



## Spray for invaders

**Pesticide spraying set to begin in parts of Mira Monte, Meiners Oaks against gypsy moths**

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Hundreds of property owners in Mira Monte and Meiners Oaks have been notified that government crews will soon begin spraying oak and other hardwood trees and plants with an organic pesticide to destroy a "breeding population" of tree-killing gypsy moths.

Officials began hand-delivering notices of the eradication plan to 600 residences and businesses on Friday. A public information meeting was scheduled for Tuesday evening at Nordhoff High School.

"Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on hundreds of kinds of plants and are capable of defoliating trees at an alarming rate," said a notice distributed by the state Department of Food and

Agriculture and the county agricultural commissioner's office. "A single gypsy moth caterpillar can eat up to 1 square foot of leaves per day."

Two clusters of up to 100 orange-colored moth eggs were found in Mira Monte last fall, following discovery last summer of seven adults moths in traps nearby, prompting a state quarantine of the area.

"Urgent treatment is now necessary to protect California from the negative economic and environmental impacts the establishment of this pest would cause throughout California," the notice said.

Steve Lyle, a state spokesman, said spraying of the organic compound Btk is set to begin March 9 and

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Photos by Scott Wintermute

## The Lowering Skies

The Ojai Valley and vicinity got its share of foul weather over the last week, with about 3 inches of rain in Ojai. Snow closed the Maricopa Highway on Monday (top). David Wilk, a resident of Old Creek Road, was unable to cross the creek Tuesday to get medications for his wife, but knew better than to make the attempt, as he had gotten stuck trying to ford the river a couple years ago. A small landslide temporarily closed one lane of the Maricopa Highway this past Friday.

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## Lake claims youthful life

**Fillmore boy dies while feeding ducks**

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Officials have released the identity of the 4-year-old boy who died Sunday while feeding the ducks at Lake Casitas.

According to Sheriff's Capt. Ross Bonfiglio, Mason Dollar, of Fillmore, apparently fell into the water, possibly just after a flock of ducks took flight. The boy had been feeding the birds with the 8-year-old son of a friend of the boy's mother.

Dollar's mother had also taken two other children on the outing. The boy's death has been ruled accidental.

"This is very, very tragic," Bonfiglio said. "We know it doesn't take very long for this type of thing to happen. How quickly they can occur."

Both mothers and their children were reportedly in the immediate area of where the boy went into the water, but no one heard

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## Rotary sends students on passage to India

**Russell, Lule to get firsthand look at education, poverty**

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MacKenzie Russell and Paola Lule set off to India yesterday packing lots of excitement, eager to observe and learn about a culture they've only read about. After a short two-day tour of local sights, including the Taj Mahal, the two 15-year-old Nordhoff students will travel to the Piyali Learning Center outside of Calcutta, one of the poorest and most heavily populated cities in the world.

The students were selected for the trip after winning a Rotary-sponsored essay contest last fall on "The City

of Joy," a book set against the background of the slums of India.

"You can tell them about poverty," said Deepa Willingham, founder of the Indian girls' school they will be visiting, "but being in the midst of it, seeing it firsthand, gives them the real feeling of what it's all about. And to see, even with this kind of poverty, how much humanity these people have. These girls have miserable lives and yet they come with smiles on their faces."

On Feb. 6, the girls went to Willingham's home in Solvang for a final pre-trip gathering, including a traditional Indian meal. Willingham, president of

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Joe Sohm, left, and Roger Kellaway flank conductor Peter Nero.

## Ojai duo teams up for 'Visions' project

**Event billed as 'photo symphony'**

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Whether it's something in the water or the air or just a sheer fact of life, Ojai is known near and far for inspiring great works of art. That claim to fame struck again in a major way two weeks ago — on the national stage — thanks to the collaborative genius of two seriously creative local citizens along with the help of

few of their well-known friends.

World-renowned photographer and Saddle Mountain resident Joe Sohm, along with his close friend and Ojai neighbor, the legendary jazz pianist and Grammy Award-winning and Oscar-nominated composer, Roger Kellaway, have just returned home from Philadelphia where

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## Ojai Valley neighbors

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When Debra James began working in the storage facility business, her primary motivation was to have more time to write. Instead, she found perfect inspiration for character and story development.

"I love writing. That's what my true passion is," said James, who has been managing Bryant Circle Mini Storage since 2006. She has developed a fondness for her customers. "We have 368 units and everybody has a story."

Born in New York City, James moved to Los Angeles as an infant and grew up in the valley. "We were the original valley girls," she said of her generation who developed the vocabulary that flooded pop culture in the '80s. "My mother and I used to drive up to Santa Barbara and on the way back we would stop by Ojai past Lake Casitas." She told her mother then that she would like to live in Ojai some day.

James lived in the Caribbean and Florida before

bringing her business out to Calabasas. She cared for her mother and worked as a professional development producer by making documentaries for the U.S. Department of Education. "I was working on a World Trade Center documentary when 9/11 happened and that crashed everything."

That prompted James to explore the movie industry by becoming an extra, "... to see how the big boys did it," she said. "But I decided I didn't want to do that."

While working at a Palmdale storage facility, James learned about a job opening in Ojai. "Out of the blue, I got a call asking if I was interested in moving to Ojai to work in storage," said James.

She finds the people she comes in contact with very interesting. "Someone said to me, 'All my dreams are in that storage,'" James said. "That is so true, especially in the economic situation we have now."

When James is not examining the human condition on Bryant Circle, she enjoys being a new grandmother to Waylon



Debra James

James Trujillo, son of daughter, Ashley, and son-in-law Tony Trujillo. James enjoys movies and has begun backpacking and hiking again. "I love The Ojai Foundation and have just discovered Shelf Road. I also like the bike path. It's great to be able to take your bike all the way down to the beach and back again."

With her life's journey bringing her full circle, James said she has found contentment in the Ojai Valley. "I feel at home here for the first time in my life," she said. "Wealth comes from within. Prosperity comes from within. That's what I've learned," said James.

## News Briefs

**'AWESOME ART' OPENS AT MUSEUM:** A reception for "Awesome Art," an exhibit of high school student art, will be held Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Ojai Valley Museum. The Marion E. Smith Excellence in Art awards will be presented at 5 p.m. The event is open to the public and is free; however, donations to the museum are always welcome. Call 640-1390 for more information.

**JAZZ SINGER COMING TO OJAI VALLEY INN:** Local jazz vocalist Ellen Johnson will be performing in the Neff Room of the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa today at 8 p.m. Johnson will be accompanied by Terry Murphy on the piano. Johnson has three critically acclaimed CDs, "These Days," "Chinchilla Serenade" and "Too Good to Title."

**CAR WASH RESCHEDULED:** Due to rain last weekend, the Oak View Pageant of Excellence court will hold its car wash and rummage sale this Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Dahl's Market in Oak View. Proceeds will go to the upcoming 2009 pageant scheduled for March 7 at the Oak View Community Center. Anyone wanting to donate items for the sale should contact Miss Oak View 2008 Beth Tousignant at 901-2614 or loveal-ways454@aol.com.

**OJAI RETREAT HOSTING KRISHNAMURTI TALKS:** The Ojai Retreat, 160 Besant Road, will host a free in-depth study group of key topics of local philosopher and educator, the late J. Krishnamurti, on Monday and March 2, 9, 16 and 23 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. (suggested arrival at 6:45 p.m.). Krishnamurti's

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### Sports

Runners, 215 of them, turn out in support of AHA's Heart and Sole.

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### Arts

Coward's classic "Private Lives" continues run.

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teachings on relationships, God, end of suffering, stillness of the mind, right education and right action will be explored. Call 798-6000.

**TENNIS TOURNAMENT RAFFLE TICKETS ON SALE:** Tickets are now on sale for the Ojai Tennis Tournament's raffle. Prizes include a sky box at Staples Center for 12 guests with parking, food and beverage, as well as two domestic airline tickets. See the Lakers, Clippers or Kings as VIPs or fly to the destination of your choice.

Tickets cost \$20 for one, \$40 for two, or \$50 for three, and are available at the Coffee Connection, Rains, The Medicine Shoppe, Ojai Coffee Roasting Co. and Attitude Adjustment Shoppe or by calling 646-2271. Proceeds from the raffle benefit the tennis programs and facilities for the Greater Ojai Youth Foundation.

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