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makes a return
engagement**



**Australian dog
excels at
guarding her dad**



**A police officer who
really likes to speed
— INSIDE THIS WEEK**

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YOUR SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS, ARTS AND OPINION SINCE 1915

Turning refugees into entrepreneurs

■ A difficult trip to help some desperate people

By PAUL MILLER

THE FRESH bullet holes in the U.S. Embassy in N'Djamena were a clue: Vaughn Feather was not in for a leisurely trip to central Africa. And he didn't want one.

"Last year I had finished a business consulting program, and I had some wanderlust," he told *The Pine Cone* after returning home to Carmel. "I decided I should get involved in some kind of humanitarian program."

Because of a long-standing interest in Africa, he decided that's where he wanted to make a difference.

And thanks to a friend of a friend, he chose a unique program for his efforts: Rising International, headquartered in Felton, which bolsters third-world economies by helping the poorest of the poor — in places such as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Rwanda — turn their local crafts and handiworks into products that can be sold in the United States.

"In some of these situations, the people are so desperate, what they really need is help getting three meals a day," said Carmel Jud, founder of Rising International, which has operations in more than 30 countries. "We look for an entrepreneurial opportunity that will help them — without it being charity."

"Pretty quickly she arrived at Chad as a great possibi-



PHOTO/COURTESY RISING INTERNATIONAL/VAUGHN FEATHER

A woman named Saleh in a refugee camp in Chad with some of the woven baskets Rising International will be selling at local house parties.

ty for me to help," Feather said. The local economy is in tatters, and a flood of refugees from neighboring Darfur has added to the woes. Rising International's goal was to set up basic export businesses in some of the refugee camps.

"The traditional model of charity isn't working, and the people we work with will tell you that," Jud said. "Nobody

See **CHAD** page 15A

Speedy, stealthy burglars hit Carmel Plaza

By MARY BROWNFIELD

AFTER REMOVING an entire plate glass window from its frame to enter the store early Friday morning, professional thieves took less than three minutes to stuff two large duffel bags with \$80,000 worth of purses and belts from Louis Vuitton and escape, according to Carmel police.

The heist occurred three months after burglars crept into a rear hallway, cut through a wall of another Carmel Plaza store, The Cheese Shop, and stole more than \$15,000 worth of rare wines.

Just before daybreak May 23, the burglars, cloaked in black and wearing masks, removed a strip from the base of the 6.5-foot-by-4-foot window and then peeled the rest of the rubber trim away.

"They lifted the window out and walked right in," said Sgt. Mike Calhoun. "Since they removed it without breaking it, they had to know either a glazier or had some window experience to know how."

See **BURGLARS** page 13A

Two more dogs in 'vicious' hearing

By KELLY NIX

TWO SEARCH and rescue dogs that attacked a woman and her Labrador in Pacific Grove five months ago must be moved out of town or permanently restrained, a hearing officer ruled last week.

The decision, issued May 20 by Robert E. Davis, comes after a Dec. 30, 2007, attack by the two dogs, both German shepherds, on the Lab as she was getting into a car.

The dog hearing, the second in the city's history, came about 10 months after KION TV anchorwoman Olga Ospina's Maltese was fatally mauled by a Labrador and a German shepherd in front of the P.G. post office July 25, 2007. Those dogs was banned from the city.

In the December attack, the two German shepherds, Lola, 2, and Bear, 11, owned by Monty Reitz, jumped Reitz' 4-foot fence and ran toward Tule, a 2-year-old female Labrador owned by Casey Conover Houston, and began biting the dog, according to Davis' report. Houston had been visiting her

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'Last Forbidden Kingdom' on display at Sunset

By CHRIS COUNTS

WINDSWEPT AND nearly devoid of vegetation, the remote Nepalese district of Mustang is a place where fried yak dung and goat droppings serve as cooking fuel, where sheep horns hang over doorways to chase away evil spirits and where firewood is considered a sign of wealth.

And yet Mustang is also home to a collection of ancient Buddhist art so impressive that Carmel photographer Kenneth Parker has made three trips there since 2003 to capture what he calls "The Last Forbidden Kingdom."

An exhibit of Parker's photographs, "Buddhist Earth: Sacred Places/Sacred Work," opens Friday, May 30, at the Center for Photographic Art. The gallery will host a reception from 6 to 8 p.m.

Surrounded by some of the world's highest mountains and

bordering Chinese Tibet, Mustang is home to about 9,000 hardy residents.

"It is very difficult to reach," he explained. "There are no roads. It takes a week to hike in."

On his last trip to Mustang in 2006, Parker was accompanied by a crew of 12 people and 15 horses. The pack animals carried, among other things, large-format cameras, generators, cables and state-of-the-art lighting equipment. The expedition was sponsored by the American Himalayan Foundation, which is funded primarily by private donors.

Birthplace of Tibetan Buddhism

Much of Tibet's rich artistic culture has been lost under Chinese rule. Yet Mustang, which shares much of the same culture, has remained virtually untouched by the outside

See **KINGDOM** page 16A



PHOTO/KENNETH PARKER

Kenneth Parker's images depict Nepal's otherworldly landscape and its rich and fascinating culture.

PROLIFIC LOCAL BLACK WIDOWS SPARE THEIR MATES

By CHRIS COUNTS

THANKS TO the work of two spider researchers from Canada, the folks at Camel Valley's Hastings Natural History Reserve have had an opportunity to reexamine some of the myths surrounding the most feared, and perhaps most misunderstood, of arachnids — the black widow.

It turns out the local variety of the poisonous spider, the Western black widow, doesn't eat its mate. But perhaps even more unusual is how common the black widow is — especially in Carmel Valley, researchers say.

See **WIDOWS** page 15A



A Carmel Valley black widow, who's probably not a widow.

Carmel Valley

CHAD

From page 1A

says, 'give us food.' They say, 'Give us a way to make money.'

In the middle of April, and paying his own way, Feather set off on a 28-hour plane trip through New York and Paris to N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, where a recent coup attempt included gunfire directed at the American Embassy.

And then another flight took him to the remote town of Abeche, where Feather was able to set up housekeeping in the residence of an aid worker.

"The water worked from midnight to 5 a.m., there was electricity 10 hours a day, and there were lots of mosquitos," Feather said. "You're just struck by how desperate and desolate the place is."

And because there's no banking system, aid workers are susceptible to being robbed for their cash and expensive vehicles. "While I was there, a worker for Save the Children was killed in a carjacking," Feather said.

First he met with a women's group in Abeche, which already sells crafts in the local market. Feather identified a woven leather basket as something Rising International could sell back home.

And at the nearby refugee camps — each one with about 20,000 residents — he thought a local basket called a Taback would be exportable.

"They make them from what they have, which isn't much," Feather said.

Nevertheless, he returned to the United States May 3 with lots of samples. And an order has now been placed for 300 units of merchandise to be produced in Chad and sold in the Monterey Peninsula. About 30 percent of the sales price — usually \$2 to \$10 — goes to the women Feather visited. Most of the rest goes for shipping.

"A regular importer wouldn't work from Chad, because shipping is so expensive," Jud said.

The products are due to arrive in Monterey in a few weeks. They'll be sold through house parties.

"We're always looking for people to host these parties, so they can invite their families and friends to see the products and buy them," Jud said.

And Feather is hoping the program will be such a success he can go back to Chad in October to identify more products local women can make.

"People tell me they're sure I'd never want to go back there," Feather said. "Actually, I would."

To sign up for a house party, or to learn more about Rising International, go to www.risinginternational.org

WIDOWS

From page 1A

"We figured we'd find one of the spiders about every 50 meters," said Mark Stromberg, director of the University of California biological field station. "It turns out that we have a black widow every two or three meters. We had no idea how many we had here."

While a high density of spiders might be creepy to some, it's great news for University of Toronto graduate students Emily MacLeod and Maria Modanu. The two spider researchers are laying the groundwork for what could be as long as a five-year study of black widows at Hastings.

"We're looking at their mating habits," said MacLeod, who took the spider photo on the cover of The Pine Cone. "In other varieties of black widows, the female eats the male, but in this one, she doesn't. We're trying to find out why."

MacLeod and Modanu are also paying particular attention to the webs created by female black widows.

"The webs differ depending on how well the female spider is fed," MacLeod said. "We're trying to see if the differences in web size affects a female's ability to attract males."

For now, though, the researchers are simply trying to master the basics of the local black widows. "We're just trying to

find as many spiders as we can," she explained. "We're trying to get a big picture of what their natural habits are."

Hastings, it turns out, provides an ideal environment for the spiders, who tend to live in small holes covered by webs.

"The reserve has lots of fields with holes," MacLeod noted. "That's the perfect habitat for black widows."

Remarkably, researchers handle black widows with little concern they will be bitten. "We've been working with them for years, and nobody has ever been bitten," MacLeod observed. "It's difficult for them to pierce human skin. Plus, they aren't very aggressive. They're not out to bite humans."

Despite how common they are, black widows are not that easy to find. "The risk of coming across one isn't too high," she insisted.

But MacLeod advises against tempting fate. "You wouldn't want to get bitten," she cautioned. "It's painful. And you definitely don't want to let children get bitten."

MacLeod clearly doesn't suffer from arachnophobia, and she discourages people from overreacting to the presence of a black widow. "They have their own world and their own ways of communicating with one another," she added. "You can kill them if you want, but you might take a good look at them first. They might be more interesting than you think."

CHURCH SERVICES



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‡ Children and Youth Sunday School at 10:30 AM

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