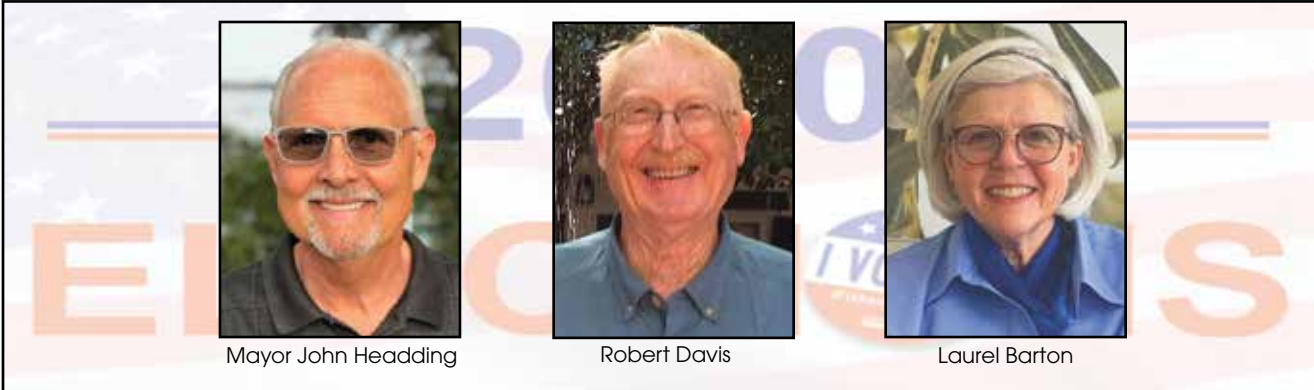


## Heading, Davis and Barton Lead on Election Night

By Neil Farrell



Mayor John Heading

Robert Davis

Laurel Barton

Morro Bay voters appear in early results to be returning the Mayor for a second, 2-year term, re-electing one councilman, and choosing a new councilwoman in election night results announced by the county elections office.

With 68.41% of the votes counted — 5,562 of the 8,174 ballots that were mailed out — Mayor John Heading leads challenger John Weiss 52.76% to 47.22% (2,764 to 2,474) and appears headed for a second 2-year term.

Incumbent Councilman Robert Davis appears headed for re-election with 28.02% (2,528 votes), with newcomer Laurel Barton leading for the other open seat with 27.82% (2,510) of the vote.

Other challengers Betty Winholtz (22.56%, 2,035) and Richard Sadowski (21.59%, 1,948) appear to have their bids falling short.

And in what may be the most visible race in Morro Bay, the Measure E-20 sales tax increase is heading towards approval with 60.02% “Yes” to 39.98% “No.” If numbers hold, Morro Bay’s local sales tax rate will go from one-half percent to 1.5 percent.

Incumbent 24th District Congressman Salud Carbajal looks to be running away with his re-election bid, leading Republican challenger Andy Caldwell 58.43% (65,744) to 41.57% (46,776) with 62.54% of the votes counted in SLO County. All of Santa Barbara County and a slice of coastal Ventura County are also part of the 24th District.

In the race for State Assembly 35th District, with 62.54% (115,101 votes counted of 184,050 total ballots mailed) Republican Assemblyman Jordan Cunningham narrowly leads challenger, Democrat Dawn Addis, 50.35% to 49.65% (56,065 votes to 55,294).

Voters from Northern Santa Barbara County — Santa Maria, Lompoc and Guadalupe — are included in the 35th Assembly District, and will apparently decide the winner.

In the Cayucos Sanitary District, three people ran for two seats and two incumbents lead the race. At press time, Hannah Millar had 44.66% of the vote (882), and Robert Enns had 40.25% (795). John Drayer had 15.09% (298).

In the Cambria CSD race, with 75.54% of the votes counted (3,398 of the 4,498 mailed ballots) incumbent Harry Farmer leads (30.40%, 2,140) with Karen Dean second (27.40%, 1,929) and Tom Gray third (22.26%, 1,560). David Pierson appears headed for defeat with 19.99% (1,407). Top three will win seats.

It should be noted that results reported here are as of Tuesday night, with unknown numbers of ballots left to count, as California’s 100% mail-in ballot election plays itself out.

Final results are not expected for a few weeks, as the county elections office continues counting ballots. The local election will be official when the Board of Supervisors certifies it.

Morro Bay City Council terms of office run through Dec. 8, and the City Clerk and City Council must certify the election, as well. City Clerk Dana Swanson said they had not yet decided how to handle the swearing in and transfer of power, normally an occasion for celebration. The coronavirus pandemic response makes this a strange new world.

Swanson said, “That’s a topic of discussion for cities around the state and staff will present some options to the incoming mayor on how to do that in a virtual world. We anticipate the council will certify the results at the December 8 regular meeting, and swearing in will either be done virtually at that same meeting, or at an in-person event on, or after, that date.” She added that they would release the details “as more information becomes available.”

## County Shines With Solar Program

By Neil Farrell



The County has finished much of the construction on a 1.2 megawatt solar farm off Oklahoma Avenue that will help power some 12 County facilities, including the various jails, saving over \$5 million over 20 years. Photo by Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County is in the midst of a significant turn to renewable energy systems, installing solar energy and battery facilities at key County-owned sites with an eye at saving millions in energy costs and considerably cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

County Energy and Water Coordinator, Annie Secrett, has been leading these efforts that have taken advantage of State energy programs, requiring little or no investment from the County. She’s produced significant results in a relatively short time.

In June 2018, County Supervisors approved installing carport/canopy style solar panels at Dairy Creek Golf Course in El Chorro Regional Park and at the Department of Social Services on Higuera Street in SLO.

In May 2019, Supervisors approved a 1.2-megawatt solar farm on Oklahoma Avenue (off Hwy 1) that is forecast to save millions over time.

And five battery projects in conjunction with Tesla and under a State program have been approved, including one at the County Health Agency at Johnson and Bishop in SLO, and across the street at the Public Health Building.

And in September, the Supervisors approved so-called “Power Pack Systems” made by Tesla, Inc. be installed at the Lake Nacimiento Intake Pump Station, the Rocky Canyon Pump Station, and the Lopez Water Treatment Plant under the “California Self-Generation Incentive Program,” or SGIP.

Solar Continued on page 15

## Covid-19: Casey Kelso’s Legends of Morro Bay: Another Small Business Survival Story

By Judy Salamacha

Warning! Moose sighting inside the watering hole at Main & Harbor Streets, Morro Bay, CA! No worry — it’s only Bull-Twinkle. Authorities have restricted his on-guard duties at Legends, the historically themed bar, for at least seventeen years.

The five star post on Yelp by Los Angeles visitor Robby D., included, “Awesome looking bar with a giant moose over the center of it! I’ve seen a lot of moose heads in my day and this was by far the biggest!”

Owner Casey Kelso rescued her treasured moose from Santa Maria. A holiday whimsy became his identity forevermore. However, the true guardian of Casey’s “social club” is her best friend Nellie, now an angel after crossing the rainbow bridge. The Saint Bernard’s portrait hangs above Bull-Twinkle and watches over Casey as she watches over her regulars and visitors.

“Nellie was with me every day of her life,” said Casey. “She mingled except when she’d wander down to Marie’s dress shop. Folks would ask if Nellie was her dog, then probe Marie where the dog’s owner was. She’d tell them ‘Either at the bar two-doors down or the bar across the street.’ She’d never tell them I owned both bars.” It might be Casey’s favorite Nellie story.

About eighteen years ago, Casey discovered the bar business. She enjoyed the neighborhood familiarity of the 1980-90’s television sitcom series, Cheers, and learned “... to understand how to create an atmosphere where people wanted to be.” When she jumped, she was all-in. Although



Legends owner Casey Kelso and her treasured moose Bull-Twinkle. Photo by Judy Salamacha

Legends Continued on page 15

## Touring Cayucos’ New Plant

Photos and story By Neil Farrell

Work on the Cayucos Sanitary District’s new treatment plant has progressed quickly, with the district expecting to be completed and ready for testing in early 2021, and to go online shortly after that.

CSD General Manager, Rick Koon, and Dylan Wade an engineer with Water Systems Consulting, which designed the \$25 million project, gave this reporter an exclusive tour of the job site, which has come a long ways since breaking ground in August 2018.

Once just a vision, the new facility has the look of a farm, with red buildings trimmed in white, in a rural, indeed bucolic setting amongst farmland on Toro Creek Road.

Koon said the project is still on budget and has seen just 2% in change orders under the contractors, Cushman, Inc. Koon said they have not had to go back to residents for an unscheduled rate change, which they set in 2015 at \$94 a month.

There is another scheduled rate increase coming in July, he explained, that will bump the cost up to \$98 a month.

The CSD has come a long ways in a relatively short period of time. The CSD broke from Morro Bay in April 2015, after the City proposed a new agreement for a new plant that basically called for the CSD to pay 40% of the costs and become a customer of Morro Bay and not a co-owner. It also gave the CSD zero control over the waste-

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## Council Approves Final Vacation Rental Law

By Neil Farrell



The Morro Bay City Council has approved an ordinance regulating so-called short-term or vacation rentals (VRs), setting rules for occupancy, density and numbers of licenses, in a process that's taken a couple of years to work through.

On a 4-1 vote with Councilman Jeff Heller dissenting, the Council set the number of VR licenses at 175; set the business license fees at \$200-\$300; and put in a requirement that each licensed VR must pay the City a minimum of \$500 a year in transient occupancy taxes, among other rules.

Normally, the City gets 10% of the cost of a room night and the \$500 minimum charge is to ensure the City gets TOT money out of those who only rent out their homes occasionally, but still hold a license.

The final ordinance approved Oct. 27 was much the same as first presented to the Council on Oct. 13, plus the handful changes agreed upon on the 13th.

One of the biggest questions was whether or not a VR license runs with the land or the homeowner? In essence the question is whether a person who owns a licensed VR can sell them together to someone who would then take over operating the rental?

City Manager Scott Collins told Estero Bay News that the two are inseparable. "The license tracks with the land and the owner," he said. "If either of those things changes, the license no longer exists."

However, Collins said, the new owner of the home is free to apply for a new license, and if there were none available he or she would have to go on a waiting list.

That's different than how San Luis Obispo County has approached this aspect of the VR question. In the County, such a license is considered an "entitlement" that runs with the land no matter who owns it. Under that scenario, taking away the license could be construed as a "taking" of property.

Collins said just one person brought up the issue at the meeting and the City Attorney does not believe it would be a taking because the license has to be renewed every year and can be revoked for non-compliance with the ordinance.

The ordinance also sets the magic number of licenses at 175, down from the 250 that was set a few years ago when a different City Council voted in an emergency ordinance, as VRs were seemingly popping up all over town.

But Collins said the City currently has about 240 licenses, and the number would be reduced through attrition.

So-called "home share" rentals, booked through websites like AirBnB and where the homeowner remains on the premises, will not need a VR license.

Instead they would pay for a regular business license from the City and also pay a minimum of \$500 a year (in TOT).

Collins said there are about 40 of those right now, so the actual number of licensed VRs is closer to 200, making it a little easier for winnowing down to 175.

Still, he said it might take a few years to get down to the 175-limit through attrition. He also predicted that with the overall fees approaching \$1,000 a year, a lot might drop out of the market.

And fees are likely to continue to rise, as Collins said they plan to hire someone to oversee the program and that person's salary and benefits will come out of the fees.

"The fees are likely to go up substantially," Collins said. "That will probably push some people out."

Also, in that scenario of a sale of an existing, licensed VR, the new owner would have to adhere to all the other restrictions in the law, density in particular.

Each VR must be at least 175-feet away from other licensed VRs.

Also, VRs are prohibited in multi-family developments (apartment complexes, mobile home parks) located in residential zones, and a "one-eighths rule" applies for those in commercial and mixed-use zones. So one of every eight apartments in a complex located in a commercial area could be a licensed VR.

But any current VRs in this circumstance are grandfathered in, and are able to continue to operate, but if the license lapses, all the restrictions apply.

And secondary dwellings or granny units can be licensed as VRs but also come under the 175 cap. However, someone can't put up a new granny unit intending to turn it into a VR. And density restrictions also apply.

It should be noted that VRs located in commercial zoned areas like Downtown, Quintana Road and the Embarcadero do not come under the density rules, which only apply in residential zones.

Asked if he is worried the City will be sued over the ordinance, Collins pointed out that the City formed a committee that included VR managers and owners as well as residents and the council adopted about 75% of the recommendations they made.

In the Resolution adopting the new ordinance (No. 640) under "Purpose" the law reads, "In the adoption of these standards the City Council finds that short-term vacation rentals support the City's significant tourism industry, but also have the potential to be incompatible with surrounding residential uses, especially when several are concentrated in the same area, as they can have a deleterious effect on the adjacent full-time residents, and may alter the character of the neighborhoods within which they are located. To that end, the City Council with this Ordinance is adopting density limitations in residential zones, a permit scheme, and operational standards that strike the balance between these interests."

The City's final ordinance will now be sent to the Coastal Commission for review and approval. Collins had no idea when that might happen, and until it does, the emergency ordinance remains in effect.

## Advisory Board Applications Being Taken

Morro Bay residents tired of shaking their fist at City Hall can take an active role in the City government and apply for an open position on its various boards and commissions.

The City Clerk's Office released a list of open positions and is asking people who want to apply to do so before the Dec. 31 deadline.

Open positions are: two seats on the Planning Commission; one seat on the Citizen's Oversight/Finance Committee; five seats on the Public Works Advisory Board; and two seats on the Recreation & Parks Commission.

The City also has five representative seats on the Harbor Advisory Board — one must be from a marine oriented business, one member at large, and one must be from the Commercial Fishermen's Organization (plus an alternate).

The Tourism Advisory Board has three seats — two hoteliers-at-large positions and one from a hotel with 50-rooms or less.

Also, the City is looking for someone to represent Morro Bay on the Council of Government's "Citizen Transportation Advisory Committee" (CTAC).

Each position carries different responsibilities and meeting schedules. Applications and eligibility requirements are available on the City Clerk's webpage or call (805) 772-6568 or email to: cityclerk@morrobayca.gov.

The City Council is expected to interview applicants sometime in mid-January. Terms begin at the end of January.

## State Water Shut Down



Water might taste different for a while; the State Water Project has shut down for its annual maintenance.

If Morro Bay residents' drinking water tastes a little off, that's because the State Water Project has shut down for its annual maintenance, leaving the City to fire up its groundwater wells.

This year's shutdown comes early as the City announced that State Water would not be available from Oct. 29 through Nov. 20.

During the shutdown, the City will use its groundwater wells from the Morro Creek groundwater aquifer. The wells are aligned on the east side of Lila Keiser Park and that water is sent through the City's desalination plant just up the street on Atascadero Road.

Thought the City has dismantled the seawater side of the plant and no longer has the ability to desalinate the water from its wells along the Embarcadero, it still is able to clean up the Morro Creek well water, which is high in nitrates, through reverse osmosis.

"The water from these wells," a City news release reads, "will be filtered and treated prior to distribution at the City's "Brackish Water Reverse Osmosis" [BWRO] treatment plant to reduce nitrate levels and provide disinfection."

The City is also changing the disinfection method with the well water, switching from the "combined chlorine" method used by the State to "free chlorine" method, so the water is likely to have a bleachy taste and could be discolored for a short time. (If water looks brownish, let it run through the tap until it clears again.)

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"The water department staff will be performing additional testing and hydrant flushing during this time to ensure distributed water meets all treatment and drinking water standards," the City said.

Readers can call Environmental Programs Manager Damaris Hanson at (805) 772-6265 or Utilities Division Manager Joe Mueller at (805) 772-6300 with questions.

## Rock Climber Gives Police the Slip

By Neil Farrell



In Summer 1991, the late-Huell Howser and a cameraman were led to the top of Morro Rock by State Park Ranger John Tramner (now retired) for an episode of Howser's TV show, 'California's Gold.' (This photo is a screen shot from that episode.) On Oct. 17, a man was spotted, illegally climbing Morro Rock, but apparently gave authorities the slip despite searches that included a CHP helicopter and police drone.

A man seen climbing Morro Rock apparently gave authorities the slip despite searches by a Highway Patrol helicopter and police drones.

According to MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins, they got the report of a man on the Rock about 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17. And while most people they catch climbing the Rock are happy for assistance getting back down, this guy wasn't.

"The usual rock climbing suspect," Cmdr. Watkins said, "enjoys the climb and then returns to earth once fire and state park personnel meet them at the top. This person decided to hide from fire and state parks and was refusing to comply with orders to climb down. At one point he was taunting harbor patrol."

Officials searched the Rock for a couple of hours with a helicopter flying around, but the man apparently has a good hiding spot. But he may also be wanted by police.

"After the sun had gone down," Cmdr. Watkins said, "P.D. received information that the subject who climbed the Rock may have been a wanted person related to a violent crime in another SLO County city. The Rock was shut down and numerous P.D. drone flights were conducted to try and locate the subject at night."

Next morning, the search continued. "At first light," Cmdr. Watkins said, "PD again launched our drone to look for the suspect with negative results. Public safety was our main concern until we could be comfortable with the idea that the suspect most likely made it down the Rock prior to sundown on Saturday night."

"The climber is still under investigation. We did get some early pictures of him and will be looking into the situation."

Climbing Morro Rock violates a law passed in the early 1970s, declaring the Rock a Landmark and sanctuary for peregrine falcons, and putting it off limits along with several other sites in California. The falcons were on the endangered species list for many years and have since been removed. But the falcons remain protected under the Predatory Bird Act. The Rock is also a nesting ground for numerous bird species.

Fines are big for this offense and include the costs of rescuers, including the CHP helicopter and fire department, and can reach thousands of dollars.

How many people climb the Rock every year is unknown but authorities catch 6-7 a year.

If anyone is curious about what it's like at the top of the 576-foot volcanic plug, they can go to the "California's Gold" website and pull up an episode from July 1991, when show host, the late-Huell Howser and a cameraman, climbed the Rock for the show escorted by now-retired Park Ranger, John Tramner (see: <https://blogs.chapman.edu/huell-howser-archives/1991/07/01/natural-wonders-californias-gold-211>).

Four people are known to have fallen and died climbing the monolith over the past 28 years, with one determined to be a suicide.

## Boy Drowns in Lake Nacimiento

A teen-aged boy recently drowned in Lake Nacimiento while swimming with family members in relatively shallow water.

At about 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 4, the Sheriff's Office got a 9-1-1 call of a possible drowning victim in the lake near

an area known as the resort ramp.

"Deputies responded to the scene along with Cal Fire," said Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla in a news release. "Witnesses reported the 14-year-old boy was swimming with his family when the boy suddenly appeared to be in distress and went under the water."

Bystanders tried to rescue him but Cipolla said they were unable to locate him in what can be very murky waters.

"Divers from the Sheriff's Underwater Search and Recovery Team located the boy at approximately 3:30 p.m. in approximately 12-feet of water," Cipolla said.

The Coroner's Office identified him as Jonathan Barqueta, 14 of Santa Maria. An autopsy was to be performed to pinpoint the cause of death. Those results had not been released by deadline.

## Thieves Scam County Jail

Online cyber thieves have been scamming the relatives of jailed inmates and the Sheriff's Office is warning the public to beware.

According to a news release from Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, "The Sheriff's Office has recently received complaints regarding an unauthorized website related to placing online commissary orders for those currently in County Jail."

The scammers are using a website whose address is very similar to the real online commissary for the County Jail, which is confusing the public.

"The approved website," Cipolla said, "is run by the Aramark Corporation and allows the public to buy snacks and goods online for those who are currently in the County Jail." The correct web address is: [shop.icaregifts.com](http://shop.icaregifts.com) and will allow the purchase of items for delivery to the incarcerated.

The phony web address is: [icaregiftsonline.net](http://icaregiftsonline.net) and is not approved for commissary items at the jail but will likely steal your money and obtain your credit card information, too.

To avoid the scammers, readers can go to the County Jail's website at: [slosheriff.org](http://slosheriff.org) and click on the "Who Is In Custody" icon. Type in the name of the inmate, and then click on "Order commissary items for this inmate," which is highlighted in the upper right hand side of the page, and follow directions.

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## Featured Listings


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[www.431Luzon.com](http://www.431Luzon.com)

Three bedroom, two bath plus bonus room. Entertaining is easy in the remodeled kitchen featuring granite counter tops, a breakfast bar and a gourmet Wolf stove. Located at the end of a very quiet street near Del Mar Park. Close to the beach, shopping and restaurants. \$750,000


**Great Price** Los Osos



**Bay View Lot**

Enjoy gorgeous views of Morro Rock and Bay from your custom home on a quiet cut-de-sac near the Elfin Forest. Number 8 on the county's priority list for building. \$225,000

**Sold** Morro Bay



[www.centralcoastsales.com](http://www.centralcoastsales.com)

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## Police Arrest Suspected Car Burglar

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay police arrested a man suspected of trying to break into cars, who tried to skate by claiming to be a bounty hunter.

MBPD Cmdr. Amy Watkins told Estero Bay News that at 12:10 p.m. Monday, Oct. 5 police were called to the 900 block of Main near the Tacos de Mexico Restaurant for a man reportedly trying to break into several parked vehicles.

"When officers contacted the suspect," Cmdr. Watkins said, "he showed objective symptoms of being under the influence of a controlled substance and also possessed narcotics paraphernalia."

When they interviewed the man, the suspect, identified as Juan Carlos Guadarrama, 30, gave what is suspected to be a phony story.

"While speaking to the officers," Cmdr. Watkins said, "Guadarrama stated he was a bounty hunter since 2010 and was still operating as such. He had a badge in his pocket that was clearly fake and told officers he was working as a bounty hunter."

Police didn't buy the story. "Officers determined he was using the badge and the bounty hunter story to address people while he broke into cars," Cmdr. Watkins said. "He also had tools we typically find on car thieves and burglars. So Mr. Guadarrama went to jail."

He was charged with suspicion of impersonating a peace officer, possession of suspected burglary tools and possession of drug paraphernalia.

## Morro Bay Hires Interim Finance Director

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay has hired the former City Manager of San Luis Obispo to pinch hit for its departed finance director while it searches for a new, full-time money manager.

Former Finance Director (and acting Public Works director) Jennifer Callaway left Morro Bay Oct. 23 for a job as Town Manager in Truckee, Calif. Callaway had been with the City since October 2017, taking over for former Finance Director, Greg Smollinger, who quit suddenly that summer after



Katie Lichtig is Morro Bay's interim finance director.

a family crisis forced him to return to San Diego, where he is originally from.

City Manager Scott Collins began recruitment for a new finance director soon after Callaway announced she was leaving, and also started looking for someone to fill in until her position is filled.

On Oct. 27 the City Council approved a contract to

hire Katie Lichtig, who earlier this year retired from the City of Santa Monica after decades in government.

Lichtig was City Manager in SLO from January 2010 to September 2017 and worked in Malibu before that. She left SLO for the Assistant City Manager/Chief Operating Officer job in Santa Monica.

She had announced her retirement after some 35 years

## News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

### Veterans Day Service Canceled

The traditional Veterans Day program at Los Osos Valley Memorial Park & Mortuary is canceled due to pandemic concerns and restrictions.

"We are very sad that we are not able to hold our Veterans Day event this year," said Office Manager Olivia Martinez. "Honoring our veterans is very important to us at the Memorial Park."

Although the day will be one of individual observances rather than gatherings, the Memorial Park will continue to honor those who served in the United States Armed Forces.

"We wanted to find another way to give back this year," said Martinez. "We will be making a donation to the Central Coast Leathernecks, they do the majority of our military honor services in our cemetery. The Honor Guard is a volunteer organization and does not charge the veteran's families for the services. We were also put in touch with the organization 860 on the Wye, the only veterans housing in the county. They just recently housed a veteran in need, so we decided to help contribute. We will be delivering this veteran a basket full of household/cleaning supplies to help him get set up in his new home."

The Los Osos Valley Memorial Park & Mortuary is located at 2260 Los Osos Valley Road. They can be reached at 805-528-1500.

To find out more about the 860 on the Wye, contact the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo at [haslo.org](http://haslo.org).

### Cuesta Online for Spring

Cuesta College's lecture classes and student support programs for the Spring 2021 semester, starting Jan. 19, 2021 will be delivered online to maintain the campus community's health and safety. A small percentage of difficult-to-convert courses with a laboratory component or activities that require in-person meetings will be held on campus with strict safety protocols, including daily health screenings, the wearing of masks, and physical distancing.

"We look forward to the full return to campus, but we will continue our current protocols to prioritize the wellbeing of our campus community and to provide a safe learning environment," said Dr. Jill Stearns, Cuesta College superintendent / president. "We want to ensure that our students are fully supported as they complete their educational goals."

Cuesta College continues to plan for an extended duration of the coronavirus pandemic in collaboration with local and state public health agencies and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. A mostly online spring semester follows the implementation of the Fall 2020 Safe Reopening Plan.

### County Gets Funding for Safety

The County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department was awarded two grants for a total of \$215,000 from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to continue their programs aimed at preventing deaths and injuries on roadways. The grants will fund best practice strategies to address child passenger safety and pedestrian and bicycle safety in the county.

"The Office of Traffic Safety grants will provide coordination, collaboration, and education to individuals in the community about the importance of child safety seats, pedestrian and bicycle safety, and the dangers of driving under the influence, with a particular focus on reaching youth and young adults," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, county health officer. "The efforts will help achieve the County's vision of a healthy and safe community."

### Libraries Mailing to Seniors

County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries are now offering Library by Mail (LBM) service for home-bound seniors 60 and over.

LBM is a free service that connects seniors to library materials like books (including large print), audiobooks and more without having to leave their homes. The library will ship their selected items via USPS in special heavy-duty bags with the postage paid both ways.

"The Adult Services Department is excited to launch Library by Mail," said Sharon Coronado, coordinating librarian, adult services "This free service brings the library to seniors who can't visit one of our locations or use the library through traditional service methods. I love connecting people to library resources and I've been concerned about our senior patrons who may be isolated, especially during the pandemic. LBM gives us a chance to serve our seniors on a deeper level, to help them know services available from their local library, and to provide a lifeline through stories."

To apply for LBM service, call Sharon Coronado at 805-781-4187. More information and FAQ are at [slolibrary.org](http://slolibrary.org) under the "Adults" tab.

### County Seeks Mask Donations

San Luis Obispo County is asking for help from folks who can sew cloth face masks so they can be donated to those in need.

SLO County Health Department said it would distribute homemade donated cloth masks at local food bank distribution centers "in COVID-19 prevention kits for farm workers, and to residents who can't readily make or purchase their own," the County said in a news release.

Mask makers can drop off their donations at several locations on the North Coast, including: 201 Cayucos Dr., at the Cayucos Fire Station; 2099 10th St., Los Osos at the Sheriff's Substation; and 4671 Broad St., San Luis Obispo at the Cal Fire Station by the airport.

The county will be accepting donated facemasks through Friday, Nov. 20.

Do you know how to sew but not how to make a face mask? The County recommends a pair of websites with tutorials, see: <https://youtu.be/6gcLp0y-Mfg> or [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)

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of public service in early 2020 but pushed it back in light of the Coronavirus Pandemic response, officially retiring this past June 1.

She is joining the City as a “retired annuitant” while Collins searches for a permanent director.

Collins’ staff report indicates that Lichtig is coming aboard under a set system for Cal-PERS retirees. Figuring out what she’ll be paid involved a specific formula.

“Under CalPERS guidelines,” Collins said, “the compensation paid to retirees cannot be less than the minimum nor exceed the maximum monthly base salary paid to other employees performing comparable duties, divided by 173.333 to equal the hourly rate and, also, cannot receive any other benefit, incentive, compensation in lieu of benefit or other form of compensation in addition to this hourly pay rate.”

Essentially, Collins said Lichtig would receive only a salary of \$67 an hour and no other benefits, which he said would save the City some \$1,800 a month. Money for the position is already included in the current City budget.

Collins said Lichtig, “has specialized skills in the area of municipal finance, and maintaining continuity of leadership and financial skill sets at this top finance position is especially critical now as the City continues to weather the financial impacts wrought by COVID-19.

“Ms. Lichtig’s experience of leading cities through financially challenging times will serve the City and community of Morro Bay well over the next several months.”

Collins said his recruitment for a new finance director would need to be completed by May 31, when Lichtig’s contract would automatically terminate under Cal-PERS rules.

The basic contract terms for Lichtig include a limit of 960 total hours of work, though the City can override that in an emergency, as per Gov. Gavin Newsome’s executive order (No. N-25-20).

The contract starts Nov. 2 and automatically expires Nov. 1, 2021, “unless a permanent finance director begins working for the City before that date,” Collins said.

Lichtig would be an at-will, exempt employee, Collins said. “The agreement could be terminated by either party at any time and would automatically terminate upon the commencement of a permanent Finance Director.”

Collins said the City has already “submitted a request for waiver of the work hour limitations to the California Department of Human Resources, as required by the order and the request was processed and forwarded to CalPERS.

“The intent is to request a waiver of the 960 hour requirement preemptively, as it is anticipated she will be doing work directly related to the COVID-19 emergency and should her work on COVID-19 related issues eventually require her to exceed the 960-hour limit that would otherwise apply.”

As for Callaway’s position as Public Works Director, which she took over just a few months prior with an eye at restructuring the department, was also temporarily filled when Utilities Director Joe Mueller was named interim public works director.

## County COVID Numbers Looking Positive

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County continues to record new coronavirus cases, but hospitalizations are seemingly not a problem right now and the deaths have slowed.

But despite that good news, the Governor’s guidelines for social gatherings might make for an un-Happy Thanksgiving.

SLO County reported 33 new COVID positive patients on the Oct. 30. We continue to fall under the Governor’s “Red Tier” for infections, which translates to a “substantial” number of cases.

But that level is below the most serious “Purple Tier” of the “Blueprint for a Safer Economy,” the latest set of criteria put out by the State Health Department governing societal behavior during the coronavirus pandemic response.

The four colors of the chart correspond with varying levels of reopening of the economy that a county can have.

### County’s Numbers Look Good

Though we continue to see additional cases through testing of potential COVID-19 patients, the numbers aren’t as alarming.

According to the County Health Department, as of Oct. 30 the county had reached a total of 4,298 cases of COVID-19 since last April 1, with 4,074 people fully recovered and 189 active cases of the virus. Some 182 people are recovering at home and 33 new cases were reported on Oct. 30. The death toll stands at 32.

There are 369 hospital beds available countywide and only seven were occupied with COVID patients, according to the County (see: ReadySLO.org). Of the 53 intensive care unit beds available, only three had COVID patients.

Among the 206 people hospitalized since the pandemic started there have been 22, aged 85-over with 19 deaths; 69, ages 65-84 with six dead; 45, ages 50-64 and four deaths; 53, ages 30-49 and three deaths; 14, ages 18-29 with zero deaths; and three under-17, again with no deaths.

The County has had 42 people admitted to the ICU since April.

### Cases Locally Remain Low

Cases for the Estero Bay Communities of Morro Bay, Los Osos and Cayucos remain among the lowest in SLO County.

According to County stats, Los Osos has reported 65 total cases since April; Morro Bay has had 66; and Cayucos 19. Cambria has reached 36 cases and San Simeon six.

By contrast, Paso Robles has had 1,980 cases to lead the county, and San Luis Obispo 847. Atascadero is third with 411 and Nipomo fourth with 366.

The California Men’s Colony State Prison has reported 294 cases among its thousands of inmates and employees, and Cal Poly, which is operating at about 10% capacity with most classes online, had 54 cases among those living or working on campus.

### Those 18-29 Have Most Cases

Though their death toll has been literally zero, those 18-29 registered the most cases, with some 1,458, according to the County’s stats. Folks 30-49 are second with 1,333 and 50-64 has had 715 cases reported.

There have been 312 cases in the 65-84 range and just 67 for 85-over, but the deaths among these folks — with 19 to date — clearly shows what experts have been saying, that the elderly are the most vulnerable for bad outcomes with the virus.

Those 17-under have had 412 cases.

### Hispanics Lead in Cases

According to County stats, Hispanics recorded the most cases with 1,981, some 46% of the total even though they make up 23% of the population.

Whites (non-Hispanic) were second with 1,538 cases, some 36% of the total, even though they make up 65% of the population.

African Americans have had 79 cases for 2% of the total. Blacks make up 2% of the population, too.

Asians have had 69 cases, some 1.6% with just 4% of the population.

“Multiracial” people have had 49 cases, 1% of the total with 3.6% of the population.

Why are Hispanics leading the list? According to the County, “Case investigations have noted many of these individuals serve as essential workers, often in roles where physical distancing is difficult. In addition, multi-generational households have made isolation in some circumstances difficult. The County Public Health Department is working with local community groups to increase outreach and address the needs of the Hispanic/Latino members of our community.”

### Construction Workers Lead

The County has broken down COVID cases by occupation with construction workers/craftsmen leading with 636 cases.

Higher education workers have had 539 cases and there’ve been 459 among the unemployed.

Childcare workers have had 394 cases; 387 amongst office workers; 317 among the retired; and 312 in the “unknown” category.

Some 293 incarcerated people have gotten the virus and 247 work in food service. Some 237 cases fall under

the health care and dental category; 170 work in agriculture; 150 professional and technical workers; and 154 first responders (police and firefighters).

Three veterinary workers, two military recruiters or trainees, and one animal control worker have caught the virus.

Ironically, there are no cases reported among barbers or hair stylists, which have both been shut down repeatedly.

### People Sharing the Virus

According to the County, so-called “person-to-person” is the way 43% of the cases they’ve been able to trace have been spread. The County defines person-to-person as, “The case is related to the patient’s contact with a known case.”

Community spread, which the County defines as, “The case is not travel-related nor related to contact with a known case,” with 23% of the cases. Travel, defined as “The case is related to the patient’s recent travel outside the county,” makes up 5% and the second largest category — “Under investigation” — makes up 29% of the cases.

So how is this being spread? The County said, “While this may change over time, most cases with a known source in SLO County are currently related to contact with a known case, often at social or family gatherings.”

### Thanksgiving in Jeopardy

Though he hasn’t yet come out with specific guidelines for Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations, nor any the other holidays, the Governor did issue guidelines for family gatherings.

The Governor’s guidelines cover private gatherings that bring together people from different households at the same time in a single space or place have gotten widespread criticism across the state. Gov. Newsome’s restrictions on social gatherings involve attendance, location, behaviors, singing, chanting, shouting and live music.

According to the County, anyone planning to host or participate in a private gathering must comply with the following requirements:

- **Keep it outside;**
- **Keep it small (no more than three households present at one time);**
- **Don’t attend if you feel sick or are in a high-risk group;**
- **Practice physical distancing and hand hygiene (wash your hands frequently);**
- **Wear a face covering to keep COVID-19 from spreading; and,**
- **Keep it brief.**

Gov. Newsome did say that he would issue new rules specifically for Thanksgiving and other holiday gatherings, but those hadn’t been released before deadline.

### Social Distancing Reimagined

The State has changed its definition for how much contact people should have to lower their risk of infection.

The State now says, “Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset [or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection] until the time the patient is isolated.”

The State now says for purposes of tracing cases, that “individual exposure” is calculated by the time two people spend in “close contact,” over a 24-hour period.

In other words, spend just 5 minutes with someone, three times in a single day (24 hours), and you’re considered to have been exposed.

Put another way, “15 cumulative minutes of exposure at a distance of 6 feet or less can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation,” according to the State.

And if you think a facemask saves you, it really doesn’t. “Because the general public has not received training on proper selection and use of respiratory PPE [personal protective equipment], such as an N95, the determination of close contact should generally be made irrespective of whether the contact was wearing respiratory PPE. At this time, differential determination of close contact for those using fabric face coverings is not recommended.”

For local information, State guidelines and updated statistics on COVID cases in SLO County, see: ReadySLO.org.



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## Siren Call At Dairy Creek Golf Course

By Neil Farrell



Caption: Jennifer Luedtke takes a swing at the County's new Toptracer Range at Dairy Creek Golf Course that opened about 2 weeks ago and is already wildly popular. Toptracer is a driving range coupled with a virtual reality system that shows where a drive would fly on an imaginary golf course all displayed on a computer screen. There are several different games that can be played on the system.

San Luis Obispo County has awarded a long-term contract for the food and beverage concessions at El Chorro Regional Park, as it is transformed into a more resort-like facility.

Supervisors on Oct. 20 approved a 15-year contract with one, 10-year renewal option to Bread Zeppelins LLC, doing business as The Siren El Chorro for food and beverage services and event management at El Chorro Regional Park and Dairy Creek Golf Course, according to a County Parks staff report.

The Siren El Chorro are the same folks that transformed The Fuel Dock (formerly Happy Jack's Saloon) into The Siren in Downtown Morro Bay, which brought live music concerts to the city and gave Downtown's nightlife an energetic boost, at least until the Coronavirus Pandemic response shut everything down.

The contract is another cog in the transformation of El

Chorro Regional Park, as the County is working on bringing in several new features — zip lines, a dinky golf course, go-cart track, and Toptracer Range among other additions.

The "Programming Plan," which was approved in June 2017, includes making Dairy Creek Golf Course into a 9-hole course instead of 18, and includes expansion of camping with cabins and more.

The idea is to turn the park into more of a family-oriented facility with popular attractions like zip lines, all designed to increase revenues from the park.

In March 2018, Cal Poly won a contract to build the Toptracer Range, a virtual reality golf driving range complex (recently completed), with the County paying some \$741,000 (\$241,000 from golf course reserves, \$300,000 from regional parks reserves, and \$200,000 out of parks facility fees) with Cal Poly pitching in \$200,000 for a total project investment of \$941,000. But the County sees it paying off fairly quickly.

"The addition of the Toptracer Range," County Parks Director Nick Franco said, "is estimated to increase Dairy Creek's revenue by nearly \$250,000 in the first full year of operation and reduce the amount of General Fund subsidy requested annually."

Dairy Creek, built in the early 1990s, is one of three, County-operated public golf courses and the other two are Morro Bay Golf Course and Chalk Mountain in Atascadero.

As with the sport as a whole, the annual number of rounds played is down, but Dairy Creek's main issue has been securing enough irrigation water to keep all 18 holes playable. The Programming Plan arose mainly due to this issue, as Supervisors declined to use Whale Rock Reservoir water — essentially drinking water — to supplement the irrigation needs. Dairy Creek is part of a wastewater recycling system.

The Siren El Chorro was given the contract after the current concessionaire called it quits. "The current concessionaire is no longer interested in continuing to operate," Franco said, "and that contract will be terminated via mutual agreement upon the establishment of a new contract with a new concessionaire."

The Siren El Chorro will develop its food and beverage business in a way that is compatible with the Toptracer Range, according to Franco. "Food and Beverage services are an essential element to operation of Parks' new Toptracer Range facility and ultimately to the overall park experience for our residents and visitors.

"The Departments' goal is to have a concession operator that will best satisfy the needs of the general public and utilize the amenities at Dairy Creek Golf Course with an eye to the future opportunities of El Chorro Regional Park, as proposed by the options within the approved Programming Plan."

Franco told Estero Bay News that the Toptracer Range is now finished and open, but they've held off on a big grand opening until the food and beverages service is up and running.

The kitchen in the clubhouse is still there and will be utilized, and the company has some additional things they want to do before opening. Once they are ready, Franco said the County plans on holding a big grand opening event.

The anticipation is that the food and beverage contract alone will bring \$10,000-\$50,000 a year for County Parks.

As for the other features, Franco said they had to use the money they'd set aside to build the miniature golf course and go-cart track to make up for lost revenues from the virus shutdowns, i.e. closing campgrounds and golf courses for months, then partially reopening, to now being fully reopened but with citizens still under shelter-at-home orders from the Governor.

He said they don't at this time have any leads on where construction money might be found, and once things get back to normal and fully reopened, they'll look for more construction funding.

They are also working on the zip lines with the folks that operate them at Lopez Lake and hope to have that contract finalized soon.

## Audubon Community Program

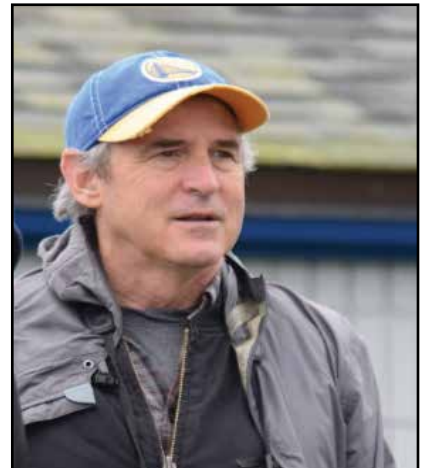


The next Morro Coast Audubon November Community Program is Nov 16 at 7:00 p.m. Pacific via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83569248860?pwd=bGQ-vb0RNeCtydEsvclNad3cyTmZGUT09>  
Meeting ID: 835 6924 8860  
Passcode: 526317

In this program participants can discover the amazing movement patterns of albatross, sharks and other open ocean creatures as Peter Pyle, Institute for Bird Populations wildlife biologist, presents his research on Transpacific Migration. Find out how Pacific Ocean migrants overcome the hardships and risks of long-distance travel through and over inhospitable and food-deprived central Pacific ocean.

The great flights of Black-footed Albatrosses, which come 4000 miles to California to get food for their chicks, will be a primary focus. In addition, he will discuss the fasting of turtles, tuna, Great White Sharks and other marine animals, as well as the surprising over-water journeys of various shore-birds, land birds, insects, and bats, and he will put all



Peter Pyle

of this information into conservation contexts.

Peter worked as a Farallon Island Biologist for 24 years, studying bird, bat, and butterfly migration as well as the habits of the Great White Shark. Peter currently works for the Institute for Bird Populations where he conducts research on changes in the abundance, distribution, and ecology of North and Latin American bird populations. In addition, he is a Research Associate for the California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, and B.P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu. He has also published or co-authored over 120 papers in the scientific literature including "Identification Guide to North American Birds, Parts I and 2" and is an expert on molt of birds.

Peter is an ornithologist and marine biologist. During the late 1970s and early 1980s he partook in the Hawaii, Micronesia, and Samoa Forest Bird Surveys. From the early 1980s through the early 2000s much of his research was conducted on birds and white sharks at the Farallon Islands, California. He has developed a special interest in bird molt and how it can be used to age birds, and has published many papers and taught many workshops on this subject in North and Latin America. Among bird banders, he is best known for his identification guides summarizing molt, ageing, and sexing information for North American birds.

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# Community

## Joan Sullivan Hits 95 Years Young



Our house on 10th street. Nothing on either side

Joan Sullivan was born November 5, 1925 in Jersey City, New Jersey. In 1970, she made her way to Los Osos.

As you may know, or have figured out, Joan Sullivan is my mother, and she's the reason I'm here in Los Osos.

I still today thank her for that move. She originally came for a location painting class and never looked back. She's raised three great kids (ok, two great kids and me), written several books on the area covering Baywood, Los Osos, the California Missions, Hearst Castle and local ranch's history, been part of the local art scene, and been an important part of local newspapers.

My mom was a big help in starting the very first "Bay News". Her joke was she worked for her son, but he didn't

*"I have treasured our adventures driving down country backroads, using your book Rounding Up the Ranches as a guide, in search of local ranches and barns. Never knowing what we will find or who we will meet, but confident in your knowledge of the history of the area and the people to guide us through. And, of course, our mutual love and appreciation for rusted old farm equipment abandoned by the side of the road or in a field overgrown with vegetation, where you always indulge me taking as many photos as I want. Thank you, it has been and will continue to be such a joy to share this experience with you. I look forward to many more to come. With love and appreciation for who you are and what you have given me."*

-Gail, Joan's daughter

*"The family that stays together...gives love and praise together (and we all do) for one terrific lady and constant inspiration to us all ...my sister Joan. I've played a lot of parts in my showbiz career over the years all over the world, but the one that has been the most rewarding is being Joan's brother. More than your extraordinary talent as an artist, you have created a beautiful family that loves you as I do."*

- Jack Betts,

*Joan's brother. Jack calls every night and they talk about their days and check on each other.*

pay very well, and mine was "she was the only one that knew how to type and spell." At 95, she still contributes a column (see "Coffee with Joan").

I have always said that I was raised by strong women. Between my mom, two sisters and my wife, I am in constant awe of what these women accomplish and what they teach me every day. I see it in my daughter too. Never get in their way, not only will they leave you in the dust, but I will be standing behind them watching their backs as they have watched over me.

Happy birthday mom. I am so proud to be your son.

Dean

*"Happy 95th Birthday to my dear, dear friend Joan Sullivan! We have spent so many happy hours together at our Monday morning coffees talking over County history and specifically Los Osos history, we could have written a book about that. Joan's many history books are how we met as I was writing one on Los Osos and wanted to consult with our acknowledged town historian. I guess it was inevitable that two history nuts would be simpatico. If I retain one tenth of Joan's extraordinary knowledge gracefully given over these five years, I will be grateful. Her stories never end about this place. Her artwork, illustrating our county over many years, capturing ranches with now gone barns and homes, is tantalizing and beautiful!"*

- Lynette Tornatzky



O'Brien Ranch Barn

Pastel by Joan Sullivan

When viewing the road from a Los Osos Valley Road vantage point, it's hard to believe that Clark Valley Road is strewn with ranches dating back to the 1800s. Several of these ranches, I was privileged to visit and paint on over the years with the Thursday Painters.

Recently I revisited the O'Brien Ranch, a wholesale nursery. Thanks to David O'Brien, who gave me permission to paint on the ranch. Once again I was taken back in time to the day I enjoyed in the same place, but in 1979. The barns, built in the 1800s, were still in place but a bit more weathered and enhanced by time.

Dr. Floride Frost got the permission for us to visit and paint on the Welsh ranch in 1979. Floride was a local dentist and friend of mine at that time. She was born on the ranch in 1900 and said that Clark Valley was named after Joseph Clark Welsh, her grandfather.

She related, "He was a true Irish gentleman who left Ireland, crossed the ocean by boat, then the Isthmus of Panama by horse and wagon. When traveling in search of a ranch for he and his wife, he reached Los Osos Valley and saw the green hills in spring. It so resembled the green hills of Ireland he knew it would take away his wife's home sickness." And so the Irish Hills were named.

Joseph Clark Welsh paid \$6,000 for the 1,066 acre ranch in 1869. After Floride's grandfather died of the flu in 1918, the family sold the 1000 acre ranch to the Gulartes for \$30,000, and when the Gulartes sold it for \$5,000 an acre they made a \$500,00, Floride said.



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# Police Blotter



## Morro Bay Police Logs

- **Oct. 18:** An officer arrested a stripped bike found abandoned in the 700 block of Quintana.
- **Oct. 17:** Some apparent Illuminutty shattered a huge window at the Family Dollar Store in the 400 block of Quintana, no doubt another satisfied customer.
- **Oct. 17:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 2:20 p.m. in the 300 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated the apparent hipster was allegedly on drugs and his high got pipped at the post.
- **Oct. 16:** Police were called 11:38 p.m. to the 700 block of Quintana where a woman said some unknown, brazen, scoundrel reached into her car and grabbed her fanny pack, which was apparently not attached to her fanny at the time. Police have no leads and are apparently chasing their fannies.
- **Oct. 16:** Police contacted a swizzle stick waltzing up Monterey at Surf at 4:30 p.m. Logs indicated the fellow had allegedly been flexing his beer muscles and was checked into the County B&B to sleep it off.
- **Oct. 16:** Some porch pirate struck at a house in the 200 block of Kern.
- **Oct. 16:** Police responded at noon to a residence in the 500 block of Main, where they contacted a suspicious fellow prowling about. The 54-year-old sneak was arrested for suspicion of trespassing, possession of paraphernalia and being schwacked on drugs, which explains a lot.
- **Oct. 16:** Police responded at 8:40 a.m. to a burglary in the 600 block of Harbor. Logs indicated a 27-year-old dingus was arrested for suspicion of burglary, possessing stolen items including drug paraphernalia.
- **Oct. 16:** Police responded to the City Corp Yard in the 100 block of Atascadero Rd., where some energized thief made off with a City-owned generator. Police have generated no leads.
- **Oct. 15:** Police responded at 11:15 p.m. to a disturbance in the 900 block of Main. Logs indicated a 41-year-old raucous fellow was tossed in the gaol for suspicion of getting deep in his cups.
- **Oct. 15:** Police responded at 6:20 p.m. to a disturbance in the 500 block of Embarcadero. A 65-year-old fellow was cited with a citizen's arrest for suspicion of disturbing the peace, an apparent case of mutiny on the Thai Bounty.
- **Oct. 15:** Police found another orphaned bicycle in the 500 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Earlier they found another unloved bike in the 700 block of Quintana.
- **Oct. 15:** Police towed a car parked too long in the 600 block of Piney Way.
- **Oct. 14:** Two cars collided at 2:15 p.m. at Main and Beach. No word on the carnage. At literally the same time, another crash was reported in the 300 block of Quintana.
- **Oct. 14:** Police responded at 12:24 p.m. to the 1600 block of Main to assist the Sheriff's Department and Child Welfare Services with some undisclosed boggle.
- **Oct. 14:** A disturbance was reported at 9:46 a.m. in the 300 block of Surf. Logs indicated a 58-year-old woman was

- popped for suspicion of belting the grape a tad too hard.
- **Oct. 14:** Police responded at 10:10 a.m. to the 600 block of Embarcadero where someone tripped and landed in a potential lawsuit.
- **Oct. 14:** Police responded to the Harbor Patrol boat-yard down by the creek where some scalawag stole their generator. Again, no leads were generated.
- **Oct. 13:** A citizen in the 800 block of Napa reported the fraudulent use of an EDD unemployment card for a loss of \$6,000.
- **Oct. 14:** A citizen told police that some hoodlum in Las Vegas ran up a big bill on his credit card, in another case possibly related to the recent ID skimmers found at the Sinclair Gas Station, the theft that just keeps on thievin'.
- **Oct. 14:** A car crack-up was reported at 2:15 p.m. in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd.
- **Oct. 13:** Someone in the 600 block of Harbor reported his or her bike was stolen (see items above for possible solutions).
- **Oct. 13:** Police responded to a disturbance at 1:45 p.m. in City Park on Harbor. A 30-year-old fellow was arrested for resisting arrest after he allegedly challenged to fight and then fled from the police, who after all do carry guns.
- **Oct. 13:** Police responded to a reported assault at 11:36 a.m. in the 300 block of Surf. Logs called it an elder abuse case and are investigating the sinner.
- **Oct. 13:** Someone reported a smash-n-dash at 11:45 a.m. at Main and Dunes.
- **Oct. 12:** Police assisted the Sheriff's Department investigating a suspected honey oil lab at the Estero Bay RV Park in the 400 block of Atascadero Rd., that reportedly exploded and badly burned the suspected cooker, who was flown to a burn center in Fresno with burns to his hands and face.
- **Oct. 12:** Police contacted a 53-year-old scofflaw that was making a pest of herself at Albertson's Market. Naturally, she had a warrant and so was given another piece of paper with a new court date that she's not likely to keep either.
- **Oct. 12:** Police are investigating a reported case of suspected sexual penetration with a foreign object.
- **Oct. 11:** Police responded at 10:39 p.m. to Main and Harbor where they arrested a 65-year-old bone to the marrow stupid fellow who was nicked for suspicion of indecent exposure and being schnockered. This little piggy went wee-wee-wee off to the hoosegow.
- **Oct. 11:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 5:40 p.m. in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd. The 52-year-old woman was arrested.
- **Oct. 9:** At 4:58 p.m. someone reported a car crash at Morro and Marina. At 5:05, someone reported another car crash at Atascadero Road and Main. Neither reported injuries.
- **Oct. 9:** Police contacted a familiar foe at 1:18 p.m. at Nain and Atascadero Road. Logs indicated the 40-year-old millionaire had a warrant. He also allegedly confessed to police that he was in possession of drug paraphernalia and was high as the stacks, too. He was booked; the rare honest man in jail.

- **Oct. 9:** At 9 a.m. police came across an abandoned trailer in the 100 block of Atascadero Rd., that was reported stolen from San Luis Obispo. The owner was notified.
- **Oct. 8:** Police are investigating a hit-n-split in the 2400 block of Laurel Ave.
- **Oct. 8:** Police contacted a gambling fellow at 1 p.m. in City Park who was holdin' a winning hand — four local misdemeanor and two out-of-county felony warrants.
- **Oct. 8:** Another car crash was reported, this time at 7:38 a.m. in the 400 block of MBB.
- **Oct. 7:** Police responded at 12:48 a.m. to a disturbance in the 300 block of Tahiti. Logs indicated a 39-year-old bouncer was arrested for suspicion of making criminal threats.
- **Oct. 6:** Police responded to a domestic disturbance at 8:52 p.m. in the 500 block of Kern. A 41-year-old louse was arrested for suspicion of corporal injury and domestic violence.
- **Oct. 6:** At 8 p.m. police contacted a 58-year-old man in the 2600 block of Main and arrested him for the Arroyo Grande Police Department.
- **Oct. 6:** Police responded to the 1300 block of Bolton Dr., where a citizen said he or she was the victim of "theft by false pretenses," by some no doubt thievin' bilge rat, too.
- **Oct. 6:** Someone in the 1300 block of Prescott turned in meth and needles for police to destroy, a case of kicking somebody's habit.
- **Oct. 6:** At 7:37 a.m. someone reported another car crash, this time in the infamous Roundabout, as apparently "yield left, turn right" is too complicated for some folks.
- **Oct. 5:** Someone vandalized a storage unit in the 400 block of Quintana, no doubt a bungled burglary attempt.
- **Oct. 5:** Police responded at 12:10 p.m. to the 900 block of Main, where they arrested a 30-year-old man for suspicion of fraudulently impersonating a police officer, possession of burglary tools and drug paraphernalia. He was taken to County Jail where he'll impersonate an inmate.
- **Oct. 5:** Police responded at 3:18 a.m. to a reported prowler in the 900 block of MBB. Police arrested a 53-year-old hombre for suspicion of prowling and booked him into the Parkinson Plaza.

## Commercial Robbery Suspects Nabbed



Shane Willhite



Samantha Estes

Morro Bay Police arrested two people in connection with commercial robberies.

On Oct. 18, the MBPD was called to a business on the Embarcadero regarding an overnight commercial burglary. During the initial investigation it was determined that another business along the Embarcadero had surveillance video of the possible suspects and a suspect vehicle. On Oct. 21 at about 10:30 a.m., officers conducted a traffic stop on the believed suspect vehicle in the area of Front Street and Beach Street.

Samantha Estes was identified as the driver of the vehicle and was on active county probation. A search of the vehicle resulted in the recovery of jewelry and equipment stolen from two local businesses on the Embarcadero.

Further investigation resulted in the identification and arrest of Shane Willhite. Property located inside the vehicle was recovered and returned to the business owners.

The investigation is ongoing. Anyone who has any information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Morro Bay Police Department (805)772-6225 or San Luis Obispo County Crime Stoppers at (805)549STOP.

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# Community

## Olde Ale House Opens in Los Osos

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

If you are looking for a glass of craft beer, a meal with the family or some nightlife with friends, the Olde Ale House in Los Osos has the taps pouring and the kitchen fired up.

On Nov. 2, post press time, the craft-beer bar and restaurant located at 945 Los Osos Valley Road opened the doors to what the owners hope will be a new go-to hangout for locals.

The Olde Ale House is definitely a family affair. Husband and wife team, Bill Marvin and Chris Stratford, and her sister, Cathy Stratford own the establishment and the couple's daughters, Amelia and Alanah, run the front of the house.

"This is a place where people can be comfortable and want to come back," Bill said. "It is family friendly and pet friendly. Originally we were just looking to have a little community hangout and focus on beer and wine, but it kind of evolved into a much bigger focal point. We recognized the importance of having good food. I mean, if someone comes and has a beer or two and there's no food available, they're going to find somewhere else to go."

The idea for the place came about when Bill and Cathy used to frequent the now closed Baywood Ale House.

"We liked the place down there," Bill said. "It was really kind of the first of its type in this community. When it closed, we just felt like the community needed a place."

At one point there were plans to go into business with the Baywood owners but that path changed. The business idea was still a sound one.

"There's not anywhere to go and grab a beer and have some food and hang out, so there's a need for it here," Amelia said.

Almost two years ago to the day, the owners bought the 1500sf former office building and set about remodeling the place, which has seating available for more than 100 people between the indoor and outdoor areas as well as a full kitchen and a bar.

"It is almost surreal," Amelia said. "It's



Olde Ale House owners Bill Marvin and his wife, Chris Stratford, and her sister, Cathy Stratford. Photo Submitted

been a lot of work, and it's exciting to see it all come together.

"We'll have 20 beers on tap — beers, ciders, sours," said Amelia. "And then we'll have a wine list and a full kitchen, so we'll be open, lunch and dinner."

It should be noted that current coronavirus pandemic restrictions allow only 25% of the space to be used at any one time.

The menu was created by head chef Kyle Miller, formerly of Baywood Ale House and Kuma, and caters to families as well as the soon to be regulars.

"It's a bit more upscale pub food," Amelia said adding that the shepherd's pie will likely be a signature dish. "There will be a lot of vegetarian items. Four out of five of us are vegan or vegetarian, so we're going to have a good little mix."

Steak and fish are also on the dinner menu that is available starting at 4 p.m. and lunch is lighter fare with sandwiches and salads. Of course, beer and wine is always available for those 21 and over.

The spectrum of beers is wide with about 50 percent of the tap lineup consisting of the local craft variety from breweries like Oak and Otter, Liquid Gravity, Santa Maria Brewing, Firestone and Barrelhouse.

"I think, especially in this time, we wanted to honor the local breweries," Amelia said. "We want to keep it pretty local to start, but have a variety."

And yes, that watering hole, happy hour domestic favorite that has stood the test of time, Coors Light, will also be on tap as will the Belgian Stella Artois. Bottled beers, primarily domestic, are available as are non-alcoholic choices.

Wine can be purchased by the bottle

or the glass. They serve a variety of about eight reds and whites from Central Coast wineries including Tolosa and Dauo.

It has been a long road to get to opening day and Bill is quick to recognize the people who helped along the way.

"People stopped by all the time just to say hello and ask us when we were going to open," said Bill. "We had so many people in the community that helped us build the place, I think they feel like they're a little part of it."

Some of those involved include Architect Thomas Reay of the Omni Design Group and Jim Dana, the contractor.

Reay was involved almost from the beginning and helped find the location.

"We looked at several other places that we thought might do, but when he saw this place, he said, 'This, is an ale house.'"

Dana designed and built most of the heated patio and its elements out back where dogs are as welcomed as the people they brought and cornhole can be played anytime.

"He saw the potential here and just went for it," said Amelia.

As for the future, the owners are looking forward to live music on the full stage



built out back, more games to play and an expanded food menu.

"When people come in, I want them to feel like they're at home, like they're just coming into a party with all their favorite friends," said Amelia.

The Olde Ale House is open Sunday through Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Readers can also check out their website at [oldealehouse.com](http://oldealehouse.com).

## Thanksgiving Dinner is a Go

Morro Bay's free Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner will happen this year, with takeout and delivery service and no sit-down dinner at the Community Center.

The free dinner was begun over 20 years ago by a school district custodian who wanted to make sure her kids got Thanksgiving Dinner. A few years later, the Morro Bay Police Union and Community Volunteers, and the Rotary Club pitched in to lend a hand.

Former City Councilman and Rotarian Rick Grantham and his wife Clair headed it up for nearly 15 years, and they passed it on to Nancy Castle several years ago. Now the annual dinner is organized by "Team Castle," and will take place from 1-3 p.m. Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, Nov. 26).

Turkey dinners with all the fixings will be available for walk-up and drive thru service at the Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way.

If readers are unable to get down to the community center, they can call (805) 225-5044 days ahead of time to request a dinner be delivered for free to your home



by a police officer or community volunteer.

Also that day, the Morro Bay Lion's Club Foundation will be giving away another free car to a local person in need of transportation.

The dinner is sponsored by the City of Morro Bay, Chamber of Commerce, Albertson's Market, AGP Video, Casa de Flores, Dorn's Restaurant, Mi Casa Restaurant, MBPD officers and community volunteers, the Odd Fellows Lodge, Morro Bay Maritime Museum and the Lion's Club Foundation, with support from Team Castle volunteers.

The dinner normally feeds around 500 people between the dinner and deliveries, with leftovers being served at the weekly Monday Night free dinner at the Vet's Hall.

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# Community

## Witch's Paddle a Bit of Halloween Fun

Story and Photos by Neil Farrell



The 7th Annual Morro Bay Witch's Paddle brought a welcomed bit of Halloween fun to the Morro Bay Harbor Oct. 30, with all manner from Glenda the Good Witch sharing a paddle board with three hags including the Wicked Witch of the West, a few warlocks and even Maleficent, the colorful cadre was quite a sight on a clear and sunny afternoon.


The rite started with a handful of women who got together to celebrate Halloween and have a bit of naughty fun, paddling down the waterfront. Since then, the specter has grown with this year's count rising to about 100.

The Witch's Paddle is a fundraiser for the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County and participants don a witch or warlock costume and paddle their broomsticks, err... paddleboards, kayaks, outriggers, cauldrons, or other vessels.


The costumes were as varied as the personalities who wore them.



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# Community

## Perfect Union Holds Grand Opening

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce recently held a ribbon cutting for Perfect Union in Morro Bay. The cannabis dispensary, offering both medicinal and recreational marijuana and CBD products, is located at 1000 Quintana Rd. Photo by Dean Sullivan

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, city officials and community members recently joined the crew at Perfect Union for grand opening ceremonies.

The Morro Bay store is the seventh Perfect Union location to open this year, and an eighth was slated to open last week in Weed, CA. Locally, they have nine employees, all of whom are from the area. The cannabis dispensary offers both medicinal and recreational marijuana and CBD products and the company, itself, has cultivation and distribution licenses in California. To enter the store, you must be 21 or older or 18 with a valid medical recommendation.

For those folks who have never been to a dispensary and might be hesitant to walk through the doors, be aware that the store is inviting, clean and well organized, and all employees are trained to provide a comfortable atmosphere.

“We want to provide a safe, welcoming environment for all guests, whether you are new to cannabis or interested in trying new products that are available now,” said Julie Hagans, senior director of marketing. “Perfect Union is known for providing excellent one-on-one customer service with knowledgeable budtenders who take the time to find out what you need and what will best help you feel better or achieve the results you are looking for. Our budtenders go through extensive training on cannabis — how it can help treat certain ailments and which products will best suit your needs — so we want all guests to feel welcome to visit and learn more about how cannabis can help them.”

The company doesn’t just move into a community, it becomes a part of one. They have a history of donating to organizations supporting the homeless, veterans, the



LGBTQ+ community and the SPCA. The involvement locally includes: the National Estuary Program, the Rescue Me Program through Top Dog Coffee, and Woods Humane Society. They also hold a membership with the Morro Bay Open Space Alliance.

Last Friday, employees held a beach cleanup in Morro Bay and plan to have an environmental event every quarter. “Giving back to the community has been ingrained in our company culture from day one,” said Hagans. “We have always partnered with community organizations, non-profits, collected donations and volunteered our time in various ways. We want to become a part of each community that we serve and be a partner that participates and gives back to those who need it most.”

The new store is located at 1000 Quintana Rd. They are open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Folks who fit the age restrictions, can also check out the company’s website at [perfect-union.com](http://perfect-union.com).

## Really Big Bird Spotted in Morro Bay

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Patrick Madding of Morro Bay spent several months making his mythical Halloween costume. Photo by Lara Kimm

Madding started working on the costume at the beginning of the year.

If you were out in Morro Bay on Halloween, you might have done a double take after seeing a big bird (not that one) walking about the city. The creature that looked like a mix of mythical, steam-punk and carnevale influences was Patrick Madding in his homemade costume.



“For me, the making it was the most fun,” said the 48-year-old former sheet metal worker, who is now a stay-at-home-dad and grad student. “I mean, wearing it is fun too, but I typically don’t like to be the center of attention.”

The inspiration for the 8-foot tall beast was Jim Henson’s Skeksis, a reptilian, bird-like fictional species from the movie “The Dark Crystal.” “I’ve had the idea in my head for a long time. “I think I made the mask first and then I started modifying that. I blew some of my stimulus check on a pair of drywall stilts, and then I made the feet on those.”

The hand-sewn mask is made of leather that Finn Hansen, the owner of The Leather Shop in Morro Bay, helped put rivets and grommets in for breathability. Madding did the copper work on the beak and the crown. The scales he made from a pair of yoga pants and the talons were sculpted out of epoxy clay.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the costume is the drywall stilts that add about two-feet to Madding’s height.

“I practiced a lot in those stilts,” he said. “I’ve got some good kneepads on under my pants just because I don’t want to fall,” he said. “That’s the reason for the walking stick to because there’s no graceful way to fall on those things; You’re just like pancake batter and going splat.”


## Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The most active Thanksgiving tradition is going Virtual this year. Historically, the SLO Food Bank has hosted 2-mile walks and 5-mile runs in Avila Beach and in Pismo Beach. As many as 1,500 people gathered to inspire

Events and Activities Continued on page 12





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# Community

**Events and Activities** From page 11

one another to be grateful for the meal they would enjoy later in the day and to raise money for those who are not as fortunate.

Participants can still register for a trot on Thanksgiving morning, but will complete the walk, run or hike on their own or with family and closest friends at a location of their choice.

For every \$1 raised, the Food Bank provides 7 nutritious meals! The rate of hunger has more than doubled since the beginning of the year. The Turkey Trot aims to provide 140,000 Holiday meals to families in need.

To help raise funds and do the virtual Trot, go to [slofoodbank.org](http://slofoodbank.org).

•••

**Cuesta College invites community members** to attend a free webinar examining “The Entrepreneurship Mindset.” The discussion is designed for small business owners and those interested in starting a business or becoming self-employed.

Cuesta College Business Education Instructor Dr. Gary Rubin recently completed research on entrepreneurs’ mindset, interviewing Central Coast business owners ranging in age from 17 to 81. He sought a group of interviewees who were diverse demographically and in the number of years they have been self-employed. He will present his findings based on his research and interviews.

**The San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden** is holding its annual plant sale fundraiser online this year, and plant lovers can get deals on a variety of unique plants grown at the garden located in El Chorro Regional Park.

The semi-annual “Greenhouse Blowout” plant sale is from Nov. 9-21 and features drought resistant plants and succulents. Garden members will get special deals and everyone can go to: [SLOBG.org](http://SLOBG.org) for plant lists and more. Buy online and pickup plants at the garden.

The Botanical Garden is located in El Chorro Regional Park, 2450 Dairy Creek Rd., off Hwy 1 across from Cuesta College.

•••

**“I’ve always enjoyed learning from others’** experiences, and these 18 people share valuable lessons and their personal thoughts on business, stress, decision making, confidence, and more,” said Dr. Rubin.

There are three opportunities to attend the webinar on the day of their choice. Saturday, November 7, at 10 a.m. Registration link: [bit.ly/34BTun](http://bit.ly/34BTun), Thursday, November 12, at 5:p.m. Registration link: [bit.ly/2Jk82Ej](http://bit.ly/2Jk82Ej) and

Tuesday, November 17, at 1 p.m. Registration link: [bit.ly/35MuZY0](http://bit.ly/35MuZY0).

Dr. Rubin received his juris doctor degree from

California Western School of Law and has been an active member of the California Bar since 1985. He practices in the areas of business startup, purchase and sale, tax, and estate planning. He has 32 years of teaching experience and has written and lectured on numerous education, legal, business, and tax issues. In addition to teaching business at Cuesta College, he is also the North County Campus Cluster Coordinator of Workforce, Economic Development & Community Programs.

## Skate Cambria Rolls On

By Jill Turnbow



Six months ago, with no notice and no fanfare, the skateboard park on Main St in Cambria was closed. And not just closed, but removed. Students who frequented the park were left reeling. Immediately parents and kids joined forces for its return. An organization named Skate Cambria was formed under the 501(c) 3 non-profit status of the Cambria Community Council to raise funds to rebuild.

Skate Cambria Directors, Juli Amodei and Shara Tatham, who both have kids who are avid skateboarders, saw the opportunity to rebuild bigger and better.

“The old skate park was not well maintained and not particularly safe,” said Juli. “We saw this as a chance to really improve the space,”

The students have been holding a rally every Friday in front of the old park to raise awareness as well as the needed funds for the project.

The property, next to the Cambria library, is owned by the CCSD.

“I think what people don’t realize is that we have already reached an agreement with the CCSD for the skate park to be rebuilt in its current location,” said Juli. “By gathering signatures, funds, and through community sup-

port, the CCSD is aware of how much this park means to our kids. It wasn’t easy. We went to a lot of meetings!”

The organization is taking a three-pronged approach. Part grant, part public funds, and part private funds. A site survey and design have already been approved. The park will return in that same location, but it will be safer and easier to maintain.

Other locations were considered but each proved to be too difficult.

“The current location has great visibility,” said Amodei. “Not only can we watch our kids but it shows tourists that we are a lively, vibrant community.” Additionally, “Kids don’t have access to school facilities right now, no access to sporting equipment. We’ve had a lot of positive support for kids needing outdoor recreation. We’re excited about the progress we’ve made.”

An added bonus has been what the kids have learned in the process. A proper board was formed which will stay in place once the park opens. The board is made up of mostly students with several adults also serving.

“It’s great because the kids are learning how to fund-raise, how to navigate the system, and how to serve their community,” Juli said.

The group hosted a pancake breakfast on Halloween in which every element was donated so that 100% of the proceeds, they cleared \$4,500, could go to the building fund. They are hoping to have the build begin by next summer.

“There is so much passion behind this project,” said Juli.

The organization is still collecting signatures and donations at the Friday rallies from 2 to 3 p.m. in front of the park on Main St. across from the farmers’ market. Skate Cambria also has a line of merchandise including T-shirts, hats, and hoodies, all created by the students. They are available on their website, [SkateCambria.com](http://SkateCambria.com). Donations are also accepted on the site. Roll on!



Volunteers Marcella Breen and Tigg Morales at the pancake breakfast fundraiser on Halloween for Skate Cambria.

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# Community

## Donations Needed for Bike Giveaway

With pretty much all American traditions put on hold this year due to the coronavirus pandemic response, there's at least one local holiday tradition that will happen.

The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office will for the 31st year in a row, hold its Christmas Bicycle Giveaway, and the department is currently asking for donations of bikes and money.

"This program," Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla said, "was set up 31-years ago to promote the holiday spirit by giving away refurbished bicycles and new helmets to children in need in San Luis Obispo County. Due to the generosity of the people of this County, the program has



The San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office will hold its 31st Christmas Bicycle Giveaway.

continued to be a big success."

The County Honor Farm is the assembly point for donated bicycles in need of repair. Honor Farm inmates repair the bikes in a program that "instills in the inmates a positive work ethic, self-respect and a sense of worth to the community," Cipolla said.

Because of all the virus restrictions, the program is short on new bikes, parts and accessories. "We are seeking the public's help by asking for new bicycles, new helmets or monetary donations for replacement parts," Cipolla said. "Individuals and businesses who wish to donate new children's bicycle helmets in their original packaging can bring the helmet to any of the Sheriff's Office Patrol stations or to the Honor Farm located (on Oklahoma Avenue) off Highway 1."

Cipolla noted that they accept adult bicycles but prefer children's bicycles, which are in high demand.

To make a monetary contribution to buy parts or helmets, send a check to: Sheriff's Advisory Foundation, Attn: Bicycle Fund, P.O. Box 3752, San Luis Obispo, CA 93403.

If readers know a youngster, 15-under, who needs a bike, they can email to: sh-bikereports@co.slo.ca.us and request a Christmas Bicycle Application or go online to: slosheriff.org and click on "Resources" at the top of the homepage, and then "Forms and Applications" on the drop-down menu. All applications are due by Nov. 25.

The Sheriff's Office will have just one day this year for the bike giveaway, starting at 9 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 10 at the Honor Farm, 880 Oklahoma Ave. Facemasks and social distance guidelines will be in effect.

Cipolla said, "The Sheriff's Office could not continue this program without the help and generosity of groups like Rita's Rainbows which donates money to buy bicycle helmets, Bike SLO County which donates many hours to helping inmates refurbish the bicycles, The Sandlot Group of San Luis Obispo for donating new bikes, and the Sheriff's Advisory Foundation which donates time and money to the cause."

### New Plant From page 1

water that would be available for reclamation.

The two agencies have been partners for decades and together rebuilt the Atascadero Road sewer treatment plant in the early 1980s. But the terms proposed were unacceptable and the CSD decided to pursue its own project.

And while the two agencies still jointly own and operate the existing treatment plant, the boards have not met in person for over 5 years. The ultimate disposition of the property on Atascadero Road has not been discussed. "We've been focused here," he said.

Things had been going almost flawlessly with construction, until a few weeks ago when a worker with one of the subcontractors doing horizontal drilling for a sewer main was killed in a tragic accident. OSHA is reportedly investigating.

"There have been no other mishaps on the job," Koon said.

Contractors on the job have been WSC for design and initial feasibility studies; Cushman, Inc., which is building the plant; David Crye General Engineering (of Morro Bay), which did the grading for the plant site and is the contractor for the installation of the needed pipelines.

Electricraft (of SLO) has done the electrical wiring of the plant and Raminha Const., of Atascadero is installing a new lift station by the highway.

"Cushman is doing an exemplary job," Koon said. "They've given us invaluable input. They've built plants like this before." On several occasions, he explained, Cushman's people on site have looked at plans and suggested changes that made the job easier. "Cushman's been great."

Koon said that some 30 people have been given tours of the work site. "A lot of the community is interested," Koon said. "There's a lot of community pride. This is a great project."

Walking about the job site, which is still very much a work in progress, Koon and Wade start the tour where the sewage comes in, at the head works where screens sift through the flow removing inorganic materials that get flushed down toilets. As with most of the plant, there is two of everything for redundancy.

Work on the guts of the "membrane bio reactor" or MBR plant, two 25-foot deep basins, is winding up. Both will be filled with biological organisms that eat the solids in the waste flow, becoming cleaner and cleaner with each subsequent segment.

A dry pit with 10-horse electric pumps and pipes is still being worked on by pipefitters, part of the recirculation system of the MBR sending wastewater twice through the basins to keep the critters fed.

The third level of treatment consists of a series of pipes with tiny holes that wastewater will get sucked into, with the holes filtering down to the tiniest (1 micron) of particles.

The plant uses two disinfection chemicals, chlorine and citric acid, and finally, ultraviolet light — two circular arrays of 60 UV light bulbs each — that will all combine to produce so-called "Title 22" water, which Koon said allows for unrestricted reuse.

The plant has a groundwater well that will supply all the water to the bathrooms, showers and administration and maintenance buildings, but all the landscaping will be watered with treated wastewater, even the fire hydrants will be charged with reclaimed water in a 130,000 gallon storage tank.

And they're using the cheapest pumping method. "It's gravity flow all through the system" Koon said, "until the forced filters. Then it's gravity flow out to the ocean."



They reached back to Ancient Greece for one of the components, an Archimedes screw that will squeeze the final water out of the plant's sludge (sending it back through the plant). That sludge will drop into a dumpster that will be sent to the Cold Canyon Landfill to cover the mounds of garbage.

"It'll be like the compost you would use for gardens," Koon said. The final sludge will be down to 12%-15% water. "Once a week or every week-and-a-half we'll get rid of 20 yards."

Eventually, they hope to recycle the wastewater by pumping it over the hill to Whale Rock Reservoir though for now, it's getting discharged into Estero Bay.

"Next is recycling," Koon said. "We're going to pursue a Whale Rock pipeline after we get this thing working. Right now it's all just theory. For now it will have to go into the ocean."



Cayucos Sanitary District General Manager Rick Koon. Photos by Neil Farrell

Over the next 5 years, Koon said, they will establish a history of the plant's treatment and testing of the wastewater in the hopes that when the time comes, they can store the water in Whale Rock Reservoir, where Cayucos' drinking water comes from.

That would pretty much secure the town's water supply far into the future.

The CSD is also working with Rec Solar of SLO on a 1-megawatt solar energy farm on property the CSD owns next door to the plant.

Koon said they would buy energy at 8¢ a kilowatt in a "power-purchase agreement" that will save the CSD \$8 million in energy costs over 25 years.

They are also considering possibly putting in a battery storage facility in the future.

Koon said they received a \$24.7 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and \$4.5 million in USDA grants that will pay for the entire project.

The final interest rate has not been worked out yet but Koon anticipates that it will be somewhere below 2% and there are "no strings attached," meaning that the project isn't required to actually recycle the wastewater, though they will certainly be in a position to do so when State law allows.



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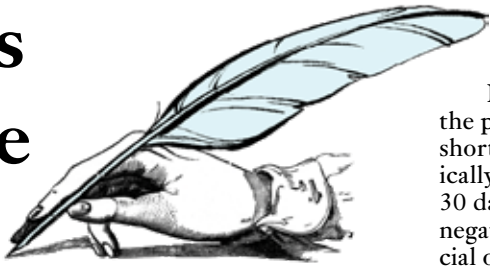
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KEVIN O'CONNOR, President



# Letters To The Editor



## A Letter to Supervisor Bruce Gibson

The present guidance by the Governor and County Health Agency is being used to effectively deny those of us with disabilities and at risk from Covid-19 the ability and right to participate in local/special district government meetings.

The County allows for in-person, in-house meetings to conduct government business. This guidance is allowing local/district governments to switch from virtual Zoom meetings to full in-person, in-house meetings. Presently, there is no requirement for any teleconferencing or hybrid meeting access to conduct local government meetings.

This month, San Simeon CSD, without prior public notice or Board approval issued an agenda for an in-house, in-person only Budget Committee Meeting. All San Simeon CSD meetings to date have been Zoom meetings. In fact, the SSCSD Board meeting scheduled one day before this meeting was a Zoom meeting.

Zoom meetings have been used by the District and worked well for months. Participation has increased. The Board, staff, and community are getting very adept at using this medium. And the District has a Zoom subscription. There will not be recordings of committee meetings for viewing and only brief minutes will follow some months later.

The change to only in-house, in-person meetings adversely impacts safety and the level of community participation.

Requests to the Chairperson and Board for a hybrid meeting or alternative access were firmly denied. They quoted the County Health Agency's approval of this in-person, in-house meeting as the legal basis for making the change and said the County does not require ANY form of remote access or participation.

For those of us with disabilities and/or at high risk of Covid-19, we have been denied what we believe is a basic right to participate in local government. These meetings are effectively closed to us and violate the spirit and intent of the Brown Act and potentially more. It is noted that the Brown Act as presently written does not require any form of fully remote access or hybrid meetings. This still does not make it right.

The County has emergency authority and can mandate hybrid meetings for community service /special district meetings.

Maybe, someday our State legislators will take up this matter in the form of a Brown Act amendment requiring hybrid meetings. However, for now we need the County under its emergency authority to act and protect our rights to participate in local government.

I will be bringing this matter up at the North Coast Advisory Council meeting on October 21, 2020.

Your support and timely action is requested to prevent further in-house, in-person only local/special district meetings by bringing this matter to the attention of the County Health Agency and/or the Board of Supervisors.

*Hank Krzciuk  
San Simeon*

## Vacation Rentals Rule the Day in Morro Bay

In case you missed Tuesday's council meeting, Morro Bay's elected officials approved (4-1) a new short-term vacation rental ordinance after many months of meetings, discussion, and community input. While the ordinance was intended to "protect the quality and character of our neighborhoods," it seems to primarily protect the financial interests of the vacation rental owners, the tax generated by their properties, and the Coastal Commission's desire that there be a wide variety of accommodations available to tourists.

None of this would be a problem, unless you are one of the people who live next door or near a busy, "non-hosted" short-term vacation rental. These single-family homes typically accommodate 8-12 people for the weekend (or up to 30 days), along with their cars, guests, pets, toys, etc. The negative impacts of what many consider to be commercial operations in residential areas form the crux of most complaints. That, combined with the challenge and cost of enforcing rules and regulations, can make the "non-hosted" short-term rental a highly undesirable neighbor.

Many cities outside the jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission simply ban these kinds of rentals due to the deleterious effect they have on neighborhoods. Some cities accommodate these rentals by physically separating them from one another. "Buffer" distances (200-500 ft.) are commonly used for this purpose. Los Osos is pursuing a 500-foot separation. By the way, there is no buffer distance required in Morro Bay's new ordinance for existing short-term rentals. They have all been "grandfathered in" regardless of how many are clustered together as they commonly are in the Beach Tract. However, a minimum separation distance will apply to future vacation rentals. What's that buffer distance? 175 ft.

Another option available to jurisdictions is to limit (CAP) the overall number allowed, which is often tied to a percentage of housing stock available. I think we can agree there is a housing crisis in California, so the % of our stock that we remove from a potential long-term rental pool is important. Morro Bay's previous mayor and council established a CAP of 250 in 2015, I believe. That amounts to 4% of our SFR housing stock. When added to our 20% of vacant 2nd homes here, a total of 24% of our housing market was unavailable to those looking for long term rental/purchase opportunities. So a reduced CAP was an important part of the various meetings and discussions. Several members of the initial "ad hoc" committee suggested a CAP of 120, which would approximate 2

*Jeff Heller  
Morro Bay City Council*

## To the California Coastal Commissioners

The Oceano sand dune area is recognized by scientists, conservationists, government and the public as the finest, most extensive coastal dunes remaining in California. The beach and dunes offer critical habitat for endangered shorebirds and other rare plant and animal species. Unfortunately, off-highway vehicle (OHV) activity has been allowed to degrade this beautiful area for decades.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Oceano Dunes was closed in March to all vehicle activity. Since the closure, the dunes and beach have transformed into a vibrant, safe and clean environment for beachgoers of all kinds. At its earliest opportunity, California State Parks intends to reopen the park to vehicle use, which will re-impose immediate threats to wildlife, sensitive habitats and community health and safety.

People for the Dunes campaign advances a new, inclusive vision of recreation and conservation at Oceano Dunes without OHVs that will secure environmental justice for surrounding communities, ensure better protection for wildlife and the natural environment, boost the local economy and respect the area's cultural heritage.

California State Parks has drafted a Public Works Plan, a Habitat Conservation Plan and an Environmental Impact Report. All documents must be reviewed and approved by state and/or federal agencies before they can be implemented. Until State Parks receives these approvals, the park should remain closed to OHV activity to prevent continued violations of the Endangered Species Act, the California Coastal Act and the Local Coastal Program. Aside from these statutory reasons, the COVID-19 situation demands that the beach and dunes remain closed to vehicular recreationists, most of whom come from outside the local region. During the closure, all parties should develop solutions that advance real conservation of natural resources and environmental justice for the local communities.

I implore all Commissioners to adopt recommendations that will preserve the natural resources of this extraordinary area and allow access for all.

*Watson Gooch  
Los Osos*

## Preserve El Morro Elementary

The Board of the Historical Society of Morro Bay has a very deep interest in the old El Morro Elementary School and site. There are at least 3 buildings on that site that would be qualified for historic preservation if the City of Morro Bay had the proper ordinance (we're working on that).

The preservation of the school buildings with or without an ordinance is our abiding concern. They are remnants of Morro Bay's past that our community cannot afford to lose now or in the future. These buildings include the original one room school house, the main school building with the bell tower and theatre, the midcentury modern building adorned with the striking butterfly effect gabled roof line and importantly the building where Botso Korisheli started the San Luis Obispo Children's Symphony and educated countless county children in the art of music including renowned Conductor, Kent Nagano.

Our motto is "Preservation and Progress," and those concepts can apply fully to the project that the SLCUSD is beginning to outline in public.

The Historical Society of Morro Bay knows that no one can fully support OR oppose a project without knowing enough to be informed of the options and their consequences. We hope that SLCUSD will be going through a transparent public process to bring all this to light. We hope that the process includes open and full conversations with the City of Morro Bay, the Morro Bay Community at community forums and the Historical Society of Morro Bay as an organization. Given that the SLCUSD appears to be quite far down the road in the plan, at least conceptually, it is a little surprising that obvious stakeholders like HSMB have not been consulted.

For the Greater Morro Bay Community:

Please contact the Historical Society of Morro Bay with any stories or photos that you may have from El Morro Elementary School. You may contact us directly at [Historicalmorrobay.org/contact](http://Historicalmorrobay.org/contact) or on Facebook at Historical Society of Morro Bay.

*Glenn Silloway, Bill Fagol, Alice Kolb,  
Garry Johnson, Joan Solu, Susan Stewart  
Historical Society Board Members*

## Good News in Cambria

Thank you citizens of Cambria & San Simeon! Due to the generous donations from the Cambria / San Simeon Community during our 2019 Annual Open Heart Drive and from bequests received, the Cambria Community Council was able to provide over 31 grants to local non-profits including our local schools this year.

In addition, the council was able to provide nearly \$47,000 to help feed those in need through the donations to "Neighbors Feeding Neighbors" campaign, which is on-going.

Since 1996, besides running the free bus service for our seniors and disabled, the Cambria Community Council has granted over \$1,284,280.

This year's grants totaled \$106,742: Over \$18,000 went to Cambria Grammar School, Santa Lucia Middle School and Coast Union High School; and, over \$88,000 was granted to 16 local non-profits including: Assistance League, Beautify Cambria, Boosters Club, Boy Scouts (Girl's Troop), Camp Ocean Pines, Cambria Community Health District Trust, HART, Historical Society, Hospice, Infant Essentials, LINK Family Services, Meals That Connect, Pacific Wildlife Care, Skate Park Project, Safe & Sober Grad, Toys for Tots.

The Council's 2020 Open Heart Campaign will begin in late November for the 2021 Grant Cycle. Check your mailbox for our letter and give if you can!

For further information, visit: [cambriacommunity-council.org](http://cambriacommunity-council.org)

*Marcelle Bakula  
Cambria Community Council*

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# Community

Solar From page 1

## Facilities Face PSPS

County Public Works runs these key water facilities and is responsible for planning for maintenance and for what to do in case of emergencies, which today includes so-called, "Public Safety Power Shutoffs" or PSPS, the practice by utility companies to shut down the power grid in areas threatened by wildfire or in danger of failure due to high-winds and other extreme weather conditions.

In the past, such weather events have knocked down power lines and sparked major fires, most notably the November 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise, Calif., which nearly destroyed the entire town and killed 86 people.

Secrest said in a report, "PG&E has recommended planning for multiple-day electric outages. Battery energy storage systems provide resiliency to facilities by providing them with a power source during an electrical disruption. In the case of a PSPS or other outage event, backup power is essential for critical County services to continue to be provided to residents."

## Battery Projects Worth Millions

These battery projects cost millions but won't cost the County one thin dime thanks to the SGIP program.

The County tried before to get backup systems built but could never find the money until earlier this summer.

"In the summer of 2020," Secrest said, "staff was contacted by Tesla Energy about the SGIP and Tesla's battery energy storage installations."

They reviewed "Tesla's experience with customers like the County, as well as the technical expertise with the SGIP application, and design, engineering, and ability to directly manufacturer and install the battery storage system."

They looked at many County facilities and decided upon the three lake sites. "The three sites are critical parts of County systems that provide drinking water to the cities of Paso Robles, Atascadero, Arroyo Grande, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach, and the unincorporated towns of Templeton, Santa Margarita Ranch, Oceano, Avila Beach and Shell Beach."

The contract with Tesla is for 10 years and the grants cover the entire costs. When the contract is up, the County will own the systems. Annual maintenance is estimated at \$4,500 a year.

And when the batteries are worn out, Tesla will recycle them at its facility in Nevada at no cost to the County.

These are not cheap systems. The Lake Nacimiento system would cost \$2.2 million and save the County \$109,000 a year in electric bills.

At Lopez Lake, the system is worth \$1.3M, and saves \$65,500 a year.

The Rocky Canyon project is worth \$2.2M, saves \$55,000 a year.

If these projects go well, the County has other sites that could come under the grant program.

## Dairy Creek Project

The Dairy Creek and Social Services projects are being done through an "Energy Savings Agreement" (ESA) with Forefront Power, an energy company that will install and operate the solar carports, selling the energy to the County at a discount over utility rates.

"An ESA," Secrest said, "allows a third-party solar developer to finance, design, construct, operate, and maintain a solar installation that the host receives and purchases energy from at a specified rate."

"PG&E continues to provide electricity services to the site for any consumption that is not covered by the solar installation. This procurement mechanism also allows the County to procure solar with no upfront capital."

The ESA contracts expire in 20 years, Secrest said. "At the end of the term, the County has the option to renew the ESA, purchase the system, or have Forefront Power remove the system at no cost to the County."

She added that the carport panels would cut the County's electricity expenses through offsetting more than 80 percent of the energy consumption at the two sites.

## Solar Farm Will Save Millions

Perhaps the most exciting and easily seen project is the solar farm on a vacant parcel behind the County Honor

Farm running parallel to Hwy 1.

That 6-acre solar farm, expected to go online in 2021, is one-fourth the size of a solar farm Cal Poly installed by CMC, Secrest told Estero Bay News.

The 1.2MW facility covers about 6 acres and involves 61 rows of solar arrays, each row containing three arrays of 18 panels each, for a total of 3,294 "modules" of solar panels. Each panel, made in Vietnam, can generate 370 watts (9 amps) of energy.

It too is not going to cost the County anything up front, and Forefront Power is also the contractor. Secrest said all the costs are being rolled into a set price per kilowatt that she said would be far less than what the County pays PG&E.

The solar farm will hook into existing power lines that cross overhead and PG&E will install a re-closure facility that will modulate the solar power supply to make that connection under another agreement reached in 2017.

The solar farm will "benefit 18 electric meters, which support 12 facilities at the County Operations Center [COC]," she said. The installation is estimated to offset approximately 13% of the County's total energy usage and 11% of total energy costs.

The facilities that will benefit are: Maintenance Bldg. 1200; the Main, West and Women's Jails; Juvenile Hall; jail trailer (a medical facility); Honor Farm; Sheriff's Detective and Storage Buildings; the fleet garage; Information Services; Emergency Operations Center; and Department of Animal Services.

## State SPURRs Solar Projects

Back in Fall 2017, Secrest said, they learned about a joint powers authority, "The School Project for Utility Rate Reduction" or SPURR that involves over 200 school districts, cities, counties, community colleges and other public agencies.

One of SPURR's programs is the "Renewable Energy Aggregated Procurement" or REAP Program. The County's solar farm is under this program.

The County also signed an agreement in 2017 with PG&E to have the company connect any solar projects the County might pursue and PG&E is in the process of connecting the Oklahoma Avenue Solar Farm to its distribution system, essentially installing a switch yard at the site.

The power will not go directly to the various County facilities but rather be absorbed into PG&E's system and the electricity metered out at the set price.

And while the solar farm lies mostly hidden behind a fence with wooden slats, the County still plans to plant trees along the side to further screen it from the highway.

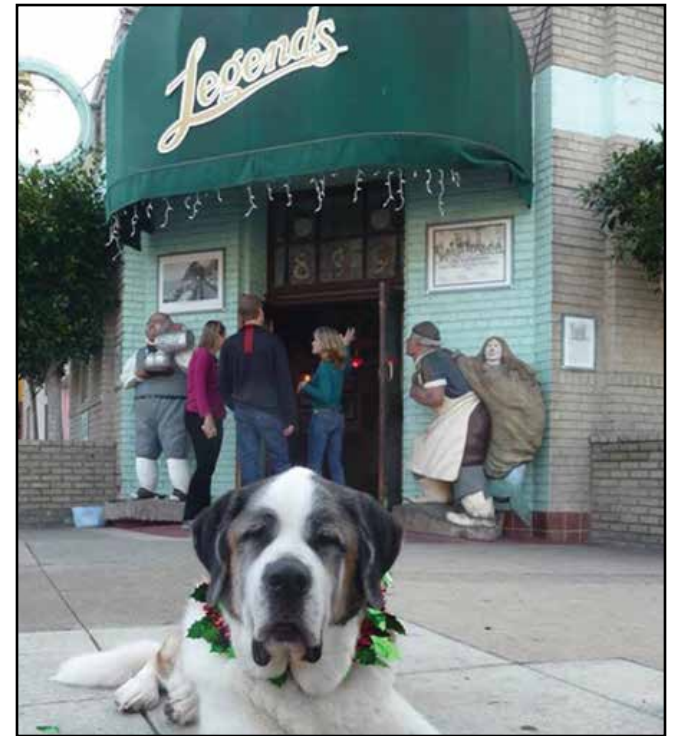
## Seeing Significant Savings

The County currently pays some 23-cents per kilowatt through PG&E and the new rate with the solar farm will be \$0.10/KW a gross savings of some \$165,000 a year and the savings will start immediately owing to the zero capital investment.

Over 20 years, the County expects to save \$5.1 million and offset 73.9 million pounds of carbon dioxide, equal to the amount of carbon contained in 39,400 acres of forest.

Legends From page 1

she has now downsized, she once owned three Morro Bay bars: Legends, formerly called the Old Circle Inn; the Buoy in north Morro Bay; and Happy Jacks across the



Nellie, who has crossed over the rainbow bridge, still watches over Casey and the customers at Legends. Writer Judy Salamacha swears this picture was not planned. "I had taken a couple photos yesterday - one at the same spot as this one with Nellie. I didn't like the shot without people and my car was in it. But I swear to God (and told Casey) the picture with Nellie just showed up. Maybe Google did it from the website, but Casey and I sincerely believe Nellie wanted to be in the story as she used to be. Casey says sometimes she just shows up for Casey to love on."

street, which she renamed the Fuel Dock. New ownership expanded it into The Siren, a popular music venue.

Over the years, Casey has experienced multiple economic shifts trying to destroy her businesses. She thought the worse was 2008. What she calls "the sub-prime mortgage hit" kept her construction patrons away. Stay-cations and tourism-intended events barely filled some gaps. She weathered impacts due to Highway One's mudslides and fires north, south and east. She held on trusting, "When triple digits hit the valley, we'll be flooded with visitors."

There was that time when Casey's entire livelihood was at risk, so much so that even the Morro Bay Car Show couldn't bail her out, but she refused to give up. She tested music Sunday afternoons at the Fuel Dock. Bands started asking for play dates so she added Saturday afternoons, then Friday nights and Thursday jam sessions. Even her Legends' patrons decided they could venture across the

Legends Continued on page 16

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street for the music. She'd dodged another bullet.

But Covid-19 ended her record seventeen-year open-daily policy. "I never closed even Thanksgiving and Christmas. Some people just need a place to be," Casey said.

"I think it was St. Patrick's Day, - no the night, before - when bars were told to close. I tried to keep current on so many changes." Her never-give-up attitude looked for a solution. "Restaurants with bars could open, but we couldn't. I read some bars linked with food trucks to stay open. I called my guy at the ABC office and told him I'd made food available for seventeen years through a window opening to her neighbor, Sabetta's Pizza. He went for it." She wasn't nervous when Morro Bay police and the fire marshal checked the first night she re-opened. "I follow the rules. I don't want to ruin it for other bars in our area."

Since, she's added menu items from several of her Main Street neighbors: Top Dog Coffee Bar, Pizza Port and the soon-to-be-open Morro Bay Butcher & Deli across the street. The new owners have been introducing their premium meats in sliders at Saturday's market. "I'm now open and I'm helping my neighbors sell more food items," said Casey. Sales have increased with city-approved outdoor dining.

Casey accepts that her new normal comes with added costs. Although it now takes two employees to operate the hours that one easily could handle before Covid-19, she likes the energy outdoor dining has created in downtown. Hauling tables and chairs in and out every day is a nuisance and she's not crazy about policing patrons about wearing masks and social distancing, but she knows it's what she has to do for now, but...

If Casey Kelso could influence one thing that would help her and her fellow downtown business owners bring and keep more business in Morro Bay's downtown area, it would be a public bathroom that would stay open when visitors and locals want to shop and discover what's available on Main Street and Morro Bay Blvd.

Casey will handle after hours. Legends always has. "I plan to be here to take care of my own."

## Endowment Established to Support Dallidet Adobe & Gardens



Jim Andre, Paul Kellogg, and History Center President John Ashbaugh at the Dallidet Adobe & Gardens. Andre and Kellogg have pledged \$50,000 in the names of Peter and Carol Andre to establish the Dallidet Adobe Endowment Fund. Photo submitted

The History Center of San Luis Obispo County recently announced the creation of the Dallidet Adobe Endowment Fund to support the Dallidet Adobe and Gardens.

An initial \$50,000 pledge, in memory of Peter R. and Carol F. Andre, has been made by Jim Andre and Paul Kellogg. Peter Andre was instrumental in the preservation of the Dallidet Adobe and thus also the creation of the History Center in 1953.

### Background

Paul Dallidet, the youngest son of Pierre Dallidet, by now an old man living by himself in his family home, was spotted shoplifting food from Sauer's Grocery on Monterey Street. The owner of the store called local attorney Peter Andre to ask advice on handling this delicate situation. Peter assured the shopkeeper that he would cover the cost of any stolen merchandise, and began to investigate the financial situation of the elderly Mr. Dallidet.

Andre discovered that the Dallidet fortune was entirely gone, and taxes on the 1856 adobe home had not been paid in years. The government was preparing to foreclose. Andre helped organize a group of local citizens to step in and save Paul Dallidet from destitution. Dallidet signed over the deed to his family home and property to the purpose-created 501(c)3 Historical Society of San Luis Obispo

County. In exchange, he received a life estate allowing him to stay in his home, and his living and medical expenses were subsidized by the Society. The Historical Society was eventually renamed the History Center of San Luis Obispo County in 2010.

Peter and Carol Andre's son Jim Andre, and Jim's partner Paul Kellogg, have pledged to donate \$50,000 over 5 years to this endowment to help ensure that the History Center will have the funds to maintain the Dallidet Adobe and Gardens in perpetuity. We are extremely grateful for this act of generosity.

Today, the Dallidet Adobe and Gardens remain in the stewardship of the History Center. The home is maintained as it would have been during the time of the Dallidet family at the turn of the century.

In ordinary, non-Covid-19 times, the home is open for public viewing and the History Center hosts events in the gardens. This year, they welcome guests to the Gardens on Sundays from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., and virtual tours of the home are conducted via Zoom. The venue is also available for rental for private events.

For more information, call the History Center of San Luis Obispo County. 805-543-0638.

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