

A DIFFICULT DECISION TIME FOR DEL MONTE – by Neal Hotelling

One hundred years ago this month, Samuel F. B. Morse, president of Del Monte Properties Company was dealing with his first major setback. Morse was 39 years old, and the company he founded to purchase the “Del Monte Unit” from his employer, Pacific Improvement Company, was only five years old.



Hotel Del Monte 1923

In the early morning hours of Saturday, September 27, 1924. Morse received a phone call from his key manager, Carl Stanley, that Hotel Del Monte was on fire. Sparks in a defective flue started the blaze about 3:00 am on the 4th floor and it quickly spread through the building’s timbers. With the use of dynamite to destroy corridors connecting the main building to the guest room wings, firemen were able to save the wings while the main building burned to the ground.

Seven hundred guests were evacuated from the hotel without injury or loss of life, but the financial hit was huge. Early estimates put the loss at \$2 million; insurance was limited to \$1 million.

Difficult and costly decisions had to be made with other factors to consider.

Morse had bought the roughly 18,000-acre Del Monte Unit in 1919 for \$1,363,930.70. The potential for undeveloped real estate was what convinced Morse to buy the Unit, but central to the holding was the elegant Hotel Del Monte, just east of Monterey. The hotel was the Peninsula’s main attraction. Soon after its opening in 1880, its well-heeled visitors had been attracted to buying homesites on the Peninsula.



Morse

However, by 1915, when Pacific Improvement hired Morse to liquidate its vast holdings, Morse found Hotel Del Monte stuck in the past. He hired Carl Stanley who breathed new life into the old hotel and again made it “the place to be.” At Morse’s direction, Stanley oversaw enhancements to the rest of the Del Monte Unit to make it more attractive to a buyer.

In 1916, they constructed a 24-room “Cottage Row” near the log lodge at Pebble Beach, which previously had no guest rooms. In early 1917 Morse and Stanley refurbished the hotel’s polo grounds and racetrack, built the Roman Plunge swimming pool near the hotel and began construction of a new golf course near the log lodge. When the log lodge burned down in December 1917, Morse convinced his employer to invest in a new modern lodge.

IS THE MILLS ACT RIGHT FOR YOU?

- by Katherine Spitz, Pebble Beach, Architect, AIA Emeritus, LEED AP

You may not feel old, but if you were a 50-year-old house, you would be! This means if you



as a 40% reduction on property taxes, but the amount depends on when you bought


live in a house built before 1974, and you need a county building permit for a remodel, you may need a consultant to tell you (and the County, of course) whether your house is historically significant. Don't worry - most old houses are not historically important, they are merely old!

the house, since property tax is linked to sales price. Sadly, yours truly bought her house over three decades ago. (I guess I have a romanticized love of history, not financial gain.)

Monterey County has a Historic Preservation Ordinance – the goal is to protect and preserve buildings and places, increasing our awareness of local history and stimulating economic activity, among other things. I don't want to bore you with building codes, but in a nutshell, the County keeps a list called the Monterey County Registry of Historic Places. Being included on that Registry is voluntary, and can benefit the owner. For example, if a house is deemed to be historic, the county can modify building codes.

What makes a house important? Criteria include being a significant architectural design in itself (as is the case of the Frank Lloyd Wright house in Carmel), or an association with an important person, even if the architecture is not unique, or possibly the location of an important event, for instance, where they signed the constitution. Clearly not every house over fifty years old meets these criteria.

If your residence is eligible for the Registry, then it may qualify for the provisions of the Mills Act, which can reduce property taxes in exchange for ten years of preservation-based maintenance. Given that Pebble Beach has lots of history, it is surprising there are only 7 historic properties listed on the County Registry in Del Monte Forest, and even fewer houses which hold Mills Act contracts.

As property values escalate, along with the pressure to build densely on residential sites, either because of the proclivity for outsize homes or the need to provide more places for people to live, the Mills Act can provide a means to save vestiges of our past for the future. Every historic house tells a different story. We can imagine Sam Morse's vision of Pebble Beach, with its Spanish inspired architecture, as well as modern designs exemplified by the Shell house. Preserving our heritage brings many benefits, including quantifiable economic advantages. Sometimes it just provides ineffable pleasure. No matter what, preserving history ensures Pebble can retain its cachet and desirability long into the future. 

To calculate tax savings, the Monterey County Tax Assessor's Office uses an arcane formula based on commercial rental value to reduce the property taxes. The savings can be as much

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In February 1919, as the new lodge and golf course opened, Morse formed Del Monte Properties Company and officially purchased the Del Monte Unit with investor money. Morse was president and he had two key vice presidents: Herbert Fleishhacker, president of the Anglo and London Paris National Bank of San Francisco, and his former classmate, G. M. Heckscher.


For five years, Morse seemed to have the Midas touch. Landscape engineer Mark Daniels helped Morse design a build-out of Del Monte Forest incorporating greenbelts and residential lots along winding roads that flowed with the contours of the peninsula and rose from sea-level to more than 800 feet. Several of his network of wealthy associates in the San Francisco Bay area were enticed to buy scenic acreage along the rocky coast between Pebble Beach and Cypress Point. Morse launched Carmel Woods in 1922 on the Company's land south of Del Monte Forest.

Then, in early 1924, Morse was ready to complete plans for his most ambitious project – Monterey Peninsula Country Club. Daniels laid out the general plan for a 1600-acre real estate and club development. Golf architect Seth Raynor walked

the land and provided a 36-hole routing in the summer of 1924 so Daniels could complete plans for roads, lots and greenbelts. Architect Clarence Tantau produced plans for a clubhouse. The estimated cost of the planned development, \$1.2 million, would be nearly as much as Morse had paid for the entire Del Monte Unit five years earlier.

Before he could complete the country club plans, he was faced with the devastating loss of the hotel fire. Seemingly unfazed, Morse immediately announced they would rebuild a fireproof hotel as soon as the embers cooled.

Regarding the country club; when the Del Monte Council's discussion of December 1, 1924 turned to possibly delaying launching the new club, the minutes reflect: "After extended discussion it was found to be the consensus of opinion that the club plan should go ahead in the spring of 1925."

Faced by adversity, Morse's instincts proved correct. It was the "Roaring 20s." Early sales at the club exceeded expectations and construction started in mid-1925. 1926 saw the new hotel's grand re-opening in May and the Club opened with nearly 700 members in July. 



Monterey Peninsula Country Club 1928

NEW ADVANCES IN REDUCING THE RISK OF WILDFIRES IN OUR FOREST

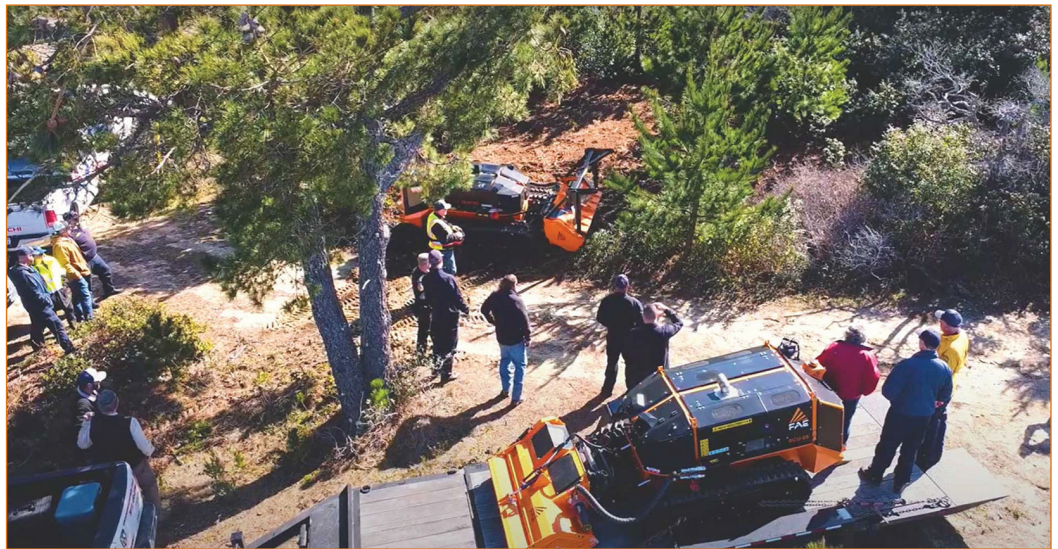
- by James Barta, DMFPO board Member

Reducing the risk of wildfires in our forest community requires the constant attention of CAL FIRE responders. Dry grasses, fallen trees, choking bushes and shrubs create perfect fire fuel, which left unmanaged, escalates the potential for a catastrophe. Until recently, clearing the forest was a challenging and time-consuming job, typically requiring multiple workers, heavy machinery, and countless hours.

That is all changing, explained CAL FIRE, Fire Captain, Greg Leonard, who works for CAL FIRE in the Peninsula Battalion Fuels Management Program serving Pebble Beach, Cypress Fire and Carmel Highlands Fire Protection Districts. The three Districts make up the Battalion. They are advancing their approach to fire suppression with the recent purchase of a remotely controlled masticator known as the RCU-75. A conventional masticator is similar to a wood chipper, it is mounted on an excavator type tractor, which moves through the forest to grind or chip trees and brush leaving the chips behind. The new device looks much like a tank and is no larger than a normal car. The low profile and center of gravity enable it to safely access smaller areas and more severe slopes than the larger on-board driver operated masticators. It is nimble and has a lighter

footprint, causing less ground disturbance than the larger machines. Because of this, it is useful for routine follow up treatment of previously masticated areas. It can be used to clear the forest and reduce fuel should a fire start. Less maintenance is required than machinery formerly used, and the operator does not need a special license or certification to operate it. Captain Leonard said it is not difficult to learn to operate the masticator, which is controlled by a hand-held device, like those used when playing a video game. "It's a pretty good investment. It is easy to haul around, and we no longer need to schedule with contractors to get the job done. We can grab it and go on any given day," he stated.

Thanks to this new fire fuel suppression innovation, the conscientious, dedicated work of Captain Leonard and members of the Battalion, the forest has never been clearer of fuel or safer from fires.



We need you! If you are interested in removing invasive weeds, restoring habitats, or surveying hiking and equestrian trails to determine maintenance needs, please contact the DMFPO office at office@dmfpo.org or 831.373.1618.

Mother Nature claims the pocket gopher, native to North America, has a key role to play in the environment as a soil aerator. That's OK when it aerates in its natural range, but when it aerates under your recently mown lawn or blooming garden, well!!!!

Said rodent, *Thomomys* species, is an herbivore feeding on the roots of your precious vegetation. It creates and maintains an extensive system of tunnels (up to 175 feet per critter), and populates at 6 to 8 critters per acre. It lives a fairly solitary life during its 3-year life span, except when it breeds, usually in early spring. It produces between 1 and 3 litters per year of up to 7 young ones depending on soil conditions. The gopher has a gestation period of 20 days; for comparison, the gestation period of the elephant is 680 days; do the math.

What can we do to protect our lawns and gardens? The first line of defense is in your **landscape design and practice**; as in use of 3/4 inch chicken wire and wire baskets to protect the root system of plants.

The second is population management; gophers can't be eliminated, but they can be controlled. Unfortunately, if you live next to an empty lot, forested green space, or scenic easement, your challenge is magnified. There are many approaches, witness the abundance of material on U-Tube. Poisons are available, but we generally avoid these avenues due to concerns over family pets, children's play, or the environment. Which leaves trapping.

In my opinion, the most humane gopher trap is the box trap; when sprung, it kills the rodent instantly. There are many styles of trap with varying effectiveness governed chiefly by soil conditions (again, refer U-Tube).



Trapping is dirty work. One has to get down on your knees and dig in the dirt to find the gopher tunnel where the traps are set (U-Tube). And then, when successful, the carcass has to be disposed of. The easy way is the green bin, but because gophers have a highly developed sense of smell, burying the carcass in the tunnel where it was caught can be a deterrent as it decomposes. Note to mark the grave as you might be back in the area in a year or so. Trapping also requires patience and persistence. Once traps are located and set, they need to be checked at least every 48 hours, and an expectation of one critter catch per week established. In some situations when trapping near open or wooded spaces, predators like raccoons or bobcats are attracted to the decomposing carcasses; as in "free lunch." Beware.

If you want to dig deep into the world of pocket gophers, go to the website of the U. C. Davis Department of Ecosystem Management and Restoration, www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.





YOU ARE INVITED!

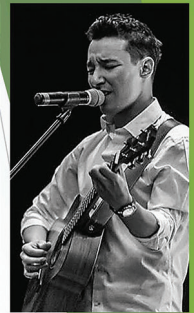
Music in the Village

Sunday, October 13, 2024
2:00PM to 4:00PM

Indian Village Picnic Grounds
The Dunes Road, Pebble Beach

Please join us on Sunday, October 13th for an afternoon of wine, elegant small bites and live music in the beautiful Del Monte Forest. We can't think of a better way to enjoy a beautiful afternoon with family and friends!

Email us at dmfconservancy@gmail.com if you have questions about this event. Hope to see you there!



DMFPO Hosts Flu Shot Clinic

Open to the Public

Monday, October 7, 2024
9:00 a.m. to Noon

Pebble Beach Community Services District
Forest Lake and Lopez Roads, Pebble Beach

Accepting cash, credit, check, Medicare or Aspire Insurance:

Standard Flu (Trivalent) – Age 2 to 100 years \$45

Flu Mist – Ages 2 to 49 years \$45

High Dose (Quadrivalent) – Age 65 to 100 years \$85

Flu Blok (egg-free) – Age 18 to 65 years \$85

RSV Vaccine and Pneumonia are not available

COVID Vaccine only available to those with Medicare or Aspire insurance. No private insurance payments will be accepted for COVID vaccine. Cost of COVID vaccine \$150

Bring CA ID (license or state)

Bring Medicare or Aspire cards if applicable

Central Coast Visiting Nurses Association
Community Services



Corporation Yard
4005 Sunridge Road

Pebble Beach 10th Annual Zombie Run and Emergency Preparedness Fair



Saturday, October 26th 9:00am



“Why a Zombie Run?” you might ask. In this day and age, public safety officials find it ever harder to compete for children’s attention and time. By offering a Zombie Race, we hope to not only get kids interested in emergency planning but also get them outdoors and moving! This fun event will encourage families to participate together in all aspects of a healthy lifestyle, including personal preparedness. In addition to the race, many public officials and volunteer groups have come together to provide fun and educational displays for you and your family.

An amazing and unique creature, octopuses are found in coastal marine waters of every ocean and coast of the United States.

All octopuses have similar characteristics. Surrounding the head are eight equally-long arms, the mantle above contains organs for respiration, digestion, and reproduction. The undersides of the arms are covered with suction cups that enable it to feel and taste. The head has two complex eyes, the pupils are horizontal slits. Octopuses have a hard beak, which they use to pierce the shell of crustaceans. They have three hearts. Two of the hearts move blood to the gills, while the third pumps blood through the rest of the body. Their blood is copper-based, which helps them survive at low temperatures, and makes it appear blue!

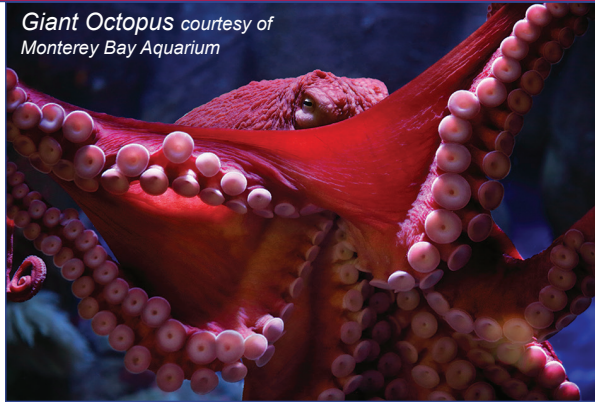
Octopuses are highly intelligent; they can use tools and recognize people.

To avoid predators, such as sharks, seals, and sea otters, octopuses use several strategies; they camouflage themselves by quickly changing their skin color, shape, and appearance; eject ink; and propel themselves by expelling water through a siphon. Because they lack bones, they can squeeze through very small spaces.

Adult octopuses feed on a wide variety of seafood.

An octopus usually forages at night then retreats to its den to eat. They keep their den tidy by leaving spent shells outside.

A 2018 Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute discovery of an Octopus Garden near the Davidson Seamount is one of a handful of known deep-sea



Giant Octopus courtesy of Monterey Bay Aquarium

nurseries. Pearl Octopus, the size of a grapefruit, migrate to the Octopus Garden to mate and nest. It is estimated that there are 20,000 or more pearl octopuses at this nursery.

Octopus moms are very dedicated. After laying eggs

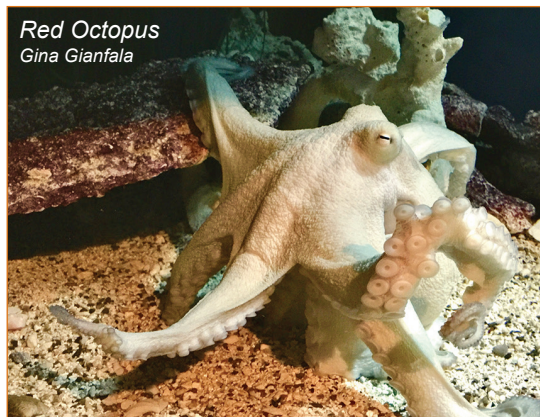
in a den, she will guard and care for them by aerating and cleaning them until they hatch. She will not leave the den or feed the entire time. The male parent dies soon after mating and the female survives only until her brood has hatched. After hatching the babies are on their own.

An octopus will generally live one to three years, depending on the species; their size varies greatly.

The Giant Pacific Octopus, found in the coastal waters of Monterey Bay, is the largest species in the world with an arm span that can reach 14 feet, and contains over 2000 suction cups. It has a long lifespan for an octopus, about three to five years. The much smaller red octopus is also found along the Pacific coast, it grows to about 20 inches and lives approximately two years. You can admire these two species at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Octopuses have been around for over 150 million years but now there are perils threatening the species' survival. Warming oceans, pollution, and acidification can diminish the availability of their prey and disrupt egg development. Over harvesting is an additional concern.

There are many sources of information available. The book by Sy Montgomery "Soul of an Octopus" and the documentary "My Octopus Teacher" are two I particularly enjoyed.



Red Octopus
Gina Gianfala



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Invitations have been sent out for the annual DMFPO Golf Tournament in December. If you are a 2024 DMFPO member and have not received the invitation sent by email, please contact office@dmfpo.org



Del Monte Forest Property Owners



Nicole Nedeff, M. A.
Native Plant Ecologist

Semiannual Meeting

Sunday, November 17, 2024

2:00 to 4:00 pm

Main Ballroom

The Inn at Spanish Bay

"Monterey Pine Forest Ecology"