorney's office was "the primary reason" for a substantial backlog of criminal cases in the county. The report was titled "Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied — Marin District Attorney's Office in Crisis."

Supervisors largely disagreed with many of the panel's find-

ings, but said work is underway to help improve the criminal justice system.

"We are agreeing with that there's a substantial backlog in the criminal cases," County Administrator Matthew Hymel said Tuesday. "We are also agreeing, and the district attorney agrees as well, that there will be value in doing an organizational review looking

at staffing levels and business processes going forward."

Hymel said the county has budgeted \$500,000 to address the backlog issues, and part of that includes funding for the analysis. Hymel expects to issue requests for proposals in September to find consultants. The study is expected to take four to five months.

GRAND JURY » PAGE 6

SEA ANEMONES

Non-native invertebrates spreading in Tomales Bay



PHOTOS BY ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

Zoe Richardson, a doctoral student at the University of California at Davis, walks along the shore of Tomales Bay. Richardson is studying an invasive sea anemone that is native to the Southern Hemisphere.

Experts study how species could affect the ecosystems

By Will Houston
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Thousands of small, self-cloning sea anemones native to the Southern Hemisphere are rapidly spreading in Tomales Bay, an event researchers say could be the first recorded sighting of the species above the equator.

After the anemone was reported last year through a citizen science app, iNature, researchers at the University of California at Davis' Bodega Marine Laboratory confirmed the species to be *Anthopleura hermaphrodita*, known as the small brown sea anemone. The striped anemone, which is less than an inch, is native to New Zealand, Australia and Chile.

UC Davis researchers, led by doctoral student Keira Monuki, are contemplating how the species could affect the bay's ecosystems.

One of the reasons the anemones have spread so successfully in Tomales Bay

is that they can reproduce asexually, said Eric Sanford, a UC Davis biology professor. A single sea anemone could make thousands of clones of itself.

"They can proliferate rapidly because they don't need another individual to reproduce. They can just spit out these genetically identical clones of themselves," Sanford said. "So in a lot of ways, it's something out of a science fiction movie if you're thinking of what would be the perfect invader from outer space."

Sanford said genome sequencing will allow researchers to estimate how many anemones first colonized Tomales Bay. It is possible, he said, that the thousands of anemones matting the intertidal areas in eastern Tomales Bay came from just one or two individuals.

The anemones also host a symbiotic algae that will be researched to determine if it influenced the species' successful proliferation in To-



An invasive sea anemone sits in a cup of bay water along the shore of Tomales Bay.

"They can proliferate rapidly because they don't need another individual to reproduce. They can just spit out these genetically identical clones of themselves."

— UC Davis biology professor Eric Sanford

males Bay.

Another question researchers are looking to answer is whether the anemone will compete with native species in the bay, including one known as the aggregat-

ing sea anemone. Using a club-shaped organ hidden under their tentacles that contains stinging cells, the anemones battle each other for territory.

ANEMONES » PAGE 4

DEADLY WILDFIRES

Travelers ask: Is taking trip to Maui proper?

Tragedy intensifies Hawaii's reliance on tourism dollars

By Christine Chung and Madison Malone Kircher

The New York Times

In the throes of responding to the Maui wildfires that razed the celebrated town of Lahaina and claimed more than 110 lives, Hawaii remains mostly open for tourism, despite the misgivings of both residents and tourists.

"Do not come to Maui," Kate Ducheneau, 29, a Lahaina resident, said in a TikTok video that has been viewed more than 2 million times since it was posted Sunday. "Cancel your trip. Now."

"It's just kind of a gut-wrenching feeling to see other people enjoying parts of their life that we used to welcome," she said, adding that her home was severely damaged by fire and her family evacuated with minutes to spare.

Last week's tragedy has intensified long-simmering tension over the archipelago's economic reliance on tourism, a dependency that sparked anti-tourism protests in recent years and brought the state to its knees during the pandemic. Many

MAUI » PAGE 2

+ Inside: More coverage of Maui wildfires » PAGE A10

CAMP DAVID

High stakes for Biden's trilateral historic summit

President seeking progress in Japan, S. Korea relations

By Ben Dooley and Choe Sang-Hun

The New York Times

With threats growing in Asia, the leaders of the United States, Japan and South Korea will meet at Camp David on Friday, taking a major step toward a three-way military and economic partnership that would have been nearly inconceivable before Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As the United States has tried to counter challenges from both China and North Korea, one key obstacle has been the tense and sometimes downright hostile relationship between Japan and South Korea, its two most important friends in the region.

Now Japan and South Korea are trying to quickly move past seemingly irresolvable disputes over the bitter history between them as Russian aggression against Ukraine highlights their own vulnerabilities in a region dominated by China.

President Joe Biden hopes to cement the nascent improvement in relations when he hosts Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan and President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea at

SUMMIT » PAGE 2

AP-NORC POLL

Biden's approval rating on economy stagnates

Only 36% of U.S. adults approve of his handling of the economy, slightly lower than his overall performance. PAGE A8



PAKISTAN

129 Muslims arrested after attacks on churches

A mob attacked a dozen churches and nearly two dozen homes of minority Christians in Jaranwala. PAGE A12

BUSINESS

Dow Jones
34,474.83 (-290.91)
S&P 500
4,370.36 (-33.97)
Nasdaq
13,316.93 (-157.70)





ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

Zoe Richardson, a UC Davis doctorate student, looks for non-native sea anemones along the shore of Tomales Bay.

Anemones

FROM PAGE 1

“Anemones will have these aggressive interactions and one will give up and close up or drift away,” Sanford said. “What we want to know is if this introduced anemone from far off is it out-competing the native anemone.”

There is also the question of how the anemones could impact Tomales Bay’s renowned oyster farms. Sanford said he does not believe the anemones will be a threat. While oysters filter algae in the water for their meals, anemones use their tentacles to grab small ma-

rine critters or zooplankton.

“There shouldn’t be direct competition for food or anything like that,” Sanford said.

Hog Island Oyster Co. co-owner Terry Sawyer said he has not seen any impacts on oysters so far.

“That’s the good news,” Sawyer said. “The bad news is that we still are concerned because it’s an ecosystem out of balance and all of us need to be paying attention to that, what niche they’re occupying and displacing. Now that they’re here, we have to watch what’s going on.”

Tomales Bay and the California coast are no strangers to non-native or invasive

species. Species have long hitched rides on the bottoms of ships or in ballast water, eventually detaching or being dumped into new territories in which they flourish. They can also be introduced through aquaculture or people dumping their aquarium pets into a body of water.

For the past 15 years, the state has provided funding to San Francisco State University’s Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Tiburon and the Moss Landing Marine Lab to survey state waters for introduced species. Andrew Chang, an ecologist at the Tiburon center, said a number of species have been found, including poten-

tially non-native sea anemones, in the region.

“But that work is ongoing to determine whether and where/when we may have detected this particular species in those surveys, including of Tomales Bay,” Chang wrote in an email. “I’d say, too, that the intertidal habitat in Tomales is one area we have not yet surveyed systematically.”

Sanford said the Anthopleura hermaphroditica could have already been established in other areas, such as San Francisco Bay.

“We don’t know but we’re potentially interested,” Sanford said.

The study is being funded by a grant from the Tomales Bay Foundation.

In your town

THE COUNTY

Firefighters in Marin deployed out of area

Thirty-nine firefighters from Marin have been assigned to help tackle wildfires in Northern California, said Chief Jason Weber of the Marin County Fire Department.

Weber said the deployments include 19 people and five engines from the county department and 20 people and five engines from other fire agencies in Marin.

“We have backfilled behind all these resources and remain fully staffed here in Marin,” he said.

As of Thursday, 10 large wildfires were burning on state or federal land throughout California, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

SAN ANSELMO

Board set to review home landscape plan

The town Planning Commission has set a hearing on a landscaping proposal for a property near the San Francisco Theological Seminary.

The property is at 75 Jones St. The commission approved a detached home there in 2021, and the Town Council denied an appeal in 2022, according to a staff report by Lindsey Klein, a town planner. The town’s approval came with the condition that the property owners install vegetation as privacy screens for the surrounding residences.

The property owners submitted the proposed landscaping plan in June. The commission is scheduled to review the plan during its meeting at 7 p.m. Monday. The town planning office is recommending approval. Project details are available online at shorturl.at/GNRUY.

SAN RAFAEL

Hearing set on plan to expand dealership

The city planning office has scheduled a hearing next week on a proposal to expand the Lexus dealership and repair center in the Canal neighborhood.

The business at 513 Francisco Blvd. East wants grow from 19,400 square feet to 34,000 square feet. The city’s Design Review Board endorsed the plan in June.

A zoning administrator hearing is set for 10 a.m. Wednesday on the third floor of City Hall. Teleconference access instructions for the public are available online at shorturl.at/ejrX7.

TIBURON

Surfacing projects scheduled for streets

The town is embarking on a series of road maintenance projects involving nearly three dozen streets.

The work over the next several weeks will include repaving, restriping, slurry seal and surface patching. Officials expect varying degrees of traffic disruption, depending on the work.

The project will involve all or part of Avenida Miraflores; Barner Lane; Bartel Court; Blackfield Drive; Bond Lane; Cecilia Court; Centro East Street; Cibrian Drive; Corte San Fernando; Cypress Hollow Drive; East View Avenue; Esperanza Street; Geldert Drive; Harbor Oak Drive; Harn Court; Hilary Drive; Howard Drive; Lagoon View Drive; Lyford Drive; Main Street; Malvino Court; Mar West Street; Mariner Circle; Mark Terrace; Meadow Hill Drive; Miraflores Lane; Monterey Drive Cypress; Paradise Drive; Porto Marino Drive; Ridge Road; Straits View Drive; Vistazo West Street; and Wilkins Court.

More information on the projects is available online at shorturl.at/rwEL6.

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