

MS patient benefits from marijuana, plans dispensary at Carmel Rancho

By CHRIS COUNTS

A PEBBLE Beach woman who wants to establish a store at the mouth of the valley to sell marijuana to people who need it for medical purposes says she's not opening the store just to make money, but also because her own experience with cannabis to relieve symptoms of multiple sclerosis has convinced her of the plant's value.

The owner of Synchronicity Holistic, Valentia Piccinini said she was bedridden by the disease in 2010, but seven years later — after a doctor encouraged her to try medical marijuana — the quality of her life has improved dramatically.

"I am no longer bedridden," Piccinini told The Pine Cone. "I no longer walk with a walker. I move enough to get into a pool, and do water exercises and work out. And I'm building a business — it's amazing how this has changed me."

When it was first suggested to Piccinini that she try medical marijuana, she had her doubts — in part because she was raising two teenagers. "I said, 'No way.'"

And when she first walked into a dispensary, Piccinini was still wary. "I don't belong here," she recalled thinking.

But now, Piccinini is not only sold on the medical benefits of marijuana, she's ready to launch an ambitious business that she believes can be a model for the emerging industry.

"I realize there's a stigma," suggested the entrepreneur, who has offered talks about medical marijuana at The Carmel

Foundation. "My job is educate and heighten awareness."

Piccinini's dispensary would be located at 26390 Carmel Rancho Blvd., Unit 18. Besides offering an array of edibles, tinctures and topical cannabis products for medical marijuana patients, Synchronicity Holistic sells hemp-infused Bark Bliss Chews for dogs. "The opportunity to have brick and mortar business is really exciting," she said.

The dispensary would feature "13 employees on the floor at all times," including a pharmacist and as many as three nurses. She said the pharmacist and nurses are partners in the venture. "I'm giving them a piece of the business," she explained.

If all goes according to plan, "I'd love to open by Christmas," she added.

For now, Synchronicity Holistic is focused on home deliveries and consultations. Piccinini said most of her clients are seniors, but some are younger, including an 18-month-old child who suffers from epilepsy.

The dispensary would not offer recreational sales of cannabis, which are currently illegal and will likely remain that way until at least 2018.

Besides opening the dispensary, Piccinini wants to establish a 10,000-square-foot laboratory and a 13-acre cultivation, manufacturing and transportation site in Hollister.

Piccinini's proposal will be reviewed by the Carmel Valley Land Use Advisory Committee Monday, May 15, at St. Philips Lutheran Church. The hearing starts at 6:30 p.m.



Countdown 'till the big party!

05.18.17

We're throwing a party and you're invited!

On Thursday, May 18th from 5:30-8:30, we'll be celebrating 33 years, our "Rio Refresh" and supporting Ag Against Hunger.

We're rolling out some new food, new wines, new cocktails, new uniforms, new lighting and a new look.



Come on by to sip, nosh and support a great local non-profit.

Tickets at EventBrite:
riogrillcelebration.eventbrite.com

The Crossroads, Highway 1@Rio Road | Carmel | 831.625.5436 | riogrill.com

Support Pine Cone advertisers — shop locally!

CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN PAINTINGS & SCULPTURE

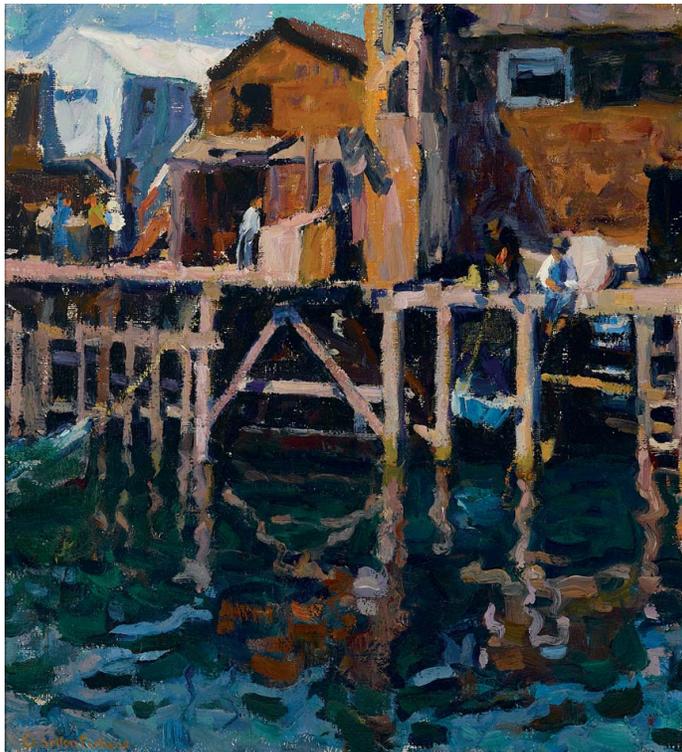
August 1, Los Angeles and San Francisco
 Consignments now invited

E. CHARLTON FORTUNE (1885-1969)

Untitled (Wharf, Monterey), circa 1915
 oil on canvas
 24 x 22 1/4 in
 Sold for \$727, 500

INQUIRIES

Aaron Bastian
 +1 (415) 503 3241
calam.us@bonhams.com



Bonhams

International Auctioneers and Appraisers – bonhams.com/calwest

© 2017 Bonhams & Butterfields Auctioneers Corp. All rights reserved. Bond No. 57BSBGL0808