

Popular Marina business must cease operation

By KELLY NIX

A UNIQUE Monterey County business that offers oceanfront tours on railroad handcars is being forced to close, an owner told The Pine Cone Thursday.

Marina-based Handcar Tours, a family-owned business that launched in 2021, gives customers a guided 6-mile handcar tour on railroad tracks adjacent to the ocean and Highway 1. The business — which co-owner Todd Clark said has been

wildly successful — is the only one of its kind in the world.

But the handcar operation got bad news late last week.

“Handcar Tours is permanently closing,” Clark said in a social media post. “Last Friday, we were notified through a notice taped to the door of our handcar station office that the Transportation Agency for Monterey County and the City of Marina will not be renewing our lease.”

The letter indicated that the business must cease operating by Oct. 31.


“It is very sad for us,” Clark told The Pine Cone Thursday morning. “Where do we go next? We built this fantastic business. Most businesses close for financial reasons, and for us, that is not the case.”



PHOTO/HANDCAR TOURS

This couple enjoys a handcar tour of the Monterey Bay. The business that offers the tours said it has to close Oct. 31.

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Make way

At issue is the Transportation Agency for Monterey County’s plan to build a \$92 million, 4.3-mile two-lane bus road along a section of the railroad corridor west of Highway 1 between Sand City and Marina. While the California Coastal Commission in September OK’d the project, its approval meant that Handcar Tours would eventually have to leave the area to make way for construction.

“We have a lease to operate on the Monterey Branch Line with the understanding that when the Surf bus project is ready to break ground, we would leave,” Clark explained.

While the agreement allowed for a possible extension after the first two years, Clark said “the transportation agency has opted to terminate the lease and not renew it for the next two years.”

Transportation agency spokeswoman Theresa Wright said Handcar Tours’ use of the rail tracks was granted on a “temporary

basis,” and that its board of directors was “very clear” about that when it approved the lease.

Wright said the agency’s lease is with the City of Marina and that Handcar Tours subleases from the city and that its lease with Marina expires Oct. 31. She said the agency has allowed the lease to come to an end but won’t be renewing it, “since Surf will be starting construction,” she said.

“The contract is not being renewed for that reason, and not for what Clark is describing as a removal for his opposition to the Surf project,” Wright said.

However, Clark believes that the decision to not renew the lease was made, at least in part, out of spite for his family’s opposition to the busway project.

He points to comments made by transportation agency executive director Todd Muck during a June Marina City Council

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CAMERAS

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and their license plates, including number and issuing state, date, time, location, and vehicle details like type and color. Unlike its predecessor, it alerts police within seconds when it identifies a stolen or wanted vehicle by automatically running the numbers through crime databases. The data are stored in the cloud managed by Amazon Web Services and are deleted 30 days later, and the contract states that the information belongs to the city, not Flock.

Still going

But a few months later, due to public outcry regarding the cameras' aesthetics, locations, privacy issues and other concerns, the council decided to halt the rollout and seek more feedback.

Several cameras that were already up and running have continued to do so, however, and have proved useful on numerous occasions, including recently helping to locate stolen cars.

Flock systems are used in more than 4,000 jurisdictions across 42 states, according to Carmel P.D., including in Pacific Grove, Salinas, Marina, Seaside, Sand City, Monterey and throughout unincorporated Monterey County.



Cameras similar to this have been installed on several Carmel streets. Their appearance and other topics will be discussed at two meetings this month.

Jurisdictions using Flock can share information to help each other track down criminal suspects. On Sept. 23, a King City gang member pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for shooting two people in December 2021. Police were able to find him and his co-conspirators because cameras captured their vehicle's license plate number, according to law enforcement.

The committee meetings will be held in Carmel City Hall and online Oct. 8 at 4 p.m. and Oct. 24 at 1 p.m., Richards announced Oct. 1. The agenda and other information will be available at ci.carmel.ca.us.

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meeting. Mayor Bruce Delgado asked Muck if his agency would support an extension of Handcar Tours' lease.

"I have seen that the handcar folks have actively opposed and tried to delay and stop the Surf project," Muck responded. "So, my recommendation to the board would be to not extend their contract."

'Now they stop'

Furthermore, Clark said that the Surf bus road project "is not coming now, not next year, the year after, or maybe never. Our opposition to the project is why we are being removed."

The family, he said, spent about \$150,000 in permits and railroad track upgrades to allow Handcar Tours to happen. Clark intends to defy the Oct. 31 closure deadline to allow his company to fulfill its services to 150 to 200 customers who have paid for tours but not been able to take them. He plans to close Thanksgiving weekend.

He said Handcar Tours has given tourists a reason to stop in Marina, a city that has largely been left out of the Peninsula's robust tourism business.

"People used to pass through Marina to get to Monterey," he said. "Now they stop."

Wright said that the agency is open to considering a proposal from the outfit to relocate "their operations further north where they won't be in conflict with" the Surf bus road.

GENE ALAN BARNES, PhD

1935 — 2023

Dr. Gene Alan Barnes was a contemplative man of action. Throughout his years, he was deeply engaged in many fields: scientific, political, athletic and creative. Gene made a career in astrophysics then devoted himself to philosophy in retirement.

Barnes studied physics at California Institute of Technology, University of Illinois, and the University of Oregon. He did research at NASA, and in the airline and tech industries. He was a Professor of Physics and Astronomy at California University at Sacramento for almost 30 years. Dr. Barnes funded scholarships for physics students at Sacramento State.

Gene was an active member of several communities; he sat on boards of the Pacific Grove Natural History Museum, and the United Nations Association, serving as Treasurer of the Monterey chapter. Barnes was a generous donor: national parks, the Sierra Club, universities, and museums all enjoyed his support. Gene was an activist for environmental causes, advocating for sensible water and power policies in California. *Le Six*, a group of three Monterey Peninsula couples, met for a quarter century to share poetry and discuss art.

Gene wrote short stories, essays, and poetry — about his travels to Stonehenge, hiking in the Sierra, and an eclipse expedition in China. Gene published a philosophical conversation with Aquinas, Descartes, Sartre, Socrates, and Buddha debating their ideas in *What Then Is Truth?* With his wife Susan D. Rautine, he wrote a dialog of marriage and gender in *Being Together*.

From the time he was 12, when his father gifted him a tennis racquet, Gene gathered trophies in all ranks. He continued to play competitively into his 80s.

He was a stargazer, chasing total solar eclipses around the world with Monterey Institute for Research in Astronomy, to which Gene donated his 8" telescope. Astrophotography was one of many passions, including: fossil collecting, watercolor painting, sculpting, and building a room-sized N-scale railroad diorama.

Hugh Donald Barnes and Mary Donan Boellner brought 2-year-old Gene Alan Barnes and his elder brother Roger Don Barnes from Topeka to Los Angeles. Upon retirement, Monterey became his long-time hometown.

Surviving Gene are his wife Susan Dorothea Rautine, daughter Laurie Barnes Harley (Don) and son Will Alan Barnes, stepson Benton Bainbridge and stepdaughter Rachel Bainbridge Steinberg (Robert), granddaughters Ilana Sheats and Liona Barnes, grandsons Coda Barnes and Ezra Eban Bainbridge-Powers, and great grandson Owen Sheats, and his first wife Carole Wolf Barnes.

Gene was grateful for family and friends who helped him in later years. He was a cheerful man whose main aim was to help others.



MAX W. YEAMAN, M.D.

Nov. 24, 1932 – Aug. 24, 2024

Max W. Yeaman, 91, of Carmel Valley, California, passed away on August 24, 2024. He was a devoted husband, a loving father and grandfather, and a kind-hearted friend, and he will be missed dearly.

Max spent his childhood in Utah and California. As the son of a music teacher, he was taught



the value of diligence and a good education. He graduated from Vallejo High School in 1950 and from the University of California at Berkeley in 1954 with a bachelor of science in zoology. He served as a 1st lieutenant in the U.S. Army in Germany from 1954 to 1956 before returning to the

U.S. to attend medical school at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He completed his medical training in California and ran a successful urology practice in San Leandro, CA, from 1965 to 1998, serving terms as president of the medical staffs at both San Leandro Memorial Hospital and Doctors' Hospital of San Leandro. Max and his wife of 44 years, Barbara, spent their retirement in Carmel Valley, hosting friends and family frequently.

Max enjoyed a life-long love of music, particularly piano performance and composition. He also was an avid reader of non-fiction, educating himself in his favorite topics of history, evolution and theology. He loved travel, sports, hiking and nature. He was a docent at Garland Ranch in the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District and at Point Sur Lighthouse. He is also a Lifetime Member of the International Club of Carmel. He will be remembered as a generous and loving Papa to his grandchildren, introducing them to Yellowstone National Park and taking them on regular outings to the local park and coffee house.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara (Boyd), in 2008; and his brother, Harold, in 2003.

Max is survived by his four children: Bradley (Deborah) Yeaman, Valerie Yeaman, Rachel (Clay) Ross and Evan (Nicole) Yeaman; eight grandchildren: Natalie, Philip, Dhandara, Isabela, Whitney, Braydon, Ryan and Emma; four great-grandchildren; sister-in-law, JoAnne Yeaman; brother-in-law, Robert Boyd; and his first wife, Cynthia Bradford.

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KANTA JAYACHANDRAN

Kanta Jayachandran, 86, passed on September 11.

She was born and raised in Bombay, India, and moved to the U.S. in 1963 to pursue a Ph.D. in statistics. She and her husband, Toke, married in 1965 and settled in the Monterey area in 1968. Kanta was a beloved math teacher at Santa Catalina School for more than 30 years, known to her students as Dr. Jay. Her friends and family and many hobbies fulfilled her in retirement.

Kanta is survived by her husband, Toke; daughters, Priya and Seema; grandchildren, Tobias, Nina and Sybil; son-in-law, Jakub Grygiel; and siblings, Veena and Baldev Chawla.

A memorial will begin at 11 a.m. on Jan. 6, 2025, at Santa Catalina School. Details are at <https://bit.ly/KANTAJ>.