

Morro Bay Voters to Pick Mayor, Two Council Members

By Neil Farrell

Two men are vying for Morro Bay Mayor's job in a rematch from the last election, and four people are vying for two council seats, with just one incumbent in the running.

Local business owner, John Weiss, is challenging Mayor Dr. John Heading, a retired pharmacist, in a rematch from the 2018 election, which Heading won in a close race.

On the Council side, incumbent Robert Davis is seeking re-election and the other available seat is wide open, as Councilwoman Marlys McPherson decided not to run again.

Former Councilwoman, Betty Winholtz, former planning commissioner Richard Sadowski, and retired public administrator, Laurel Barton, are Davis' challengers.

The Estero Bay News this year asked residents of Morro Bay what issues they wanted the candidates to address, through a posting on Morro Bay Nextdoor, a local social media gossip site and had nearly 50 responses.

The four questions here address the issues most often mentioned in that informal poll. Candidate answers are in alphabetical order.

Laurel Barton

Laurel Barton, 67, has two adult sons ages 28 and 30. She holds a bachelor's degree in plant science from Fresno State University, and a master's degree in public administration from the University of San Francisco. She worked over 30 years in an administrative capacity for cities and school districts. She's been vacationing in Morro Bay for over 15 years, bought a home here 6-years ago, and has been permanently living in Morro Bay for the past 2 years.



Among her stated hobbies is public gardening with Morro Bay in Bloom, walking through the city, and "Following great ideas from great cities across the country."

Question-1: Many residents are concerned about the pilot program of RV camping on the waterfront. What is your position on this and should it become a permanent feature of the waterfront and a revenue source for the Harbor Department?

L.B.: The Harbor Department needs a sustainable, stable source of revenue. Whether the dry camping experiment is sustainable depends on the answers to the following questions:

1. With the State camping facilities reopened, is there enough demand for these sites to justify their burden?
2. Are there sufficient amenities available to ensure that health and safety issues are adequately addressed?
3. What has the experience been during the trial period? How much intervention by Harbor and law enforcement personnel was required?
4. Does the revenue generated justify the financial and other costs — for example the loss of space for other use?
5. What is the experience of allowing tent camping at the site adjacent to the Maritime Museum?
6. If the experiment is extended, are additional restrictions needed for sufficient safety and sanitation for campers, city facilities and residents?
7. If extended, should this be seasonal or year-round use?

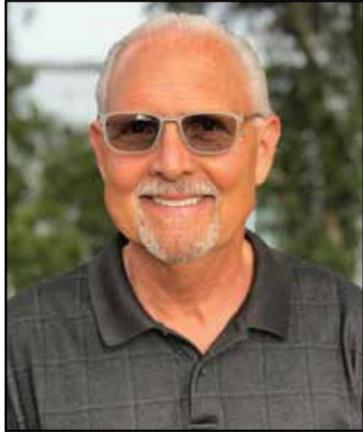
Q-2: Residents are concerned about the Water Reclamation Facility project, and want to know what candidates will do to either lower their water/sewer rates or avoid rate increases in the future?

L.B.: The best way to protect against rate increases is delivering the WRF within the deadlines imposed by the Water Board. Delays in projects always result in higher costs.

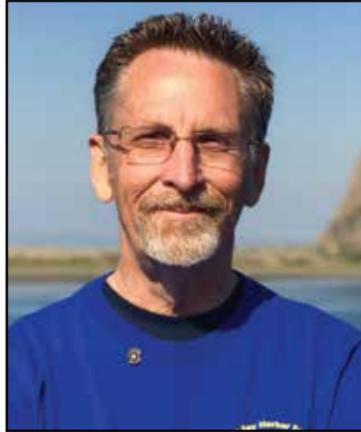
The current rate structure was approved by Morro Bay voters and is tied to this project and this timeline. If we were to pause the project now, or consider a different site at this late date, we are in danger of losing the conditions that made us eligible for the low interest loan that is critical to keeping the rates down. And, if we were to abandon this project in favor of some other option, as some advocate, we will still have to pay back at least \$24 million in loans with zero progress toward a fully functioning plant, and the risk of RWQCB fines.

There are many opportunities for economies to avoid rate increases once the plant is functioning. We can investigate lower cost, alternative energy sources (wind, solar) to decrease the cost of running the plant. We can incentivize retrofitting for low flow water options and water-efficient landscaping techniques for homeowners to lower their water bills.

Q-3: What is your position on vacation rentals operating in residential neighborhoods; what should be the maximum number



Incumbent Dr. John Heading and challenger John Weiss are running for the mayor's seat in Morro Bay.



of licenses; and how would you enforce against unlicensed VRs?

L.B.: The vacation rental ordinance is expected to pass before the new council is seated, however, the new ordinance is just the beginning. The city will need to carefully monitor the effectiveness of the ordinance to make sure it meets the goal of balancing the peaceful enjoyment of neighborhoods with the rights of property owners and the generation of revenue through bed tax.

We will not know if the maximum number of permits is appropriate, if buffer zones are sufficient, or if increased enforcement contemplated reduces the issues articulated by neighbors until the ordinance is in place for at least one tourist season. However, eliminating unpermitted vacation rentals is key to success.

Q-4: Many residents are concerned about the city's finances and asked what your ideas are to increase tax revenues; and how can we diversify the local economy, i.e. what industries do you feel would be a good fit for our small community?

L.B.: Essential city services cannot be maintained without a significant, sustainable source of revenue. The city has decreased its labor costs over the past several years, with deeper cuts in response to the revenue drop and expense increase brought by COVID-19. I therefore support the 1% sales tax increase as the least painful way of bridging the revenue/expense gap and restoring our reserves.

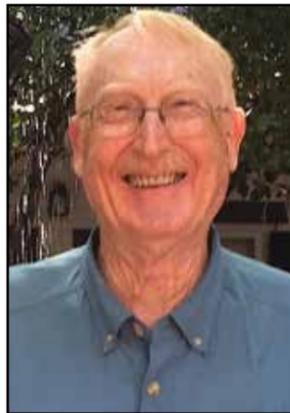
I'd work to identify businesses that are based here and want to remain, but are facing challenges. It's a better use of resources to support existing businesses and help them thrive than to constantly seek something new.

We have several underutilized spaces in each of our business districts that, with creative reuse, could meet the needs of a growing business.

Sectors to be encouraged would include health care, especially in elder care or memory care to match our current population demographics; outdoor sports companies who seek small to medium sized manufacturing facilities could be approached. Marine-based research facilities needing a location close to the bay and ocean would be worth exploring and green economy jobs, like working with wind energy, are also something I would support.

Robert Davis

Incumbent Councilman, Robert "Red" Davis, and his wife, Gail, bought a home in Morro Bay in 1991 and have lived here full time for more than 20 years. He has served as secretary and treasurer of the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, president of Morro Bay Friends of the Library, a member of the Integrated Waste Management Authority, member of San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, and various City Council sub-committees, such as Cannabis Ordinance, Wind Farm Development, Chevron property negotiations, Revenue Enhancement measures, Tidelands Lease Policy, Community Choice Energy, Recreation and Parks Commission and the City's Tourism Board.



Davis holds a bachelor's degree in human resources management and public employee labor relations. He worked 33 years at Caltrans as a budget analyst, training manager, contract compliance officer and planner. During that same time he was also a Senior NCO in the Air Force Reserve, serving as training officer, deployments officer and supervising an air terminal operations center.

His priorities for the future are:
• Complete the WRF so that we become water-independent

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Covid-19 Success Story: LOMS Launches College Bound Today

By Judy Salamacha



Montebello CA CBT student group with Co-Founders Dan Clement (L) and Todd Clark (R) and Counselor Andy Castillo at the top. Photo authorized for use by Dan Clement, co-founder of College Bound Today

A n age-old nursery rhyme asks, "When you grow up do you want to be a butcher, a baker or a candlestick maker." Today, as the 2020 school year literally zooms by, Los Osos Middle School (LOMS) will encourage students to consider a future beyond what they were familiar with living in San Luis Obispo County. They will explore dream career options while preparing for sought-after higher education at Harvard, Purdue, UCLA, Georgetown or any college that they might want to attend but never thought they would have the chance to.

On September 19, Principal Karl Klum (LOMS) and the co-founder of College Bound Today (CBT), Dan Clement, assembled their team of San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) staff to Zoom-meet members of the new community-based advisory board and mentors. Participants included representatives from Montebello Unified School District, where the program began eleven years ago.

Principal Klum noted, "Los Osos Middle School intends to be the first-ever pilot college program that will include parents and students starting in 7th grade and following through high school's freshman year."

Klum credits Clement as the "bulldog" who has recruited fifteen diverse volunteer mentors and numerous local educators and community leaders to collaborate with the SLCUSD staff to

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Friends Group Raising \$100K for New Patrol Boat

By Neil Farrell



The Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department is trying to raise \$100,000 to assist the Morro Bay Harbor Department in purchasing and repowering this patrol boat owned by the Port San Luis Harbor District in Avila Beach. Submitted photo

Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department is raising money to help the City purchase a used patrol boat from Port San Luis, and they're off to a good start but have quite a ways to go.

The Harbor Patrol currently has three patrol boats but one is nearly 40-years old and, while it's been a workhorse, it's literally falling apart and long past due to be replaced.

The department would like to pare down its 3-boat fleet to two boats, said Chief Harbor Patrol Officer Becka Kelly. They want to have two, diesel-powered boats, each with a fire-fighting water canon.

The oldest boat was built in 1984 and has been in on countless rescue missions over the years. "We love that boat," Kelly said. "It just needs to be retired."

The biggest issue with that gas-powered boat is the structural integrity, specifically a hole in the fiberglass hull that was repaired once, but tore off in the midst of an emergency call,

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Bomb Threat a False Alarm

A suspected bomb threat left in the bathroom of a San Simeon motel was apparently a false alarm, according to a Sheriff's Sergeant.

Sgt. Anthony Perry said in a news release that Sheriff's dispatch got a report at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26 of a bomb threat found in a bathroom stall at the Cavalier Inn, 9415 Hearst Dr., San Simeon.

He did not explain the nature of the "threat" whether it was written on the wall or something more sinister.

Sgt. Perry said, "A precautionary evacuation of the business was conducted and the property searched for explosive device(s) utilizing a Sheriff's Office K9 and a California State Parks K9, both trained in the detection of explosives."

The dogs combed the property and no suspicious devices were discovered, Sgt. Perry said. They called the incident at 7 p.m. and the motel was returned to normal activities.

"No suspects have been identified at this time," Sgt. Perry said. "Any persons with information related to this incident are encouraged to contact the Sheriff's Office at (805) 781-4550 or remain anonymous by calling Crime Stoppers at (805) 549-STOP (549-7867).

Crime Stoppers also has a free mobile app for downloading at P3TIPS.COM or submit tips through their website at: www.slotips.org.

Utility Discounts Expanded

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay residents having trouble paying water and sewer bills who are taking advantage of a City discount program, recently had the discounts more than doubled and extended in time.

The City Council voted unanimously on Sept. 22 to increase the City's "COVID-19 Utility Discount Program" from 10% to 25% for customers that qualify and to extend the discounts to the end of June 2021.

They also upped a rebate program for people living in mobile home parks and apartment complexes.

The City's income qualifications are tied to Pacific Gas & Electric's "CARES Program," which gives customers discounts base on their incomes. If someone qualifies for CARESS discount, they qualify for the City's.

According to a staff report, the City has 280 customers on the discount program, and 17 who live in mobile home parks or apartments (under the Utility Rebate Program).

The City has amassed some \$580,000 in its discount fund, which comes out of the revenues from the Water Reclamation Facility or WRF surcharges.

The City charges a \$41 a month surcharge for residences specifically for the WRF project, on top of the normal costs based on usage. The rates pencil out to about \$191 a month for customers who use up to 5 units of water (a unit is 750 gallons).

The Rebate Program was at \$12.50 month or \$150 a year, and has been increased to \$180 a year (\$15 a month).

The discount programs came into focus with the advent of the Coronavirus Pandemic response in March, and the City Council

quickly approved extending the utility discount program to anyone who was laid off from work by the shelter-at-home orders, and the shutdown of all "non-essential" businesses.

That discount expansion actually expired at the end of June 2020 and the Council's vote extends it through the end of June 2021. The discounts would reduce back down to 10% next July, unless extended further.

The WRF surcharges totaled some \$3.7 million in fiscal year 2019-20, according to a staff report. The water surcharges brought in \$1.55 million and the larger sewer portion \$2.17M but those tallies were actually under budget for what had been anticipated at the start of the fiscal year in July 2019. The report pegs the coronavirus as the cause.

"The collection amount is less than budgeted," according to the report, "by approximately \$100,000, and staff believes this is due to lower than expected water usage in the commercial sector resulting from businesses closing their doors for portions of the year related to COVID-19. The WRF surcharge for commercial accounts varies depending on usage as opposed to the flat rate that was established for residential accounts."

Under the WRF project parameters, the City staff is supposed to analyze the revenues every year with an eye at possibly lowering rates, but they hadn't completed that study before the Sept. 22 meeting.

"The thinking at that time," according to the report, "was the City adopted the WRF surcharge with a set of assumptions [project costs, interest rates and durations of loans, use of cash reserves, revenue generation, etc.], that may change to the benefit of the water and sewer customers as the project progresses. As the project proceeds, new factors may come to light that differ from assumptions that were made when the WRF surcharge structure was developed."

Indeed, already there have been dozens of change orders just to the treatment plant's construction contract pushing those costs to over \$70 million.

Also, bids on the conveyance system part of the project came in high. The City's engineer's estimate for that portion was \$24 million (with a \$3 million contingency for a total of \$27M).

But the lowest bid out of five was Anvil Builders, Inc., of San Francisco at \$31.4 million.

Still, because of the 0.83% interest rate on a loan of \$62 million the City got from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency's "Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act" or WIFIA loan program, the overruns have been absorbed within the project's contingency funds.

"The City assumed it would secure the WIFIA loan at 3.25% when the WRF surcharge structure was developed," the report said. "That interest rate difference saves the City and ratepayers approximately \$800,000 to \$900,000 a year in debt payments over the life of the WIFIA loan, a substantial savings."

Also, the City is still working on getting a loan from the State's Revolving Loan Fund. It's been approved for a \$5 million grant that doesn't have to be repaid, and up to \$100 million in loans to complete the project.

The actual amount they will borrow has not been set yet, but, "Staff remains hopeful that once we secure the SRF funding, we can revisit the financial analysis and potentially offer longer term water and sewer rate savings to all our community members. Securing SRF funding will help further reduce debt payments compared to assumptions that were made in developing the water and sewer rates. Staff will complete the rate review once the SRF funding is secured and provide recommendations to Council at that time [likely in Spring 2021]."

Worker Dies at CSD's Jobsite

Work on the Cayucos Sanitary District's new treatment plant had a tragedy Sept. 28, when a man working for a drilling subcontractor was killed in an "unfortunate accident."

At about 10:35 a.m. Monday, Sept. 28, a worker with Ventura Directional Drilling based in Santa Paula, became entangled in cables, leading to his death, according to a news report quoting a statement from OSHA.

The project, which is adjacent to Hwy 1 near the Toro Creek Road intersection is installing conveyance pipelines running from the District's lift station, east to the new treatment plant on Toro Creek Road about a mile from the highway.

Work on that treatment plant is nearing completion and is expected to go online sometime after the first of the year. The pipeline is one of the final big portions of the \$25 million project, which had gone smoothly until last Monday.

The District issued a statement, "The Cayucos Sanitary District Board of Directors and staff, together with the community of Cayucos, express their deepest condolences to the family and coworkers affected by this unfortunate accident. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this very difficult time."

EBN asked the District's general manager for additional information but they were not releasing anything at this time.

The County Coroner's Office and OSHA are reportedly investigating the accident. The name of the man who died had not been released before EBN's deadline.

According to Venture Directional Drilling's website, directional drilling, "is a trenchless technology that was originally invented in the 1920s to increase oil field production and, later in the century, was adapted for utility conduit installations and environmental remediation.

"Now, directional drilling and trenchless technology is a thriving and ever-evolving field with recent advances that present new opportunities for projects that were once impossible."

The company says it can directionally drill and install piping from 1-inch to 24-inches in diameter.

COVID Lockdown Eases a Little Bit

By Neil Farrell

With coronavirus cases slowing down, San Luis Obispo County dropped into a lower level of shutdown, allowing more businesses to reopen, under strict restrictions to try and stop the spread.

"SLO County," the Health Department said in a news release, "is slowing the spread of COVID-19. As a result, more businesses can reopen indoor operations with modifications and

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capacity limits. SLO County is now in the 'Red tier.'

SLO County had been placed in the worst, "Purple" tier of Gov. Gavin Newsome's color-coded chart designating the levels of infection and reopening with various scenarios and business types.

Essentially SLO County has gone from "widespread" to "substantial," infection rates.

"While we celebrate this small success," County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein said, "we must stay vigilant. Our progress depends on each person in SLO County. We need everyone to do their part to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community."

The State's so-called "Blueprint for a Safer Economy" allows counties in the red tier to reopen indoor operations for some additional business types and allows for certain activities to resume.

Businesses must still follow all State guidelines for their industries "and self-certify that they are ready to reopen."

The effected businesses include:

- Personal care services, like nail salons, tattoo studios, and massage therapy, will be permitted to reopen indoors at 25% capacity;
- Restaurants will be permitted to move from outdoor-only to limited seating indoors at 25% capacity or 100 people, "whichever is fewer;"
- Places of worship will be permitted to move from outdoor-only to limited indoors at 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer;
- Movie theaters will be permitted to reopen at 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer;
- Gyms and fitness centers will be permitted to move from outdoor-only to limited operations indoors at 10% capacity; and,
- Schools can reopen for in-person instruction "once the county has been in the red tier for at least two weeks."

Dr. Borenstein reassured that outdoors is still best. "Outdoor operations remain the safest environment to slow the spread of COVID-19 and should be supported whenever feasible," she said. "If we see an increase in the spread of COVID-19 here, we will move back to purple and most indoor operations will close again very soon."

House Parties Spread COVID

Recent virus exposure tracing has identified cases, "spread between different households at gatherings," according to the County. "The nature of these gatherings [bringing together people from multiple households for a prolonged time, often indoors or with shared food and beverages] creates the perfect environment for COVID-19 to spread easily and quickly."

Everyone is being advised to stay away from such gatherings and to continue with the same precautions they've been urging for months. "All residents should take protective actions to limit the spread of COVID-19 in SLO County — wear a face covering in public, stay at least 6-feet from others outside of your household; stay home when you are sick; wash your hands often; and get tested for COVID-19."

Playgrounds to Reopen

On Sept. 29, the State Health Department issued COVID-19 guidelines for reopening playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities.

But the strict guidelines might be difficult to enforce on a playground full of children that have been cooped up at home for seven months.

"Visitors to outdoor community playgrounds must wear face masks [required for everyone age 2 or older]," the County said, "may not eat or drink at the playground; stay 6-feet apart from adults and children from other households; wash or sanitize hands prior to and after visiting; consider visiting at different times or days to avoid wait times and crowds; and limit the visit to 30 minutes per day when others are present, among other health guidelines."

Fifth Jail Inmate has COVID

Another County Jail inmate tested positive for COVID-19 on Sept. 26, according to a news release from the Sheriff's Department, becoming the fifth guest so far to test positive in the hoosegow.

Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla said the inmate was asymptomatic but still tested positive.

"The inmate had recently been arrested five days prior," Cipolla said, "and as a result had been in a quarantine unit per the health protocols of the County Jail. There was no exposure to other inmates. Also, there was no exposure to Jail staff since they are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment."

The Jail is now up to five cases among the inmates and this was the first case they've detected since July 22, Cipolla said.

There have been no new cases among deputies. Since last March, three correctional deputies and three patrol deputies have tested positive for COVID-19. All have recovered at home.

"The County Jail continues to be vigilant with screening, testing, and isolating sick individuals to protect staff, inmates, and the public," Cipolla said.

Testing Returns to Estero Bay

The County reopened a free, by-appointment-only, COVID-19 testing site in Morro Bay this week.

The Morro Bay site will again be at the Vet's Hall, 209 Surf St., and open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., on an ongoing basis.

A new site was also opened in Paso Robles at the Paso Robles Event Center, home of the Mid State Fair, in the Frontier Pavilion. It will be open Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 7 to 5, by appointment only.

The County also has testing sites at the South County Regional Center in Arroyo Grande, open Mondays-Fridays 7 to 7; and the SLO Vet's Hall on Grand Avenue at Monterey Street, open Mondays-Fridays, 7-5.

The testing is free to those without health insurance. If you have insurance they will ask for your account information, so they can bill the insurance, and there will be no co-pays.

Testing is Key to Reopening

According to the County, the more testing they do the more evidence they have to show the State the true nature of virus infections here.

"High testing numbers help improve our adjusted case rate to meet the State's metrics for reopening more local businesses," Dr. Borenstein said. "Getting tested can help our community. If you have symptoms or think you may have been exposed to COVID-19, make an appointment to get tested. COVID-19 tests at these sites are fast, safe, easy and free."

In a related tidbit, the City of Morro Bay, which is aping the County's guidance, is also asking residents to help enforce the mask mandate.

"If you are in distress addressing a client or customer that

is irate about masking requirements, MBPD encourages you to please call 9-1-1," reads a news release from the City.

The County has contracted with OptumServe to handle the testing appointments. Make an appointment online at: www.EmergencySLO.org/testing.

For updates on COVID-19 in SLO County, see: ReadySLO.org or call the Public Health Information Line at (805) 788-2903. A staffed phone assistance center at (805) 543-2444 is available Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer COVID-19 questions.

To check on what State guidelines your business must adhere to, see: readyslo.org.

Deputy Wounded in Third Shootout in Four Months

By Neil Farrell



Gunman Christopher Michael Straub

A San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's deputy was wounded in a shootout with a wanted ex-felon, marking the third time Sheriff's deputies have shot by a gunman in just the past 4 months.

On Friday, Sept. 24 at about 10:20 a.m. a Sheriff's deputy patrolling on Theater Drive in Templeton came across a broken down vehicle he reportedly recognized as belonging to a local gang member who had an active warrant.

According to Sheriff's spokesman, Tony Cipolla, "Upon pulling over, the suspect fled from his vehicle on foot and the deputy gave chase and was joined by a second deputy in the search. The suspect ran through the vineyards to the cemetery, hid and then ambushed the deputies."

Cipolla said the suspect fired multiple shots from a handgun at the deputies, and hit one of them in the leg.

"The deputies returned fire," Cipolla said. "The suspect continued to flee and attempted to return to his vehicle through the vineyard."

But by then backup had arrived on scene and intercepted the man trying to get back inside his vehicle, which was locked.

Deputy Wounded Continued on page 4

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Deputy Wounded

From page 3
 “He was still armed with a handgun,” Cipolla said, “at which point a second officer-involved shooting took place on Theatre Drive. The suspect was pronounced deceased at the scene.”

The wounded deputy, later identified as Richard “Ted” Lehnhoff, 34, was airlifted to a local hospital via Highway Patrol helicopter, where he was treated for a gunshot wound in his lower left leg, spent a few days in the hospital and was released. He is anticipated to make a full recovery.

The dead suspect was identified as Christopher Michael Straub, 38 of Templeton, whom Cipolla said had a criminal record.

“Straub had a significant criminal history,” Cipolla said, “having been booked 28 times into jails all across California including two incarcerations in State prison. Straub was a known member of a white supremacist gang, and a criminal investigation had already been initiated by the Sheriff’s Gang Task Force when this incident occurred.” The Sheriff’s Office has not identified the gang.

Straub was loaded for bear and was believed to be trying to access the weapons in the car when he was killed.

“Multiple weapons were discovered afterwards in Straub’s vehicle,” Cipolla said, “including four assault rifles, one bolt action hunting rifle, one shotgun, two handguns, plus the handgun he used to shoot at deputies. After a search warrant was served on his residence, it was discovered he was illegally manufacturing parts for weapons.”

Deputy Lehnhoff, according to Cipolla, started with the Sheriff’s Office in 2008 as a correctional deputy. “He left for a job in law enforcement in Riverside County,” Cipolla said. “In 2015, he returned to the Sheriff’s Office to work as a patrol deputy.”

The officer-involved shooting, which is rare in SLO County, was the third in the past 4 months.

Back on June 10, Mason James Lira, 26, a transient from Monterey with a long, violent criminal history, fired a handgun into the Paso Robles Police Station at about 3:45 a.m. and then fled into the night.

Paso Robles police officers were inside the building at the time. Sheriff’s deputies and the Highway Patrol responded to their call for assistance.

When they arrived on scene, the gunman was gone so they started to search Downtown Paso Robles when about 4:19 a.m. the gunman started shooting at them.

“One of the deputies was shot in the face by the suspect,” Cipolla said. “The second deputy returned fire at the suspect. This Deputy then grabbed his wounded partner and removed him to a position of relative safety where he rendered medical aid.”

The wounded deputy, Nicholas Dreyfus, 28, was flown to an out-of-area hospital where he underwent surgery and has since been released and is recuperating.

A massive manhunt was launched for Lira, who had vanished again, involving several law enforcement agencies.

Meanwhile at 7 a.m. that morning, someone reported finding a dead body lying near the train tracks. That person was identified as a 58-year-old transient man and Coroner’s Investigators determined that he had been murdered, Cipolla said. Lira is suspected of killing him.

At about 2:10 p.m. June 11, with officers on Ramada Drive staging for a search of the nearby Salinas Riverbed, Lira resurfaced

and another shootout ensued with a second deputy being hit and rushed to the hospital.

“Officers arrived at the scene and conducted a search for the suspect,” Cipolla said, “when the suspect opened fire on the officers, wounding two of them. These officers were also evacuated and transported to local area hospitals for treatment. Officers continued their search for the suspect along the Salinas River when they encountered Lira, who had been hiding in the riverbed.”

Lira had now allegedly killed one man, and wounded four law enforcement officers, in possibly the worst shootout this county has ever seen.

Officers found Lira and he reportedly ran towards Hwy 101, fleeing through a vineyard when he was shot and killed by officers. He too was heavily armed.

“Officers found Lira in possession of two handguns that are believed to have been stolen from a commercial burglary in the City of San Luis Obispo a few days before the shooting of the Sheriff’s deputy on June 10,” Cipolla said.

Lira reportedly had a box of ammo with him when he met his demise, and Sheriff Ian Parkinson said they found more ammunition in a hidey-hole under a Downtown theater, where he was believed to have been camping for up to a week.

It’s unknown why Lira, who had a history of mental illness, went on the shooting spree but authorities said he had a long history with the law.

Lira was arrested several times in at least three counties — Monterey, Santa Cruz and Tulare, according to Cipolla. He’d been released from Monterey County custody June 3.

And on Aug. 21 in Nipomo, Sheriff’s deputies killed a Bakersfield man who opened fire at the Vons gas station in the 500 block of Tefft St. Scott Huffman, 42 of Bakersfield was firing randomly into the store and at a passing fire engine responding to a completely unrelated call. Huffman reportedly fired at officers and was killed when they fired back.

Drop Boxes, Poll Sites Named

By Neil Farrell

The County Clerk’s Office has nailed down the locations for ballot drop boxes and in-person voting for the Nov. 3 General Election, and mail-in ballots have been sent to all registered voters in San Luis Obispo County.

The North Coast will have ballot drop-off boxes at the Cambria Library, 1043 Main St.; the Cayucos Library, 310 B St.; Los Osos Library, 2076 Palisades Ave.; and the Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St.

Hours of operation (when the libraries are open) are: Tuesdays-Saturdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the “book drops” are accessible all the time. The drop boxes are inside and in the case of the Morro Bay branch, an outdoor “book return” box is doubling as a 24/7 ballot box (be sure to put your ballot in the correct box, as there are two in Morro Bay).

The normal number of in-person voting sites was nearly halved after some 42% of the election volunteers from the March Primary told the Election’s Office they didn’t want to work the General Election due to concerns about the Coronavirus Pan-



demic.

Also, 42% of the polling locations pulled out for November, forcing the County Clerk’s Office to find new locations that were also large enough to ensure social distancing is adhered to. Some towns — Cayucos and San Simeon — have no in-person sites.

The polling sites or “Voter Service Centers” — will be open from Halloween (Sunday, Oct. 31) through Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 3.

The North Coast locations are: the Cal Fire Training Center (at Sunnyside School) in Los Osos, 880 Manzanita Dr.; Cambria Vet’s Hall, 1000 Main St.; and the Morro Bay Community Center 1001 Kennedy Way.

The hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31 through Monday, Nov. 2, and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on the official Election Day — Tuesday, Nov. 3.

The vote by mail ballots voters are receiving in the mail now can either be mailed back via the Post Office; dropped off at any of the drop box locations; or turned in at Voter Service Centers during the 4-day election period.

Mailed-in ballots must be post marked by Nov. 3 to be counted, so readers are encouraged to send it in prior to that date to ensure your vote gets counted.

Probation Chief Retires

San Luis Obispo County’s long-time chief probation officer is retiring after more than three decades with the County.

James “Jim” Salio was recently honored for his 31-years with SLO County’s Probation Department, running the department that supervises people on probation and adjudicates the juvenile justice system.

“Jim was hired as a Probation Department student intern trainee in 1989,” reads a staff report on his retirement, “and then as a Deputy Probation Officer in 1990. Jim promoted through the ranks, serving as a Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (1995), Division Manager (2000), and Assistant Chief Probation Officer (2008) before being selected as the County’s Chief Probation Officer (2009).

“Throughout his career he has been known for his strong leadership qualities and decision-making skills.”

Salio was named Chief Probation Officer in June 2009. While chief he graduated from the U.S. Department of Justice’s “Nation-

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News

al Institute of Corrections Executive Orientation Program” and the Sam Houston State University’s “Correctional Management Institute” in 2010.

He was appointed in 2008 by then-Gov. Jerry Brown to the “State Commission on Juvenile Justice” and the “California Council on Interstate Adult Offender Supervision.” He also served as the president of the Chief Probation Officers of California in 2018.

During his tenure Salio “modernized and advanced the Probation Department by implementing evidenced-based practices and strategies proven to reduce recidivism; secured state funding for the expansion of the Juvenile Hall to meet critical infrastructure needs and allowed for the development of the Coastal Valley Academy (CVA); established a field and facility training officer programs that enhanced the competency and professionalism of Deputy Probation Officers and Juvenile Services Officers; and implemented a new collections case management system that increased efficiency and collection efforts in support of victims and the County.”

He also oversaw an over \$19 million remodel and expansion of the County’s Juvenile Services Center (JSC) bringing the aging facility up to modern standards.

The expansion added some 23,400 square feet and included new classrooms, inmate housing, and staff offices, along with new indoor and outdoor exercise areas including a really nice gymnasium with a hardwood floor, and regulation basketball and volleyball courts.

That project also includes a courtroom specifically for the juvenile court inside the JSC.

The Resolution acknowledges Salio’s “leadership and expert knowledge of juvenile law significantly contributed to making changes at the County and State level that diverted lower risk youth away from the juvenile justice system and strengthened services and interventions for probation involved youth.”

The Coastal Valley Academy is a program that “reduces recidivism and reintegrates youth on probation with their families through local residential treatment services here in San Luis Obispo County, rather than sending them to a group home outside of the county.”

Over his long career, Salio has been honored by several organizations that work with at-risk youth and their families, including – the South County Services Affirming Family Empowerment program, San Luis Obispo Coastal Unified School District, Department of Social Services, Children Services Network and the Association of California School Administrators.”

Esteros Bay News also thanks Salio for his over three decades of service to the citizens of SLO County and wish him a long and happy retirement.

RV Camping on Waterfront Doing Well

By Neil Farrell



Campers parked at Coleman Park enjoy unique bayside camping, with a public bike lane and walking path just feet away. These three spaces are among the 19 total spaces spread over three sites that the Harbor Department is renting out in a pilot program. These dry camping spaces go for \$75 a night. Photo by Neil Farrell

A pilot program of renting camping spaces on Morro Bay’s waterfront to RVers got off to a slow start, but is gaining in popularity.

Harbor Director Eric Endersby told Estero Bay News, “First weekend [Sept. 11-12] we filled the Coleman lot, and I think we had one at the creek location. Last weekend (Sept. 19-20] we

booked all 19 spots on Friday night, and almost all Saturday night, then just a few Sunday night.

“We currently have a few fire evacuation refugees sticking around too. Had some problems as expected the first weekend when we were newbies with a new program, but we’re getting the wrinkles ironed out. But nothing major – just a few rule-benders.”

The controversial program, which many local residents have spoken out against, is quickly becoming an election issue with some of the council candidates being asked how they felt about the program at a recent virtual forum sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

That’s probably fortuitous, considering that the pilot program is slated to run out at the end of the year, and was approved

by the Coastal Commission as a stop-gap measure to assist the harbor department with revenues lost due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and economic shutdown.

But the need for more revenues has loomed over the harbor department for some time.

With revenues not keeping pace with expanding budgets and a list of deferred maintenance, the Harbor Department was looking for ways to increase its revenues, which derive from tideland’s trust lease payments, dockage and slip fees, liveboard fees and parking fees at the launch ramp.

One idea that hadn’t gotten much attention was to set up RV camping spaces at several spots along the Embarcadero and the beach.

New App Continued on page 6

News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Health Department Issues Guidelines for Halloween



There certainly is enough scary stuff going on right now, but what will all those ghosts ghouls and goblins lurking amongst us do for Halloween.

Because COVID-19 continues to pose a substantial risk to SLO County, and the State has not yet issued health guidance for the upcoming holiday, County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein issued new Halloween Guidance to reduce the risk of COVID-19 during Halloween celebrations.

“We can still enjoy Halloween and prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 in our communities,” said Dr. Borenstein in a news release. “This guidance gives you choices to celebrate Halloween safely. Please take the time to review it and take steps to reduce the risk to you, your family, your neighbors, and our whole community.”

Traditional holiday activities often promote congregating and the mixing of households, which increases the risk of transmitting COVID-19. The County’s COVID-19 Halloween Guidance directs community members to limit contact while distributing treats, safely prepare treats, wear a cloth face covering with your costume and as you hand out treats, stick to your social bubble, and more. Dr. Borenstein strongly discourages standard Halloween activities like traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating because they can easily spread COVID-19 to multiple households. However, the guidance provides low-risk alternatives, including leaving bowls or pre-packaged treats on your doorstep or porch for trick-or-treaters to enjoy, online parties or costume contests, drive-by parades, socially distanced activities, a movie night at a drive-in theater, and more.

Highest risk activities and those that are not permitted include carnivals or festivals, live entertainment (including live music), indoor and outdoor haunted house attractions where people are gathered close and screaming, and in-person parties or gatherings (including outdoor social gatherings) with people not part of your small social bubble.

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Every year, Arroyo Grande Community Hospital, French Hospital Medical Center, and Marian Regional Medical

Center recognize the significance of October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and urge women to schedule their annual breast exams.

October serves as a gentle reminder of an annual mammogram, but breast health is of great importance to us all year long. Early breast cancer usually does not have any symptoms. It is important for women to understand the role of breast self-exams in helping each woman become more familiar with her breasts, which may help identify abnormalities or changes. It is also essential that women receive their regularly scheduled screening mammograms beginning at age 40 and continuing annually. If there is a family history of breast cancer, consulting a physician regarding the appropriate age to begin screenings could be life-saving. Dignity Health has partnered with many local organizations to offer free screening mammograms year round to those who may otherwise not afford them. Mammograms catch up to 90 percent of breast cancers, even before symptoms appear, and breast cancers caught in their earliest stages have a 98 percent survival rate.

Poly Awarded Multiyear Department of Education Grant

Cal Poly’s TRIO Achievers, federally known as Student Support Services, recently secured a new five-year grant totaling \$1.72 million from the Department of Education.

The multiyear federal grant allows the program to continue its annual mission of supporting at least 258 first-generation, low-income students, as well as students with disabilities, through the 2024-25 academic year. In addition, the grant supports approximately 20 students as peer mentors and student assistants, two full-time staff, and one half-time staff position.

Founded in 1984 at Cal Poly, TRIO Achievers provides eligible students with grant aid, cultural events and activities, academic tutoring and advising, and graduate/professional school advising and preparation. In addition, the program offers a variety of academic resources, including laptop/technology rentals, a book lending library, quarterly workshops and academic supplies.

“We are excited and grateful to be able to continue this important work for our students and campus partners,” said Ethny Stewart, director of TRIO Achievers. “Our program has a proven track record in supporting students in their persistence and degree attainment, and this generous grant renewal will allow us to continue this core mission throughout their time at Cal Poly.”

The multiyear grant includes a 3.5 percent increase over the program’s 2019-20 base funding amount.

“This renewed funding is critical in supporting students from underserved backgrounds as they work toward attaining their degree,” said Debi Hill, who oversees Cal Poly’s TRIO programs in her role as associate vice president for Student Affairs, Equity and Transition. “For many of the students served, TRIO Achievers is much more than a resource for academic support. To them, it’s a home away from home with a community of peers who have shared experiences.”

For more information on TRIO Achievers, visit <https://trioachievers.calpoly.edu/>.

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Eagle Rock Purchase Closes

The initial proposal included several so-called “dry camping” spaces in the Morro Rock parking lot at the base of the monolith but were rejected, first by the Harbor Advisory Board and then the City Council, which also took the Target Rock parking area off the list.

In the end, the areas selected were Coleman Park, a former leased work yard near Morro Creek, and in the Triangle lot where the Maritime Museum is located. They’ve cleared out a total of 19 spaces for “dry camping,” meaning no utility hookups available — no water or electricity, and no sewer tank dump stations.

The Morro Creek area doesn’t have a bathroom and Coleman Park’s restroom has been condemned and closed for over a year, with rented portable outhouses put in place at both areas by the City.

The Triangle lot has a single public restroom that’s closed at night and the City put out some port-a-potties there too. Campers are being advised to use the facilities in their rigs and presumably take their waste home with them as there are no dump stations.

In a previous staff report, Endersby estimated the department could bring in \$100,000-\$130,000 a year from the RV spaces. Nightly rates are \$75 a night at Coleman Park (three spaces), and \$65 a night for the Triangle Lot (seven) and the creek area’s nine spaces (see: www.morrobayca.gov/1020/Waterfront-RV-Tent-Camping for information on this program). The sites are being booked through “Bonfire.”

Having most of the sites rented in just the second weekend would seem like a good start considering the City currently is not doing any tourism marketing and isn’t likely to restart those efforts for some time.



This is the view from atop Eagle Rock looking southward at the Back Bay with Baywood Park/ Los Osos in the distance. Photo courtesy Jim Curnutt

Efforts to preserve a historic outcropping in Morro Bay are nearing an end after the City and a local conservation group agreed to a conservation easement for the property known as “Eagle Rock.”

“Eagle Rock (also called ‘Cerrito Peak’), a natural peak located in Morro Bay, is a unique parcel of undeveloped open space,” reads a report from the City Attorney.

The granite outcropping sits towards the southern edge of town, on Cerrito Place. It has a long history of use by Native Americans including grinding holes on the granite mound at the top, and features a small eucalyptus grove that harbors Monarch butterflies in winter.

It’s always been a popular spot for residents, a place where children play and people go to sit on the summit and admire splendid views of the Back Bay that rival any in town.

Though City parcel maps show the peak to consist of several residential lots, no one had ever tried to develop the peak until the late-Dan Reddell purchased one of the lots (that faced northeast) and included the peak.

Reddell, a local real estate broker and developer proposed building a single-family home on the property situated below the peak on the flanks of the hill. His project was met with an avalanche of opposition.

In December 2011, the City Council approved his plans and the conservation group Save the Park sued the City to overturn the decision. Save the Park was joined in the lawsuit by the Xerxes Society, a Monarch butterfly activist group from Oregon.

That suit set aside the entitlements on the land granted by the Council.

“As a result of that lawsuit,” City Attorney Chris Neumeyer said, “the land use entitlements were provisionally set aside. The court decision, which was finalized on Aug. 4, 2015, also required several actions from the property owner before the Council could consider whether the suspended land use entitlements should be reinstated, if at all.” Among these was a more robust environmental review.

The entitlements were slated to end naturally in September 2017, when Reddell’s widow, Janne Reddell, approached the City about possibly selling the property.

In May 2017, the City Council approved the purchase for

\$350,000, which Neumeyer said was “less than its then market value, as disclosed by a broker’s opinion.”

The City made Mrs. Reddell give back \$85,000 to cover the City’s expenses from the Save the Park lawsuit and the net payment for the property was \$265,000.

Ordinarily, such lawsuits, which challenge City decisions, are up to the applicant(s) to defend, but this lawsuit also sought to strip the City of its authority to issue coastal development permits, in favor of a judge reviewing each project going forward.

That was something the City decided it had to fight and so took an active role in the lawsuit.

“The property was purchased by the City,” Neumeyer’s report stated, “with an intent to maintain it in its current undeveloped state, with an ultimate goal of selling the property to a non-profit whose mission is preservation of open spaces.”

The Morro Bay Open Space Alliance, which had formed not long before this issue arose, in April 2016 pledged to raise the money to pay back the City its \$265,000.

Among the donations MBOSA secured were two \$25,000 donations from the Larry L. Hillblom Foundation, totaling \$50,000. “Together the combined \$50,000 makes the Larry L. Hillblom Foundation the single largest donor toward the purchase of Cerrito Peak,” MBOSA president, Glen Silloway said in a news release at the time.

It’s taken a few years, but the Open Space Alliance (MBOSA) raised the needed money and was to remit the \$265,000 to the City by Oct. 31, according to the new agreement that also included a City commitment to go through the process of putting Eagle Rock into permanent open space and designating it an “Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area” or ESHA. Since then, the two sides have been negotiating further protections.

“The result of the negotiations included an option for the grant of a conservation easement from the City to MBOSA and/or another qualified entity committed to the same conservation goals as held by the City and MBOSA,” Neumeyer said.

The conservation easement “is binding upon successive owners of such land, and the purpose of which is to retain land predominantly in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, or open-space condition,” Neumeyer said.

That means if a future City Council decides to sell Eagle Rock, this parcel, which includes the rocky peak, cannot be developed.

The conservation easement doesn’t mean nothing can be done with the property. The terms include one that give the City “express authority to maintain the property and as necessary erect fences, or otherwise secure the property, to prevent damage while maintaining public access.”

MBOSA will also get to place a commemorative sign or monument on the property and should the group fold, a third party can be named with City approval to take over the easement.

LOCAC to Address Local Homeless Situation

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Community members have expressed concerns and complaints surrounding the homeless population in Los Osos, particularly in the area around the library at what is referred to as Midtown site where an estimated dozen people are camping. There have been multiple reports of human waste, syringes, public safety issues, and possible fire threats in the area. Additionally, the number of people living in vehicles on the adjacent Palisades Ave. has also increased.

“I want to emphasize that this issue is of concern in every community of the county,” said District Two Supervisor Bruce Gibson during a LOCAC meeting held in September. He added that the size of the problem has “gotten to a point now where I think we should be able to mobilize more resources than we have in the past. I know none of this is going to happen as quickly as a lot of people would like.”

The Los Osos Community Advisory Committee is looking to create a committee dedicated to informing about the matter.

The so-called Unhoused Residents Forum Subcommittee will coordinate with County agencies, non-profits, and community organizations working on this issue to host an educational forum to update the public on what measures are currently being taken and to consider further steps.

“Our plan right now is to relocate those camping in the brush next to the library in what we call the Midtown site that is county property,” Gibson said. “And because it is county property and subject to some very tight restrictions, we’re able to mobilize some funds to work on moving folks to alternative shelter and providing them necessary services.”

There are legal complexities that come with people setting up camp on public property. In 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court backed a lower court’s ruling (Martin v. Boise) in Boise, Idaho that homeless persons cannot be punished for sleeping outside on public property in the absence of adequate alternatives.

County Public Works is taking the lead on the issue and working with a team of people from social services, the parks department, county libraries, California Fish and Wildlife public health, behavioral health, CAPSLO and community volunteers to determine how best to address the Los Osos situation.

“Over the last few weeks we’ve been working really on connecting people to services and that has been done a lot through our sheriff,” said County Deputy Director of Public Works Kate Ballantyne.

The Midtown site is not the only area of concern locally or in the county at large, but the fact that it is county-owned property has helped in garnering resources.

“We are tremendously concerned with everyone homeless and unsheltered,” Gibson said. “Last year I asked our Planning Services Oversight Council to establish a committee, and that committee has been working, and is now in the process of trying to figure out where the resources are to provide services and alternative shelter to every individual who’s homeless and in this county. The sad thing, the actually shameful thing, is that this county has an extraordinarily high percentage of homeless people who are in shelter. . . but right now, our focus is in dealing with the specifics of the Midtown site.”

LOCAC is calling people to be part of 7-member subcommittee that will work to develop an informational public forum. The group will be comprised of two people from local non profit/community/service organizations and two people who are interested in the topic along with three members of LOCAC.

Applicant qualifications:

- Interested and informed on the subject.
- Willing to work cooperatively with other members and other viewpoints.

• Able to devote about 2 hours per week for meetings beginning in late October and continuing until early December.

“Preference will be given to individuals who may represent more than one perspective or group regarding the ‘Homelessness’ issue in Los Osos,” the website states.

For the full guidelines, go to LOCAC.info. Applications should be sent to info@locac.com by October 15.



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Police Blotter



Morro Bay Police Logs

- **Sept. 20:** Police responded at 10 p.m. to a disturbance at City Park in the 700 block of Harbor. Two, apparently butt-toasted fellows, 53 and 46, were having some sort of boggle. Both were arrested for getting zig-zagged in public.
- **Sept. 20:** Police responded at 8 p.m. to a domestic disturbance reported on Trinidad. Logs indicated they contacted a man "involved in unfounded claims of false imprisonment," which is what they said after visiting Mr. Dahmer.
- **Sept. 20:** Someone turned in a wallet they found for safekeeping. No word on where it was liberated from its pocket prison.
- **Sept. 20:** Police contacted an apparent ruffian allegedly brandishing a weapon in the 1000 block of Front St. Logs indicated the 30-year-old fellow was tad chatty on the way to the hoosegow. "While he was in the back of my patrol unit 1501," reads the logs, the suspect, "admitted to be high on methamphetamine." The suspect reportedly "was transported to the San Luis Obispo County Jail where he provided me with a voluntary urine sample," a breathalyzer apparently being of no use.
- **Sept. 19:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8 p.m. at Main and Surf. Logs indicated the scofflaw woman driver had a suspended license. She was cited and released, and a 10-day all expenses paid vacation awaits her at the Parkinson Plaza.
- **Sept. 19:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 1:49 p.m. at Main and Surf for some undisclosed code violation. Logs indicated the 25-year-old driver was allegedly driving on a toot and arrested. According to logs, the owner of the car, a 44-year-old woman, showed up at the scene "to claim the methamphetamine pipe in her car is hers," in this week's example of why they call it dope. Both were arrested, he for DUI and she for UTI.
- **Sept. 18:** Police responded at 8:08 p.m. to a disturbance in the 300 block of Surf. A 39-year-old apparent hellcat was arrested for suspicion of brandishing a weapon, vandalism and resisting arrest. She went to the cooler to chill.
- **Sept. 18:** Two cars went badda-boom! at noon at Main and Atascadero Road. No injuries reported, but the cars will never be the same.
- **Sept. 18:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:08 p.m. in the 600 block of Harbor. Logs indicated the fellow driving, 28, was allegedly stoned on drugs and was tossed to the nick to crash.
- **Sept. 17:** Some graffidiot struck at the Storage Depot, in the 300 block of Quintana.
- **Sept. 17:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 4 p.m. in the 900 block of Main. The 58-year-old was arrested for suspicion of resisting arrest and of course being blindo in public.
- **Sept. 17:** A citizen in the 100 block of Luzon reported a fraud committed by some scoundrel.
- **Sept. 16:** Police responded at midnight to a disturbance in the 500 block of Main. Logs indicated they contacted a 30-year-old fellow with a bell on every tooth, whom they actually arrested for suspicion of disturbing the peace, a case of next time call it a protest.
- **Sept. 16:** Police started a case of suspected child abuse in the 200 block of Atascadero Road.
- **Sept. 16:** Police responded at 4:20 p.m. to Rite Aid where they apparently caught a suspected fellow with sticky fingers.

The 43-year-old man was arrested for suspicion of trespassing, shoplifting and possession of drugs, which explains the delusion of getting away with it.

- **Sept. 15:** Police responded at 11:10 a.m. to City Park where they found some apparent homeless person's undisclosed property and took it to be destroyed, a potential case of one man's treasure...
- **Sept. 15:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:45 p.m. at Surf and Main. Logs indicated the juvenile driver didn't have a license. The car was towed and he or she arrested in no doubt the saddest joyride ever.
- **Sept. 15:** Someone reported losing his or her California I.D. card.
- **Sept. 14:** Police responded to Lila Keiser Park at 10:41 p.m. where they towed away a car for expired tags.
- **Sept. 14:** Police responded at 1:46 p.m. to Spencer's Market, 2650 Main, where an unwelcomed fellow had showed up at the store. The 62-year-old interloper was cited and released for alleged trespassing.
- **Sept. 14:** Police responded to a motel in the 1200 block of Main after someone found a handgun in a motel room, no word on where former Chief Cantrell was at the time.
- **Sept. 14:** Some scalawag committed vandalism at the WRF project construction site, in the 500 block of South Bay Blvd., no word on cost increases to come from it.
- **Sept. 13:** At 10:51 p.m. police contacted a suspicious man, 55, in a vacant lot behind the Sea Air Inn & Suites in the 800 block of Morro and arrested the blighter for suspicion of belting the grape in public.
- **Sept. 13:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:48 p.m. in the 800 block of Embarcadero. They arrested a 27-year-old tomato for suspicion of driving stewed.
- **Sept. 13:** Some apparent swamp donkey stole tools out of the bed of a truck parked at Harbor House Inn in the 1000 block of Main.
- **Sept. 13:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:30 a.m. on Hwy 1 after the driver apparently led them on a chase. The woman driver, 27 was arrested for suspicion of reckless driving and felony evading a police vehicle, which is bone to the marrow stupid.
- **Sept. 13:** Police responded at 5:51 a.m. to a disturbance in the 400 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated they contacted a 40-year-old apparently raucous feller who was booked into the

County B&B to sleep it off.

- **Sept. 12:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 6 p.m. at Beach and Main. The naughty boy driver had a felony warrant out of Truckee and a suspended license.
- **Sept. 12:** Police stopped yet another suspicious vehicle at 4:22 p.m. somewhere in town. The 66-year-old woman driver was nicked for suspicion of driving on a bender.
- **Sept. 11:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at Lila Keiser Park and of course cited the driver for a suspended license.
- **Sept. 10:** A citizen in the 600 block of Napa reported the unauthorized use of his or her debit card, to which the only defense against is abject poverty.
- **Sept. 10:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 4:38 p.m. in the 1000 block of Quintana. The model citizen, 22, was arrested for suspicion of vandalism, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia.
- **Sept. 10:** Police found an abandoned bicycle in the bushes at Lila Keiser Park, the place where lost bikes go to die.
- **Sept. 10:** At 1 a.m. police responded to a cry for help from a man in the 1700 block of Embarcadero who asked to be taken to County Mental Health. A mobile crisis worker responded and took the troubled chap for a 72-hour timeout.
- **Sept. 9:** A gobsmaeked fellow at Morro Rock called police because he left his backpack on the sand and went surfing, and can you believe it? Someone stole it.
- **Sept. 9:** Police responded to the 1000 block of Front and Giovanni's Fish Market for some fishy criminal activity from the day before.
- **Sept. 8:** Police responded at 6:13 p.m. to Tognazzini's Dockside Restaurant in the 1200 block of Embarcadero for a disturbance. Logs indicated a 40-year-old bent fellow was hauled off for suspicion of being too deep in his cups.
- **Sept. 8:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 9:20 a.m. in the 700 block of Embarcadero. The 59-year-old boulder was cited and released on a failure-to-appear warrant, no doubt soon to be two.
- **Sept. 7:** Police contacted a 55-year-old woman at 1:35 p.m. at an undisclosed location in town and cited her for alleged possession of a glass hookah pipe.
- **Sept. 7:** Police responded at 3:22 p.m. to a car crash at Hwy 1 and Yerba Buena. Logs indicated they bestowed blame for the crash on some lead-foot for driving too fast.

On the Job — Support Our Community

By Theresa-Marie Wilson • Photos by Shari Sullivan

Our On the Job series continues. Estero Bay News encourages people to support the community as well as shop local. Stop by area businesses and tell them we sent you. Be sure

to check businesses for hours of operation and social distancing practices, as things change rather rapidly. Send your photos on the job with a brief description and who's who to Editor@EsteroBayNews



Husband and wife team, Geoff and Jillian Montgomery are the owners of the soon to be opened Morro Bay Butcher & Deli located at 911 Main St. They are serving sliders with grilled onions at the Morro Bay Main Street Farmers Market on Saturdays. Check out their website at MorroBayButcher.com.

Gladis Rodriguez is serving up burritos, tacos, tostadas, combo plates and more at Taco de Mexico located at 980 Main St. in Morro Bay. They are open Monday - Saturday from 8 a.m. to 9.m. and are closed on Sunday.



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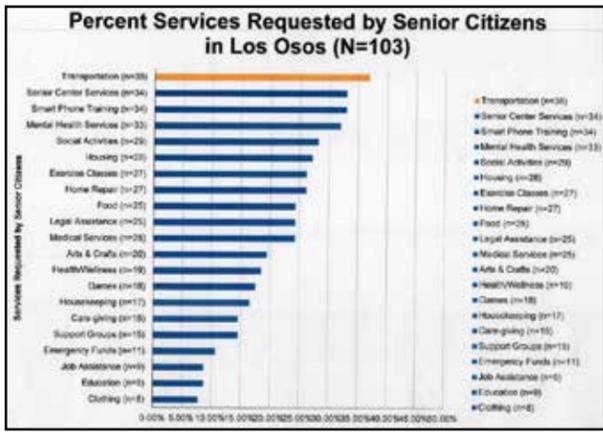
805-506-1649

Laurie Lackland of Lackland Health Partners
I'm a local Morro Bay resident and have 20+ years in the healthcare industry, most recently with the SLO VA as a Nurse Practitioner. I care about your health, and I want to be a good neighbor.

Community

Keeping Up with Los Osos Cares

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



This graph shows the requested services from Los Osos respondents to the first senior questionnaire sent out by Los Osos Cares in February of this year.

Los Osos Cares, dedicated to providing services to employment, economic sustainability, health, housing and transportation, wants to know the needs of the local senior population.

LOC received a Dignity Health Community Project grant earlier this year designated to support the non-profit Basic Needs and Resources-Navigation for the Estero Bay Community. The grant was for their work to create a caring network of social services for the poor and vulnerable aging population through the Los Osos Cares Senior Outreach Program.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have had to be creative from our original outreach to help those in need,” said Executive Director Linda Quesenberry in an email. “Our resource center is sheltering at office, and we have served over 250 people for emergency needs by phone and email referral and emergency funding.”

LOC developed a senior questionnaire to address the needs of seniors that went out in February, but was halted due to the shutdown in March — 210 people responded with 103 from Los

Osos, 94 from Morro Bay and 13 from Cayucos. The results of that survey can be found at <https://bit.ly/2SgY2wO>.

The organization is sending out a short “Post Pandemic Senior Questionnaire.” The survey can also be found at <https://www.lososocares.com/seniors>. The deadline for submitting questionnaires is Oct 30.

“We will address the needs by advocating for services and comparing both questionnaires,” Quesenberry said.

LOC has other projects on board too. There will be a drive-thru Senior Health Fair on October 16th in partnership with St Benedicts Episcopal Church, 2220 Snowy Egret Ln, Los Osos, from 1-3 p.m. SLO Food Bank and senior service agencies will participate in the event by giving out food and information bags.

In September the organizations launched an Estero Bay R U OK phone helpline that will be in place for 2021. Team captains, Violeta Vallin or Los Osos, Sharon O’Leary of Morro Bay and Robyn Taylor of Cayucos, will interact with seniors to ensure resources, services and emergency needs are met and wellness checks will be available if needed.

Additionally, free community dinners are offered every Thursday from 5 – 6 p.m. at South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Avenue, Los Osos. The event has served over 2000 people this year under the guidance of Program Coordinator Dr. Andrea Brown.

The LOC Estero Bay Womenade program has provided emergency funds for many families since the beginning of the pandemic and the warming shelter will be in place when the needs arise as the weather changes.

“Our goal is to create a culture of care for all community members in the Estero Bay,” said Quesenberry. “Our Board of Directors lead by Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall pastor of St Benedicts Episcopal Church, are all active in our outreach as program coordinators and community advocates. The partnerships and support of the City of Morro Bay Community Resource Center, Los Osos Cares Community Resource Center, community leaders in Cayucos, service organizations, faith based community and businesses in the Estero Bay have made our programs successful.”

Los Osos Cares serves the residents of Los Osos, Morro Bay and Cayucos in collaboration with other agencies, to provide them with access to information, referrals and services.

For more information, go to www.LosOsosCares.com or send an email to wecareinlososos@gmail.com or call the office at 805-592-2701.

Birds of SLO Part 1



The Morro Coast Audubon Society presents Birds of SLO Part 1, 2019 on October 19 at 7 p.m. This is a slide show featuring outstanding images of hundreds of species of birds taken last year by seventeen of the finest nature photographers in San Luis Obispo county. The photos are amazing and their impact is heightened by the synergistic effect of live guitar accompaniment by RD Clark and Jack Collins. If you enjoy birds and birding, you’ll enjoy this program. It will be great entertainment and motivation to get out and bird more often in our county. You’d be hard pressed to come up with an example of anything quite like it.

This is a zoom event, join in at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86457536621?pwd=amdPQN-hETWlCc2tweXh0ZXZlZXdvQT09> The meeting ID is 864 5753 6621 and the passcode is 594224



Hope Merkle in front of her house in October of this year. Photo by Lynne Johnson

This is the season for goblins and ghosts to appear and give their reputation another chance to command attention. Everyone has family ghost stories they can talk about.

The question is, will the virus pandemic limit trick-or-treaters from knocking on doors this year?

In 1993 I interviewed and wrote an article about Hope (Lee) Merkle and the ghost she lives with in her home that was built by Walter Redfield in 1920. It was my distinct pleasure recently to meet up again with Hope, manager of Los Osos Valley Nursery 301 Los Osos Valley Road.

The house may continue to be haunted. Hope said in a phone interview that in about 2006 she and her son, Michael, were sitting on the couch watching TV when Michael looked up and saw a man out of the corner of his eye. He immediately yelled, “Who is he?” He supposedly being Papa Warden, who was electrocuted on the property many years earlier.

The story goes that when a pole from the pole pea garden accidentally hit a telephone wire he was electrocuted. Sadly his son had died the day before he was electrocuted. There is no way to explain the apparitions people see. I have my own stories that remain a mystery to me, if you have time to listen to them.

Original Story

Brian and Hope Lee, owners of Los Osos Valley Nursery, 301 Los Osos Valley Road at Pecho in Los Osos, talk about Papa Warden as though his ghost really exists. Hope moved to the house with her parents in 1977. She remembers feeling safe when she went to bed at night and the door to her bedroom would automatically shut, but she wasn’t aware at that age of anything being strange about it. She and her husband Brian live in the old house with their two-year-old son, Austin.

Brian said, “When my son was eight-months-old, I woke suddenly one night at 3 a.m. and saw someone waving to me at the end of the hallway to get my attention. It was a wave that motioned for me to come to it. I sleep with my head facing the hallway. I thought something is happening to my son, so I immediately got up and went into his bedroom and saw him climbing out of the crib. He would have fallen four feet, if I hadn’t caught him. I got rid of the crib the next day. Basically there was a reason I awakened suddenly. I am not into the supernatural, and this happened several times.

“My wife saw the same apparition too. We hadn’t talked about it until a couple of months later when she mentioned seeing an apparition. We compared what it looked like. It looked like an old farmer wearing what I called blue jeans and a Pendleton shirt

Coffee With Joan Continued on page 13

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Did you know that the Morro Bay City Council has lied to us, and is still lying to us about the size of the new wastewater treatment plant (WRF)? They lied to the California Coastal Commission to get the development permit and to the United States Environmental Protection Agency to get the funding.

The project is much larger than the City has told us. Morro Bay’s current wastewater treatment plant has a capacity to process 6.64 million gallons a day and that’s for both Morro Bay and Cayucos.

But the new WRF has two separate units for treating incoming sewage and each one has the capacity to process 8.14 million gallons a day.¹ This is what we ratepayers are paying for and the City has not disclosed it to the public.

The plans the City submitted to the Coastal Commission say “The Project includes construction of a new one million gallons per day (mgd) advanced treatment facility ...”²

The funding agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency, signed by Mayor Heading on behalf of the Council, states that the money is for “Design and construction of 0.97 million gallons per day (MGD) WRF [that] will provide preliminary, secondary, tertiary, and advanced treatment.”³

The Environmental Impact Report for the project says that “The WRF would treat a maximum peak daily flow of 2.75 million gallons per day (MGD) ...”⁴

The City’s website tells ratepayers that “The project includes construction of a new one million gallon per day advanced treatment facility ...”⁵

Councilmember Heller has consistently stood for an appropriately sized less expensive project that all ratepayers can afford.

Mayor Heading and Councilmembers Davis, Addis, and McPherson have supported this project.

Morro Bay residential and business ratepayers need a City Council majority that is honest and that can be trusted.

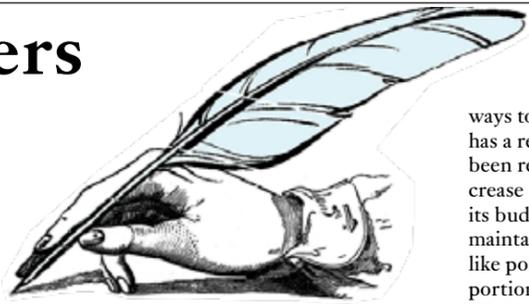
VOTE — John Weiss for Mayor and Richard Sadowski and Betty Winholtz for City Council.

Steve Stevens	Kerrigan Mahan	Linda Donnelly	Carole Truesdale
Melanie Mahan	Margaret Carman	Larry Truesdale	Ray Lewis
Kristen Headland	Nancy Bast	Caroline Lewis	Cynthia Hawley

Visit www.CALMorroBay.com for documents referenced in this letter.

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Letters To The Editor



Dr. John Headding for Mayor

I am going to vote to re-elect John Headding for Mayor of Morro Bay because of his experience. Prior to his current duties as Mayor, Dr. Headding served four years on our City Council.

In the next two years, the City of Morro Bay needs to recover from the fiscal damage that COVID has caused and complete the new Water Reclamation Facility (WRF). Accomplishing these will require steady leadership.

His opponent, John Weiss, is a successful small business owner and has devoted hours working with Rotary, however to the best of my knowledge has never served on a City board, commission or committee or held an elected office in Morro Bay. As most know, working in the public sector is a lot different than working in the private sector.

This is not the time for someone with no prior experience either as a City board member or City Council experience to be running the City.

Homer Alexander
Morro Bay

Significant Differences in Morro Bay Candidates

The recent forum for Mayor and City Council candidates highlighted significant differences between those seeking leadership of Morro Bay's municipal government.

The most critical and expensive issue facing voters is completion of the Morro Bay Water Reclamation Facility (WRF), which is currently under construction and faces a state mandated deadline of February 2023. Candidates Headding (Mayor), Davis and Barton (City Council) all favor timely completion of the project. Candidates Weiss (Mayor), Winholtz and Sadowski (City Council) favor pausing the project. If Weiss, Winholtz and Sadowski are elected and succeed in stopping the WRF project, voters should expect the city to devolve into the same civic dysfunction that resulted in the bankruptcy and dissolution of the Los Osos Community Services District.

Ms. Winholtz also indicated she's fine with writing off \$20 to \$40 million dollars in ratepayer money to move the WRF to a different location. Pausing the project and moving the WRF will waste a huge amount already expended, cost ratepayers the low interest financing already approved, leading to higher sewer rates, costly lawsuits and state fines.

Another significant difference is how to resolve city finances and maintain services. Candidates Headding, Davis and Barton support Measure E-20 on the November ballot, increasing local sales tax by one percent to provide additional funding for police, fire and other taxpayer supported services. Candidates Weiss, Winholtz and Sadowski oppose Measure E-20 and favor finding

ways to cut an already emaciated budget and staffing. Morro Bay has a revenue problem not a spending problem. Revenues have been relatively flat and the cost of services will continue to increase causing long-term service deficits even as the city balances its budget each year. More revenue is needed if residents want to maintain the independent local services they have come to expect like police, fire, street maintenance and recreation. Besides, a large portion of local sales tax is paid by visitors, not residents. Weiss, Winholtz and Sadowski demonstrate a lack of understanding or unwillingness to recognize the cause of the city's budget woes and support realistic solutions.

Morro Bay needs competent and experienced civic leadership that balances the concerns of both our businesses districts and neighborhoods during this incredibly challenging time. We don't need leaders who only prioritize local business interests and their own pet grievances.

On November 3rd, vote John Headding for Mayor, and Robert "Red" Davis and Laurel Barton for City Council to get the leadership our community needs and deserves. Vote YES on Measure E-20 to fund our local services.

David Betonte
Morro Bay

Thank You Estero Bay News

Thanks again for your very well-written article (Estero Bay News Vol #2, Issue #15) publicizing the online live-streaming fundraiser on August 16 that featured the live concert by the SLO County Stumblers and benefitted the Bags of Love food delivery program sponsored by Bobby de Lancelotti's Estero Bay Kindness Coalition (EBKC). Your coverage helped us mobilize local support for this very worthy cause, and for that we are all most grateful.

Although EBKC has continued to receive donations as late as last week, Bobby is ready to close the books on this event, so we thought you might appreciate an update.

Thus far, EBKC netted a total of \$15,260 from the fundraiser. As a result, EBKC is now in a much better financial position to continue providing free food to the families it serves as the pandemic persists during the 2020-2021 school year. Furthermore, EBKC now is better situated to consider a possible expansion of its food deliveries to include the families of additional low-income students who attend other schools aside from the 8 local public schools where it already operates.

Dan Clement
Los Osos

What's in the Water?

On September 28, Council candidate Richard ET Sadowski stated during the League of Women Voters Candidates Forum that raw sewage leaks from one of the City's sewer mains into the City's drinking water. He repeated the claim on September 29 during the Tribune's candidates interview and added that coronavirus is also being conducted through the City's water supply.

I asked Mr. Sadowski for proof of his contentions because, if true, this is a health threat to our residents and Public Works needs to correct it. Mr Sadowski has so far refused to offer evidence to support his claim.

I investigated and found the following report from the Regional Water Quality Control Board: State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board Central Coast Region Staff Report for Regular Meeting of May 28-29, 2015

Subject: Morro Bay Groundwater Degradation
Staff Contact: Dean Thomas, 805/549-3690

Linda Stedjee and other residents of the City of Morro Bay presented their case at the May 2014 Central Coast Water Board meeting that leaking sewers are the cause of elevated nitrate concentrations in City's supply wells near Morro Creek. Staff maintained its concurrence with the City's findings that the predominant source of nitrate is upstream irrigated agriculture.

At the May 2014 meeting, the Board requested that the City collect caffeine samples (a wastewater indicator) from the City's supply wells to further investigate the possibility that leaking sewers are the cause of the elevated nitrate concentrations. The City subsequently sampled water from its supply wells, State supply water, and wastewater for caffeine and sucralose, an artificial sweetener and another wastewater indicator.

According to preliminary results, caffeine was not detected in the supply wells, but sucralose was detected at very low but essentially identical concentrations in both the supply wells and the State water supply. These results, in conjunction with recent nitrate sampling, further corroborate staff's determination that sewage is not the predominant source of nitrate in the City's wells.

Water Board Engineering Geologist Dean Thomas discussed the results of the city's sampling. Mr. Thomas recommended that Water Board staff not spend any additional resources on this issue. Public commenters included Linda Stedjee, Marla Bruton-Sadowski, and Richard Sadowski.

The Water Board concurred with staff recommendation to accept the sampling results and not take any additional action.

The full report is available at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast/board_info/agendas/2015/may/item16/item16_stfrpt.pdf

I urge Morro Bay voters to look for the truth behind claims made by candidates for public office. Misleading comments can lead to false conclusions and erroneous decisions.

Robert "Red" Davis
Candidate Morro Bay City Council

Proof Needed Before Voting

I would consider voting for Weiss, Winholtz, and Sadowski, if they can produce one letter or email dated within the last five

years from the Coastal Commission or their staff or the Regional Water Quality Board that indicates that those agencies would consider, much less support, their fantasy about keeping the wastewater plant at its current location. If they are unable to document just one shred of evidence, then their pipe dream is just wild speculation putting your dollars at extreme risk. They have had years to approach these permitting boards and their staff to get some validation of their claims yet they never can show anyone that these boards would even consider it.

Please, don't be fooled by their unsubstantiated claims; we can't afford it.

Ric Deschler
Morro Bay

We Need Homes not Vacation Rentals

The city council has finally decided to take some action to limit the number of short-term vacation rentals. My children and many of my friend's children are grown up now, and most have been forced to leave the community they grew up in.

The people that don't live here think they are part of the community because they own a short-term vacation rental. They are a big driver in the rentals being scarce and overpriced — 250 short-term vacation rentals = 250 families that can't find a place to live. Our state is having a housing crisis and the council needs to take more action to protect our residents and stop catering to people preying on our community in a time of crisis.

Don Holmes
Morro Bay

America, Land of the Free and Home of the Brave

I am an immigrant who came to this country and into elementary school. I learned early on that America was the land of the free and home of the brave, and relished the stories of some of our early heroes like Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, fearless men that were not daunted by peril and death. The words of Francis Scott Key resonated loudly and clearly that America was unique and its people courageous.

With the coronavirus lockdown which has swept this great nation, I have considered how quickly we have all covered with fear to this flu epidemic. We have recently learned that 94% of deaths from COVID-19 in America are people with a pre-existing condition and over the age of 65, which means that people died not from the virus but with the virus, usually from viral pneumonia. The epidemic of 1918 which killed approx. 675,000 people in America, killed people of all ages and many in their 20s and 30s. This virus has not been as deadly or has affected as many in younger age groups.

Therefore I have asked myself why are we still in fear of being locked down on a mandate based on someone's determination that a percentage of per hundred thousand infections qualifies for us to be all forced into this. Perhaps the lockdown has helped save lives, and perhaps it has not, time will tell.

There have been many heroes in our rich past, and when one looks back in time, Americans have never been defeated by fear. We stormed the beaches of Normandy and Iwo Jima, we helped win WW1 and WW2, and through tremendous sacrifice, we faced adversity and fear, overcame it, and did not back down. It was the self-sacrifice of the individual for the greater good of the country that took place.

I hope that very soon we will return to being a country that does not cower in fear to any adversity, be it an epidemic or any other obstacle that presents itself. We have self-inflicted, I fear, more wounds to this great country by cowering to a flu virus in this lockdown state. I can only hope that America quickly comes to its senses, and with good common sense I believe most of us would like to get back to our normal way of life.

May we yet become a country that is the land of the free and home of the brave.

Dave Mason
Los Osos

Laurel Barton is Up to the Task

As a 20-plus year homeowner in Morro Bay I have observed the City Council over the years. Currently our City confronts a set of complex challenges. We need Council leadership that is up to the task, and that is why I support Laurel Barton. Based on her long career in city administration, she can hit the ground running on day one. She worked in grant writing and city planning for the cities of Tulare and Visalia and served on the Visalia City Council. She has first-hand experience dealing with budgets and major projects. She is right on the issues: Laurel Barton supports the water reclamation project which is well underway under the guidance of the current City Council. She supports Measure E-20 to address our budget shortfalls. She will ensure that funds are spent to maintain services and caring for our community. Please join me in supporting Laurel Barton. She is the person we need on our Council at this crucial time.

Ray McKelvey
Morro Bay

Look for the Truth

"The bottom line is that the current wastewater treatment plant will never meet today's discharge requirements without extensive upgrades, and the Coastal Commission denied a permit in 2013 to make those upgrades" — says Mr. Davis (Vol. 2 Issue 18)
The truth is the Coastal Commission didn't consider any



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Letters

upgrades. The issue put before it concerned a brand new plant.

There was talk about bringing the plant up to today's standards but the governing bodies of both Morro Bay and Cayucos summarily dismissed this idea.

Since then, Cayucos decided to build their own sewer plant and the idea of improving the existing plant was never re-evaluated. Previous flow calculations included both towns, plus the infiltration from broken down Morro Bay sewer lines, which adds huge amounts of water to the system.

Morro Bay has spent millions of dollars chasing a fantasy of water reclamation. But they've spent nothing on fixing the existing sewer line problems -- which almost doubles the water that goes into the wastewater treatment plant during the rainy season. Without knowing the true flow of the plant, we have no idea what it would cost to make the old plant work. As it is, the existing plant has rarely violated water quality limits -- and that's even when Cayucos was using the plant.

I wonder if truth really matters to Mr. Davis and the rest of this sitting council. I know Betty Winholtz. She does her homework and knows the facts. I would take her at her word in a minute.

*David Nelson
Morro Bay*

Councilmember is Wrong

I would like to correct erroneous statements made by Councilmember Red Davis at the September 28 Morro Bay candidates' forum. Mr. Davis stated that at the May, 2015 meeting of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Board said that the Morro Basin well nitrate problem is caused by farming activities; not leaking sewage.

I was at that May 28, 2015 meeting. Mr. Davis was not. In fact, well-documented evidence presented at that meeting confirmed sewage contamination of every well downgradient of Morro Bay sewer lines. It was a serious problem then, and is even more serious now, given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the evidence of sewage contamination, the RWQCB declined to take action. Board members stated that, since the City had sufficient "potable water" from other sources, and since there are problems with leaky sewers all over the State, the Board would not do any more work related to the issue. The reason given was that the Board was occupied with higher priority tasks related to the drought.

Perhaps now, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board might want to revisit the issue. So should Mr. Davis. City officials must stop ignoring the elephant in the room and do what is necessary to protect our health.

As an expert in sewage collection systems, I would be happy to sit down with Mr. Davis, and go over the substantial evidence of serious sewage contamination of our drinking water wells. I make the same offer to concerned residents who want the real facts.

*Richard E. T. Sadowski
Candidate for Morro Bay City Council*

A Clear Choice

Citizens for Affordable Living is pleased to announce their candidate endorsements for mayor and two city council seats.

John Weiss is a mayoral candidate who offers 42 years of successful, retail experience in Morro Bay. Weathering financially good times and bad times, he understands the business community; he understands finances; he understands promotion. As a long-time, active member in a service club, he has exercised leadership and mentored many. He shines his key values of honesty and integrity through the many ways he volunteers for Morro Bay. He is a great listener. We strongly urge your vote for John Weiss.

Richard Sadowski is a council candidate who offers his diverse experience in service. Richard has lived in our community for over 17 years. He was recently an active member on two of Morro Bay's citizens' advisory boards: the Planning Commission and the Water Reclamation Facility Citizens Advisory Committee (WRFAC). His technical background is in engineering. He understands leadership and finance. The City needs these qualities now. He has spoken before the City Council on numerous occasions and on various topics. We strongly urge your vote for Richard Sadowski.

Betty Winholtz is a council candidate who offers 8 years of experience on Morro Bay's City Council, 2002-2010. During that almost decade, the City Council successfully addressed the local effects of a national Recession and oversaw the planning of a new sewer plant. Right now we face parallel situations: a deficit budget and a money-pit sewer plant. She has continued to speak up for residents and neighborhoods since leaving office. Betty has lived in Morro Bay for 34 years and has institutional history that would enhance decision-making. We strongly urge your vote for Betty Winholtz.

Decisions regarding housing, vacation rentals, roundabout at 41/Main, COVID-19, local coastal program, and other pertinent topics will be decided by this Council--either in favor of the residents or not. We want those decisions made with and for residents.

This year Morro Bay candidates couldn't be more distinct. There is a clear choice between "stay the course" and change the town forever, OR address this "moment of reckoning" and bring the town back from the edge of disaster. That is how dire the City's financial and moral situation is. When you love something, vote for it.

*Dan Sedley
Citizens for Affordable Living*

Look Elsewhere for the Truth

If truth is what you want, you will need to look well beyond Red Davis' September 24 post, "Look for the Truth." In that post, Mr. Davis challenges Betty Winholtz' statements about the potential for continuing to use the current wastewater treatment plant until better options than the current WRF project can be developed.

Mr. Davis refers to problems associated with the levels of Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in the existing plant's effluent, and to the associated threat of Water Board fines. The effluent does slightly exceed current standards for TSS and BOD. However, Mr. Davis leaves out some very important facts:

1. TSS and BOD have been found generally harmless for open ocean discharges. The Water Board knows this, and so does your City Council.

2. In 2017, the SLO Board's sister agency, the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board approved a new permit for the Point Loma wastewater treatment plant. Yet, that plant discharges well over 100 times as much TSS as Morro Bay's plant, and well over 300 times as much BOD. It got a permit because the authorities know full well that the discharges are harmless.

3. Morro Bay's own plant effluent monitoring reports state, year after year, that the plant's discharges to the ocean are causing no harm whatsoever, and that the plant is running very efficiently with no signs of degraded performance despite its age.

Given these well documented facts, the constant hype about the potential for the Water board to levy huge fines is absolute nonsense. If the City spent a tiny fraction of the money it is wasting on the WRF project to hire a good lawyer, the whole fine issue could be put to rest.

Your City Council doesn't fear fines. They just want you to fear them, so that they can continue their ill-advised WRF project, which we now know, thanks to Estero Bay News, will not provide the water independence Mr. Davis claimed it would back in 2017. State Water will continue to be the City's primary water source for the foreseeable future.

If you want truth from your City Council, vote for Betty Winholtz, Richard Sadowski, and John Weiss.

*Linda Stedjee
La Rochelle, France
(Former Morro Bay resident)*

Candidate Refutes Letter Writer

In last week's paper, City Council candidate Robert Davis challenged my statement that the City can have a less expensive sewer plant in its current location without trouble from either the Coastal Commission or the Water Board. He used statements from the sewer plant manager as evidence.

I fail to see conflicts between my statement and the plant manager's comments.

1. I agree the current sewer plant does not meet standards and will need to be upgraded. I believe an upgrade has to be cheaper than a brand new plant 3 miles away requiring 2 new lift stations and 4 pipelines, increased operational costs, with additional public services moving onto the new site.

2. I did not address BOD or TSS, so I'm not sure how this relates other than identifying the standard the City must reach.

3. I agree the City is operating under a Time Schedule Order. The Order is moot if fulfilled. If the City meets the sec-

Letters Continued on page 13

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and drought-proof;

- Continue to work with the chamber to develop a more diverse local economy;
- Develop open space and recreational opportunities for the Chevron property, power plant and existing water treatment plant;
- Create additional affordable housing opportunities;
- Supports our fishermen and develops offshore wind energy;
- Improve harbor and waterfront areas with a plan to match resources with needs;
- Develop new revenue so that we can: maintain local control of police and fire resources; repave our streets to acceptable standards; and, maintain clean public restrooms and weekend trash pickup.

Q-1: RV campsites on the waterfront:

RD: Council agreed to conduct this as an experiment, with a temporary permit from the Coastal Commission, to see how it works. Harbor Department needs new revenue to repair, maintain and upgrade facilities and this might be a feasible part of the solution. We are closely monitoring to gauge pros and cons and we will revisit the program in December.

Q-2: Water/sewer rates:

R.D.: Right now we're good, even with contract change orders dealing with the red legged frog and the delay in permitting the erosion feature. Our two low interest loans and our contingency fund are giving us room for these added expenses. Council will review expenses as soon as we solidify the State Revolving Fund loan terms and see if we can reduce rates at that time.

Q-3: Vacation rental ordinance:

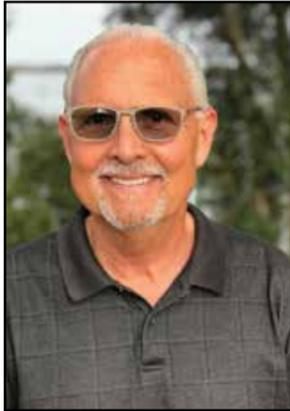
R.D.: Council took the recommendations that came to us from the STR Committee, Planning Commission and TBID and set the number at 175 as presented by those three advisory bodies. We will set the annual permit fee at a level that will pay for a full-time compliance officer to monitor all STRs and look for those operating illegally. That includes our reviewing consultant, Host Compliance, which reviews all advertising media throughout the state looking for ads for unpermitted rentals in Morro Bay.

Q-4: The Economy:

R.D.: Mayor Headding and I are actively engaged with Castle Wind to bring clean offshore wind energy to Morro Bay and provide jobs for residents, especially for our fishermen who will provide support for offshore service and maintenance. We are working in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to offer opportunity sites for development and to improve and streamline our permitting process to facilitate development. I am personally connected to REACH to help us create additional housing that will bring more young working families and service employees to live in Morro Bay. Affordable workforce housing is essential to attracting new industry and I am committed to making that happen.

Dr. John Headding

Incumbent Mayor Dr. John Headding, 67, is married to wife, Sue, an RN, and they have two adult daughters, one of whom lives in Morro Bay with her husband and two children who attend school in Morro Bay. Dr. Headding holds a bachelors of science degree in pharmacy and a doctor of pharmacy degree (both from University of the Pacific Stockton, Calif.); and a masters degree in healthcare administration from the University of Colorado.



The Headdings have lived in Morro Bay since 2012.

His top priorities are:

- 1) Achieve economic and financial sustainability;
- 2) Maintain core public safety services (police/fire/maintenance);
- 3) Complete the WRF project and capital projects for fixing existing, old sewer/water infrastructure;
- 4) Improve communication and community engagement in important city decision making;
- 5) Complete the general plan/local coastal plan update;
- 6) Assist local businesses to improve sustainability through COVID-19;
- 7) Work with the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management to bring wind energy to Morro Bay;
- 8) Continue to work with Vistra Energy to re-develop the existing abandoned power plant; and,
- 9) Implement the housing element plan to bring more affordable housing units to Morro Bay.

Q-1: RV campsites on the waterfront:

J.H.: I do support this as it is only a pilot program, and will be reevaluated by the council to determine long-term feasibility. This involves approximately 20 spaces that will not significantly impact parking or views. With the 20 spaces in the pilot program being occupied at 50% occupancy this will generate approximately \$175,000 per year in additional revenue for the harbor department, which is desperately needed for capital improvements in the future.

Q-2: Water/sewer rates:

J.H.: The current WRF project including the reclamation component has received unprecedentedly low interest rate financing. With our EPA loan financing approximately 50% of the project, and SRF Loan/grant (which should be received within the next 3 months) financing approximately 50% of the project, we will save over \$40 million in debt costs. Recent analysis shows that the current rates are more than adequate to cover project costs and debt costs. The council recently increased rebates to our most vulnerable financially challenged individuals and will reevaluate the rate structure again after receipt of the SRF financing. I anticipate because of historically low interest loans, that water and sewer collection rates can be decreased in the future.

Q-3: Vacation rental ordinance:

J.H.: The current City Council at the last meeting recommended adoption of the new vacation rental ordinance for the city. The new ordinance will decrease the number of non-hosted short-term vacation rentals from 250 to 175 permits in residential neighborhoods. New density buffers are part of the ordinance, which will eventually decrease the impact of non-hosted short term vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods. Additionally the council recommended increasing the permit fee, and recommended a strict system for fines that will generate revenue in order to fund proper code enforcement of the ordinance. We have also retained the services of a company that specializes in identifying unlicensed vacation rentals in our community. The New ordinance suggests strict penalties for operation of illegal short-term vacation rentals.

Q-4: The Economy:

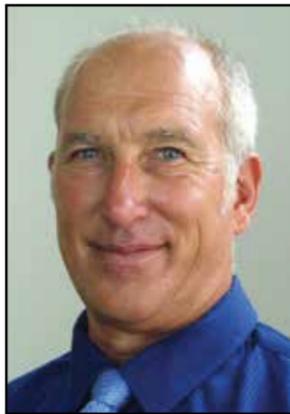
J.H.: The city continues to maintain a balanced budget, but COVID-19 impacts have resulted in significantly reduced revenues. I support measure E-20, which is the 1-cent sales tax increase proposed for the city. This will generate approximately \$2 million per year helping us to maintain core public safety services such as police and fire. Tourists pay for approximately 70% of sales tax dollars and I believe they should pay their fair share for city services utilized.

Additionally, I support continuing to pursue development of the opportunity sites identified by the city council — Market Place Plaza on the Embarcadero; Bank of America site, etc. Also redevelopment of the Vistra (formerly Dynegy) site and pursuit of wind energy development offshore could result in significant new revenues for the city. Lastly, we must achieve the goals of our housing element in order to produce more affordable workforce housing to accommodate new industry.

Richard Sadowski

Richard E.T. Sadowski, 62, married, has a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering, and is a Certified Wastewater Collection and Conveyance professional. "I moved to San Luis Obispo County in 1981 and to Morro Bay in 2003," he said.

His top priorities are:



- 1) Rein in the runaway WRF consultant costs and lower water rates;
- 2) Clean up the City finances and restore our emergency fund; and,
- 3) Collaborate with the Cayucos Sanitary District on repairing the jointly owned 60/40 Main Street sewer main that is currently ex-filtrating raw sewage into our Morro Creek basin drinking wells.

Q-1: On RV camping on the waterfront:

R.S.: The RV camping pilot at selected locations was initiated while the California State Parks were still closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This dry camping idea was piggybacked on an 'Emergency Permit' issued for outside dining during the pandemic. The dry camping pilot was irresponsible and showed that our City Council is not concerned about putting our resident's health and safety first. Out of town campers were boasting how much they saved by not having to pay for lodging for all their friends and family and simply pay the \$250 fine.

Q-2: On lowering water/sewer rates:

R.S.: This City Council is in over their heads regarding the WRF and the consultant costs. I have the education and experience to be able to hold the WRF consultants accountable and to rein in the runaway costs for this project. As a council member, I would work on lowering the water rates and properly prioritize the different aspects of this project.

Q-3: On the vacation rental ordinance:

R.S.: The City needs active enforcement on vacation rentals (VR) that need to be funded by VR permit fees. VRs are businesses operating in neighborhood residential zones and should be limited. If elected, I would entertain limiting the number of VR's to around 150. That said, if elected, I would meet with hotel owners, neighboring residents, and realtors and flush out the details.

Q-4: On the Economy:

R.S.: We are a tourist town. Our economic engine is an organic one; people come to visit here because of the living beauty surrounding us. I am currently collaborating on a project with Cal Poly academia studying the effects of ocean acidification. I would continue to reach out to academic institutions and State agencies to invest in protecting our biodiversity and help our local citizens scientists with job creation.

John Weiss

John Weiss and wife, Christine, have five children and three grandchildren. Three graduated from Morro Bay High School, and two from U.C. Berkeley (one Phi Beta Kappa and Magna Cum Laude).

Weiss has lived in and owned a small business, Coast Electronics-RadioShack, for over 40 years in Morro Bay, which he co-founded with his father (Dick Weiss) in 1978. He served as Chamber of Commerce President from 2006 to 2008 and 2011; and joined the Rotary Club of Morro Bay in 2001.

He served as club president in 2009-2010 and was Rotary District Governor over Kern, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties.

He credits both experiences — with the Chamber and Rotary — teaching him leadership skills, as well as running his family business with "my great staff."

Weiss helped form an Environmental Rotary Club in 2011 and a Rotary club at the high school — Rotary for Young Professionals. His passion is community service including trash pick up starting in 2010 at the Roundabout, Bay Shore Bluffs, Morro Rock and the Embarcadero.

At his store, he said that many of his employees have worked for him over 20-35 years.

He graduated from the MBPD Citizens Academy in 2012 and said he "found it beneficial to better understand Public Safety. My family, business, and community service are very important to me. If elected Mayor, I promise to bring my 42-years of local experience to help our city and community, which I love, to thrive and protect our Public Safety services."

Q-1: RV campsites on the waterfront:

J.W.: State parks have now reopened across California, so there's no reason to allow RVs on the waterfront. Dry camping is also a significant public health risk. In light of these facts, I would disband this program, particularly as it competes with the operator, which provides full RV camping services and is located on City property.

Rather than raise needed revenue for the Harbor with the dry RV Camping on the Waterfront, I would work with the stakeholders to increase revenues in an equitable manner to help make the Harbor financially sustainable without sacrificing our environment and competing with our own full service tenant that is not on the Embarcadero. Violators should receive penalties that are true incentives not to break our laws.

Q-2: Water/sewer rates:

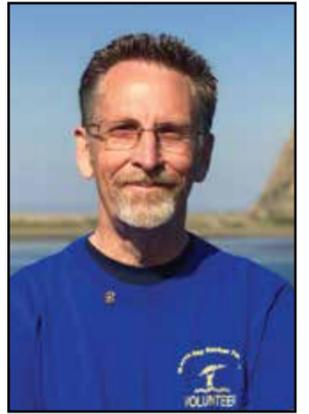
J.W.: Water and sewer rates have been on the rise since 2007, with little to show for it except for delays and mounting costs. In office, I will reactivate the WRF Citizens Advisory Committee to evaluate how to reduce costs for the project and make the right decision for ratepayers.

Q-3: Vacation rental ordinance:

J.W.: The current Vacation Rental Ordinance does not protect some neighborhoods and the occupancy rate of hoteliers by unlicensed operators.

I continue to support unlimited hosted vacation rentals. The current council campaigned on making changes shortly after being elected to protect the stakeholders and neighborhoods. Only now is something coming forward. Having listened to the drafts prepared by the Planning Commission and TBID, they are only now considering their proposals with a few changes at a future council meeting for adoption.

I support active enforcement and fair treatment of the



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licensed operators and consideration of the hotelier stakeholders and as noted above unlimited licensed hosted vacation rentals.

Q-4: The Economy:

J.W.: Economic recovery is going to be my number one priority if elected as Mayor. We need to support our business community by simplifying the permitting process and reducing the costs of operating a business. I am against the Recovery/Emergency Sales Tax increase, which has no sunset clause; and the 1% sales tax is higher than currently needed, especially when the pandemic ends.

Rather, if this tax measure is not passed by the citizens, and future revenues or cuts are insufficient, I would recommend a "Measure Q-2" special election, with that money being especially for fire, police and roads at 0.5% for a period to coincide with the pandemic.

I helped to pass the current Measure Q back in 2006 and I can help again. If needed, Measure Q-2 would bridge the gap and be used only as long as we are in a Pandemic. I would work to attract and retain new industries, especially partnering with Cal Poly and the National Estuary to help protect the Bay.

I would work with local successful businesses to expand and also help to find affordable housing for our workers. Finally, I would reinstitute the Community Forum I helped start in 2006 with businesses and local citizens to collaborate and identify needed changes to make our City an even better place to live and work.

Betty Winholtz

Former 2-term Councilwoman, Betty Winholtz is running once again to take a leadership role representing residents of Morro Bay. She came to Morro Bay in 1986 from Iowa and holds a master's degree in counselor education.

Early on, she worked for former councilman the late-John Baker's ice cream shop in Downtown Morro Bay where she had deep discussions with Baker about hard work and service, and his foundation for a successful storefront and way of life.

She created a full-time career as a private academic tutor. As a self-employed businesswoman, she learned the additional value of fiscal conservatism.

Winholtz was a member of the White Caps and German Bands, Morro Bay Beautiful, M.B. Historical Society, M.B. Seniors, Save the Park (a non-profit that fought to conserve Cerrito Peak), and a volunteer with MBHS and El Chorro Regional Dog Park.

She said that, a fiscal conservative and prior City council member, she knows we can do better with City finances. "A budget should balance without using emergency reserve funds," Winholtz said. "First Responders and

other City services can be locally maintained through concrete [not temporary] changes and strict spending rules and not expensive consultants."

Q-1: RV campsites on the waterfront:

B.W.: This is neither a sound nor healthy way to boost the Harbor Fund's revenues. The City should not be in competition with private businesses, which is what this creates. Allowing camping on the Embarcadero has been proposed before, but this is the first City Council to approve it.

Q-2: Water/sewer rates:

B.W.: It is naive to state increased rates can be avoided when the Maximum Guaranteed Price has already been raised once

K-12 Schools Can Reopen with Modifications

County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein affirmed October 6, San Luis Obispo County's K-12 schools have the option to reopen for modified in-person instruction according to the criteria listed in State's Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

"Because we have kept our COVID-19 transmission relatively stable, we have been consistently in the red tier for two weeks now," said Dr. Borenstein in a news release. "Local schools are not required to reopen for in-person instruction, but they may choose to reopen if they implement the State's COVID-19 guidance for schools and school-based programs."

According to the State of California, schools can reopen for in-person instruction once their county has been in the red tier for at least two weeks. Prior to reopening, local schools must submit a plan for modified in-person instruction to the County Health Officer for review and consultation. Schools must follow the State's guidelines when they reopen.

Per the State's School Reopening Framework, schools that open during this time are not required to close if SLO County moves back to the purple tier – which is the first and most restrictive tier – but should consider increasing screening and testing of staff.

The County Public Health Department continues to work closely with the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education and local districts for opening local schools safely. County Office of Education officials convey that many local districts decided to stay closed through the end of the calendar year, but some may reopen with approved reopening plans by County Public Health officials.

Anyone with questions for the Office of Education or local schools may visit www.slococ.org/covid-19-information-resources.

with another increase in the wings along with more change orders; when the lowest bid for four pipelines down Main and Quintana is \$7 million over estimates to say nothing of the business and sales tax loss to Quintana storefronts; when the cost for unpaid easements as a result of imminent domain is in the hundreds of thousands of dollars; and when ongoing operating costs for pumping sewage 3 miles uphill isn't disclosed.

These costs stop if we stay at the current site and upgrade what we have. Then the ratepayer will see a refund – do the math.

Q-3: Vacation rental ordinance:

B.W.: Hosted VRs can be unlimited because there is a live-in enforcer, the home owner; un-hosted VRs should be limited in quantity (1% of the population which is approximately 100) for residential and mixed use zones. There are many residents in mixed use zones and they have not been immune from converting long term rentals into short term rentals. Enforcement is key, and an anonymous hotline should be provided where suspected illegal units can be reported.

Q-4: The Economy:

B.W.: Curbing spending is as important as revenue enhancing to balance the budget: make permanent the temporary 5%-8% salary freezes until the end of COVID-19; institute zero-base budgeting in the next budget cycle; move City Hall and public service offices to the second floor of the Community Center, freeing up the City's half block of Harbor/Shasta/Dunes to sell or for housing.

The kinds of businesses that seem to survive in Morro Bay are home-grown businesses, which depend on permanent residents as much as tourists for their trade.

Letters From page 13

ondary standard when Cayucos goes offline in December, we've beaten the 2023 deadline.

4. Same as #2, I agree upgrading is necessary.

5. The Coastal Commission denied a permit for the specific project proposed in 2013. While environmental reasons played a role, so did the newly-elected leaders' request for denial. With a Time Order in place, the denial kept the City/Cayucos from Water Board fines. Fines could have happened if the project was continued.

During public comment at the Hearing, I did state, "We ask for your denial."

In 2013, the public reasoned that if a new plant could be built in a safer location for only \$10-\$12 more a month, we were willing to do that. In 2020, the reality is the new site is neither environmentally safer nor only \$10-\$12 more a month.

Not only is the estuary at risk, sewer bills have risen from \$41.35/mo. to \$108/mo. (excluding water bill), not a 25% increase but a 161% increase.

I agree, "Voters should look for truth behind every claim made by candidates for public office."

Betty Winholtz

Candidate for Morro Bay City Council

Please include your full name and town you live in on all letters sent. Although we do welcome longer opinion pieces, publishing is as space permits. Estero Bay News reserves the right to edit for length and clarity.

Email letters to
editor@esterobaynews.com

Coffee With Joan From page 9

and a beige colored, large brimmed hat. We've had other people experience strange happenings too. Things you can't explain. Another time I was standing at the front desk talking to a gentleman and we heard someone walk up to the desk on the wood flooring. We turned to see who it was and no one was there."

Brian went on, "A friend was sitting in our living room and suddenly my son's remote control car came shooting across the floor. It had no batteries in it and was turned off when I picked it up. My friend thought my wife was controlling it from another room, but she wasn't. This too has happened often."

More than 30 inexplicable episodes have occurred over the last ten years with the Lees. Several times one door has opened and another closed, as though it was the wind, Brian added, "Things I perceive as out of the ordinary happen. It could be coincidental. I do believe in common explanations for things. Certain things do have answers. We call the ghost, 'Papa Warden.' It might be Papa Warden's son, Robert, who died a tragic death a day before his father died."

Robert "Bob" Warden was electrocuted July 31, 1964. Mary Warden said her husband always warned the men about the overhead wires when moving the irrigation pipes on the ranch. He became the victim of his own warning. In moving some pipes, one touched the high-powered wire overhead and he was electrocuted. Bob's father, Horatio "Papa" Warden died August 1, 1964 in Santa Barbara.

"It even seems when we talk about him, strange things happen. I thought about him this morning and you called," Brian chuckled!

Hope has also had numerous "ghostly" experiences. She feels the ghost is very friendly. How many times in a lifetime has anyone had a TV surge, where the TV goes on and off during the night? Hope did and then she added a little dejectedly, "was disappointed to find out it was only a surge. When I thought it was Papa Warden at it again. He seems to be most active during the fall season."

"Over the years food articles have been missing or moved or altered. I bought some groceries one day that included 12 packages of Hamburger Helper. I stored it away in the cupboard and one or two days later, I looked for it and it was gone. I called the grocery store to see if I left it, and just thought I put it away. There was no explanation. Other times food has been taken or altered. My vanilla was just colored water when I used it."

Is it a ghost? Whose ghost is it anyway? Papa Warden only lived on the ranch from 1942 until he died in 1964.

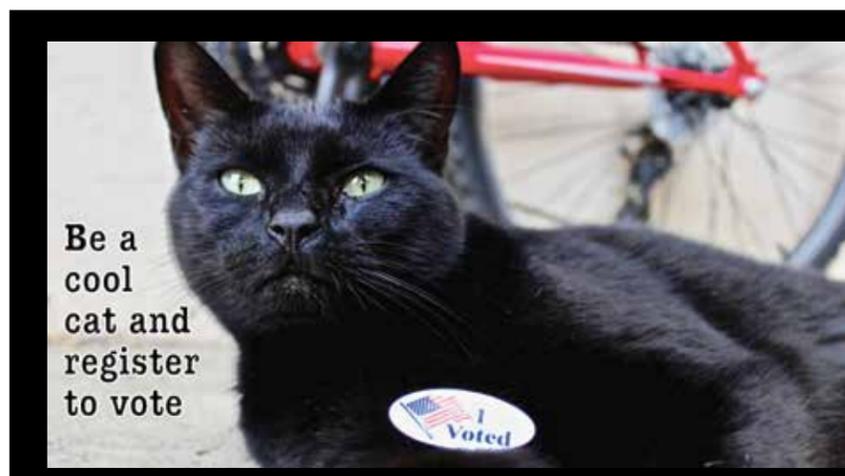
Papa Horatio M. Warden Jr. was born in the Warden home place on the Highland Ranch in San Luis Obispo, July 3, 1886. He became associated with his father in business after leaving school in 1906 and familiarized himself with the farming interests and eventually was the proprietor of the ranch. He became vice-president and manager of the H.M. Warden Co., when his father Horatio Sr., died. Horatio Jr. married Georgie Lilly and they had three sons, Horatio M., III, Robert, Donald and Frank.

Could the ghost be one of the guests who had such a good time at Walter Redfield's ranch? In 1925 Los Osos land developer, Walter Redfield and his wife Pansy purchased 340 acres of eucalyptus trees at Pecho and Los Osos Valley Road at \$50 an acre – paying \$1,000 down. He subdivided 50 or 60 acres of this land, calling the development Redfield Woods. He and Pansy moved to an old farmhouse 'at the turn in the road to the Spooner Ranch.' Brian found a cement slab on the north side of the two-acre nursery property, which might have contained an old farmhouse.

As things got better for the Redfields, they built an attractive home, still there (Brian and Hope Lee's house), with a beautiful garden. But the Redfields continued to use the old farmhouse for their guests. Redfield even envisioned a golf course for the area and invested a sizable amount having it professionally planned, including plans for a clubhouse.

Redfield bought a 13-passenger Cadillac and invited prospective customers from Taft and Bakersfield to come and enjoy weekend with them at the farmhouse. Prospectors would hunt ducks, go fishing and enjoy the beach and gather around the player piano in the evenings. They had a heck of a good time. Pansy cooked and looked after the rooms.

When the Depression came, property sales dropped and payments stopped and they lost the land belonging to them. After losing so much during the Depression, Redfield made a living in San Luis Obispo selling real estate. He did this for some years before returning to the area and moving to Baywood Park (present location of Baywood Elementary School. Could the ghost be Walter Redfield wanting to return to beautiful Los Osos and Redfield Woods and the 'good ole days?'



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Students enjoy Chinatown meal together after attending concert at Los Angeles Music Center. Photo authorized for use by Dan Clement, co-founder of College Bound Today

create the college-mentoring program intended to be fully operational by mid-November.

"I'm very pleased to have accomplished those goals on schedule," said Clement.

The purpose of CBT's program is to introduce and mentor students to consider career options, develop their study habits to successfully complete high school and reach beyond for a career by selecting and attending the college or university that will provide the education and training they will need.

Introducing CBT at LOMS has been on the fast track ever since Clement and his wife, Jude, recently relocated to the Central Coast. Principal Klum was impressed with CBT's proven track record of success at the Montebello, CA schools.

According to CBT's website (www.collegeboundtoday.net), "...out of 1,300+ students who completed CBT's program, more than 99% went on to attend college, with 85% attending 4-year colleges and universities, 91% were Latino students, 85% of them qualified for free or reduced lunch and 70% were in the first generation of their families to attend college."

Early on Clement discovered strong parent involvement was critical for the success of the program. The CBT model at LOMS will soon invite 7th grade students to commit. They will be teamed in groups of 8-to-10 students with at least two mentors meeting monthly through their freshman year at Morro Bay High School. Students are recommended by staff, and parents are informed as to why they were selected. Students MUST commit to 7-out-of-7 Saturday meetings, and their parents must agree to get them there. The goal is to build family relationships that will foster continued encouragement especially once away from home.

Before CBT Clement spent 31 years as a trial lawyer in Los Angeles "living the fast lane," he said. To slow down he served as in-house lawyer for Southern California Gas for several years, but began to dream and explore another career. "I spent

enough time ripping people to shreds," he added.

In 2007 he discovered his friend and co-founder of CBT, Todd Clark was ready to retire after founding and operating Constitution Right Foundation (CRF), which created the Mock Trial programs. He introduced Clement to the CBT concept and offered to help him build it. Clark also had the connection to the 30,000-strong Montebello School Unified District where Clement convinced the district to pilot the program. The first year showed strong promise at Schurr High School so CBT was expanded to the 3,000 non-English speaking students at Bell Gardens the following year.

Today Clement is proud of CBT's statistical success, but animates when telling the stories of students the group has mentored. For example, Zayla Zazueta graduated from Mount St. Mary's in three years and received a USC Masters in social work the next year, then mentored at Schurr High for four years.

From an immigrant family himself, Josue Gutierrez Balderas studied immigration law at Georgetown University. He impressed U.S. District Court Judge Jesus G. Bernal so much, the judge invited him to intern.

Forrest Lin planned to attend Yale. Clement was awestruck the student had research every detail including where he'd eat pizza in between studies. A good student at Schurr High, he was offered full-ride scholarships at Harvard, Stanford and Yale. Clement taught him to be his own advocate and negotiate visitations for his parents and a better financial package. After graduation from Yale, he worked on Wall Street in investment banking.

Clement noted a benefit of mentoring has been the career-long relationships built with the students as they excel into their life's work. Persistence is required to harness a dream, but when sought after within a team working together on the goal, time is scheduled for fun, including field trips, college visits and, of course, celebrations.

Patrol Boat From page 1

while running full throttle to Montaña de Oro.

The two patrolmen onboard realized something was wrong when the boat started taking on water. The patch had de-laminated and the boat hasn't been in use now for a couple of years.

"The integrity of the boat for emergencies isn't there," Kelly said. "We want to sell it. It would be a fine recreational or fishing boat. We never intended to keep it this long."

Their middle boat, built in the early 1990s by Harold Davis of Davis Boats, is a single engine, gas powered but no longer meets their needs. "It's 22-foot and a great little bay boat, but for emergency work," Kelly said, "it doesn't fit our needs for a multi-faceted job."

Boats Are Expensive

The newest boat in the fleet, a 2013 Radoncraft built by Don Radon of Santa Barbara, is what they need — twin diesel engines with a water canon and advanced electronics for search and rescues at night or in rough seas — and was built to their specs.

It also cost some \$450,000, which the department simply doesn't have now to buy another one.

"We can't just go back and do that again," Kelly said of their most recent big capital outlay. They will be keeping that boat and they plan to sell at public auction the other two boats but don't expect to get much for them.

The last patrol boat they auctioned brought just \$10,000 and Kelly said she's been working with City Hall on how an auction might take place, considering the restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic response and the shelter-at-home orders.

An online auction is a possibility but most potential boat buyers want to "kick the tires" figuratively speaking.

Kelly said the oldest boat has been trailered and is currently sitting in storage. It's been cleaned up and is ready for sale, once they get the go-ahead, anticipated to be before the end of the year.

State Grant Sought

The department is asking for an \$85,000 grant from the State Department of Boating and Waterways, the agency funded by special gas taxes on marine fuels, to buy the PSL boat (plus \$2,000 for a boat trailer).

DBW has helped the City with numerous projects, including new patrol boats and replacing the floating docks by the launch ramp, among others.

Bill Luffee, president of the Friends of the Harbor Department, a non-profit group that raises money to supplement the harbor department's needs, is heading up the fund-raising efforts.

The Friends have paid for numerous equipment needs — communications equipment for jet ski operators; a new rescue sled; repairing and replacing beach lifeguard towers; buying a beach wheelchair for the handicapped; replacing the floats on the sea lion dock and installed free binoculars on the street end pier by the Hofbrau; and replacing a solar powered emergency phone on the Sandspit that hadn't worked for two years.

Luffee said their goal is to raise \$100,000 to help with re-powering of the PSL patrol boat. In the past, they've done things like organizing marine swap meets and drive-in movies at Morro Rock, but with the Coronavirus restrictions, they can't hold any types of public events to raise money.

Money Woes Plague Harbor

With the virus lockdowns, the City deferred rent payments to the harbor department from tidelands leases, punching a big hole in the budget that is slowly refilling, as tenants catch up with rent payments.

Kelly said much of the department's money woes originated with the loss of payments from the power plant's outfall lease, some \$250,000 a year. "That used to fund a lot," she said. Those payments, which included a minimum of \$500,000 a year to City Hall (more if the plant ran a lot), ended shortly after plant owner, Dynegy, closed it for good in 2014.

Luffee, who is a past chairman of the Harbor Advisory Board and a driving force in forming the Friends group, said a lot of harbor maintenance needs have been put off due to tight budgets, for example a bayside parking lot behind the Inn at Morro Bay is literally falling into the bay.

"The bay is the lifeblood of the city," Luffee said.

PSL Boat Needs Engines

Kelly explained that the PSL boat, which is an inboard twin, diesel powered Radon built in 2002 and equipped with a water canon, needs both engines replaced, which is where the \$100,000 comes in.

That's how much it will cost to replace the engines and to install a separate motor for the water canon.

Right now, the canon runs on a "power take off" or PTO system connected to the engines, so to use the canon, the boat has to be in neutral, which causes the boat to drift with the force of the

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Kevin says, "Look for the ANT on the Door"

KEVIN O'CONNOR, President

water spray, making it difficult to keep the stream on point. "You can't drive the boat and shoot water at the same time," Kelly said.

The boat has been inspected by a marine surveyor and a diesel mechanic and is in pretty good shape, but does need new engines, which they estimated could run \$110,000.

They will complete the purchase once the DBW grant is finalized, which Kelly said should be by the end of the year. The engine work will take a couple of months, so they anticipate it hitting the water in Spring 2021, placing a sense of urgency on the Friends' fundraising efforts.

They will also probably paint it, as currently it is red and white and Morro Bay's colors are blue.

Harbor Patrol Has Been Busy

For the Harbor Patrol, the coronavirus pandemic started out slow, as the team worked out ways to enforce the many restrictions that were initially laid down, including restrictions on fishing that caused the launch ramp to be closed early on.

Then it was opened to allow only SLO County residents to launch boats, a move intended to emphasize social distancing and the shelter-at-home orders.

It was reopened to all shortly after rockfish and salmon seasons opened in April. And now, with the state mostly reopened,

they are super busy.

Kelly explained that people were cooped up for so long that when it started to ease, they had a rush of people going boating, fishing and kayaking and paddle boarding.

"People have been purchasing a lot of equipment," she explained, "because that was something they could go out and do."

Fundraising Already Begun

The Friends group started fundraising with appeals going out on social media, which Travis Ford of Rock Harbor Marketing is handling as the IT guru for the Friends group since it started. They raised some \$10,000 with that first effort, said Luffee.

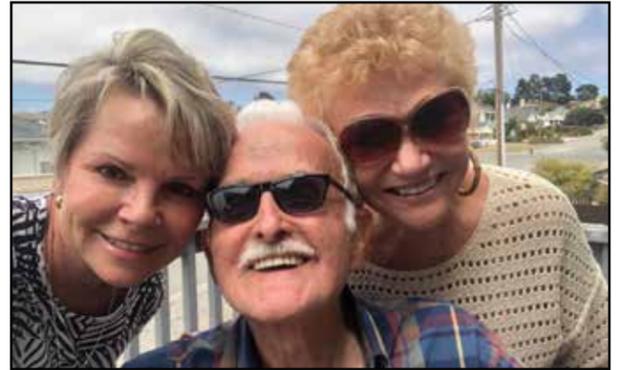
According to a news release, "Morro Bay Harbor Department's jurisdiction is comprised of some of the most notoriously rough waters in California, with 150 days per year of small craft advisory conditions, and an average of 30 days per year of hazardous harbor entrance conditions.

"The harbor department also aids neighboring communities reaching approximately 100 square miles."

If readers would like more information or to donate to the cause, see: www.friendsofthembhd.org/harbor-patrol-boat-fund-raiser or call the Harbor Department at (805) 395-0619. Donations are tax deductible and donations of \$50 or more gets a Friends T-shirt and water bottle.

In Memorandum

Reginald J. Hudson
May 23, 1931 - September 26, 2020



You may have caught a glimpse of Reg as he would bike or walk to one of his two volunteer positions. Twice a week for 16 years he swept floors and emptied trash for the Morro Bay Police Department and the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce.

In June of 2019 his beloved wife of 60 years passed away and going to the "watering hole" (McDonalds) became Reg's daily exercise. He was a fiercely independent man but always enjoyed a lunch, a beer and conversations with friends and neighbors that he cherished. He will be sadly missed by all of us who were fortunate enough to have known him.

The Natural World Learning About Agriculture at the City Farm

By Ruth Ann Angus



Students from the Pacific Beach Continuation High School during Farm Class at City Farm.

Agriculture is a large part of life on the Central Coast of California but may not be well known by most of the population. We see farm fields as we drive down our country roads but know little about life on the farm or how our food is raised. The educational program at City Farms aims to change that.

City Farm SLO is a 19-acre parcel of class-one irrigated farmland located along Highway 101 between the Madonna Shopping Center and Los Osos Valley Road. The property is owned by the City of San Luis Obispo and is managed by the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, City Farm SLO, under the terms of a 20-year lease with the City. Central Coast Grown subleases separate parcels of the City Farm property to four small independent organic farmers.

Farmers supply fresh organic produce to farmers' markets, restaurants, the SLO Food Coop, SLO Veg and the San Luis Coastal Unified School District's Food Services, which serves City Farm vegetables in school lunches.

Teresa Lees is an educator with the Farm and her passion is Eco Literacy and Eco Farming. Lees has conducted the Farm Class for the past four years. This is a program held for students at Pacific Beach Continuation High School. City Farm has partnered with San Luis Coastal Unified School District to provide at-risk students hands-on twice-weekly classes in planting, harvesting, and cooking crops.

A farm box program began in 2019 with students harvesting, washing, packaging, and marketing the vegetables they grew at the farm that went to 30 satisfied customers four times before classes had to be shut down due to COVID-19. The farm is continuing the farm box program until the students can return and has shifted it to a CSA model whereby shares are prepaid to support future production.

Lees explained that in recent years they held a SLCUSD Prepare Program that was also on hold but now has been granted a special waiver for in-person classes and the first one was held in September for Therapeutic Horticulture. She will also be starting an after-school program on Fridays called Family Fun on the Farm.

Since the suspension of most classes, production on the



Educator Teresa Lees and a volunteer erect a pole for a pergola at City Farm between the Madonna Shopping Center and Los Osos Valley Road

one-sixth acre School Garden has increased. They have harvested a total of 2,361 pounds of trimmed organic vegetables and 681 pounds have been donated to the San Luis Coastal Unified School District, Food Bank, and Salvation Army. Retail sales through the Farm Box Program has resulted in 1,680 pounds of vegetables sold and wholesale to the school district's food services, the Avila Valley Barn, and the SLO Food Coop.

Another offering at City Farm is the Global Family Farm and the Family Educational Garden. Here elementary students and their families can learn about worldwide food cultures and food cultivation methods. At City Farm they believe "we are all part of one family," and they demonstrate with this program that brings people to the farm to participate in co-creating the "commons" of sharing global horticulture, permaculture, agriculture, and indigenous culture. They promote global unity and permaculture design principles by growing food crops from the four corners of the globe through regenerative agriculture techniques. With seasonal community farm celebrations and volunteer projects, the public can join these endeavors aimed at bringing indigenous food cultures into the lives of local families.

The striking bounty of this summer's harvests shows that the farm's experiment with improving soil health and sequestering carbon is now working. Rather than rototilling, disking, or digging, they have covered the heavy clay dirt with soaked cardboard and planted directly into a thick application of compost, allowing soil microbes to do their work undisturbed and enriched.

The farm's no-till technique has been used successfully by tenants Katie iKard and Teresa Lees and is also advocated by Cal Poly professors of soil ecology, Charlotte DeCock and of agroecology, Nicolas Babin, who visited City Farm in July. It has been supported by an "Existing Activity Payment" just awarded by the National Resources Conservation Service thanks to assistance by Soil Conservationist Cheryl Zelus and her staff.



Produce from City Farm.

Despite the ravages of COVID-19, the school gardens and suburban farms are burgeoning. The public is invited to visit and take home a bag of veggies. Sign-ups are done at the website for scheduling, small-group, socially distanced, face-covered one-hour walking tours. Group size is limited to six people. All attendees need to wear a face covering. Learn more and RSVP at cityfarmslo.org/events.

You can learn more on their website at www.cityfarmslo.org. You can also call 805-769-8344.

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Arby Kitzman

local Avocado Grower

“Morro Bay needs a leader who brings a balanced approach and uses common sense when it comes to the tough issues - that’s John, he’s a consensus builder.

It’s time we come together to find the solutions.”

Paul Donnelly

Former Morro Bay Councilmember & past member

Water Reclamation Facility Citizens Advisory Committee

“John is running for Mayor to serve the people of Morro Bay. He’s honest, he has integrity and a long history of giving back to our community.”

Grace Poletti

95 years young Morro Bay Resident & Volunteer

“John Weiss has been a long-time friend of the fishermen and will work with us to help protect and conserve Morro Bay’s fishing industry for future generations.”

Jeremiah O’Brien

Morro Bay Fisherman

To see a list of endorsements, please visit the campaign website at www.johnweissmayorformorrobay.com



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