

# Business owner prepares to deal with lots of files so she can reopen

By DENNIS TAYLOR

A HOMEGROWN salon owner looks forward to the day when she can reopen her manicure business — a day which might be just a few weeks away. But with the coronavirus still considered a significant threat to public health, the nature of Jaime Schrabek's hands-on industry leaves her satisfied to keep any eagerness at arm's length.

Schrabek closed Precision Nails in the Carmel Rancho Shopping Center on March 17 to comply with Monterey County's shelter-in-place order and put her only employee on furlough. Aside from losing money every day, she says

she has no regrets.

"Honestly, I was thrilled that the county's public health officer made that decision for all of us. It's what we needed to do," said the Carmel High graduate (Class of '85), who opened her business here in 1996. "I'm totally committed to compliance, so it never was an issue of raging against authority, or questioning the science, or any of that. It would just go against who I am as a business person."

A dirty little secret about the nail industry, said Schrabek, is that compliance isn't nearly as widespread as it ought to be. Safety regulations from the state board of barbering and cosmetology are in place, but inspectors are

scarce and oversight is limited, allowing salon owners and manicurists to cut corners.

"It shouldn't be a Wild West-type situation, but it is," she said. "Staying in compliance with the regulations (such as discarding every nail file after use, and cleaning instruments and equipment for every client) is time consuming and expensive. When you're trying to compete on price, you find that a lot of clients have become accustomed to paying very little for this kind of work."

By contrast, the owner of Precision Nails is known as a stickler. Schrabek said she and employee Sherrie Boyd sanitize their hands and wear clean gloves for each client, use a new nail file for every service, and sterilize their metal tools beyond state board requirements. That protocol gives Boyd — in her eighth year of employment there — multiple levels of confidence.

"Jaime goes above and beyond to ensure safety, not only of our clients, but also her staff," Boyd said. "As an employee, that's reassuring to me. I don't worry about somebody coming back to us with an infection, thinking they got it at our salon."

## Lively debate

Boyd also feels that Precision Nails won't open its doors again until the threat of the coronavirus can be minimized, and will be fully prepared when the time comes.

"I was just saw an article in Nails Magazine about how to reopen a salon safely," she said. "As I was reading their recommendations, I was thinking, 'OK, we already do that, and we're doing that, too, and that ....' I felt very happy that we're already doing all of those things that other salons are now trying to catch up on."

Schrabek's obsession with safety is hardly new. Years of political advocacy have earned her a position as the only manicurist on the state's health and safety advisory committee. Since February, she also has co-hosted a weekly podcast, "Outgrowth: A Slice of Pro Beauty," largely devoted to issues affecting beauty industry professionals.

And she recently touched off a lively debate on her Facebook page by asking fellow salon owners whether they feel legal and ethical obligations to notify their clients if somebody who was in their salon tests positive for Covid-19.

"Wouldn't you want to take every reasonable precaution to protect your clients, yourself, your co-workers, your families and the community at large?" said Schrabek, who holds a Ph.D. in education and teaches classes all over the United States on business and technique in her industry.

See SALON page 20A

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## GARBAGE

From page 3A

community, and we were hit with huge increases to our bills. Some restaurants' and hotels' bills doubled."

He also pointed out that "take-away dining will be here to stay, at least for the near future," resulting more garbage, and therefore bigger bills.

But most of the council showed little interest in getting rid of the luxuries or putting off approving the hike.

"We have been getting some of these services for five years, and it has been at a cost to GreenWaste," commented councilwoman Carrie Theis, who represents the city on the waste management district's board. "If we decide not to have the extra services, you will hear from the public and the businesses." She acknowledged the lousy timing, given

the financial strain many residents and business owners are feeling due to the coronavirus shutdown.

Councilman Bobby Richards wondered if there was some way to get GreenWaste to come down on its costs or if the city could seek bids from other companies, but his suggestions got little traction among his fellow council members. Hilton also said getting out of a franchise agreement is more difficult than terminating a simple contract.

"If we can gain anything by delaying, that would be one thing," said councilwoman Jan Reimers. "But it seems to me we won't be able to gain by delaying. The amenities will be missed by the community, and I don't know that we have a choice, frankly. I'm not optimistic that we have much flexibility here."

"The first time a truck rolls at 4 a.m., we're going to hear about it," Mayor Dave Potter said. "I just don't see being able to roll back those services."

With that, the council unanimously approved the hikes.

## CITATIONS

From page 5A

■ The next night, a 32-year-old woman from Hayward was stopped for a traffic violation while driving in the area of San Carlos and Seventh and "admitted to coming to our area because she was tired of being cooped up at home." She was staying at a hotel outside the city limits.

■ On April 24, a homeowner at Santa Lucia and Scenic was having work done in his basement without a permit, and the managers of the two companies doing the remodel, a 20-year-old man and a 36-year-old man, were cited for

doing non-essential work in violation of the shelter order and for not having permits.

■ And on April 25, a 43-year-old woman who was driving the wrong way near the beach was found to be from out of town and cited for violating the stay-home order.

Chief assistant district attorney Berkley Brannon said his office had filed 146 counts of violation of the shelter order as of June 1. A couple of the Carmel cases were declined due to "lack of capacity" in the courts and because the offenses were minor. Since then, his office has started filing more cases as a deterrent. While police should continue to educate and use discretion in the field, "our current practice is to file shelter-in-place violations that we can prove, as long as prosecution is in the interests of justice."

## GAVEL

From page 4A

by jury in exchange for a maximum sentence of life without the possibility of parole. The district attorney's office entered into this agreement after consulting with the Williams family, who expressed their desire for closure and finality of the judgment in their daughter's case. The decision was also partly based on an executive order issued in March 2019 by Gov. Gavin Newsom which created an effective moratorium on the death penalty in California. Holifield also waived his right to writs and appeals if he was convicted at the court trial.

Judge Butler found Holifield guilty of the first-degree murder of Williams, and also found true two special-circumstance allegations that the murder was committed during the commission of kidnapping and the commission of a lewd and lascivious act on a child under the age of 14. She also convicted Holifield of kidnapping Williams with the intent to commit rape.

## SALON

From page 12A

"What do I care? How are they going to trace it back to me?" I mean, whoa, really? Are your clients reading this?"

If oversight becomes more stringent after the pandemic, Schrabek predicts many salon owners could have a rude awakening if they are lackadaisical about complying with health and safety regulations.

Schrabek said she'll reopen on her own timetable, with new safety protocol in place for a job that requires close proximity to the client, as well as physical contact. Masks will probably be required for the manicurist and client. Hand washing — already mandated for the manicurist — also is likely to be required for clients. Touching cell phones (a major source of bacteria) during service will be strictly prohibited.

On May 6, the Professional Beauty Federation of California, representing 500,000 California barbers and salon owners, announced plans to sue Gov. Gavin Newsom for the right to reopen their businesses as soon as possible. Schrabek said this week that she does not support the lawsuit.

Boyd, a W-2 employee with Precision Nails, said her financial stress during the shutdown has been minimized in part by her own financial habits. "I was taught from a young age to put money away for a rainy day," she said. She also is thankful for the unemployment benefits she has received from the federal government, and she's watching her mailbox for a stimulus check.

Schrabek said she has been smart with her money over the years and feels no immediacy to reopen her salon.

"I can work with my landlord. The chambers of commerce — both Carmel and Salinas Valley — have been wonderful with support and information. The Monterey County Business Council, which I never paid attention to before this, has been very helpful," she said.

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